



**International Journal of Education, Social Studies,
And Management (IJESSM)**

e-ISSN : 2775-4154

Volume 6, Issue 2, June 2026

The International Journal of Education, Social Studies, and Management (IJESSM) is published 3 times a year (**February, June, October**).

Focus : Education, Social, Economy, Management, and Culture.

LINK : <http://lppipublishing.com/index.php/ijessm>

**The Representation of Beauty Through Linguistics
Expression in the Film the Ugly Stepsister**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of beauty through linguistic expressions in the film *The Ugly Stepsister* (2025), directed by Emilie Blichfeldt. Beauty is considered a social and cultural construct influenced by societal values, media, and prevailing norms. In films, language functions as a medium for expressing attitudes, judgments, and perceptions of beauty. Therefore, this study aims to identify the linguistic expressions used to represent beauty and analyze how the characters use language to describe and evaluate beauty in the film. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a sociolinguistic approach. The data source consists of dialogues from *The Ugly Stepsister* that contain expressions related to beauty and physical appearance. The data were collected through watching the film, selecting relevant utterances, and transcribing the dialogues. The collected data were then analyzed using sociolinguistic theories to reveal the social meanings embedded in language use. The findings are expected to show that beauty is represented through various linguistic expressions, such as compliments, descriptions, comparisons, and evaluative judgments concerning physical appearance. These expressions reflect how beauty standards are socially constructed and communicated through language. The study is expected to contribute to the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in understanding the relationship between language, society, and the representation of beauty in media. Furthermore, the findings may serve as a reference for future researchers interested in language use and social representation in films.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received

11 June 2026

Revised

21 June 2026

Accepted

05 July 2026

Keywords

Corresponding

Author : 

Beauty Representation, Linguistic Expressions, Sociolinguistics.

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INTRODUCTION

Beauty is often understood as a physical attribute related to appearance; however, in academic discussions, beauty is increasingly viewed as a social and cultural construct shaped by society. Standards of beauty are not fixed or universal, but are influenced by cultural values, historical contexts, and social expectations. Naomi Wolf argues that beauty standards are socially constructed ideals that influence how individuals perceive attractiveness and self-worth in

society. These standards are continuously reinforced through social interaction, cultural discourse, and media representation. As a result, beauty is not merely a natural characteristic but a concept that is socially produced and maintained within particular cultural contexts.

The perception and evaluation of beauty are frequently communicated through language. Language allows individuals to express opinions, judgments, and attitudes toward physical appearance. Through descriptive words, compliments, comparisons, and criticisms, people construct meanings related to beauty in everyday communication. According to Edward Sapir, language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires through a system of symbols. This definition highlights that language functions as a medium through which individuals share meanings and interpret social concepts. Therefore, the language used to describe beauty can reveal how individuals and societies interpret and value physical appearance.

The scientific study of language is known as linguistics. Linguistics examines how language is structured, how it functions, and how meaning is conveyed through linguistic forms. According to George Yule, linguistics is the systematic study of human language that aims to describe and explain the nature of language and its patterns. Linguistic analysis enables researchers to understand how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning in communication. In relation to the concept of beauty, linguistic analysis can help identify how particular lexical choices and expressions are used to represent physical attractiveness and social evaluation.

However, language does not function independently from social context. The way language is used is influenced by social factors such as culture, identity, social relationships, and situational context. The study that examines the relationship between language and society is known as sociolinguistics. Janet Holmes defines sociolinguistics as the study of the relationship between language and society, focusing on how language reflects social meaning and social identity. Through sociolinguistic analysis, researchers can examine how linguistic choices represent social attitudes, beliefs, and cultural values within a community. In discussions about beauty, sociolinguistics provides a framework for understanding how language reflects social perceptions and standards related to physical appearance. In addition to everyday interaction, the construction of beauty is strongly influenced by media representation. Media plays a crucial role in shaping how people perceive social concepts, including beauty and attractiveness. Stuart Hall explains that representation is the process through which meaning is produced and communicated through language and

other symbolic systems. According to Hall, language does not simply reflect reality but actively constructs social meaning. Through representation, media texts contribute to shaping how audiences understand concepts such as identity, gender, and beauty. Therefore, analyzing language in media texts can reveal how certain ideas about beauty are constructed and communicated.

One form of media that strongly reflects social discourse is film. Films present narratives, characters, and dialogues that mirror social values and cultural ideologies. Dialogue in films represents spoken interaction between characters and often contains expressions that reveal attitudes, judgments, and social perceptions. Guy Cook states that discourse in media texts reflects language in use within a particular social context and carries cultural meanings and ideological messages. Therefore, analyzing language in film dialogue can provide insight into how social concepts such as beauty are expressed and interpreted within media narratives.

One film that presents a critical perspective on beauty standards is *The Ugly Stepsister* (2025), directed by Emilie Blichfeldt. The film offers a reinterpretation of the traditional Cinderella story by focusing on the character who is considered physically unattractive according to societal standards. Through the experiences of the main character, the film portrays how individuals are judged based on their physical appearance and how social pressure influences their desire to conform to beauty ideals. The dialogue between characters contains various linguistic expressions related to beauty, including compliments, comparisons, and negative judgments about appearance. These expressions provide important data for analyzing how beauty is represented through language in the film.

Although previous studies have discussed beauty representation in media, many of them focus mainly on visual representation or beauty standards in advertisements and social media. Studies that specifically analyze how beauty is represented through linguistic expressions in film dialogue are still limited, particularly from a sociolinguistic perspective. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how linguistic expressions in the dialogue of *The Ugly Stepsister* represent beauty and how characters use language to describe and evaluate physical appearance. By applying sociolinguistic theory and the concept of representation, this research seeks to reveal how language contributes to the construction of social perceptions of beauty within the film.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method with a sociolinguistic approach to analyze the representation of beauty through

linguistic expressions in the film *The Ugly Stepsister* (2025), directed by Emilie Blichfeldt. This approach was selected because the study focuses on understanding and interpreting the social meanings embedded in language use, particularly expressions related to beauty in the film dialogues.

The population of this study consisted of all dialogues in *The Ugly Stepsister*. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, focusing on dialogues containing words, phrases, sentences, or expressions related to beauty, physical appearance, evaluations of appearance, compliments, criticisms, comparisons, and other evaluative forms. The data consisted of the characters' utterances obtained from the film and its transcript that were relevant to the research focus.

The primary instrument of this study was the researcher as the human instrument, who was responsible for identifying, collecting, classifying, and analyzing the data. In addition, a data recording sheet was used to document the dialogues, scene contexts, speakers, types of linguistic expressions, and the social meanings conveyed in the utterances.

The research procedure involved repeatedly watching the film to gain a comprehensive understanding of the storyline and dialogue contexts. The researcher then transcribed the dialogues related to beauty, identified relevant data, categorized the data based on the types of linguistic expressions, and analyzed the social meanings using Holmes' (2013) sociolinguistic theory, Labov's (1972) theory of language variation, and Fairclough's (1995) **Critical Discourse Analysis**.

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The collected data were classified into categories such as compliments, descriptions, comparisons, and evaluative judgments. Each utterance was subsequently analyzed to reveal how language was used to represent beauty and how beauty standards were constructed within the film.

The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through theoretical triangulation by comparing findings from different theoretical perspectives employed in the study. In addition, repeated examinations of the data and interpretations were conducted to maintain analytical consistency. Since this study adopted a qualitative approach, no statistical tests were applied. The scope of the study was limited to dialogues containing representations of beauty in *The Ugly Stepsister* and did not include visual elements such as costumes, makeup, cinematography, or other technical aspects of the film.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the selected utterances, the researcher identified several linguistic expressions used to represent beauty in *The Ugly Stepsister* (2025). The data were categorized according to their communicative functions and social meanings. The complete classification of the linguistic expressions is presented

Table 1.
Classification of Linguistic Expressions Representing
Beauty in *The Ugly Stepsister* (2025)

No.	Utterance	Category
1	I'm ugly and fat	Negative Judgment
2	Look at the mirror, sweetheart	Beauty-Oriented Directive
3	You have a beautiful face, but your nose?	Compliment and Criticism
4	You're the ugly one	Negative Judgment
5	I didn't want you because you're ugly	Negative Judgment
6	Work hard because you're ugly	Negative Judgment
7	You are fat, not suitable to wear this dress	Negative Judgment
8	I will eat this tapeworm egg so that I always look skinny	Beauty-Oriented Directive
9	I don't fuck that girl	Rejection Expression
10	I want to be beautiful like Agnes	Comparative Expression
11	Why am I not as beautiful as Agnes?	Comparative Expression
12	You have to change your face	Beauty-Oriented Directive
13	The prince will definitely choose you, Agnes	Beauty Privilege Expression
14	Beauty is pain, Elvira	Beauty Ideology Expression
15	I will be more beautiful than you, Agnes	Comparative Expression
16	She has a charming smile	Compliment
17	She is prettier than anyone else in the room	Comparative Expression
18	You look beautiful tonight	Compliment
19	She is not even that beautiful	Negative Judgment
20	You don't look quite well, my girl	Negative Evaluation of Appearance

Table 2.
Frequency of Linguistic Expressions Representing Beauty

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Negative Judgment	7	35%
Beauty-Oriented Directive	3	15%
Comparative Expression	4	20%

Compliment / Compliment and Criticism	3	15%
Rejection Expression	1	5%
Beauty Privilege Expression	1	5%
Beauty Ideology Expression	1	5%
Total	20	100%

The findings reveal that beauty in *The Ugly Stepsister* is represented through seven types of linguistic expressions: negative judgments, beauty-oriented directives, comparative expressions, compliments, rejection expressions, beauty privilege expressions, and beauty ideology expressions. Among these categories, negative judgments are the most dominant, accounting for 35% of the total data. This indicates that beauty is frequently constructed through criticism and negative evaluations of physical appearance.

Comparative expressions account for 20% of the data and demonstrate that beauty is often measured by comparing oneself with others. Compliments and compliment-criticism expressions represent 15% of the data, highlighting positive evaluations of beauty while simultaneously revealing unrealistic expectations of physical perfection. Beauty-oriented directives also account for 15% of the data and reflect social pressure to alter one's appearance to meet beauty standards.

Additionally, beauty is represented through expressions associated with rejection, privilege, and ideology. The utterance "The prince will definitely choose you, Agnes" suggests that physical attractiveness provides social advantages, while "Beauty is pain, Elvira" reflects the belief that beauty requires sacrifice and suffering. Therefore, the findings indicate that beauty in the film is represented not only as a physical attribute but also as a social construct shaped by cultural values, social expectations, and dominant ideologies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of 20 utterances related to beauty in *The Ugly Stepsister* (2025), the study found that beauty is represented through seven types of linguistic expressions: negative judgments, beauty-oriented directives, comparative expressions, compliments, rejection expressions, beauty privilege expressions, and beauty ideology expressions. Negative judgments were identified as the most dominant category, indicating that beauty is frequently constructed through criticism and negative evaluations of physical appearance.

The findings further reveal that the characters use language to describe and evaluate beauty through comparison, praise, criticism, and directives for

physical transformation. Beauty is commonly associated with attractiveness, thinness, and conformity to socially accepted standards. In addition, the study found that beauty is linked to social advantages and opportunities, as reflected in beauty privilege expressions.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that beauty in *The Ugly Stepsister* is not represented merely as a physical attribute but as a social construct shaped by cultural values, social expectations, and dominant ideologies. Through linguistic expressions, the film portrays how beauty standards influence self-perception, interpersonal relationships, and social acceptance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Mrs. Tiara K. Pasaribu, M.Hum. and Mrs. Dr.Rosdiana Rajagukguk, M.Hum. as the first and second supervisors for their invaluable guidance, constructive suggestions, patience, and continuous support throughout the process of conducting this research and writing this article.

The author also extends heartfelt appreciation to Mrs. Prof.Sondang Manik, M.Hum. and Mr. Jubil Ezer Sihite, M.Hum. as the examiners for their valuable feedback, insightful comments, and recommendations that significantly contributed to the improvement of this study.

Finally, the author would like to thank all individuals who have provided support, encouragement, and assistance during the completion of this research.

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