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The Linguistic Construction and Subversion of Social Stereotypes in Ted Lasso: A Sociolinguistic Study

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ABSTRACT: Language plays an important role in constructing social stereotypes and shaping perceptions of social identity. This study examines the linguistic construction and contextual interpretation of social stereotypes in the American television series *Ted Lasso*, focusing on how linguistic expressions may reinforce or challenge established social judgments. Adopting a qualitative research design supported by descriptive quantitative findings, the study draws on a source corpus of thirty utterances from three seasons and conducts a contextual re-analysis of six selected extracts. The analytical framework integrates stereotype types, linguistic components, and sociolinguistic functions, with particular attention to stereotype reinforcement, subversion, and interpersonal reframing. The source findings indicate that group identity is the most frequent stereotype category (46.67%), while state verbs (30%) and interpretive action verbs (26.67%) are the dominant linguistic components. Social categorization is the most frequently reported sociolinguistic function (30%). The contextual analysis reveals that evaluative expressions, linguistic contrast, negation, repetition, and reformulation contribute to the reconsideration of established judgments. However, challenging individual expectations does not necessarily constitute the subversion of a group-based stereotype. The study concludes that interpreting stereotypical meanings requires attention to linguistic form, social categorization, and conversational context, highlighting the distinction between stereotype subversion and broader interpersonal reframing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a central role in shaping how individuals perceive, describe, and evaluate members of different social groups. Through everyday interaction, speakers communicate socially shared beliefs about identity, behaviour, and cultural background. Such beliefs may develop into stereotypes when particular characteristics are generalized to individuals based on their group membership (Schneider, 2005). From a sociolinguistic perspective, stereotypes are not merely personal assumptions; they are also constructed, communicated, and sometimes challenged through linguistic practices (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021; Beukeboom, 2025).

Television discourse provides a valuable context for investigating how language represents social identities and cultural expectations. Through dialogue, characters express judgments, negotiate relationships, and respond to assumptions about themselves and others. Linguistic choices, including verbs, adjectives, and nominal expressions, contribute to these representations, while their interpretation depends on the surrounding conversational context (Semin & Fiedler, 1988). The American television series *Ted Lasso*, which follows an American coach working within a British professional football club, offers examples of interactions shaped by cultural differences, group identities, and social expectations.

Although stereotyping has been widely examined as a social and linguistic phenomenon, understanding how stereotypical expressions are reinforced or challenged in television dialogue requires attention to both linguistic form and conversational context. A particular expression may reproduce an established assumption or encourage its reconsideration, depending on the speaker's communicative purpose and the social circumstances of the interaction. This relationship is especially relevant to *Ted Lasso*, where encounters between characters provide opportunities to examine the negotiation of social identities and established judgments (Schneider, 2005; Beukeboom, 2025).

The present study investigates the linguistic construction and subversion of social stereotypes in *Ted Lasso*, focusing on how linguistic expressions communicate social judgments and how conversational contexts influence their interpretation. It examines the linguistic resources used to represent individuals and groups, while distinguishing between the reinforcement of group-based stereotypes and the reconsideration of broader interpersonal judgments. In doing so, the study seeks to contribute to an understanding of how language participates in constructing, maintaining, and questioning stereotypical meanings in television discourse.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Stereotyping as a Social Phenomenon

Stereotyping is a social and cognitive process through which individuals attribute generalized characteristics to people based on their membership in particular groups. These assumptions may concern nationality, gender, age, language, occupation, or social status. Although social categorization helps individuals organize information about others, it can also promote oversimplified judgments that disregard individual differences (von Hippel & Hilton, 1996; Schneider, 2005). Such generalizations influence how people perceive members of other groups and interpret their behaviour.

Language plays an important role in constructing and maintaining these beliefs through everyday social interaction. Beukeboom (2025) explains how linguistic generalizations communicate stereotypical assumptions beyond specific individuals and situations. Similarly, Fiske et al. (2007) demonstrate the importance of social evaluations, particularly perceptions of warmth and competence, in shaping judgments about different groups. These perspectives indicate that stereotypes are not simply individual beliefs but socially communicated representations that influence expectations and interpersonal relationships.

Nevertheless, the meaning and function of stereotypical expressions depend on the social context in which they occur. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021) emphasize the relationship between linguistic practices and the social circumstances of communication. An expression may reinforce an established assumption or invite its reconsideration depending on the participants, their relationships, and the surrounding discourse. In *Ted Lasso*, interactions involving cultural differences and social identities provide opportunities to examine how stereotypical judgments are communicated and potentially challenged through language.

2.2 Language and Social Identity

Language plays a central role in constructing and expressing social identity, allowing individuals to communicate their cultural backgrounds, social relationships, and group affiliations. Linguistic variation reflects differences in social position and cultural belonging, while particular speech patterns may become associated with specific communities (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021; Labov, 1972). As Hall-Lew et al. (2021) discuss, linguistic forms also carry social meanings that influence how speakers are perceived and evaluated. Consequently, language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a resource through which social identities are recognized and interpreted.

Social identity involves distinctions between groups to which individuals belong and those perceived as different. Such distinctions may contribute to stereotyping when shared characteristics are attributed to people primarily because of their group membership (Schneider, 2005). Fiske et al. (2007) further explain how social perceptions, particularly judgments concerning warmth and competence, shape evaluations of different groups. Linguistic expressions may therefore communicate social affiliation, establish group boundaries, or challenge assumptions associated with particular identities.

In *Ted Lasso*, interactions between American and British characters illustrate how cultural expectations and social identities are negotiated through language. Differences in linguistic behaviour and interpersonal communication provide opportunities for characters to express belonging, evaluate others, and reconsider established assumptions. Examining these exchanges within

their conversational contexts helps explain how language contributes to constructing social identity and potentially reinforcing or challenging stereotypical judgments.

2.3 Linguistic Construction of Stereotypes

Language contributes to the construction and transmission of stereotypes through linguistic choices that associate individuals and social groups with particular characteristics, behaviours, or social roles. Such representations may extend judgments beyond individual experiences and reinforce generalized assumptions about group members (Beukeboom, 2025). The linguistic categories examined by Semin and Fiedler (1988) provide a framework for understanding how descriptions of behaviour differ in their levels of abstraction and evaluative meaning.

This framework distinguishes between descriptive action verbs, interpretive action verbs, state verbs, adjectives, and noun categories. Descriptive action verbs refer to observable actions within specific situations, whereas interpretive action verbs introduce greater evaluation by characterizing behaviour according to the speaker's interpretation. State verbs express psychological states, attitudes, or relationships that may be perceived as relatively enduring characteristics. These distinctions are important because linguistic abstraction can influence whether behaviour is interpreted as a temporary action or as evidence of a more stable personal disposition (Semin & Fiedler, 1988).

Adjectives and noun categories also contribute to the linguistic representation of individuals and groups. Adjectives attribute evaluative qualities, while noun categories identify people through social labels that may emphasize group membership over individual differences. Carnaghi et al. (2008) demonstrate the significance of nouns and adjectives in shaping person perception, while Schneider (2005) explains how social categorization contributes to the development of generalized beliefs about groups. Nevertheless, the presence of an adjective or category label does not necessarily indicate stereotyping unless the expression communicates an assumption associated with social group membership.

In *Ted Lasso*, characters employ linguistic descriptions, evaluations, and social labels when interpreting individuals and their relationships. Examining these expressions through Semin and Fiedler's (1988) framework, together with their conversational contexts, provides a basis for identifying how stereotypical meanings are constructed and whether particular utterances reinforce or challenge established social assumptions.

2.4 Reinforcement and Subversion of Stereotypes

Stereotypes are reinforced when linguistic expressions reproduce generalized assumptions about members of particular social groups. Such representations may involve evaluative descriptions, categorical labels, or statements that attribute specific characteristics and behaviours to group membership. Schneider (2005) discusses how social categorization shapes perceptions of others, while Beukeboom (2025) highlights the role of linguistic generalization in maintaining stereotypical beliefs. Repeated representations may consequently strengthen established social expectations and influence how individuals interpret group differences.

Stereotype subversion, by contrast, involves questioning or challenging assumptions associated with particular social categories. This may occur through explicit rejection, alternative descriptions, or contextual reinterpretation that exposes the limitations of an established generalization. Deutschmann and Steinvall (2020) examine how stereotypes can be evoked and challenged through linguistic practices. However, challenging an individual's behaviour or expressing a positive judgment does not necessarily constitute stereotype subversion unless a group-based assumption is being reconsidered.

The interpretation of reinforcement and subversion also depends on the sociolinguistic functions of stereotypical expressions. Ashmore and Del Boca (1994) and Schneider (2005) discuss the relationship between stereotyping, social categorization, and group identity, providing a basis for understanding how linguistic representations contribute to interpersonal relationships and social boundaries. Humour may also reproduce familiar stereotypes or expose their limitations; its function depends on the speaker's stance, the target of the expression, and the surrounding interaction rather than on humorous wording alone.

In *Ted Lasso*, interactions involving cultural differences, professional expectations, and social identities provide opportunities to examine how stereotypical assumptions are maintained or questioned through dialogue. The present study therefore distinguishes between the reinforcement of group-based generalizations, their contextual subversion, and the reconsideration of broader interpersonal judgments. This distinction offers a basis for examining how linguistic forms and conversational contexts contribute to the negotiation of stereotypical meanings.

3. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a qualitative research design supported by descriptive quantitative findings from the original corpus to examine the linguistic construction and subversion of social stereotypes in *Ted Lasso*. It draws on thirty selected utterances documented in the underlying master's thesis, comprising ten utterances from each of the series' first three seasons. The qualitative analysis focuses on how linguistic expressions communicate stereotypical assumptions and how conversational contexts may reinforce, challenge, or reinterpret these judgments. The quantitative findings provide background information on the distribution of stereotype types, linguistic components, and sociolinguistic functions within the source corpus (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The analytical approach builds on the framework adopted in the original study, incorporating Labov's (1972) variation theory, the social stereotyping perspectives discussed by Fiske et al. (2007), and Semin and Fiedler's (1988) classification of linguistic categories. The latter distinguishes descriptive action verbs, interpretive action verbs, state verbs, adjectives, and noun categories. The sociolinguistic functions of the expressions are examined with reference to Ashmore and Del Boca (1994) and Schneider (2005), particularly in relation to social categorization, group identity, and interpersonal evaluation.

The present analysis extends this framework by considering whether selected utterances reinforce established group-based assumptions, challenge such assumptions, or reconsider broader interpersonal judgments. Each extract is interpreted in relation to its linguistic form, the speaker's social position, and the surrounding conversational context. This contextual approach distinguishes the qualitative interpretations developed in the present article from the descriptive frequencies reported in the original study, without treating those earlier results as newly generated findings.

3.2 Data Selection

The data for this study are derived from the American television series *Ted Lasso*, which portrays interactions among characters from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. The series was selected for its representation of American–British cultural differences, social identities, and interpersonal expectations, providing a relevant context for examining linguistic stereotyping (Duepmeier, 2021). Such interactions offer opportunities to investigate how language reflects social assumptions and contributes to the negotiation of cultural identities.

The source corpus comprises thirty utterances drawn from the first three seasons of *Ted Lasso* (2020, 2021, and 2023), with ten utterances representing each season. As documented in the original master's thesis (Obaid, 2026), these expressions were identified through repeated viewing and selected for their relevance to social stereotyping. The corpus includes utterances produced primarily by Ted Lasso, alongside contributions from other characters. The original selection was purposive, focusing on expressions associated with social identities, personal characteristics, cultural differences, and interpersonal behaviour rather than complete episode transcripts.

The present study draws on six extracts from this corpus for detailed contextual re-analysis. These extracts were selected to examine different linguistic strategies through which established assumptions may be reinforced, questioned, or reinterpreted. The analysis considers their linguistic forms and reported conversational contexts, distinguishing group-based stereotyping from broader interpersonal judgments. Accordingly, the findings are limited to the selected material and are not intended to represent the frequency of stereotyping throughout the entire series.

3.3 Analytical Framework

The present study employs the eclectic analytical framework adopted in the source thesis to examine the relationship between linguistic expressions, social stereotypes, and their communicative functions in *Ted Lasso*. The framework integrates three analytical levels informed by Labov's (1972) variation theory, the social perception perspectives of Fiske et al. (2007), the linguistic categories proposed by Semin and Fiedler (1988), and the approaches to stereotyping discussed by Ashmore and Del Boca (1994) and Schneider (2005).

The first level identifies stereotype types, including gender, race, age, language, physical characteristics, socioeconomic status, occupation, and group identity, following the operational categories employed in the source study (Obaid, 2026). These categories are examined in relation to social variation and group-based evaluations. The second level investigates linguistic

components through Semin and Fiedler's (1988) classification of descriptive action verbs, interpretive action verbs, state verbs, adjectives, and noun categories, identifying how speakers describe behaviour and attribute characteristics to individuals or groups.

The third level examines the sociolinguistic functions of stereotypical expressions, drawing on Ashmore and Del Boca (1994) and Schneider (2005). These functions include social categorization, personal classification, group identity and belonging, justification and self-esteem, humour, emotional regulation, power and status, and marginalization. This level considers how linguistic expressions contribute to social relationships, identity construction, and interpersonal evaluation within particular conversational contexts.

Building on these three levels, the present study introduces a contextual distinction between stereotype reinforcement, stereotype subversion, and broader interpersonal reframing. Reinforcement occurs when an utterance reproduces a generalized assumption about a social group, whereas subversion involves questioning or challenging such an assumption. Interpersonal reframing refers to the reconsideration of an individual judgment without clear evidence of group-based stereotyping. This additional analytical distinction allows the selected extracts to be interpreted according to both their linguistic forms and their conversational contexts, without treating every positive evaluation or challenged expectation as stereotype subversion.

3.4 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis examines six selected extracts from *Ted Lasso* to investigate how linguistic expressions construct, reinforce, or challenge social stereotypes. Each extract is examined according to its stereotype type, linguistic component, and sociolinguistic function, followed by a contextual interpretation of reinforcement, subversion, or interpersonal reframing. Particular attention is given to the relationship between linguistic choices, social assumptions, and the conversational circumstances in which the utterances occur.

Extract 1: Gender Stereotypes and the Representation of Female Authority

Season One, Episode 3

Ted Lasso describes Rebecca as "strong, confident and powerful" and compares her strength with that of Michelle Obama. The utterance is associated with **gender stereotyping**, while its primary linguistic components are the evaluative adjectives used to characterize Rebecca's confidence and authority. According to Semin and Fiedler (1988), adjectives attribute qualities to individuals that may be interpreted as relatively stable personal characteristics. In this context, the positive descriptions emphasize Rebecca's leadership and social position, reflecting the sociolinguistic function of **expressing power and status** (Schneider, 2005).

From the perspective of stereotype subversion, the utterance may challenge traditional assumptions that associate authority and leadership predominantly with men. Its positive representation of female competence is relevant to socially constructed gender expectations (Lindsey, 2015). However, the expression does not explicitly reject a previously stated gender stereotype. Therefore, it is more accurately interpreted as a **potential challenge to conventional gender expectations**, rather than conclusive evidence of stereotype subversion. This distinction demonstrates the importance of contextual interpretation when examining how positive evaluations may question established social assumptions.

Extract 2: Challenging Social Judgment Through Linguistic Contrast

Season One, Episode 8

Ted Lasso uses the expression "Be curious, not judgmental" while reflecting on being underestimated by others. The utterance employs two contrasting adjectives, "curious" and "judgmental," to distinguish between openness to understanding others and the tendency to form premature judgments. The imperative construction, reinforced by negation, presents curiosity as the preferred social attitude while rejecting judgment based on insufficient knowledge. Within the analytical framework, the principal linguistic components are **adjectives**, and the expression performs a sociolinguistic function of **positive evaluation and encouragement**, consistent with its interpretation in the source thesis (Obaid, 2026).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the contrast challenges the assumptions through which individuals evaluate others before understanding their circumstances. Schneider (2005) explains how social categorization can encourage generalized perceptions, while Banaji and Greenwald (2013) discuss the influence of implicit assumptions on social judgments. In this context, the

utterance questions premature evaluation and promotes a more open approach to interpersonal communication. However, although the expression challenges prejudgment, it does not explicitly identify a particular social group or reject a specific group-based generalization. It is therefore best interpreted as **a challenge to stereotypical thinking and premature social judgment**, rather than conclusive evidence of the subversion of a particular social stereotype.

Extract 3: Challenging Established Expectations Through Positive Belief

Season One, Episode 7

Ted Lasso expresses his commitment to optimism through the statement "I believe in hope. I believe in 'believe'," challenging the team's pessimistic attitude towards uncertain outcomes. In the source thesis, the utterance is classified under **Other Stereotypes**, particularly beliefs associated with positivity and faith, while its principal linguistic component is the **state verb** "believe" (Obaid, 2026). According to Semin and Fiedler (1988), state verbs express psychological states and attitudes. The repetition of "believe" emphasizes Ted's personal conviction and presents optimism as an alternative to the negative expectations surrounding the team's performance.

The utterance performs a sociolinguistic function associated with **expressing power and status**, understood here as the speaker's attempt to influence collective attitudes through his leadership rather than asserting institutional authority. By rejecting pessimism, Ted encourages the team to reconsider its expectations and adopt a more positive perspective. Nevertheless, the expression does not attribute generalized characteristics to members of a particular social group. It is therefore more accurately interpreted as **the subversion of a negative collective expectation rather than a direct challenge to a social stereotype**. This distinction is consistent with Schneider's (2005) discussion of stereotyping as a process involving generalized perceptions associated with social categories.

Extract 4: The Linguistic Construction of Collective Identity

Season Two, Episode 8

Ted Lasso encourages collective responsibility through the expression "turn that 'me' into 'us'," contrasting individual achievement with group belonging. The opposition between the singular pronoun "me" and the plural pronoun "us" represents a shift from individual-centred identity towards collective participation. In the source thesis, the utterance is classified under **Group Identity**, with an **interpretive action verb** identified as its linguistic component (Obaid, 2026). The verbal construction "turn ... into" expresses a metaphorical transformation of personal orientation rather than a literal action. Within the sociolinguistic framework, this linguistic contrast reflects the function of **Group Identity and Belonging**, emphasizing the importance of cooperation and shared responsibility.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the utterance illustrates how language can negotiate the relationship between personal identity and group membership. Schneider (2005) discusses the significance of social categorization in shaping perceptions of group belonging, while Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021) emphasize the relationship between linguistic practices and social identities. By presenting collective participation as an alternative to individual self-interest, Ted challenges an individualistic orientation within the team. However, the statement does not explicitly reject a generalized belief about a particular social group. It is therefore more accurately interpreted as **the reframing of individual identity towards collective belonging**, rather than conclusive evidence of stereotype subversion.

Extract 5: Reconsidering Social Judgment and Personal Identity

Season Three, Episode 11

During a conversation with Coach Beard, Ted Lasso questions the tendency to evaluate individuals solely through their past mistakes, expressing the hope that people will be judged not by their "weakest moments" but by the strength they demonstrate when given a second chance. In the source thesis, the utterance is associated with **Social Identity**, while its linguistic components include **state verbs and interpretive action verbs** (Obaid, 2026). The state verb "hope" expresses the speaker's attitude, whereas the evaluative construction involving judgment emphasizes the distinction between temporary behaviour and enduring personal identity. The utterance performs a sociolinguistic function of **Social Categorization** by questioning the criteria through which individuals are classified and evaluated (Schneider, 2005).

From the perspective of stereotype subversion, the contrast between "weakest moments" and the possibility of a second chance challenges the assumption that past misconduct permanently defines an individual's character. Such evaluations are relevant to the relationship between social categorization and person perception (von Hippel & Hilton, 1996). However, the utterance does not explicitly attribute characteristics to members of a particular social group. It is therefore more accurately interpreted as **the reconsideration of fixed personal judgments rather than direct evidence of group-based stereotype subversion**. This distinction illustrates how evaluative language may encourage more flexible interpretations of individual identity without necessarily challenging a specific social stereotype.

Extract 6: Reframing Negative Social Judgments Through Linguistic Contrast

Season Three, Episode 12

Ted Lasso employs the expression "You're not abandoning me, you're just following your heart" to reinterpret emotional separation through contrasting evaluations. In the source thesis, the utterance is classified under **Other Stereotypes**, with linguistic components associated with descriptive and interpretive action verbs (Obaid, 2026). The negative construction "not abandoning" rejects an accusation of personal rejection, while "following your heart" introduces an alternative interpretation emphasizing individual choice. Drawing on Semin and Fiedler's (1988) distinction between descriptive and interpretive linguistic categories, the expression illustrates how different descriptions of the same behaviour can influence its social evaluation.

The sociolinguistic function of the utterance concerns **interpersonal judgment and personal classification**, as the speaker replaces a negative characterization with a more supportive explanation. Such linguistic reformulation reflects the relationship between language and social interaction discussed by Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021). However, although the statement challenges an established interpretation of separation, it does not identify a social group or reject a generalized assumption about its members. It is therefore best understood as **interpersonal reframing rather than direct stereotype subversion**. The extract demonstrates how negation and reformulation can modify social judgments without necessarily challenging a group-based stereotype.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Linguistic Construction Patterns

The descriptive findings from the original corpus of thirty utterances reveal several patterns in the linguistic representation of social stereotypes in Ted Lasso. Group Identity is the most frequently identified stereotype category, accounting for 14 occurrences (46.67%), followed by Physical Characteristics with seven occurrences (23.33%). These findings highlight the prominence of group belonging and personal evaluation within the selected corpus, although they do not establish the frequency of these phenomena throughout the series (Obaid, 2026).

The distribution of linguistic components, presented in Table 1, shows that state verbs are the most frequent category, with nine occurrences (30%), followed by interpretive action verbs with eight (26.67%) and descriptive action verbs with six (20%). Adjectives account for four occurrences (13.33%), while noun categories appear three times (10%). Together, state verbs and interpretive action verbs represent 56.67% of the classified expressions, suggesting that attitudes, psychological states, and interpretations of behaviour are particularly prominent in the selected data.

Table 1. Distribution of Linguistic Components in the Source Corpus

Linguistic component	Frequency	Percentage
State Verb	9	30.00%
Interpretive Action Verb	8	26.67%
Descriptive Action Verb	6	20.00%
Adjective	4	13.33%
Noun Category	3	10.00%
Total	30	100%

These patterns are consistent with the analytical distinction between linguistic descriptions of observable actions and more abstract representations of psychological states and personal characteristics (Semin & Fiedler, 1988). Nevertheless, linguistic abstraction alone does not establish the presence of a social stereotype. As illustrated by the six qualitatively examined extracts, determining whether an expression reinforces or challenges a group-based assumption requires consideration of its conversational context. Accordingly, the quantitative distributions describe the characteristics of the source corpus, while the contextual re-analysis clarifies the different social meanings these expressions may convey.

4.2 Reinforcement and Subversion in Context

The contextual analysis of the six extracts indicates that linguistic forms alone do not determine whether an utterance reinforces or challenges a social stereotype. Their communicative significance depends on the assumptions being addressed and the surrounding interaction. Although evaluative adjectives, state verbs, linguistic contrasts, and negation may express alternative social perspectives, their interpretation requires distinguishing group-based generalizations from individual judgments (Schneider, 2005; Beukeboom, 2025).

The representation of Rebecca's authority provides the clearest potential challenge to a group-based gender expectation. By describing her as strong, confident, and powerful, Ted presents female leadership positively, potentially questioning conventional associations between authority and masculinity. Similarly, the contrast between curiosity and judgment challenges premature evaluation, although it does not identify a specific stereotyped group. These examples demonstrate different forms of resistance to established assumptions: one concerns gender-related expectations, while the other questions the broader practice of judging others without sufficient knowledge.

The remaining extracts primarily illustrate the reconsideration of collective or interpersonal expectations. Ted's repeated expression of belief challenges pessimism, while the contrast between "me" and "us" promotes collective identity over individual self-interest. Likewise, the discussion of second chances questions fixed judgments based on past mistakes, and the reformulation of emotional separation replaces an accusatory interpretation with one emphasizing personal autonomy. These utterances illustrate how repetition, contrast, and negation may reshape social evaluations, but they do not independently establish the rejection of group-based stereotypes.

Taken together, the findings suggest that **stereotype subversion and interpersonal reframing are related but analytically distinct processes**. A statement challenges a social stereotype when it questions a generalization associated with group membership, whereas interpersonal reframing modifies the interpretation of an individual's behaviour or circumstances. The six extracts provide clearer evidence of challenges to expectations and personal judgments than of explicit stereotype reinforcement or definitive group-based subversion. This distinction highlights the importance of contextual analysis in preventing ordinary positive evaluations or alternative interpretations from being misclassified as stereotype subversion.

4.3 Sociolinguistic Implications

The findings highlight the relationship between linguistic expression, social categorization, and identity construction in *Ted Lasso*. Group Identity represents the most frequently identified stereotype category in the source corpus, accounting for 14 of the 30 utterances (46.67%). Social Categorization is also the most frequently reported sociolinguistic function, with nine occurrences, followed by Justification and Self-Esteem (five), Expressing Power or Status (three), and Group Identity and Belonging (three) (Obaid, 2026). These descriptive patterns indicate the relevance of social belonging, interpersonal evaluation, and identity negotiation within the selected material.

The contextual analysis further suggests that linguistic expressions may serve different social purposes depending on the assumptions they communicate. Social categorization can contribute to stereotype reinforcement when fixed characteristics are attributed to group members, but such assumptions may also be questioned through alternative evaluations or conversational reformulation (Schneider, 2005; Beukeboom, 2025). Nevertheless, positive descriptions, expressions of encouragement, and challenges to individual judgments should not automatically be interpreted as stereotype subversion without evidence of a relevant group-based generalization.

These findings emphasize the importance of examining linguistic stereotyping through both linguistic form and conversational context. While the descriptive frequencies identify recurring categories and functions within the source corpus, the six selected extracts illustrate how social expectations and interpersonal judgments may be negotiated through evaluation, contrast, negation,

and reformulation. The study therefore highlights the value of distinguishing **group-based stereotype subversion** from **broader interpersonal reframing** when interpreting social meanings in television discourse.

Extract	Linguistic feature	Contextual interpretation
1	Evaluative adjectives	Challenges gender-related expectations
2	Adjectival contrast and negation	Rejects premature social judgment
3	Repeated state verb	Challenges a negative expectation
4	Pronoun contrast	Reframes individual and collective identity
5	Evaluative expressions	Questions fixed judgments about individuals
6	Negation and reformulation	Reinterprets interpersonal behaviour

Table 2. Proposed Contextual Interpretation of the Selected Extracts

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the linguistic construction and contextual interpretation of social stereotypes in *Ted Lasso*, drawing on a source corpus of thirty utterances and a qualitative re-analysis of six selected extracts. The descriptive findings indicate that Group Identity was the most frequent stereotype category (46.67%), while state verbs (30%) and interpretive action verbs (26.67%) were the most common linguistic components. Social Categorization was also the most frequently reported sociolinguistic function. These patterns highlight the importance of group belonging, social evaluation, and linguistic choices in the selected discourse.

The contextual analysis demonstrated that evaluative adjectives, linguistic contrast, repetition, negation, and reformulation may contribute to the reconsideration of established judgments. However, the findings also revealed an important distinction between **stereotype subversion** and **interpersonal reframing**. While the positive representation of female authority may challenge conventional gender expectations, other extracts primarily question premature judgments, collective pessimism, individualistic attitudes, or fixed interpretations of personal behaviour. Thus, challenging a negative expectation does not necessarily constitute the subversion of a group-based stereotype.

The study contributes to sociolinguistic analysis by emphasizing the need to interpret stereotypical meanings through the relationship between linguistic form, social categorization, and conversational context rather than through isolated expressions alone. Nevertheless, its conclusions are limited to the selected corpus and six contextual extracts, which cannot represent all instances of stereotyping throughout the series. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of distinguishing group-based generalizations from broader interpersonal evaluations when examining how television dialogue constructs and challenges social meanings.

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