

## How is the Elderly Minority Discursively Marginalized? A Multimodal Analysis of Ageism in *The Intern* (2015)

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### ABSTRACT

Media representations significantly shape societal perceptions of aging, often marginalizing older adults within youth-centric environments. Although ageism is widely discussed in media studies, there remains a lack of research applying a systemic functional multimodal framework to examine how implicit age-based biases are discursively constructed and challenged in popular cinema. To address this gap, this study investigates how Ageism is represented both linguistically and visually in the film *The Intern* (2015). The objective is to uncover how age-based stereotypes and marginalization are constructed through multimodal discourse. Using a qualitative descriptive design, the study adopts Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) as the main analytical frameworks. A total of 41 linguistic clauses and 37 visual data shots were selected from eight key scenes. The analysis of the linguistic data focused on transitivity and mood, while the visual data were interpreted using Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar. Findings show that material, relational, and mental processes are dominant in representing Ageism, with younger characters often positioned as active agents and the elderly as passive or outdated figures. Declarative and interrogative moods reveal implicit judgments and doubts toward older individuals. Visually, Ageism is represented through marginal framing, color contrast, and symbolic positioning that reinforces social distance. While the film initially depicts ageist perspectives, it gradually subverts them by portraying the elderly character as competent, valuable, and eventually accepted in a modern workplace. This study is limited to selected scenes and does not include other semiotic elements such as background music or paralinguistic features. Future research could expand the scope by incorporating these aspects. In conclusion, the film offers both a critique and a reinforcement of ageist ideologies, inviting reflection on how older individuals are perceived and valued in contemporary media and workplace culture.

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### INTRODUCTION

Ageism or age discrimination is a form of discrimination that is rarely discussed. According to Butler (1996), Ageism is a form of prejudice and discrimination against individuals based on their age. The term not only describes overt acts of exclusion or prejudice against older individuals, but also subtle social and linguistic practices that

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marginalise them. Ageism continues to evolve and is often represented and reproduced through media and film. Movie is also one of the medias that is powerful enough to enact discourse (Fairclough, 2001, p.41). These representations can reinforce societal assumptions that equate youth with competence and innovation, while portraying older adults as outdated or irrelevant.

Ageism manifests extensively across various media platforms, continuously shaping public perception and perpetuating negative narratives about older adults. According to Camacho-Markina and Santos-Diez (2025), the media frequently makes older adults invisible and uses stigmatizing terms to refer to this group. This stigmatization is deeply embedded in everyday digital and visual culture; for instance, Lee and Hoh (2021) found that internet memes often express ageism through themes of infantilization, barbarization, and fetishization. Furthermore, ageism frequently intersects with sexism, placing a double standard on older individuals, particularly women. Kenalemang (2021) highlights that cosmetic advertisements pathologize aging, pushing neo-liberal ideas that older women must hide outward signs of aging to remain visible and attractive. This distortion is further amplified online, as Guilbeault, Delecourt, and Desikan (2025) demonstrated that women are systematically represented as younger than men across internet images and language models. Even in cinema, Chonody, Perez, and Fillmore (2024) noted that while films sometimes show positive stereotypes of "successful aging," they continue to underrepresent women, people of color, and the LGBTQ+ community, substantiating ongoing marginalization.

Exploring ageism within media is compelling because these representations have profound real-world consequences on societal attitudes and the lived experiences of older individuals. Rothermund and de Paula Couto (2023) explain that age stereotypes are acquired early in life and can act as self-fulfilling prophecies that actively shape the actual aging process. When media consistently frames aging negatively, it can limit the options available to older adults; for example, Fraser et al. (2016) found that media stereotypes regarding age-related health conditions can reduce help-seeking behaviors and the use of assistive devices. Additionally, society imposes prescriptive views on older adults, such as expectations of disengagement or constant activation, which, according to de Paula Couto and Rothermund (2022), can be misused to justify the exclusion of older people. Because films are highly effective mediums for reflecting and constructing the reality of ageism, as observed by Ishaq, Abidin, and Kurniansyah (2022), analyzing cinematic texts provides crucial insights. Therefore, unpacking how popular media constructs ageism is an essential step toward challenging these stereotypes and moving toward a more realistic, plural, and inclusive representation of older adults in society.

Linguistic and multimodal studies are increasingly examining how Ageism is embedded in language and visual communication. As in the first study conducted by Xu (2017). This research examines how online media, particularly social media platforms and websites represent older individuals and how these representations reinforce or challenge ageist stereotypes. This research uses a critical discourse analysis approach to study various forms of representations of older people that appear in news articles, advertisements, and popular social media platforms. One of the main findings in this study is that although there are more positive representations of older people on some platforms, most of these representations are still stuck on Ageism stereotypes. The research shows that in many cases, older people are portrayed as weak, irrelevant, or functioning only in the context of welfare or care.

Previous research has extensively explored ageism as a reflection of broader cultural norms and societal values. Chonody, Perez, and Fillmore (2024) state that the examination of ageism and sexism in films is crucial because it reveals significant aspects of a society's cultural norms and values, often showing how media perpetuates neoliberal pressures to maintain youthful health standards. The cultural dimensions of ageism are complex and deeply ingrained in societal beliefs, which is why Kornadt, de Paula Couto, and Rothermund (2022) emphasize the importance of cross-cultural research. They argue that cultural values and socio-ecological variables significantly influence how different societies view older persons and the aging process itself. Within literary and dramatic contexts, scholars are increasingly challenging these dominant cultural narratives. For instance, Shevchenko-Hotsuliak and Casado-Gual (2025) highlight the necessity of searching for alternative cultural narratives and conceptualizations of later life that can help reconstruct the value of aging and intergenerational relationships. Similarly, Miquel-Baldellou (2024) discusses how contemporary portrayals in fiction can challenge classical paradigms of dominant identities, pushing for an evolution in cultural representations. Together, these studies underscore that ageism is a deeply cultural phenomenon constructed and contested through various media forms. While systematic reviews by Camacho-Markina and Santos-Diez (2025) provide valuable diagnoses of media ageism, they point out that most existing research comes from sociology, relies on broad discourse analysis, and often fails to examine the specific multimodal elements or images accompanying the texts. Similarly, although Kenalemang (2021) utilized Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) to expose visual ageism, her focus was primarily limited to cosmetic advertisements rather than the complex narrative and workplace dynamics found in feature films.

However, despite this growing body of research, there is still a lack of studies that apply a systemic functional and multimodal framework to examine Ageism in popular media texts, especially in film. To address this gap, this study offers novelty by applying both Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar (2006) to systematically dissect the film *The Intern* (2015). By integrating linguistic and visual analysis, this research fills the gap by uncovering exactly how implicit age-related biases and the marginalization of the elderly minority are discursively constructed, preserved, and subverted within the cultural context of a modern, youth-centric workplace. This study investigates the film *The Intern* (2015) directed by Nancy Meyers, which presents the story of a 70-year-old man who becomes an intern at an e-commerce company. While the film appears to challenge age stereotypes on the surface, a deeper examination of the film may reveal underlying biases in both the dialogue and visual depiction of the characters. This research draws on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), and Visual Grammar to explore how Ageism is represented linguistically and visually in certain scenes in the film.

This research seeks to answer the question of how are Ageism practices represented through linguistic and visual elements in the film *The Intern* (2015)? By applying a multimodal discourse approach to the film, this research aims to contribute to the emerging field of critical discourse analysis and media studies by clarifying how implicit age-related biases are constructed, perpetuated, or even subverted through cinematic narratives. In doing so, it also adds to the understanding of how language and images function together to shape social ideologies in contemporary media.

## METHOD

This research was conducted using qualitative methods because it deals with words or images and non-numerical data. Peshkin (1993) explains the objectives of qualitative research are: description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation. This approach is considered appropriate because this research aims to describe and interpret the linguistic and visual meanings in the film *The Intern* that reflect the practice of Ageism. In addition, qualitative methods make it possible to understand the social context and ideology implied in the interactions between characters in more depth.

The data of this study are linguistic and visual data. The documentary method was used to collect data because all data were obtained through screenshots from the Netflix website (Descombe, 2010, p.225). The main data in this study are linguistic and visual data from some selected scenes in the film *The Intern* (2015). Furthermore, Halliday and Hassan (1989) Generic Structure was applied to find the structure of the film. The narrative structure of the film is presented, GS: EX^RA^CX^FA^DE, GS: Generic Structure, EX: Exposition, RA: Rising Action, CX: Climax, FA: Falling Action, DE: Denouement. After finding the structure of the film, Table 1 is the data collected using in this research.

Table 1 The clauses and shots data

Scene	Linguistic data (Clauses)	Visual data (Shots)	Time code	Narrative
Cameron scene	7	5	11.20	Exposition
Davis scene	4	3	13.30	Exposition
Break 1 scene	-	4	16.20	Rising action
Becky scene	11	8	16.45	Rising action
Jules scene	14	7	17.50	Climax
Break 2 scene	-	4	20.10	Falling action
Hotel room scene	3	2	1.40.23	Falling action
Yoga scene	2	4	1.55.53	Denouement
Total	41	37		78

After collecting the data, the visual and linguistic data processed as follows; first, Classifying the linguistic and visual data based on three major aspects; prejudicial attitudes toward the aged, discriminatory practices against older people, institutional practices and guidelines that often perpetuate stereotypes for older people. Second, Analyzing the linguistic data that has been broken down into clauses using Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) transitivity and mood analysis. To analyze the data, analyzing visual data using representational, interactive, and compositional meaning by Kress T., and Leeuwen (2006), Interpreting the interplay between linguistic and visual data and the relationship using Ageism by Butler (1980) and drawing the conclusion from all analysis and findings.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Linguistic analysis was conducted using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, specifically the experiential metafunction through the transitivity system, and the interpersonal metafunction through the mood system. Meanwhile, visual analysis uses Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar theory (2006), which includes three main aspects: representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning. The analysed data is taken from eight selected scenes that show intergenerational interactions, particularly between an elderly character (Ben) and younger characters in the work environment. Through this approach, this chapter not only presents the results of the classification and distribution of types of process and mood but also discusses how visual elements such as angle, camera distance, character placement, and gesture build social meaning in the film narrative. The results of the analysis of these two aspects are then linked to Robert N. Butler's theory of Ageism to interpret the implied and explicit forms of age discrimination in the film.

### Findings

#### The Result of Transitivity Analysis of the Character in *The Intern*

To reveal the ideational meanings in the dialogues of the characters of the film *The Intern*, this analysis uses the Transitivity system of Systemic Functional Linguistics by Halliday's theory. Table 2 presents the distribution of process types found in the eight selected scenes, these scenes were analysed by process type: material, mental, relational, verbal, existential, and behavioural. symbol "S1-S8" means the order of the selected scenes in the film.

Table 2 Transitivity analysis of process in selected scenes in *The Intern*

Process	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	Total
Material	4	2	-	2	6	-	-	1	15
Mental	2	1	-	2	2	-	2	-	7
Relational	1	1	-	7	4	-	-	1	14
Verbal	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3
Existential	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Behavioral	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7	4	-	11	14	-	3	2	41

From the total of 41 clauses analysed, the most dominant process is material (15 clauses), followed by relational (14 clauses), and mental (7 clauses). Verbal processes only appeared 3 times, while existential and behavioural processes were not found in the data. The findings suggest that interactions in the film are driven by actions and depictions of identity, interspersed with cognitive and affective expressions from the characters.

#### The Result of Mood Analysis of the Character in *The Intern*

The mood analysis in this study aims to reveal the interpersonal meaning contained in the speech of the characters in the film *The Intern*. Table 3 shows the distribution of mood types in eight scene excerpts, which include declarative, interrogative, and imperative moods.

Table 3 Mood analysis in selected scenes in *The Intern*

Mood	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	Total
Declarative	1	4	-	9	11	-	3	1	29
Interrogative	3	-	-	2	3	-	-	1	9
Imperative	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Total	7	4	-	11	14	-	3	2	41

From the total 41 clauses analysed, the declarative mood is the most dominant with 29 clauses, indicating that the majority of interactions in the film are conveyed in the form of statements or information. The interrogative mood appears in 9 clauses, indicating a request for information or a form of curiosity between characters, while the imperative mood is only found 3 times, reflecting a limited number of direct instructions or requests. These results show that in general, interpersonal relationships in films are built through informative and expressive forms of communication.

### The Result of Visual Analysis of the Character in *The Intern*

The visual grammar analysis in this study was conducted to reveal the representational, interactive, and propositional meanings of eight scene excerpts in the film *The Intern*. Table 4 is the details of the visual analysis results based on Visual Grammar by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006).

Table 4 Visual analysis of selected scenes in *The Intern*

Scene	Representational meaning	Interactive meaning	Compositional meaning
Scene 1	Narrative process	Camera dollying Offer Close shot Close personal distance Close social distance Eye-level Representational	Given (Cameron) New (Jules) Salience (Jules' gesture)
Scene 2	Narrative process	Camera zoom Offer Medium close shot Close personal distance Close social distance Eye-level Differentiation	Given (Ben) New (Davis) Salience (Davis)
Scene 3	Narrative process	Camera zoom out Offer Medium long shot Far personal distance Far social distance Oblique Representational	Centre and margin (Ben) Salience (Ben)

Scene	Representational meaning	Interactive meaning	Compositional meaning
Scene 4	Narrative process	Camera stationary Offer Medium close shot Close personal distance Close social distance Eye-level Oblique Differentiation	Given (Becky) New (Ben) Saliency (Becky)
Scene 5	Narrative process	Camera stationary Offer Medium close shot Close personal distance Close social distance Eye-level Representational	Given (Jules) New (Ben) Saliency (Jules)
Scene 6	Narrative process	Camera zoom in Offer Medium close shot Far close shot Close personal distance Close social distance Eye-level Representational	Centre (Ben) Saliency (Ben)
Scene 7	Narrative process	Camera stationary Offer Close shot Close personal distance Eye-level Representational	Given (Ben) New (Jules) Saliency (Jules)
Scene 8	Narrative process	Camera zoom out Offer Medium shot Close personal distance Eye-level Representational	Given (Ben) New (Jules) Saliency (Jules and Ben)

All scenes show the use of narrative process as representational meaning that actively displays actions or interactions between characters. From the interactive meaning aspect, there are variations in camera techniques such as camera dolly, zooming in, and zooming out, as well as the dominant use of gaze offer, eye-level angle, and personal distance that illustrate emotional and social relationships between characters. Meanwhile, from the compositional meaning aspect, elements such as given-new, centre, margin, and saliency are used to accentuate the roles and relationships between characters in the frame, with the visual focus shifting according to the context of the dialogue and the position of the characters in the story. This analysis shows that the visual aspects in the film reinforce social

representations, ideological positions, and interpersonal meanings that are built multimodally.

### Ageism in *The Intern* (2015)

Ben experienced various forms of Ageism, namely personal prejudice and discriminatory actions. Visual analysis reinforces Ageism discourse through framing, angle, distance, and salience techniques, which subtly demonstrate the marginalization, isolation, and dominance of young discourse in the work environment. This finding is in line with Butler (1980) that Ageism is not only interpersonal, but also structured in social norms and systems. Butler (1980, p. 8) describes the three main characteristics of Ageism: Prejudice attitudes toward the age, discriminatory practices against older people, and institutional practices. This multidimensional nature of ageism is further supported by Voss, Bodner, and Rothermund (2018), who emphasize that age discrimination is a domain-specific phenomenon deeply embedded in real-life interactions, particularly within workplace contexts where institutional stereotypes dictate interpersonal behavior. Based on Table 5, the results of linguistic and visual analysis that has been done on the character of Ben in *The Intern* (2015), here is an explanation of the forms of Ageism experienced by Ben.

Table 5 Form of Ageism found in *The Intern*

Scene	Form of Ageism		
	Prejudice	Discrimination	Institutional practices
Cameron scene	Jules expresses doubt or scepticism towards their (older people) existence as interns	-	-
Davis scene	Davis emphasise that Ben is different or not age-appropriate to be an intern,	highlighting the discrepancy of visual colour between Ben and Davis	-
Break 1 scene	-	Ben is seen isolated in an office space. He is also not involved in any conversations or work dynamics	-
Becky scene	Becky expresses surprise and doubt about Ben's existence as an intern	highlighting the discrepancy of visual colour between Ben and Becky	-
Jules scene	-	Jules actively tries to delimit Ben's workspace, not by competence, but by age stereotypes	-
Break 2 scene	-	social and professional role abandonment	-

Scene	Form of Ageism		
	Prejudice	Discrimination	Institutional practices
Hotel room scene	-	-	-
Yoga scene	-	-	-

In the Cameron scene, linguistic analysis shows that Jules expresses doubts about Ben's existence as an intern *Do they eventually want job here?* and *First off all, I'm not great with older people*. It reflects age prejudices that older people do not fit into modern work roles or are considered unfit for the position. With this form of mood, Jules is not asking to get information but to express doubt or scepticism towards their (older people) existence as interns. The second clause, *First off all, I'm not great with older people* is a mood declarative. In experiential meaning, Jules places herself as Carrier (subject) and *not great with older people* as Attribute. This is a relational process that conveys a negative personal judgement towards a certain age group. This clause shows social avoidance towards older people, not because of Ben's nature, but because of his age.

In Davis scene, linguistic analysis shows that Davis reflects a prejudice attitude toward age, just like the second practice of Ageism of Butler's (1980:8). The term *regular-age* spoken by Davis in *They had one opening a regular-age intern* implicitly implies that Ben's age does not fall into the 'normal' category or what is usually expected for the position. The term *regular-age* here functions as a marker that emphasise that Ben is different or not age-appropriate to be an intern. Visual analysis of this scene also showed discriminatory treatment of the elderly highlighting the discrepancy between Ben and Davis.

In break 1 scene, visual analysis shows that Ben is seen isolated in an office space, Ben positioned in the center of the frame, but narratively, he is not at the center of interactions or activities. He just does not seem to be involved. He does not receive any real task, as the other interns start working, while Ben does not know what to do or he does not even interact with the other co-workers. The lack of interaction between Ben and the other co-workers in this scene reinforces the sense of isolation. The camera pans to Ben who looks confused and does not know what to do. He is also not involved in any conversations or work dynamics.

In Becky scene, linguistic analysis shows that Becky expresses surprise and doubt about Ben's existence as an intern *How are you an intern?* and *Oh my God, how old are you?* It reflects age prejudices that older people are not suitable for modern work roles or are considered unfit for the position. The question *How are you an intern?* implies the assumption that an intern should be young, in other words, Ben's being much older than the general expectation for the position is considered unnatural or illogical. Meanwhile, the question *Oh my God, how old are you?* emphasise Becky's shock at Ben's age, which seems incompatible with the role he is currently undertaking. Visual analysis of this scene also shows the discriminatory treatment of the elderly which highlights the discrepancy between Ben and Becky. These overt expressions of shock and discrepancy serve to perpetuate negative narratives and limit the professional options available to older adults, a consequence of media stereotyping similarly noted by Fraser et al. (2016).

In Jules scene, linguistic analysis points to discriminatory practices by Jules towards Ben. In the clauses *I think that you'd be much better off working in creative or marketing* and *it is a little*

*bit slower pace, a little bit easier to grasp*, Jules actively tries to delimit Ben's workspace, not by competence, but by age stereotypes. In the clause *I think that you'd be much better off working in creative or marketing*, the mood structure is declarative, but the function of this speech act is suggestion which contains judgment value. Jules uses the mental process *I think* which places the opinion as subjective. In the second clause, *it is a little bit slower pace, a little bit easier to grasp*, the phrases *a little bit slower* and *easier to grasp* imply that the suggested task is simpler. This indicates that Jules assumes Ben is unable to handle fast-paced or complex tasks, an assumption based on old age stereotypes rather than objective evaluation. This specific cinematic portrayal echoes the findings of Ishaq, Abidin, and Kurniansyah (2022), who observed that mass media and films frequently construct the elderly as inherently incompetent and a burden to fast-paced modern environments. Visual analysis of this scene supports the practice with Jules' gestures (giving instructions) being more prominent, while Ben is shown looking silent and passive depicted standing with unresponsive body language.

In break 2 scene, visual analysis shows Ben experienced discrimination in the form of social and professional role abandonment. Ben as the only actor involved in the narrative process, reading a newspaper on his desk. This scene implies that Ben is not actively involved in the contemporary world of work, but rather performs old patterns of activity that are considered irrelevant. Although Ben is physically present, he is visually portrayed as alienated from the social dynamics of the office. Ben's visual alienation perfectly illustrates what de Paula Couto and Rothermund (2022) identify as the prescriptive view of 'disengagement', which reflects a normative societal expectation that older individuals should passively step aside and not interfere with youth-dominated professional spheres.

In the hotel room scene and yoga scene, linguistic analysis shows Ageism is starting to decline, the clause *Thank you so much* shows a declarative mood in the verbal process which means the speaker (Jules) conveys her gratitude to Ben. While, in the clause *And I think I want to hire you* shows a declarative mood with a desiderative mental process which means that the speaker wants to convey his intention or personal decision. Jules' change in attitude shows that she is starting to accept Ben.

## Discussion

The initial hypothesis of this study posited that ageism and age-based stereotypes against the elderly minority are actively constructed through both linguistic and visual discourse in the film *The Intern* (2015). The findings confirm this hypothesis, revealing that ageist prejudice and discriminatory practices are indeed embedded within the film's narrative and multimodal elements. Linguistically, material processes predominantly position younger characters as active agents, while relational and mental processes are used by the youth-centric majority to assess the elderly character, Ben, often emphasizing his perceived incompatibility with the modern workplace. Visually, techniques such as marginal framing, contrasting colors, and specific compositional positioning reinforce his social distance and isolation from the younger workforce.

However, the hypothesis is also partially challenged by the film's narrative arc, offering a deeper lesson on the fluidity of age representation in media. While the initial scenes heavily reinforce ageist stereotypes – such as Jules expressing explicit doubt about older interns and visual cues isolating Ben – the film ultimately subverts these ideologies. By the climax and denouement, Jules' declarative mood shifts from skepticism to gratitude, and the visual

salience places them on equal, centralized footing. What can be learned from these results is that media texts are often sites of ideological struggle; *The Intern* simultaneously critiques and reinforces ageist norms, illustrating that the elderly minority can transition from marginalized outsiders to valued, integrated members of a contemporary workspace when their individual differences and experiences are recognized.

These conclusions significantly reshape existing knowledge in the field of critical discourse analysis by demonstrating how systemic functional linguistics and visual grammar can uncover subtle age discrimination in seemingly progressive cinematic texts. Previous research on media ageism largely emphasizes overtly negative narratives. For instance, Camacho-Markina and Santos-Diez (2025) found that the media frequently makes older adults invisible and uses stigmatizing terms. Similarly, Lee and Hoh (2021) noted that online media often relies on explicit visual ageism, such as the infantilization and barbarization of older adults. By applying a multimodal approach, this study adds a new dimension to this literature, showing that marginalization in film is not always overtly hostile but is often subtly constructed through cinematic framing, camera distance, and passive clause structures.

The results of this study are largely consistent with recent findings regarding the representation of older adults in cinema, while also offering unique contextual deviations. Ishaq, Abidin, and Kurniansyah (2022) found that films frequently reflect the reality of ageism by initially constructing the elderly as incompetent or burdensome, which aligns with the discriminatory practices Ben faces early in the movie. However, the film's eventual portrayal of Ben as a highly competent and wise figure aligns closely with the findings of Chonody, Perez, and Fillmore (2024), who noted a shift in modern films toward positive stereotypes of "successful aging," where older leads are depicted as active and without health issues. This consistency underscores a dualistic trend in modern media: while subtle ageism is present, it is increasingly countered by a neoliberal push to present older adults as valuable, provided they conform to specific standards of successful integration.

The relevance of these findings lies in their capacity to add robust evidence to the scientific consensus regarding how age stereotypes dictate social interactions and organizational behaviors. Voss, Bodner, and Rothermund (2018) highlighted that age discrimination is inextricably linked to age stereotypes, emphasizing that these biases operate strongly in domain-specific contexts like the workplace. Furthermore, de Paula Couto and Rothermund (2022) identified prescriptive views of aging, noting that societies expect older adults to exhibit either "disengagement" or "activation" so as not to become a burden. The visual and linguistic isolation Ben initially experiences perfectly exemplifies the societal expectation of "disengagement," while his subsequent acceptance relies entirely on his "activation" and usefulness to the younger generation. Uncovering these dynamics is highly relevant to audiences as it exposes the subtle, everyday mechanisms of workplace inequality.

Despite these insights, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The research was restricted to analyzing only 41 linguistic clauses and 37 visual shots derived from eight purposively selected scenes in *The Intern*. Consequently, the analysis does not account for the entirety of the film's discourse. More importantly, the study focused exclusively on linguistic elements (transitivity and mood) and visual framing, entirely omitting other crucial multimodal and semiotic elements such as background music, intonation, and paralinguistic features. These auditory and performative elements play a significant role in cinematic meaning-making, and their exclusion limits a fully

comprehensive understanding of how the film constructs ageist or anti-ageist ideologies multimodally.

Moving forward, the findings of this study can be applied practically in both media literacy education and organizational diversity training to highlight how unconscious biases against the elderly minority manifest in communication and spatial organization. Future research should build on these observations by expanding the scope of multimodal analysis to include audio-visual interplay and paralinguistic markers in a wider variety of film genres. Key experiments or subsequent studies could involve comparative analyses of multiple films across different cultures to see if the visual marginalization of older characters is a universal cinematic trope or a culturally specific phenomenon, thereby addressing the call by Kornadt, de Paula Couto, and Rothermund (2022) for more cross-cultural research on views of aging.

To sum up, the "take-home" message of this research is that ageism in the media is a complex, multimodal construct that requires critical vigilance to decode; even films that aim to celebrate intergenerational friendships can inadvertently reproduce subtle discriminatory framing. For researchers in linguistics and media studies, this highlights the necessity of combining text and image analysis to capture the full spectrum of ideological representation. For researchers in other fields, such as sociology and organizational behavior, and for the general public, these results serve as a reminder that true workplace diversity must move beyond mere representation. It demands an active dismantling of the communicative and structural biases that position older individuals as a marginalized minority, fostering an environment where intergenerational collaboration is genuinely equitable.

## CONCLUSION

The result of this research, based on the analysis of 41 linguistic clauses and 37 visual shots, shows that the linguistic interactions in the film *The Intern* are dominated by material (15 clauses), relational (14 clauses), and mental (7 clauses) processes. From the interpersonal meaning, the declarative mood is dominantly used (29 clauses), followed by the interrogative mood (9 clauses). Interpreting this evidence, the material process places the young character as the dominant doer, while the elderly character becomes the recipient or object of the action. The relational processes are used to mark the assessment or identity of the character of the elderly, often associated with incapacity, limitation, or incompatibility with the modern work environment. Meanwhile, the mental processes show the attitude and opinion of the young characters towards Ben, who are often skeptical or doubtful. Furthermore, the dominant declarative mood is more used to convey judgments implicitly, while the interrogative mood is used to doubt or question the capabilities of the elderly. Visually, out of the 37 analyzed shots, Ben's character is often shown with marginal framing that reinforces social distance in his marginal position within the work structure. The use of contrasting colors shows the identity gap of each figure, and the information value that often places Ben in the left (Given) position depicts him as representing old experience or familiar traditional values. This combination of linguistic and visual data shows that the film *The Intern* not only represents Ageism explicitly through dialogue, but also implicitly through visual choices. These findings indicate that Ageism is a form of social ideology reproduced by the media, but the film also criticizes these stereotypes by showing the positive contribution of older characters in the modern workplace.

Based on the results of this study, the film invites us to reflect on how older people are positioned in modern society, and the importance of creating an inclusive work environment

that values experience, not just age. However, this study is limited as it only focuses on specific linguistic clauses and visual framings within selected scenes. To address the limitations of this study, it is suggested that future researchers expand the scope of the data by examining other semiotic and multimodal elements, such as background music, intonation, and paralinguistic features, to provide a more comprehensive analysis of media discourse. For media makers, the results of this study serve as a reminder of the importance of fair and non-stereotypical representations of the elderly.

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