LIGHTS, CAMERA, *ACCENT*: EXAMINING DIALECT PERFORMANCE
IN RECENT CHILDREN'S ANIMATED FILMS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is hard to deny that there is a certain appeal to children's animated movies, evident in their popularity at the box-office (*Mulan* grossed over $300 million worldwide during its release and *Shrek* over $480 million). Such films, with their optimistic portrayals of the world as an ideal place, are seen as light-hearted and endearing, and are thought to be relatively innocuous. Yet are these films and the messages they convey truly as harmless as they appear? Some scholars who have critically examined the use of language for character portrayals in such movies argue that these films portray dialects in a way that maintains and promotes negative racial and ethnic stereotypes of the groups who use these dialects (Lippi-Green 1997; Pandey 2001).

However, these previous studies only examine dialect use in movies made through the year 1994; it is important to examine language use in more recent children's animated movies in order to understand the nature of language and character portrayals in today's movies and how these portrayals may have changed or remained the same. Such an examination of these movies reveals that dialects are employed for character portrayal in such a way that at times does indeed reproduce and sustain stereotypes of the groups who use these dialects, but also reveals a change in the portrayal of other dialects and their speakers that may point to newer trends in animated films that have important implications for our understanding of language performance in animated films.

In order to understand the nature of dialect use in animated films, I first provide a discussion of previous literature regarding language performance and its implications for notions of style (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, I provide a detailed discussion of how discourse is structured within the media of film in order to help the reader understand the orientation of this study and the expectations for talk in animated films. Chapter 4 offers a discussion of the methodologies employed by the present study. Chapter 5 presents a detailed analysis and discussion of the data both quantitatively (Section 5.1) and qualitatively (Section 5.2), and also discusses some new trends in animated films (Section 5.3). Finally, Chapter 6 provides a discussion of some of the important implications of the present study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Over the past several decades, sociolinguistic research has witnessed an increasing

interest in the performance of language in formal settings, from public orations to stand-

up comedy (Coupland 2007; Chun 2004). Such language differs from day-to-day speech

in some crucial ways. As Richard Bauman (1978, 11) discusses, a formal performance

puts not only its speaker on display, but also his or her language as well. Along with this

heightened attention to language goes an understanding that the words are not simply

present for referential value; instead, they have an express purpose and a deeper meaning.

As a result, language in such venues is generally crafted carefully (and often crafted in

advance) in order to achieve a desired effect, as many of the studies of performance

discussed below have found. Such findings have had major implications for our

understanding of the nature of styling and have motivated new conceptions of style

acknowledging the deliberate ways in which people construct their speech. This new

approach to styling provides us with new theories for understanding what language

styling accomplishes for character portrayal in recent children's animated films.

In this section, then, I discuss studies analyzing formal performances that involve

an intentional use of certain accents and dialects to project a particular persona, as well as

the implications of such studies for theories of style. In order to understand how language

(and, specifically, accent) is meaningfully styled and deployed in formal venues, however, it is necessary to first discuss the nature of cultural stereotypes and the links between cultural stereotypes and language attitudes, as it is these stereotypes that help to impart a deeper meaning to the performed language. Below, then, is a detailed discussion of the workings of cultural and linguistic stereotypes.

2.2   The Nature of Stereotypes

A stereotype, in its very basic sense, is defined as "an exaggerated belief associated with a category" (Allport 1954, 191). According to Hewstone and Giles (1986, 271) stereotypes function as cognitive tools for organizing our social world into neatly contained categories. Since stereotypes serve important functions, such as simplifying complex incoming information and aiding in the prediction of behavior, they can be argued to be natural and inevitable products of organizing processes of the mind.

Hewstone and Giles (1986, 271) explain stereotyping as a process that includes three essential elements: first, individuals are categorized according to clearly visible characteristics such as sex or race. Then a set of traits (behavioral, emotional, etc.) is assigned to most or all members of this category. Finally, this set of traits is assigned to a particular individual who is a member of (or is perceived to be a member of) the category. In this way, groups and the individuals that comprise them are viewed through a narrow lens, and their behaviors and actions are likewise viewed in a simplified manner which can be explained by appeal to these traits that appear to define them.

The phenomenon of social stereotyping has important implications for how certain languages and dialects are viewed. Much research has noted the correlation between attitudes about groups of people and attitudes about the language used by these people. Bucholtz (2001b, 87), in her discussion of the linguistic practices of "white nerds," argues that beliefs about race are also beliefs about language. Preston (2002, 40) as well agrees that attitudes towards a language or dialect are tied to attitudes about its speakers. Thus, he says, certain groups are commonly viewed as hard working or intelligent, and their language is viewed in a similar way; other groups are believed to be lazy or unintelligent, and their language is deemed lazy as well (Preston 2002, 40).

This close tie between language attitudes and social attitudes means that languages and dialects can come to have particular stereotypes and social meanings such as "uneducated" or "refined" attached to them, a phenomenon that occurs through the process of indexing. Indexicality refers to instances in which a linguistic sign comes to refer to a specific (social) meaning, through repeated co-occurrences of the sign and its social meaning (Bucholtz 2001b, 88).[1] Thus, the use of a particular dialect or language in speech indexes a particular social group associated with that dialect and evokes particular meanings and stereotypes associated with the group. These associations help to imbue the

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[1] In the traditional Peircean conception of the term, indexicality marks instances in which the relationship between a sign and its referent is physical or objective; thus, smoke generally indexes the fact that a fire is (or was at one time) present. Although linguistic forms and their social meanings do not have objective or physical connections, nevertheless they often come to be seen as possessing such relationships (Coupland 2007, 22). For example, although the link between Southern English and being unintelligent is not natural or objective, some people may view it as such. Thus, such relationships are in some sense indexical, and it is in this sense that I shall employ the term *index* throughout this study.

speech with additional meaning. In the present study we shall examine more closely how accent performances make use of these indexical links between language forms and social meanings to enhance character portrayals in recent animated films.

2.2.1 *Language Ideology and Language Attitude Studies*

The ideologies and social meanings attached to languages and dialects have been examined in detail by scholars who have been interested in the areas of language ideology and language attitudes. As Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) discuss, the term *language ideology* has been defined in different ways by different researchers, some of whom adopt a relatively neutral stance towards its conception, while others take a more critical approach to the term. Researchers such as Alan Rumsey (1990, 346), who defines language ideologies as "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world," fall into the former category. Judith Irvine (1989), on the other hand, adopts a somewhat more critical stance towards language ideology, defining it as "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (255). Generally speaking, definitions of language ideology focus on shared sets of beliefs about language that are at least partially informed by social experiences.

These beliefs about language have been examined through language attitude studies, which have revealed the extent to which stereotypes inform and affect people's perceptions of certain dialects and languages. Studies by Dennis Preston (1998, 2002),

for instance, in which people are asked to draw dialect boundaries on maps of the United States and are then asked about traits or characteristics associated with the speech of different areas, reveal that people do indeed have clear associations tied to particular dialects. A study by Williams (as cited in Fasold 1984, 171) in which White teachers were asked to rate the speech of students of certain ethnicities (White, Black, and Mexican) provides support for the idea that attitudes towards dialects are at least in part informed by stereotypes of their speakers. The teachers were shown video clips of students of each ethnicity reading a passage (the accompanying audio track, which was in fact identical for all video clips, featured a passage being read in Standard English) and were asked to rate the speech of each group along two dimensions (standardness and confidence). The results revealed that the ratings for the Black and Mexican students were noticeably lower (i.e. they were rated as less standard and less confident) than that of the White students despite the fact that the audio track was identical in all cases, indicating that stereotypes were partly informing teachers' attitudes towards the students' speech. These and other language attitude studies reveal the extent to which dialects and languages are imbued with social meanings that affect our understanding and perception of them. The present study will illustrate how such social meanings underlying dialects are deliberately reproduced to aid in characterization in recent animated films.

2.2.2   The Production of Linguistic Stereotypes in Formal Performances

Given that dialects do carry with them clear and identifiable social meanings that are linked to societal stereotypes of their speakers, they are a potential resource for quickly enhancing a character's portrayal with additional meaning in formal venues such as animated movies. Bell (1984) offers information regarding precisely how this is achieved. During a performance, an actor converges his or her speech to a particular group he or she wishes to identify with, with the aim of putting the audience in mind of a particular group. In the case of film, it is often the director—the person responsible for the creative elements of a film—who instructs the actor to employ a particular dialect in order to achieve a particular effect (Lippi-Green 1997, 84). The director, then, can be said to be ultimately responsible for the actor's styling of speech. This distinction between the director's role and the actor's role is explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

Bell (1984, 190) claims that only a few linguistic tokens are necessary to convey the dialect to the audience. These linguistic tokens are often highly salient and stereotypical ones (as found in the present study), in order to ensure that the audience will interpret them as intended. These stereotypical features of the dialect being produced result in (or, at least, are intended to result in) the audience's identification of the dialect and the group of people associated with the dialect, which then, in conjunction with the content of the talk, evokes for them particular social meanings attached to the dialect and its speakers. These associated meanings help to inform the audience's understanding of the character.

With this deeper understanding of the workings of stereotypes, we now turn our attention to formal performances in which speakers manipulate accents (and the stereotypes associated with them) in order to project specific identities.

2.3   The Performance of Accent in Formal Venues

One site for accent performance investigated by Bucholtz (2001a) is a science-fiction and fantasy convention where science-fiction fans gather to meet and participate in various events and activities such as live-action role-playing games. Specifically, Bucholtz examines how accent performance among a group of science fiction fans during a live-action role-playing game allows these fans to create and deploy identities on multiple levels. In this interaction, accents are employed to mark the boundaries of the game world, to create characterizations, and to display interactional stances between participants. Bucholtz notes that many players in the game employ an accent during the game to create a character style and to indicate that they are operating in the "game world." The factors operate to such an extent that when elements of the game require them to momentarily suspend their character identities, they suspend their use of the contrived accents as well (2001a, 236). She gives an example of a player (Drac-U-LAH) who uses a "pseudo-Transylvanian" accent associated with the popular film character Dracula to project an identity as charming and dignified, but also mysterious and brooding (2001a, 240). This identity is achieved in part because of certain stereotypes (of charm and mysteriousness) that are attached to the pseudo-East European accent

employed by the player. Bucholtz also discusses the wide use of British English accents in role-playing games and argues that their popularity stems partly from their associations with the fantasy genre in general (e.g., the science-fiction television series Dr. Who) (248). In these cases, the use of a British accent marks the player as highly skilled in fan culture and also, in reproducing a language style associated with other fantasy productions, ties the current event intertextually to previous fantasy performances. Like Bucholtz's work, the present study will examine how accents are employed to aid in characterization work, and will also briefly examine how such performances of accent tie the event intertextually to previous cultural texts.

Chun (2004) examines a different site of performance, that of stand-up comedy, in which accent use is deliberate and purposeful. She analyzes several performances by stand-up comedian Margaret Cho, a Korean-American who frequently employs a "Mock Asian" accent in her comedy routines to reproduce, but also challenge, stereotypical ideologies of Asians. Chun examines the ways in which Margaret Cho adopts a "Mock Asian" accent to index racial and national difference and to construct an identity of "otherness." At the same time, however, she argues that Margaret Cho uses this "Mock Asian" accent to criticize the very ideologies it is associated with (283). Such work reveals how accent can deliberately be put to work to not only index certain social meanings, but also challenge these ideological views. The present study as well will briefly discuss situations in which accents are employed in part to challenge certain cultural and linguistic stereotypes.

Such work as Bucholtz (2001) and Chun (2004) illustrates the deliberate and creative practices through which speakers in a performance can employ aspects of language, and the social meanings attached to these language forms, to construct and project various identities. Another medium in which such practices are possible is that of film, where actors—usually at the request of a director—often adopt a particular accent (contrived or real) in order to further some element of the film. This phenomenon is explored below, with a focus on the function of accent in children's animated films specifically.

2.3.1   The Performance of Accent in Disney Films

Lippi-Green (1997) offers perhaps the most thorough account of linguistic variation and accent use in children's animated films. In her book, she notes that because there is often not sufficient time in children's movies to build character through action, stereotypical accents that are associated with particular groups and ideologies about these groups may be used instead (81). Such accents, imbued as they are with social meaning, further our understanding of characters' personalities. In order to test how pervasive such functions of accent are in children's animated films, Lippi-Green analyzes twenty-four Disney movies to determine whether systematic patterns exist regarding the portrayals of characters who speak with certain accents and how these patterns help reaffirm societal stereotypes of the speakers of these varieties. Her findings do indeed suggest such

patterns of association, and she argues that animated films are a means of teaching children to associate certain traits with certain groups, through language variation (85).[2]

A similar study examining portrayals of dialects and their speakers in animated films was conducted by Anjali Pandey (2001). This study explores the different ways in which non-standard varieties of English are portrayed in various children's animated films. Pandey's main argument in this study is that these animated movies consistently portray non-standard English accents in a negative light, equating them with low socio-economic status and power. This is accomplished, Pandey argues, through various linguistic devices, although for the purposes of her study she focuses on analyzing the differences in the lexical usages between characters speaking standard and non-standard English. Pandey argues that such differences in lexical usages create asymmetrical power relations between characters who speak Standard English (SE) and those who speak non-standard English (4).

For her study, Pandey considers the speech of various characters from a range of children's animated movies spanning the years 1941 to 1994, though, unlike Lippi-Green (1997) and the present study, she does not provide an exhaustive list of all movies analyzed. In her discussion of her findings, Pandey focuses on *The Jungle Book* (1967) and *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), discussing the implications of certain characters' lexical usages. For instance, one scene in *The Jungle Book* begins with an African American Vernacular English (AAVE) speaking character—an orangutan named King Louie—

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[2] A more detailed account of Lippi-Green's (1997) study is provided later in this chapter.

uttering the statement "I wanna be a man-man one-one, orang, orang, utang utang" (Pandey 2001, 5). Pandey argues that King Louie is portrayed as a somewhat nonsensical character who garners little respect, and his "slow, dim-witted nature is accentuated through…lexical reduplications" that paint his speech as nonsensical, too (5). When such utterances are juxtaposed by the utterances of standard English-speaking characters who do not use such lexical reduplications, it serves to underscore the childishness of the AAVE-speaking character. Such portrayals of AAVE-speaking characters reproduce and reaffirm societal stereotypes of AAVE-speaking persons as unintelligent and childish or irresponsible. Pandey also argues that many of the characters' lexical usages work to portray standard speakers as powerful and nonstandard speakers as powerless, claiming that "the 'power of perspective' is given to speakers of SE who do all the labeling and 'name-calling'" (6). For example, a group of AAVE-speaking characters in *The Jungle Book* are referred to by SE-speaking characters as "mangy monkeys" and "undesirable scatterbrained apes" (6). Here, the SE-speaking characters offer their opinions about the monkeys through negative labels, but the AAVE-speaking characters' perspectives are never provided. Through such power asymmetries, Pandey argues that these movies are able to legitimize standard dialects and undermine nonstandard ones. This idea of the "power of perspective" will be discussed again later in relation to several findings of the present study.

Taken together with the findings of Bucholtz (2001) and Chun (2004), the work by Lippi-Green (1997) and Pandey (2001) enhances our understanding of how language

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can be put to work to actively construct and deploy certain identities by manipulating the social meanings attached to the language forms. Such findings complicate earlier theories of language styling, which tended to operate on a much more restricted and fixed notion of "style." These earlier studies are discussed briefly below, followed by a discussion of newer conceptions of style.

2.4   Traditional Notions of Styling

The notion of linguistic 'style'—a concept pioneered by William Labov (1966) in his study of language variation in New York City's Lower East Side—refers, in its very broadest sense, to particular ways of speaking. Traditional studies of style (e.g., Ervin-Tripp 1973; Tarone 1982) generally take a rather narrow approach to the term and the social contexts that motivate different speech styles. According to Labov, and many of those examining language variation after him, styling occurs mainly as a reaction to a single variable, that of attention to speech (Bell 1984, 147). Style, then, is viewed as a simple process of speaking more formally when attending to speech and speaking less formally when being less attentive. Furthermore, early studies tended to assume that people styled their language according to predetermined and discrete variables such as socioeconomic class, gender, and age (Wolfram 1997).

These early studies, then, tended to take a structural approach to style, treating range in style as a linear progression from one point to the next (most often from 'casual' to 'formal' or 'less attentive' to 'more attentive'). Although such studies are able to

produce quantifiable results that can be generalized (at least in theory) across a speech community, in doing so they present a rather narrow view of style as a concept that is a response to predetermined social structure and is tied closely to conceptions of class. However, work done by those discussed earlier such as Bucholtz (2001), Chun (2004), Lippi-Green (1997), and Pandey (2001), among others, has illustrated that styling can in fact be creative and dynamic, and can be initiated for a variety of reasons. This work has forced linguists to reexamine the nature and processes of language style, which has led to new articulations of style. These new concepts are discussed below.

2.5   New Theories of Style

Coupland (2007) synthesizes these newly emerging ideas of language styling into a coherent theory that presents an updated, broader conception of 'style' as a dynamic and fluid process of meaning making in social interactions. He argues that the earliest studies of styling (as mentioned above) do not take into account the fact that people alter their speech to project not just class identities, but many other identities as well (2007, 38). Moreover, the pre-figuring of social contexts for the analysis of styling, as well as the traditional focus of attention to speech, treats styling as strictly internally motivated and a reaction to a specific context or stimulus, which minimizes speakers' agentive roles in shaping their speech (or, in the case of most films, the director's role in shaping actors' speech). Coupland argues for an alternative approach that acknowledges the creative process of styling identities. He stresses that when seeking to understand how people

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create meaning through styling language, we must focus on the link between the discursive activity and the context within which it is couched (both the broad social context as well as the immediate, local context), keeping in mind that the discursive activity has the potential to reshape the social context itself. Thus, he argues, we must analyze "the creative, design-oriented processes through which social styles are activated in talk and, in that process, remade or reshaped" (3). The present study seeks to do just this, and it examines the active and deliberate ways in which speech is styled as a means of projecting a variety of different identities. In order to illustrate how dialect styling helps to create identities I appeal to both the broad social context (by way of the shared social meanings that are reproduced through accent use) and the immediate context within which the speech is situated (i.e. the particular situation in which the styling is occurring).

While Coupland acknowledges that speakers are in some sense always performing speech and performing identities (given the agentive role speakers take in constructing meanings and identities) he makes a distinction between what he calls mundane performance and high performance (146). The former refers to acts of styling in regular, daily interactions, while the latter refers to styling in events that are formal and scheduled. High performance would include such events as public speeches, stage performances, and television shows and movies. All of these venues, as we have witnessed above (Section 2.3), are potential sites for examining how social meanings are reproduced through the styling of speech. Furthermore, Bauman (as cited in Coupland

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2007, 148) argues that high performances are sites for not simply reproducing—but also occasionally challenging—social meanings and stereotypes. This issue, which was discussed earlier through Chun's (2004) work, will be addressed again later in this study.

High performances, then, are potential sites for the reproduction and refiguring of societal stereotypes through linguistic styling. One such venue is that of children's animated films. As was discussed above, studies of language use in these sites have yielded much important information concerning linguistic styling and stereotypical portrayals. Having now examined the basic underpinnings of new (and old) theories of style, we return now to one of these studies of animated films, Lippi-Green (1997), which serves as the motivation for the present study, to examine in greater detail its claims and findings.

2.6   In-depth Examination: Lippi-Green (1997)

As mentioned earlier, Lippi-Green (1997) provides the most comprehensive account of language variation in children's animated films made up to that time. Her study is appealed to again here and explained in greater detail, as it forms the basis of the motivations for the present study. To recap briefly, noting that stereotypical accents are often employed in children's animated films to evoke particular characteristics quickly, she sets out to investigate whether systematic patterns exist in the portrayals of particular dialects that may help to sustain stereotypes held about the speakers of these dialects.

Drawing from work on ideology and language subordination (Foucault 1984; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994), Lippi-Green (1997, 64) explains that in some societies a *standard language ideology* is adopted in which a uniform, idealized, standard variety of a language (in the case of the United States, Standard American English) is valued and promoted by dominant institutions, and perhaps even by society as a whole. Similarly, Paul Simpson (1993, 6) claims that such dominant ideologies serve to maintain asymmetrical power relations, by promoting the language of mainstream groups and subordinating the language of non-mainstream groups. Linguistic subordination occurs, then, through devaluing non-mainstream varieties while simultaneously validating mainstream varieties, and Lippi-Green notes that many different dominant institutions participate in this process, one being the entertainment industry.

Before continuing, there is at least one important point to note with respect to this idea of the maintenance of dominant ideologies. While Coupland (2007, 86) acknowledges that standard language ideologies allow for subordination and "gate-keeping," he also points out that speakers are capable of using language styling to subvert dominant ideologies and stereotypes, an issue that will be addressed later in the present study. It is therefore important to keep in mind that although dominant ideologies are powerful and are upheld by many institutions, they are nevertheless still contestable. Still, dominant institutions do tend to uphold dominant ideologies, and Lippi-Green maintains that an examination of one subsection of this institution of the entertainment industry – the genre of children's animated films – may shed light on how dominant institutions

engage in this process of linguistic subordination more generally. Although others such as Grant (as cited in Lippi-Green 1997) and Kaufman (as cited in Lippi-Green 1997) have examined how certain ethnicities are portrayed in a stereotypical light in individual cartoons or movies, Lippi-Green is the first to investigate this phenomenon of dominance and subordination in animated films in a systematic way, looking for trends across a wide range of movies.

To tests her claims, Lippi-Green analyzes the dialects of 371 characters in 24 animated Disney movies made from 1938-1994, coding for such variables as story setting, the dialect spoken by each character, and the character's motivations ("good," "bad," "mixed," "unclear") and gender. She then cross-tabulated her data, examining, for instance, dialect spoken versus story setting and dialect versus character motivations.

The results of Lippi-Green's study reveal that about 20% of US English-speaking characters have negative motivations, as compared with 40% of foreign-accented characters, which indicates that the overall representation of foreign-accented people is noticeably more negative than that of speakers of US or British English. She also argues that these movies project a stereotype of African American males as unemployed and as having no purpose in life besides that of having fun (94). Furthermore, her findings reveal a tendency for characters with love interests to speak mainstream US or British English despite the story setting or the character's ethnicity, which perhaps conveys the message that in order to be attractive one must not only look appealing, but also sound appealing. Overall, Lippi-Green's findings are consistent with previous work, which argues that

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certain groups are portrayed in a stereotypical light in some animated productions. Her results suggest that animated films provide an opportunity for viewers (and especially young children, who are a major target audience) to adopt, and perhaps even promote, the stereotypical views that they subtly project.

2.7   The Present Study and its Contributions

The existing literature on stereotyping in children's animated films seems to suggest that animated movies portray accents in a way that serves to reproduce and reaffirm certain ethnic, social, and regional stereotypes. Yet these studies only examine movies made up until 1994, which begs the question of: *what is the nature of language and character portrayals in more recent animated films*? In an attempt to answer this question, the present study examines in detail the use of ethnic, social, and regional accents for character portrayal in more recent, post-1994 children's animated films. This is done in an attempt to reveal how such portrayals have changed (or, in some cases, remained the same), as well as the possible motivations for and implications of such changes (or lack thereof).

A firm understanding of language and character portrayals in current animated movies is important given that such portrayals may promote negative stereotypes of certain groups and may possibly even facilitate discrimination against these groups. It is especially important given that these movies are often considered innocuous and thus any serious messages being conveyed have a greater potential to go unnoticed and

unaddressed. Moreover, such a study may shed further light on how this subsection of the entertainment industry participates in the linguistic subordination and promotion of certain varieties and, indeed, may reveal how such processes of subordination can be challenged and subverted. On a more theoretical note, examining how accent use aids in the creation and deployment of identity will hopefully contribute to and enhance our current understanding of the nature and processes of language styling. Finally, on a broader level, insofar as the messages conveyed in these movies reflect (and perhaps affect) societal attitudes, such a study may enhance our understanding of how and why societal attitudes towards certain groups may have changed in recent years or may be undergoing change right now, and also how and why (despite a wealth of sociolinguistic research that demonstrates the legitimacy of all languages and dialects) some stereotypes endure even into the present day.

CHAPTER 3

SETTING THE STAGE: UNPACKING THE MEDIUM OF FILM

Before turning to a discussion of the methodology and results of the present study, it may be useful to spend some time examining how specifically discourse is structured within the medium of film. Such an understanding will not only help explain the orientation and focus of this study, but also enhance the reader's understanding of the expectations for talk and performance in a specific platform event, wide-release animated film.

Talk can occur in a variety of different ways, with different numbers of speakers and listeners who take on different roles. For instance, talk can be structured as a dyadic or triadic conversation, it can occur during a service encounter, or it can happen during a public platform event (Scollon and Scollon 2003). All of these different arrangements entail different relationships between speakers and hearers, as well as different rules for how talk is organized. Goffman (1979) argues that the terms *speaker* and *hearer* do not capture fully the multifaceted roles of participants in interaction. For example, he explains that the term *speaker* can be broken down into different types, all of which make up the *production format* of an utterance (18). Goffman explains that speakers can either be animators, authors, or principals. The animator is the person who is physically producing the speech, the author is the person responsible for shaping the words, and the principal is the person who is responsible for the ideas being conveyed in the talk. In a given interaction, one person can hold all three of these roles simultaneously or just one

or two of them. In many films, each role is held by a different person. Thus, the animator is the actor who is voicing the talk, the author is usually the screenwriter who has written the words in the script, and the principal is the director who is responsible for the overall plot and the creative elements and themes of the film. With regards to the use of dialect in film, then, although it is the actor who voices a given dialect, it is usually the director who is the creative force behind the use of the dialect in the first place.

Goffman also divides the term *hearer* into various types of hearers, all of which are encompassed under the idea of the *participation framework* of an interaction. One specific type of hearer that Goffman discusses that is relevant to the present study is the audience, which refers to the group of listeners attending to the talk occurring at a performed event. This audience, according to Goffman, differs in several ways from other types of listeners. First, audiences are not only physically more removed from a speaker than other hearers (indeed, they may not even be physically present—as in the case of the present study—but instead may be "imagined" from the speaker's point of view) but also somewhat conversationally removed since audience members are generally expected not to directly respond to the speaker's talk (except perhaps during a designated question period). Instead, the role of the audience is to receive, appreciate, and evaluate the speaker's talk. Bell (1984, 161) delineates a similar role for the audience, and states that the audience is the evaluative group for whom the talk is constructed.[3]

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[3] Unlike Goffman, Bell uses the term *audience* more broadly to refer to addressees in all types of interactions (daily, face-to-face interactions as well as performed events). Nevertheless, both scholars agree

This understanding that talk in performances is evaluated by an audience has important implications for the nature of the talk occurring in such performances. Given speakers' awareness that they are performing for an audience, their language is deliberately crafted and is as much on display as the speakers themselves (Bauman 1978). In the case of most films, this crafting of language is generally done by the director and/or screenwriter. The language used during performance is deliberate and typically has a special meaning that transcends the basic referential meanings of the words themselves. These deeper meanings are the focus of the present study, and we will examine how and why certain accents are put on display in the performance of character in animated films.

One last distinction must be made regarding the structure of performance. As Scollon and Scollon (2003) describe, interactions consist of producers, messages (and the actors who help convey them), and recipients. When considering portrayal in film, then, one could potentially examine the intentions of the producers who create the messages, the creation of the messages themselves, or the reception of the messages by the audience. The present study focuses its attention on analyzing the messages themselves, without making too many strong claims about the intentions of the producers or the audience's reception of these messages (although at times it may be necessary to consider issues from these latter angles as well). An examination of messages themselves is valuable because messages often take on a power and life of their own that can have

that the role of the audience in a performed event (or, for Bell, in any interaction) is to receive and evaluate the speaker's talk.

serious consequences, regardless of the intentions behind their creation. They are thus worthy of study in their own right.

Finally, it may also be worthwhile to examine the typical structure of animated films and the "traditional fairytale format" themselves. This understanding of the typical fairytale format will aid us in our interpretation of our data, some of which may in fact challenge these traditional notions, as we shall discover later. The most traditional of fairytales, as evidenced by such "classic" fairytales as Sleeping Beauty or Cinderella, share certain story elements such as a beautiful princess and handsome prince who represent the protagonists of the film. The villain of these films contrasts sharply with the protagonists, and is often portrayed as extremely evil and often rather unattractive (e.g., Cinderella's "ugly stepsisters"). Furthermore, the most traditional fairytales feature elements of medieval times and of fantasy, such as dragons, knights, and castles, and generally take place in a world somewhat removed from reality. Although not all animated movies fit the mold of the "traditional fairytale format," they have still tended to conform to similar norms. Many have clear divisions between good and evil, feature ideal protagonists and unattractive villains, and contain few references to the real world (apart from establishing setting).

Having examined the nature of discourse in film and the format of the traditional fairytale, we are now ready to turn our attention to the methodology and results of the present study. Below is a presentation of this study's methods (Chapter 4), followed by an analysis of the data (Chapter 5) and a discussion of its implications (Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1   Movie Selection Process

The data for the present study comes from the following seventeen children's animated

films made between 1995 and 2008, with the film's production company and year in

parentheses: *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Disney 1996), *Anastasia* (Warner Brothers

1997), *Mulan* (Disney 1998), *Shark Tale* (DreamWorks 2004), *Over the Hedge*

(DreamWorks 2006), *Happy Feet* (Warner Brothers 2006), *Toy Story* (Pixar 1995), *A

Bug's Life* (Disney 1998), *Tarzan* (Disney 1999), *Shrek* (DreamWorks 2001), *Monsters,

Inc.* (Disney/Pixar 2001), *Ice Age* (20th Century Fox 2002), *Finding Nemo* (Disney/Pixar

2003), *Madagascar* (DreamWorks 2005), *Cars* (Disney/Pixar 2006), *Ratatouille*

(Disney/Pixar 2007), and *Kung Fu Panda* (DreamWorks 2008).[4] The movies were

selected according to popularity as determined by box-office results, as more popular

movies may have greater implications for the effects of the messages conveyed. The

movies were also selected so that they were distributed more or less evenly across the

fourteen years. I have examined movies made using computer-generated imagery (CGI)

in addition to those made with traditional animation because of the increasing use of

computer graphics in making children's movies. Additionally, my data include movies

made by Warner Brothers, 20th Century Fox, Pixar, and DreamWorks, in addition to

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[4] The data from the first six movies were collected as part of a preliminary study.

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Disney, because the former companies have become major competitors with Disney in the past fifteen years.

4.2   Data Collection Process

The data collection process entailed viewing each movie in its entirety once, while coding for certain variables and noting other general observations. The following variables were coded for each speaking character: the setting of the movie, the dialect used, the motivations of the character, whether the character was a protagonist, whether the character was a lover, and whether the character was a central or secondary villain. Many of these categories are the same as those discussed in Lippi-Green (1997), to allow for a closer comparison of studies.

4.2.1   Coding Decisions[5]

For the movie setting category, I noted either the country in which the movie took place if this was determinable or, following Lippi-Green's methods, I recorded the setting as "mythical." This term refers to movies that take place in a completely fictional setting. Following Lippi-Green (1997), the category of "motivations" was divided into four

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[5] The general rule-of-thumb was to code for characters who spoke at least one word. However, I only recorded instances in which characters spoke individually, as opposed to speaking in unison as a group, as this eliminated the issue of having to decide whether each character who speaks in a group should be counted individually or whether the group should be coded as a whole. I also decided to exclude instances in which an off-screen voice is heard without it being clear as to the character to which the voice belonged, as this would eliminate the possibility that the character would appear on-screen at a later point and inadvertently be coded for twice.

groups: positive, negative, mixed, and unclear. However, as Lippi-Green does not explicitly state the criteria she used for placing characters into each category, I had to come up with my own. Characters were recorded as having positive motivations if it was clear that they aligned themselves in some way with a protagonist, while characters were said to have negative motivations when it was clear that they sided against a protagonist or when they participated in actions that would potentially harm a protagonist. Characters that shifted sides throughout the movie were recorded as having "mixed" motivations, while characters with very minor roles were labeled "unclear" in their motivations. The category of "lover" refers to all characters who are involved in or showed an interest in a romantic relationship.

Phonological and syntactic characteristics of the character's speech, as well as the use of particular lexical items, were examined to determine a character's dialect and are discussed in greater detail in the qualitative results section of this study (Section 5.2).[6] In many instances of dialect portrayal in these films, highly salient and stereotypical features are employed (such as the lexical item *y'all*) that make the dialect easy to identify quickly. With regards to the strength of the dialect, while this was not coded for, instances in which there appeared to be a noticeable difference among characters in the strength of a particular dialect were noted. In cases where there was insufficient data to categorize the speech into one dialect category with certainty and in cases in which the speech was not of a recognizable variety, the variety was labeled as "unclear." A second

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[6] Bell (1984, 194) argues that actors' reproductions of dialect features need not be accurate representations of the dialect in question, but instead simply sufficient to evoke the linguistic model.

rater (a native speaker of English who was born and raised in the United States) was also asked to view each movie and record each character's dialect, to ensure reliability of the data. Where differences in the determination of a dialect occurred and a clear consensus between raters could not be reached, the dialect was labeled as "unclear." Finally, several characters appeared to use more than one dialect through the course of the film. In these cases, the character was classified according to the dialect he or she used predominantly throughout the film.

The data collection process yielded 554 characters that used twenty-two identifiable dialects or languages. Of these varieties, nineteen are dialects of English (including regional and social dialects of US English, Standard American English, varieties of British and other native Englishes, and non-native Englishes) and three are foreign languages. Table 4.1 below presents a list of the different dialects and languages present in the seventeen movies, with the number of characters using each variety:

Table 4.1 List of dialects and languages used in 17 recent animated films (Azad)

Dialect/Language	N
Standard American English	272
New York English	60
Boston English	8
Midwestern/Minnesotan English	5
Southern English	25
African American Vernacular English	13
"Surfer" or "hippie" style of English	4
Standard British English	39
Scottish English	5
Australian English	16
Jamaican English	4
Hispanic English	12
French English	35
Italian English	4

Table 4.1 continued

Dialect/Language	N
German English	3
Austrian English	1
Russian/Eastern European English	25
Indian English	2
Chinese English	17
French (language)	2
Italian (language)	1
Japanese (language)	1
Total	554

4.3   Data Analysis Process

After all the data were gathered, I analyzed them both quantitatively and qualitatively,

examining the ways in which they aligned with and departed from Lippi-Green's

findings. For the quantitative analysis, I created a chart that displayed the overall

distribution of the dialects present in the movies, comparing it to Lippi-Green's own data.

In order to compare other parts of the findings of both studies, I cross-tabulated variables

such as story setting and language variety used, as well as the variable of motivation

versus that of language variety used. Chi-square tests for homogeneity were performed

when necessary in order to determine the statistical significance of the results. Along with

a quantitative analysis of the data, I also include a more detailed discussion of how

accents function in animated films and how (and why) certain portrayals are undergoing

change. Having thus laid out the methods and techniques of the study, I now turn to a

discussion of the study's findings in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the data are examined through both a quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis (Section 5.1) includes an examination of the data in a broad sense and a comparison of the findings to Lippi-Green (1997). The overall distribution of the characters' speech into larger dialect groups is compared to Lippi-Green's findings, and data supporting the interpretation of two different functions of accent—the establishment of setting and the construction of character—are discussed and compared to Lippi-Green's data. The data are then examined in a more detailed manner (Section 5.2), with a focus on specific portrayals of certain dialects and their speakers, in order to understand more fully how accents aid in character construction. In Section 5.3, newer trends in animated films are discussed with respect to the findings of the previous sections. Finally, in Chapter 6 I discuss in detail some of the broader implications that result from the findings of the study.

5.1   Quantitative Analysis: Comparison to Lippi-Green (1997)

A broad examination of the data reveals that the speech of the 554 characters recorded in the seventeen movies can be divided into eight major dialect groups: SAE (Standard American English), Regional US English, Social US English, SBE (Standard British English), Other British English, Other English, Non-native English, and Other

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Languages.[7] The category of "Regional US English" includes varieties associated with a specific geographic region of America (e.g., New York English). The category "Social US English" includes varieties associated with specific social groups, such as a specific age group, cultural group, gender, and others. In this study, it includes African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and "surfer" or "hippie" styles of English (both of which are marked by somewhat slow speech, frequent use of the word *man* (e.g., "It's a conspiracy, man") to refer to others, and frequent use of the interjection *whoa*, among other features).[8] The category "Other British English" refers to other varieties of English used in the United Kingdom (UK) and in this study contains only Scottish English. The category "Other English" refers to varieties of English spoken in countries (excluding the US and UK) where English is the primary language spoken and includes Australian and Jamaican English. The category of "Non-native English" refers to varieties spoken in areas in which English is not the primary language and includes European and Asian varieties of English. Finally, the category "Other Languages" refers to languages other than English used in the movies (see Table 4.1).

The distribution of the characters into these dialect groups is presented in Figure 5.1a below in ratio form. These findings are compared to those of Lippi-Green (1997),

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[7] These categories are based on the categories outlined in Lippi-Green (1997).
[8] Although the labels of *surfer* and *hippie* reflect two different identities or character portrayals, these speech styles are similar and thus have been grouped together into the same category.

presented in Figure 5.1b. This information from my data is also presented as raw numbers

in Table 5.1, following the two pie charts:[9]
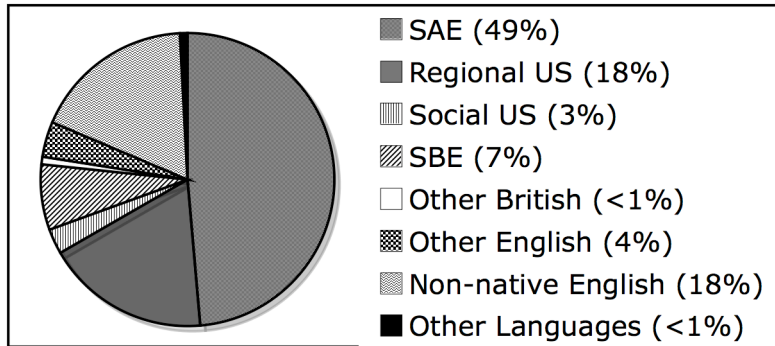
Figure 5.1a Characters distributed by language variety, n=554 (Azad)
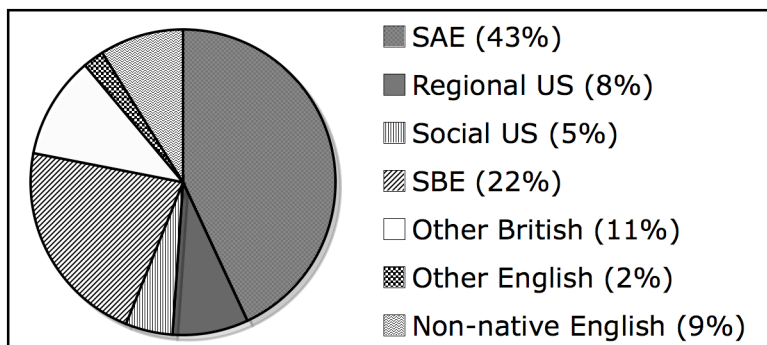
Figure 5.1b Characters distributed by language variety, n=371 (Lippi-Green 1997)

Table 5.1 Raw figures of characters distributed by language variety (Azad)

	SAE	Regional US	Social US	SBE	Other Brit.	Other Eng.	Non-nat. Eng.	Other Lang.	Total
Azad study	272	98	17	39	5	20	99	4	554

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[9] Raw numbers for Lippi-Green's (1997) data are not listed here due to the fact that she only presents this data as rounded percentages and does not provide raw figures.

A comparison of the pie charts above (Figures 5.1a and 5.1b) reveals similar percentages

for several categories, namely that of "SAE" (49% in my study versus 43% in Lippi-

Green's), "Social US English" (3% versus 5%), and "Other English" (4% versus 2%).

Like Lippi-Green (1997), the findings of the present study indicate that more characters

in these films speak Standard American English than any other variety. On the other

hand, there are several notable differences between the two figures. First, the present

study includes the category of "Other Language" to account for a small handful of

characters who speak little to no English in the movies, but instead employ a foreign

language. While the presence of languages other than English in animated movies

appears to be a more recent phenomenon (as Lippi-Green did not report any such cases),

these characters–totaling just four in number–are generally very minor characters and

appear in their respective movies no more than once.[10] It is thus difficult to draw any

conclusions about the use of foreign languages in animated films, though these

occurrences are still noteworthy and merit further investigation.

Some more significant differences between my study and Lippi-Green's are the

disparities in percentages for the categories of "Regional US" (18% in my study versus

8% in Lippi-Green's), "SBE" (7% versus 22%), "Other British" (< 1% versus 11%) and

"Non-native English" (18% versus 9%).[11] Some caution must be used when interpreting

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[10] The one exception to this statement is an Italian-speaking character in the movie *Cars* who has a somewhat more visible role in the film.

[11] According to chi-square tests performed for these pairs of data, the differences in the findings are all statistically significant at $p < .001$ ($\chi^2 = 17.1$ for "Regional US," 43.2 for "SBE," 78.9 for "Other British," and 14.3 for "Non-native English").

these findings, due to the fact that the present study does not examine all available animated films from the period in question (unlike Lippi-Green's study). The representativeness of the data could thus be questioned, and certain elements of the observed distribution of dialects may be a result of aspects of the movie selection process. Nevertheless, the present study will attempt to account for the observed differences between the distributions of dialects in the two studies further on. Until then, it will suffice to call attention to fact that the data suggest that the presence of regional US accents and foreign-accented English has increased over the past fifteen years, while the presence of Standard British English and other British Englishes (i.e. Scottish) has decreased. I will for now turn the discussion to two major functions of accent in film, one being the establishment of setting and the other being the construction of character.

5.1.1 Accent as a Tool for Establishing Setting

As noted earlier, the nature of performance generally entails that attention is called to the act of expression itself (Bauman 1978, 11). The language employed during the performance is on display along with the speaker, and is thus usually carefully crafted and deployed to a desired effect. It is not surprising then that much accent use in film is not simply coincidental, but instead quite deliberate. One major function of accent in films in general is for the establishment of setting. Lippi-Green argues (1997, 84) that in many films intended for American audiences, directors call for actors to use accented forms of English (whether these accents are contrived or not) in order to convey to the

audience that the movie is taking place in a foreign setting, as the use of actual foreign languages would render the movie incomprehensible to a large part of the intended audience (and subtitles are not usually an option given the young age of many viewers). The main function of accent in these instances, then, is for conveying setting (although it is still possible for accent to function for other additional purposes at the same time). Lippi-Green (1997, 84) includes a list of over ten movies in which accent is used to establish setting, and indeed the list could easily be lengthened today.

Given this use of accent for conveying setting in film, it would be worthwhile to consider the extent to which accents in recent animated films function as tools for establishing setting, and the extent to which they potentially serve other purposes. One way to approach this question is to examine the distribution of specific accents across specific setting types. If an accent occurs mostly in its natural setting (e.g., if Australian accents occur mostly in movies set in Australia), this is one indication that the accent is primarily functioning as an indicator of setting. Lippi-Green (1997) investigates this issue in her study, specifically examining the distribution of foreign accents across setting types. In order to compare my study to hers I have cross-tabulated my data in the same way, examining the distribution of characters with and without foreign accents or languages across the three different setting types that Lippi-Green specifies.[12] These three different setting types are: "English-speaking Setting" (including countries where English is the primary language, such as the US, Britain, and Australia), "Non-English-speaking

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[12] For the purposes of this analysis, I have combined characters who use foreign accents and those who use foreign languages into the same category.

Setting" (including areas in which English is not the primary language spoken, such as European and Asian countries), and "Mythical Setting" (including settings in which there are no clear primary or national languages). Table 5.2a below presents the findings of my study, and Table 5.2b presents Lippi-Green's findings:

Table 5.2a Comparison of foreign accent and setting, n=554 (Azad)

	English-speaking Setting	Non-English-speaking Setting	Mythical Setting
Characters with foreign accents/languages	8 (6%)	76 (38%)	19 (9%)
Characters with non-foreign accents	130 (94%)	122 (62%)	199 (91%)
Total	138 (100%)	198 (100%)	218 (100%)

Table 5.2b Comparison of foreign accent and setting, n=371 (Lippi-Green 1997)

	English-speaking Setting	Non-English-speaking Setting	Mythical Setting
Characters with foreign accents	17 (8%)	16 (15%)	1 (2%)
Characters with non-foreign accents	205 (92%)	89 (85%)	43 (98%)
Total	222 (100%)	105 (100%)	44 (100%)

As indicated in Table 5.2a, 38% of the characters in non-English-speaking settings employ foreign accents (or languages). While not the majority of characters, this percentage is nevertheless significantly higher than both the percentage of characters in

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English-speaking settings with foreign accents/languages (6%)[13] and the percentage of

characters in mythical settings with foreign accents/languages (9%)[14]. This finding lends

support to the idea that one function of accent in animated films is the establishment of

setting. Moreover, the present study's finding of 38% differs significantly from Lippi-

Green's own finding of 15% (Table 5.2b).[15] This may indicate an increasing tendency in

recent animated films for foreign accents to convey setting.

However, the data in Table 5.2a also suggest that foreign accents are not merely

used for establishment of setting, but may instead be used to convey other elements of the

films, such as characterization. For example, as may be seen in Table 5.1a, 9% of

characters in mythical settings employ a foreign accent/language. Given that there are no

predominant languages associated with mythical settings, the foreign accents that occur

therein are likely not conveying setting, but instead may be conveying something else,

such as characterization.[16] Moreover, while 9% is certainly not a large proportion, it is

noticeably larger than that of Lippi-Green's study (Table 5.1b), in which only 2% of

characters in mythical settings use foreign accents. This suggests that in mythical settings

there may be an increasing tendency for foreign accents to convey something other than

setting. Overall, the findings in these tables indicate that while foreign accents appear to

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[13] $\chi^2 = 46.1, p < .001$
[14] $\chi^2 = 50.2, p < .001$
[15] $\chi^2 = 17.4, p < .001$
[16] It is also possible that such uses of foreign accents are intended to convey an image of a globalized, diverse land in which different groups live and interact. While this possibility is not examined in depth in the present study, it is nevertheless important to note for future investigation.

be increasingly used to convey setting, they are also increasingly being used to convey other elements of film.

Although Lippi-Green (1997) only considers the issue of the function of foreign accents in American animated films, it may be useful to examine whether other varieties of English, such as SAE, regional varieties, and social varieties, exhibit the same patterns and function to convey both setting and something other than setting. Table 5.3 below examines the distribution of characters speaking varieties of US English across setting types, as compared to the distribution of characters speaking all other varieties. The US English varieties considered here are Standard American English (SAE), Regional US varieties, and Social US varieties (as mentioned above, this refers to varieties associated with a particular age group, cultural group, social class group, etc.). Note that, the "English-speaking Setting" has been divided into a "US English-speaking Setting" and an "Other English-speaking Setting." This has been done in order to make more apparent the distribution of US English dialects into US English settings as compared to other settings. Table 5.3 below presents the results of the analysis.

Table 5.3 Comparison of US accent and setting, n=554 (Azad)

	US English-speaking Setting	Other English-speaking Setting	Non-English-speaking Setting	Mythical Setting
SAE	56 (58%)	25 (60%)	85 (43%)	106 (49%)
Regional US	29 (30%)	2 (5%)	13 (7%)	54 (25%)
Social US	4 (4%)	1 (2%)	3 (2%)	9 (4%)
Other dialect/language	7 (7%)	14 (33%)	97 (49%)	49 (22%)
Total	96 (100%)	42 (100%)	198 (100%)	218 (100%)

Table 5.3 reveals several notable findings. First, across all settings except one (the non-English-speaking setting) more characters speak SAE than any other variety. Indeed, SAE-speaking characters account for 43% of characters even in non-English-speaking settings. This is not extremely surprising, because there is a tendency in general American society to view SAE as the lack of an accent (Lippi-Green 1997, 41). It could be argued, then, that this finding indicates that in these movies SAE represents an unmarked accent against which others are highlighted. However, this claim that SAE is completely unmarked or neutral is challenged later. The findings also reveal some notable points about the distribution of regional US accents across setting types. First, a large percentage of characters in US English-speaking settings (30%) employ regional US accents. As was shown above regarding foreign accents, this may suggest that a major function of regional US accents is to convey setting. At the same time, however, Table 5.3 also indicates that 25% of characters in mythical settings speak with regional US

accents. This finding suggests that these accents are not serving the purpose of conveying

setting, since there are no logical dialects or languages attached to mythical settings.

Regional US accents, as with foreign accents, appear to function both as tools to convey

setting as well as some aspect other than setting.

An examination of dialects distributed across major language settings thus

indicates that they do indeed serve the purpose of establishing setting. However, the

findings also reveal that in some cases, these accents are used for some purpose other

than conveying setting. In the next section we consider more systematically the

possibility of the use of accent for aiding in characterization.

5.1.2 *Accent as a Tool for Constructing Character*

Lippi-Green (1997, 81) argues that although one purpose of accent use in film is for

establishing setting, accents also serve as tools for creating character traits, through their

association with particular groups of people and the ideologies and stereotypes attached

to these groups. She claims that foreign accents that appear in non-foreign settings are

likely not being used to convey setting, but certain elements of character instead. One

major element, based on the tendency for animated movies to depict basic themes of

good versus evil, is the character's role as having positive motivations (and siding with

the forces of good) or having negative motivations (and siding with the forces of evil). In

order to investigate the association of foreign accents with positive or negative

motivations (or neither), Lippi-Green (1997) examines the distribution of all of the

characters with clear positive, negative, or mixed motivations across major language groups. I cross-tabulated my data in the same way, and the results of my study are presented in Table 5.4a below. Lippi-Green's results are presented in Table 5.4b. The dialects have been grouped into the following major language groups: "US English" (including SAE, regional US dialects, and social US dialects), "British and Other English" (including SBE, Scottish, Australian, and Jamaican), and "Foreign English/Language" (including all other dialects and languages used). Before examining the results of the two tables, however, it may be useful to point out that in my study of 554 characters with identifiable dialects, only 278 possessed clear positive, negative, or mixed motivations. The motivations of the other 276 characters (almost 50%) were unable to be determined, usually because these characters were too minor in the films, and thus did not have enough screen time in which to establish motivations. By comparison, only 23% of characters in Lippi-Green's study were recorded as having "unclear" motivations. This difference between the studies may be due to the fact that there appears to be an increase in the amount of characters per film in general over the past fifteen years (my study averaged about twice as many characters per film than Lippi-Green's study). Many of these characters tend to have minor roles, however, and this may account for the overall increase in the proportion of characters with "unclear" motivations. The tables comparing accent and motivations are presented below.

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Table 5.4a Comparison of motivations and accent, n=278 (Azad)

	US English	British and Other English	Foreign English / Language
Positive	145 (76%)	16 (43%)	37 (76%)
Negative	34 (18%)	15 (41%)	11 (22%)
Mixed	13 (7%)	6 (16%)	1 (2%)

Table 5.4b Comparison of motivations and accent, n=285 (Lippi-Green 1997)

	US English	British and Other English	Foreign English / Language
Positive	122 (74%)	53 (58%)	10 (37%)
Negative	33 (20%)	28 (30%)	11 (41%)
Mixed	11 (7%)	11 (12%)	6 (22%)

Lippi-Green's findings (Table 5.4b) indicate that 41% of foreign-accented characters are portrayed as "bad" characters with negative motivations, while only 20% of US English-speaking characters and 30% of British and other English-speaking characters are portrayed as being "bad" characters. This high percentage for foreign-accented characters, she argues, suggests that the overall representation of foreign-accented people is much more negative than the representation of either speakers of US or British English (Lippi-Green 1997, 92). A comparison of my own data to that of Lippi-Green reveals some similarities and some noticeable differences between the two groups. Like Lippi-Green's findings, my findings indicate that about 76% of US English-

speaking characters are portrayed as having positive motivations. However, my study (Table 5.4a) indicates that only 22% of foreign-accented characters are portrayed as being bad characters. Indeed, the results of my study suggest that the majority of foreign-accented characters are portrayed quite positively (76%). It would appear, then, that the overall representation of foreign-accented people has in fact become more positive (with respect to being seen as "good" or "evil") over time. Furthermore, my study indicates that the portrayal of British and other English-speaking characters has become increasingly negative (30% in Lippi-Green's study versus 41% in my own) and less positive (58% versus 43%) with respect to character role. Before concluding that there has been a shift to view foreign-accented persons more positively and speakers of British and other Englishes more negatively, it may be wise to examine some of the data more closely in order to determine whether some other factors can account for these findings.

First, examining the subset of data comprised of speakers of British and other English varieties, there are only 37 characters with clear motivations, 15 of whom were determined to have "negative" motivations. These numbers are rather small, and the paucity of the data thus necessitates caution when interpreting the findings. Of the 15 "bad" characters, 13 are speakers of Standard British English and 2 are speakers of Australian English, which represents only 12.5% of the total number of Australian English speakers (n=16). This offers little evidence that Australian English speakers are portrayed negatively (moreover, the total number of Australian English speakers is likely too small to draw firm conclusions about any portrayals of this group at all). On the other

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hand the 13 "bad" SBE-speaking characters make up about 33% of the total number of

SBE speakers, which is a more substantial proportion. Interestingly, 7 of the 13

characters appear in movies made before the year 2000. While this is perhaps not

remarkable in and of itself, it is interesting to note that around this time period some

notable changes occurred within the genre of children's animated films. First, Disney—

which was for a long time the most well-known and successful producer of children's

animated films—experienced a dramatic drop in the success of its movies around this

time (Mitchell 2002). While Disney's *Tarzan* (1999) grossed $435 million dollars at the

box-office worldwide, its next movie, *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000), grossed just

$160 million. Two major factors in Disney's drop in popularity were the increasing

popularity of computer-generated imagery (CGI) as an alternative form of animation, and

rising competition with other production companies (such as Pixar and DreamWorks)

that were making use of CGI for animated films (Mitchell 2002). Children's animated

movies made after 2000 were usually animated using CGI and were often not produced

by Disney exclusively.[17]

The increasing popularity of movies made by production companies other than

Disney and the increasing use of CGI animation affected the appearance of animated

films, and perhaps even affected their tone as different production companies may have

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[17] Disney and Pixar soon began collaborating on projects, and in a 2006 deal between the two studios
Disney bought Pixar.

distinct styles and approaches to movie-making.[18] If indeed the appearance and tone of

these movies have undergone changes, this may perhaps shed light on the finding that 7

of the 13 bad SBE-speaking characters occur in pre-2000 movies. The changes may

indicate that portraying SBE speakers as "evil" represents an older idea of the "villain"

popular in older, pre-2000 movies, but less popular in post-2000 movies. Moreover, 5 of

the 13 characters occur in the movie *Shrek* (2001), a movie that could be viewed as a

parody of traditional fairytales (do Rozario 2004). As a parody, *Shrek* contains (and then

proceeds to challenge) many "classic" elements of fairytales (an issue that will be

addressed again later). This may indicate, then, that a portrayal of SBE as villainous may

be a classic fairytale feature. If this is indeed the case, then, taken together with the

previous finding that 7 of the 13 characters appear in pre-2000 movies, this suggests that

SBE as evil may represent an older, classic idea of the villain in animated movies. This

conception of the evilness of SBE as an older idea may also account for the finding that,

as seen in Figure 5.1a, the overall occurrence of SBE in recent animated movies has

decreased since Lippi-Green's study. More data and observations are of course needed to

confirm these hypotheses, and future investigation may yield insightful information about

this topic.

The results of Table 5.4a also suggested that many more foreign-accented

characters were portrayed positively than negatively, a finding that differs from Lippi-

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[18] Although beyond the scope of this study, there is much work that could be done regarding how exactly
the emergence of major competitors to Disney and the shift to CGI animation have affected the overall
appearance and mood of animated movies.

Green's data and warrants deeper investigation to determine the potential causes of such a finding. Of the 49 foreign-accented characters with clear motivations, 36 appear in movies set abroad. In these cases, it is difficult to determine with certainty whether an accent is functioning mainly for setting or for characterization; it is possible, therefore, that many of these 36 "good" foreign-accented characters have accents that function mainly for setting establishment and are not intended to convey a characterization of foreign-accented characters as necessarily "good." On the other hand, of the remaining 13 foreign-accented characters that appear in movies set in English-speaking countries or in mythical lands, 12 (92%) are portrayed as having clearly positive motivations. Although these numbers are small and so caution is required when interpreting them, this finding could indicate that portrayals of foreign-accented people are in fact becoming more positive overall. More work in needed, however, to confirm this. Nevertheless, this issue will be addressed again further in this study.

A broad analysis of the data from the present study thus reveals some similarities to—but also some differences from—Lippi-Green's (1997) findings. Both studies revealed that SAE-speakers make up the majority of the characters in the films, and both found this proportion to be around 50%. My study, however, indicates an increase in speakers of regional US accents and speakers with foreign accents, and a decrease in speakers of SBE and other English varieties.[19] Furthermore, my study revealed that speakers of SBE are portrayed more negatively than before with respect to character role,

[19] Again, though, the representativeness of the data may be questionable.

while speakers with foreign accents are portrayed much more positively than before, although more data are needed to draw firm conclusions about these findings.

While a broad, quantitative analysis does provide us with useful information regarding the use of accents for characterization (and setting) it does not provide us with a full picture of how accents can be used to create character. For this, a more focused and descriptive analysis of the data is necessary. Indeed, Coupland (2007, 76) notes that a more fruitful analysis of style can be achieved by attending to the local contextualization of individual features in the talk. For example, while a broad analysis indicates overall positive portrayals of foreign-accented characters and speakers of US varieties with respect to character roles (see Table 5.4a), a more in-depth analysis—as we shall discover in the following section—reveals that while a given character and his or her dialect may not be overtly portrayed as "evil," negative and restrictive stereotypes may still be reproduced and deployed for characterization.

5.2   Accent, Stereotypes, and Characterization in Children's Animated Films

In this section, I examine the data in a more detailed manner, analyzing characters' speech in specific film scenes, to understand how accent use serves to reproduce and sustain cultural stereotypes and to aid in character portrayal. I will consider stereotypes that are overtly negative, examining some negative stereotypes associated with African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Hispanic English and New York English, as well as stereotypes that are less overtly negative, such as those associated with Minnesotan

English. Finally, I will examine how multiple identities can be associated with one particular accent depending on the context of the discourse.

5.2.1 Negative Stereotypes: The Portrayal of AAVE Speakers

Both Lippi-Green's (1997) and Pandey's (2001) findings reveal a portrayal of AAVE-speaking characters as irresponsible and lazy. Lippi-Green (1997, 94) argues that AAVE-speakers are portrayed as "show[ing] no purpose in life," and Pandey similarly claims that they are portrayed as having a sense of "aimlessness" (2001, 6) and showing a "lack of responsibility" (5). Such portrayals of African Americans reproduce and sustain an abiding stereotype of this group as being lazy and irresponsible. Researchers (Rickford and Rickford 2000, 30; Dixon 2006, 102) have argued that this stereotype (often referred to as the "Coon" stereotype) has existed for a long time and perhaps originated during slavery as a means of justifying the practice and allaying slave-owners' fears of a slave rebellion by portraying them as too lazy and unintelligent to act out. This stereotype has been sustained partly through media portrayals (e.g., the 1934 movie *Stand Up and Cheer*) of AAVE-speaking characters as lazy and reckless, which have helped to strengthen the indexical links between the dialect and these social meanings.

Although in my study AAVE is not featured extensively, an examination of AAVE-speaking characters reveals that several are indeed portrayed as lazy and irresponsible.

One such portrayal of an AAVE speaker can be found in the movie *Mulan*. This movie tells the story of a girl, Mulan, who takes her father's place in a war by disguising herself as a man. In one scene, as shown below in Example 1, Mulan's guardian ancestors decide she needs to be protected and that one of them should be sent to accompany her. Mushu, a small, AAVE-speaking dragon, volunteers for the job, but the ancestors object to this. Throughout this interaction, Mushu is portrayed as irresponsible and is not respected by the other ancestors. The bolded words represent some of the AAVE features present in Mushu's speech.

Example 1

(1) Great Ancestor:	Silence! We must send the most powerful of all.
(2) Mushu:	(*laughs*) Okay, okay, **I** [monophthong] get the **drift** [dɹɪf], **I'll** [monophthong] go.
(3) Guardian Ancestors:	(*uproarious laughter*)
(4) Mushu:	Oh **y'all** don't think I can do it? Watch **this** [dɪs] **here** [r-less]! (*releases a tiny breath of fire*) Ha! Jump back, I'm pretty hot, eh? **Don't** make me have to singe **nobody** to prove **no** point.
(5) Great Ancestor:	You had your chance to protect the Fa family!
(6) Ancestor 1:	Your misguidance led Fa Theng to disaster!
(7) Fa Theng:	Yeah. Thanks a lot.
(8) Mushu:	And your point is?
(9) Great Ancestor:	The point is, we will be sending a real dragon to retrieve Mulan.
(10) Mushu:	What? What? **I'm** [monophthong] a real dragon!
(11) Great Ancestor:	You are not worthy of this spot!

As shown in Example 1 above, certain phonological, syntactic, and lexical features of Mushu's speech are present that serve to mark him as a speaker of AAVE and index his membership in the social group "African American," such monophthongized diphthongs (e.g., lines 2 and 10), consonant cluster reduction (line 2), non-rhoticity (line 4), the production of fricatives as stops (line 4), negative concord (line 4), and the lexical item *y'all* (line 4).

In this interaction, Mushu is portrayed as a character who does not garner much respect from those around him. At the start of the passage, the Great Ancestor says that they must send the "most powerful" guardian to watch over Mulan (line 1). Mushu's response in line 2 ("Okay, okay, I get the drift, I'll go") indicates that to him it is quite apparent that the Great Ancestor is referring to him. However, this elicits laughter from the other ancestors (line 3), indicating that they find his presumption that he is powerful to be extremely ridiculous. This laughter signals that the ancestors have little respect for Mushu and do not view him as capable. This is confirmed by Mushu's response in line 4 ("Oh, y'all don't think I can do it?"). The lack of respect is also evident in lines 9 and 11, where it is revealed that the Great Ancestor does not consider him to be a "real dragon" (as indicated by the stress that he puts on the word "real" in line 9, which implies that Mushu is a "fake" dragon) and says that he is "not worthy" of the job. This labeling is akin to Pandey's (2001, 6) argument discussed above (see Section 2.3.1) regarding the "power of perspective" being given to speakers of standard dialects. In this instance, the "power of perspective" is afforded to the Great Ancestor (who speaks Standard British English), who questions Mushu's authenticity as a dragon and labels him an unworthy candidate.

Furthermore, Mushu is portrayed as a character who is somewhat irresponsible and does not make good choices. This is revealed in lines 5-7, where the ancestors remind him that he had a chance to prove his worth and failed. His actions are referred to as "misguidance" and resulted in "disaster" (line 6). These descriptions cast Mushu as

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one who does not make good decisions. Mushu's response in line 8 ("And your point is?") suggests that he views the incident with Fa Theng as trivial and does not understand the seriousness of the situation. Again, his remarks here cast him as rather irresponsible and reckless.

In another scene from *Mulan*, Mushu is sent to awaken the Great Stone Dragon (portrayed as a piece of carved stone), who the Great Ancestor has decided should be sent to protect Mulan. However, while Mushu is trying to wake the Dragon up by knocking on the statue, he accidentally breaks off the Dragon's ear, which causes the whole statue to crumble to the ground. Mushu worries aloud to another character (a cricket named Cri-kee) about what he will do next, as is shown in Example 2 below. In this example, Mushu is again portrayed as reckless and rash. Again, the bolded items represent some of the AAVE features present in Mushu's speech.

Example 2
(1) Mushu: **This** [dIs] is just great, now what? I'm doomed! And all 'cuz "Miss Man" **decides** [dIsa:dz] to take her little drag show on **the** [də] road!
(2) Cri-kee: (*talks to Mushu by chirping*)
(3) Mushu: Go get **her** [r-less]? What's **the** [də] matter with you? After this Great Stone Humpty Dumpty mess I'd have to bring her home **with** [wId] a medal to get back in the **temple** [reduced *l* after vowel]. (*Mushu's face lights up*) What a minute! That's it! I'll make Mulan a war hero and they'll be begging me to come back to work! That's the master plan! Oh, you **done** it now, man!

In this example, Mushu worries about what to do now that the Stone Dragon is broken. However, as line 3 reveals, his concern is not so much related to who will protect Mulan, but instead how he will "get back in the temple." Mushu then has the idea to "make Mulan a war hero," which will have the other guardian ancestors "begging [him] to come

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back." These lines suggest that Mushu will go extreme lengths to gain respect from the ancestors; he is willing to risk Mulan's life to make her a "war hero," all in order to redeem himself. In addition to painting him as rather selfish, this scene also portrays Mushu as reckless and irresponsible.

These two scenes of *Mulan*, along with others in the film, serve to portray Mushu as an AAVE-speaking character who is rather reckless and irresponsible, and who is not respected by his peers. These portrayals are in contrast to the portrayals of the other characters in these scenes, who are not cast as irresponsible and are not speakers of AAVE. In fact, Mushu is the only AAVE-speaking character in the whole movie, which is set in China (where one would not typically expect to hear many AAVE-speaking persons). The use of AAVE appears then to function more as a tool for characterization. In these scenes, Mushu's AAVE accent—in conjunction with the content of his talk— reproduces and sustains a long-standing stereotype discussed above of AAVE-speakers as irresponsible.

A similar portrayal of an AAVE-speaking character is present in the movie *Shark Tale*. This movie tells the story of an AAVE-speaking fish named Oscar who works at a whale-washing business, but dreams of being rich and famous. Oscar gets a chance to be seen as important when it is discovered that a dangerous shark has been killed and it appears that Oscar was the person who slew him. Instead of admitting that he did not kill the shark, Oscar pretends that he was in fact the "sharkslayer" and, for a while, revels in the fame and fortune that goes along with this falsehood.

Throughout much of the movie, Oscar is portrayed as an irresponsible character who does not take life seriously. He is also portrayed as lazy and as having no interest in working hard. For instance, in an early scene in the movie, presented below in Example 3, Oscar greets his co-workers as he heads to his workstation. He has arrived a little late and notices that his time-card has already been punched in for him. He realizes that his co-worker Angie, an SAE-speaking fish, has done this for him, and he goes off to talk to her. He finds her in her office talking on the phone with a customer. As before, the bolded items represent some of the AAVE features present in Oscar's speech.

Example 3

(1) Oscar:	**Yo** Johnson, is it lunch yet?
(2) Johnson:	You just got here!
(3) Oscar:	That's **my** [monophthong] point! (*laughs*)
(4) Oscar:	(*greeting a worker*) Hey headphone guy! (*approaches a group of three female turtles*) Lookin' good ladies!
(5) Turtles:	Hey Oscar!
(6) Oscar:	Mm, Mm, Mm! Keep up the **bad** work!
<several lines omitted>	
(7) Angie:	Hi, Oscar!
(8) Oscar:	Hey thanks for coverin' for me. (*grabs phone from Angie and starts talking to the customer*) **Yo**, I'm sorry, Dun. Angie needs to get her **freak** on, would you hold for one moment please. Thanks, **dawg**.
(9) Angie:	Oscar!
(10) Oscar:	C'mon Ang, dance **with** [wIt] me, **mama**! Let me see it! (*singing and dancing*) Tomorrow **I** [monophthong] will be rich. C'mon Ang!
(11) Angie:	Oscar! You're gonna get me fired!
(12) Oscar:	Please, you, fired? Nah, **that** [dæt] can't happen, cuz' then **I** [monophthong] would have absolutely no reason to come to work.

In Example 3, some of the phonological and lexical features that mark Oscar's speech as AAVE are monophthongized diphthongs (lines 3, 10, and 12), the production of fricatives as stops (lines 10 and 12) and the lexical items *yo*, *freak*, *dawg*, and *bad* (lines

1, 6, and 8). [20] In addition to these phonological and lexical features, there are other aspects of his portrayal that are worthy of note. When Oscar arrives at work, he asks his co-worker if it is lunchtime (line 1). When his co-worker reminds him that he has just arrived, Oscar replies "That's my point" (line 3). Oscar's utterances in this interaction indicate that, although he has just arrived at work, he is already ready to take a break. In this exchange, then, he is portrayed as a character who is lazy and does not like to work hard.

Oscar's conversation with Angie (starting at line 7) takes place in Angie's office, where she is on the phone with a customer. The office setting is generally seen as a place where people are expected to be serious and professional, and are expected not to behave childishly. However, when Oscar enters, he interrupts her conversation with the customer and, as shown in line 8, even takes the phone from her and starts talking to the customer, telling the customer that Angie "needs to get her freak on." He then tells Angie to dance with him, referring to her as "mama" (line 10). Oscar's behavior and utterances, given the professional office setting, serves to portray him as irresponsible and one who does not take work seriously. When Angie objects to Oscar's behavior and tells him that he will get her fired, Oscar replies that this is impossible because then he would "have absolutely no reason to come to work" (line 12). His admission that he only comes to work to spend

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[20] Oscar is played by Will Smith, an African American actor who tends to use more Standard English than AAVE in public. The occurrence of highly marked AAVE features in Oscar's speech, then, appears to be an intentional choice of the director. Thus, as discussed earlier in Chapter 3, although Will Smith is the *animator* who physically produces Oscar's AAVE dialect, the director is the *principal* responsible for its presence in the first place.

time with Angie again portrays Oscar as a person who has little interest in working and would rather have fun.

This portrayal is also evident in Example 4 below, where Oscar tells Angie about a new moneymaking idea he has thought up:

Example 4

(1) Oscar:	Oh, listen, tell me what you think about **this** [dIs]. This is like, the best idea ever, **a'ight**? It's a sure thing, guaranteed cash extravaganza. (*pause*) Bottled water.
(2) Angie:	Oh no…
(3) Oscar:	Now all **I** [monophthong] need is another advance on **my** [monophthong] paycheck from the boss and, Ang, I am outta **this** [dIs] place, I mean I'm- I'm- I'm (*makes sound of a plane flying away*)
(4) Angie:	Oscar, instead of getting in Mr. Sykes face with another one of your get rich quick schemes, go do something you're actually good at—your job!

In Example 4, Oscar tells Angie about a "guaranteed cash extravaganza" that will make lots of money quickly (line 1). His desire to make money quickly reveals that he is not interested in working hard to earn a living. Furthermore, Angie's response in line 4 ("**another** one of your get rich quick schemes") indicates that Oscar has had many such ideas over the years, while her suggestion that he "go do something [he is] actually good at" suggests that all of these "schemes" have been foolish and unsuccessful. Interestingly, this portrayal of Oscar as imprudent and impetuous is similar to the portrayal of Mushu discussed earlier. Both characters are portrayed as rather reckless and prone to irrational and imprudent ideas.

In these interactions, then, Oscar is portrayed as an AAVE-speaking character who is irresponsible and does not like to work. Also notable in these interactions is the fact that Angie, who represents the voice of reason and responsibility, speaks SAE. There

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is a clear juxtaposition between the lazy and irresponsible AAVE speaker and the rational SAE speaker that serves to highlight the differences between the two and call attention to Oscar's irresponsible nature. Furthermore, given that this movie takes place in a mythical setting with no natural or national languages, the AAVE accent is likely being used not for conveying setting, but for aiding in character construction instead. In this situation, then, the use of the AAVE accent, combined with the content of Oscar's talk, serves to reproduce and sustain a stereotype of African Americans as lazy and irresponsible.

Along with a portrayal of Oscar as irresponsible, the movie also paints him as someone who is very interested in and attracted to women. This portrayal is in fact associated with another long-standing stereotype of African Americans. As Dixon (2006) discusses, another stereotype of African Americans that emerged a little after slavery was that of the "Black Buck," a character who is "hypersexed" and "has no control over his sexual appetite" (103). Some of Oscar's utterances in the interactions above reveal his "sexual appetite" for women. For instance, in line 4 in Example 3, Oscar greets three female turtles not with the word "hello," but instead with the phrase "lookin' good ladies." This phrase suggests that he notices and appreciates their feminine appearance and looks. Additionally, his utterance "mm, mm, mm" (line 6) not only signifies his approval of the females, but also—insofar as the sound "mm" is often used as an expression of pleasure when consuming food or drink—quite literally signals his "appetite" for the women.

This portrayal of AAVE-speaking characters as "hypersexed" is also present in the movie *Happy Feet*. This movie tells the story of an Emperor penguin named Mumble who cannot sing, which is an important skill for these penguins to possess. Instead, Mumble has a gift for tap-dancing, which leads to him being shunned by the community. Eventually, he ends up on the other side of the Antarctic, where he meets a group of Adelie penguins (called the "Amigos") who take Mumble to their leader, Lovelace. Lovelace is an AAVE-speaking penguin who claims to be an oracle and answers questions that the penguins have. He is depicted as having a harem of female penguins around him, and his utterances, as shown below in Example 5, portray him as very sexual:

Example 5
(1) Lovelace: (*voiceover*) Hold it, **y'all**. I have a warning for the audience. Ladies, please avert **your** [r-less] eyes. 'Cuz I been known to hypnotize.
<several lines omitted>
(2) Lovelace: The voices are shrieking in **my** [monophthong] head! They're saying, 'Lovelace, who is this fool? Tell him, tell him to go forth, and multiply!" Come to think of it, why don't we all go forth and **multiply** [məltɪpla:]?
(3) Harem: Ooh, Lovelace!
(4) Amigo 1: What- what he saying?
(5) Amigo 2: It's mating season!
(6) Amigo 3: Already?
(7) Lovelace: I will retire to **my** [monophthong] couch of perpetual indulgence.

In this example, the phonological and lexical items that help mark Lovelace's speech as AAVE are monophthongized diphthongs (lines 1, 2 and 7), non-rhoticity (line 1), and the lexical item *y'all* (line 1). When we first meet Lovelace in line 1, he addresses the movie audience and warns ladies to "avert [their] eyes" because he is hypnotizing, suggesting that he is so attractive sexually that it is dangerous. A little while later, when Mumble

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asks Lovelace so many questions that he loses his patience with Mumble, Lovelace

claims that the voices in his head are ordering him to tell Mumble to "go forth and

multiply" (line 2). Lovelace follows this up by stating that they should all go forth and

multiply, which elicits shrieks of delight from the female penguins around him. This

utterance again projects an image of Lovelace as very sexual and as having lots of sex

appeal (as evidenced by the excited females). Furthermore, Lovelace's statement that he

is going to his "couch of perpetual indulgence" again paints an image of him as

extremely sexual. Additionally, it is possible that Lovelace is intended to be a caricature

of the well known singer Barry White, given that he is initially depicted speaking in a

deep bass voice (with R&B/soul music playing in the background) that is reminiscent of

the one Barry White was famous for using in the introductions of many of his songs.

Given that Barry White is often associated with images of romance and sex appeal, this

imagery enhances the portrayal of Lovelace's sexual nature. These portrayals of Lovelace

and Oscar thus work to reproduce and sustain a stereotype of African American males as

hypersexual.

5.2.2   Negative Stereotypes: The Portrayal of Hispanic English Speakers

The present study revealed a portrayal of Hispanic English speakers very similar to the

one regarding AAVE speakers witnessed above. Hispanic English-speaking characters in

the movie *Happy Feet* are portrayed as irresponsible, lazy, and as being overly sexual.

This representation of Hispanic English speakers as lazy and sexual has been cited by

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other scholars such as Hill (2005, 114), who argues that the use of Mock Spanish by people who are not of Latino descent evokes negative stereotypes of Spanish-speaking people as lazy and "sexually loose."

The presence of Hispanic accents in animated movies appears to be a recent phenomenon; these accents do not appear to occur in either Lippi-Green's or Pandey's studies. A quote by Lippi-Green (1997) may shed light on the situation: "A study of accents in animated cartoons over time is likely to reveal the way linguistic stereotypes mirror the evolution of national fears" (85). It could be argued that in present-day America there is a preoccupation—and perhaps a fear—concerning issues of immigration. This may, according to Lippi-Green, explain the presence of Hispanic accents in recent movies such as *Happy Feet*.

In the movie, after Mumble is shunned by his fellow penguins and leaves the community, he meets a group of Hispanic English-speaking penguins called the "Amigos." These penguins, who all have Hispanic accents, are portrayed as a misfit group who like to spend their days partying and having fun. For instance, in Example 6 below, the penguins have befriended Mumble and are showing him around the area where they live. The bolded items represent Hispanic English features of the penguins' speech.

Example 6
(1) Amigo 1: Hey stretch! You like to party?
(2) Mumble: Um, party? Yeah, I guess so.
(3) Amigo 1: Well **stick** [stik] with us, baby.
(4) Amigo 2: Yeah, cuz' we practically own the action here.
(5) Mumble: Everybody's so, "spontan-new-us."

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(6) Amigo 2:      "Spontan-new-us"!
(7) Amigo 1:      Si! And these are the bad times!
(8) Amigo 3:      Yeah, our food chain gone loco.
(9) Amigo 4:      Everyone a bit [bit] down.
(10) Amigo 2:     But it ain't gonna stop [dentalized t] no party!
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In the example above, certain phonological, syntactic, and lexical features are present that

serve to mark the Amigos' speech as Hispanic English and index their Hispanic ethnicity,

such as the production of [I] as [i] (lines 3 and 9), the production of alveolar stops as

slightly dentalized (perhaps being produced with the blade of the tongue instead of the tip

of the tongue) in line 10, negative concord (line 10), copula deletion (line 9), the use of

gone instead of *has gone* in line 8, and the lexical items *si* and *loco*.

The interaction above serves to portray the Amigos as a carefree bunch who like

to party and avoid doing work. For instance, one of the first things the Amigos ask

Mumble when getting to know him is whether he likes to party (line 1), suggesting that it

is something they themselves enjoy a lot. This is also apparent in their claim that they

"own the action" (line 4), which suggests that they are the ones who party the most. In

lines 7-9, the Amigos admit that life has not been great lately due to a food shortage.

They claim that their food chain has "gone loco" (line 8). The use of the word "loco" in

this statement, in addition to signaling the Amigo's dialect, may also function as a tool

for signaling a light-hearted mood, which Hill (2005, 113) argues is one purpose that

"Mock Spanish" serves. Although these penguins are not using Mock Spanish per se,

since they are not the monolingual English speakers of non-Latino descent who Hill

claims are the main users of Mock Spanish, their use of the word *loco* may still function

in the same way that Hill describes. If so, then the phrase "gone loco" in line 8 may be

present in order to again signal the penguins' casual attitudes regarding the food crisis.

This, combined with their declaration that the crisis "ain't gonna stop no party" (line 10),

suggests that the penguins are focused on partying and not on addressing the food

shortage. This interaction portrays them as lackadaisical and immature in manner.

The Amigos' irresponsible and lazy attitudes, as well as their sexual natures, are

again displayed in Example 7 below, which takes place in the film shortly after the

interaction presented above in Example 6. Here, Mumble is looking around the area

where the Amigos live and notices one penguin carrying a pebble in his mouth. He asks

the Amigos about the penguin.

Example 7
(1) Amigo 1:   That's no rock, **hombre**. **It's** [its] love **stones** [dentalized *t*].
(2) Mumble: Huh?
(3) Amigo 2:   For **building** [bildɪŋ] the nest.
(4) Amigo 3:   The one with the most pebbles **wins** [winz].
(5) Amigo 4:   You know, **chica chica** [tʃika] boom boom.
(*Mumble notices that the Amigos have not built any nests*)
(6) Mumble: You're not interested in- in chicas?
(7) Amigos: Hey!
(8) Amigo 1:   You kidding?!
(9) Amigo 2:   Without us, the **chicas** [tʃikaz] got no boom!
(10) Mumble: So why aren't you collecting pebbles?
(11) Amigo 3:   Pebbles, shmebbles, man!
(12) Amigo 2:   **We got** personality!

In Example 7, the Amigos inform Mumble that the penguin is building a nest using "love

stones." In lines 4 and 5, two Amigos tell him that the penguin who has the most pebbles

wins the female, whom they describe as "chica chica boom boom." This phrase appears

to be a play on the Spanish word *chica*, which means *girl*. The use of the phrase—which

has sexual connotations—instead of the word *chica* alone, highlights the penguins' sexual nature and their sexual interest in female penguins. Moreover, when Mumble asks in line 6 whether or not they are interested in females, the Amigos' reactions (lines 7 and 8) indicate how preposterous that idea is. One Amigo clarifies that the ladies need the Amigos, saying that without them the females are not that attractive and have no "boom" (line 9). This line serves to reinstate the Amigos' sexual dominance and prowess, which was threatened in line 6 by an assumption that they were not sexually interested in females. These lines again help to portray the Amigos as highly sexual. The interaction in lines 10-12 also reveals the Amigos' lazy and irresponsible nature. Instead of building nests to attract mates like the other penguins do, the Amigos believe that they do not have to partake in such work and can instead win over females with their charm and charisma. This paints the Amigos as rather immature and irresponsible, and also as uninterested in working.

Thus, in a similar way to that described above regarding the portrayal of AAVE speakers, the Hispanic-English speakers in *Happy Feet* are portrayed as lazy and irresponsible, and as highly sexual. The use of Hispanic English dialects, in conjunction with the nature of the Amigos' talk, serves to reproduce and sustain stereotypes of Hispanics as lazy, irresponsible, and sexually loose.

5.2.3   Negative Stereotypes: The Portrayal of New York English Speakers

There are a number of characters in the films examined in the present study that speak

with New York dialects, and many of them share in common the character trait of being

tough and pushy. This is a stereotype of New Yorkers that has been projected in other

films as well (Metcalf 2000, 186). This stereotype is employed in these animated films

through the use of New York accents to help portray characters as tough and prone to

violence. Returning to the film *Mulan*, Example 8 below describes a scene where Mulan

first meets some of the men in the army, one of whom is a short, New York English-

speaking character named Yao who, even from his first appearance, is portrayed as tough

and violent. The bolded items below represent some of the features of Yao's New York

English dialect.

Example 8
(1) Mushu: It's all attitude! Be tough, like this guy here!
(2) Yao: (*spits on the ground*) What **are** [r-less] you lookin' at?
(3) Mushu: (*whispering to Mulan*) Punch him. It's how men say hello.
(*Mulan punches Yao on the shoulder*)
(4) Chien-Po: Oh Yao, you made a friend!
(5) Mushu: Good, now slap him on the behind, they like that!
(6) Yao: Whoa! I'm gonna hit you so **hard** [r-less], it'll make **your** [r-less] **ancestors**
                [dentalized *t*, r-less] dizzy.

In Example 8, certain phonological features are present in Yao's speech that help mark

him as a speaker of New York English and index his membership into this social group,

such as non-rhoticity (lines 2 and 6) and the production of the alveolar voiceless stop as

slightly dentalized (line 6). In this scene, Mushu is trying to help Mulan blend in with the

army men and act like them. He explicitly describes Yao as "tough" (line 1) and urges

Mulan to act like him. Yao's utterance in line 2, a response to Mulan's merely looking at him, suggests that he is easily provoked into violence. Furthermore, after Mushu urges Mulan to punch Yao and slap him on the behind as a gesture of friendship, Yao threatens to hit Mulan so hard that "it'll make [her] ancestors dizzy." This utterance again projects an image of Yao as a character who is stereotypically tough, hot-tempered, and violent.

This stereotype of New Yorkers is also present in the movie *Shark Tale*. As mentioned earlier, this movie centers on Oscar, a fish who dreams about being rich and famous. The main antagonists of the movie are a mafia group of sharks who are in charge of the reef and are all speakers of New York English. In Example 9 below, the head shark of the mafia, Don Lino, is talking to Oscar's boss, Sykes, about some new developments around the reef.

Example 9
(1) Don Lino: (*talking to his fish in a fish tank*) How **are** [r-less] my little babies this **morning** [r-less]? Ya miss me? You **doin'** [dentalized *d*] good? Eh? Eh? You see, Sykes, it's a fish eat fish world. You either take or you get taken.
<several lines omitted>
(2) Don Lino: Long story **short** [r-less], from now on **you's** work for Frankie an' Lenny, **capiche**?
(*When Sykes subtly insults Lenny, Don Lino gets angry at him*)
(3) Don Lino: That's it, that's it! You **are** [r-less] out!
(4) Sykes: What? What do you mean I'm out?
(5) Don Lino: **You're** [r-less] fired! And on top of **that** [dæt], you're gonna hafta **start** [r-less] payin' me!
(6) Sykes: For what?
(7) Don Lino: So **nothing** [nəʔIn] happens to that **little** [lIʔl] whale-wash of yours!

In Example 9 above, the phonological, syntactic, and lexical features that help mark Don Lino as a New York English speaker are non-rhoticity (lines 1, 2, 3, and 5), the dentalization of alveolar stops (line 1), the production of fricatives as stops (line 5),

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glottalization of intervocalic consonants (line 7), the nonstandard second-person singular pronoun *you's*, and the lexical item *capiche* (a borrowing from Italian). In line 1 of this interaction, Don Lino tells Sykes that they live in a "fish eat fish" world where "you either take or you get taken." This attitude reveals Don Lino's tough and merciless nature. Later, when Sykes subtly insults Don Lino's son, Don Lino fires him and threatens that Sykes will have to start paying him to keep his whale-wash business safe from harm (lines 5-7). This threat again paints Don Lino as a tough man who is hot-tempered and violent. Moreover, the indirect threat of harm to Sykes' business highlights Don Lino's mafia-man identity. The mafia is traditionally seen as an underground criminal group with a hierarchical power structure that operates deals with individuals and businesses outside of the public eye. One well known media portrayal of the mafia is present in the 1972 movie *The Godfather*, which tells the story of the dealings of the criminal Corleone family. In fact, the mafia sharks in *Shark Tale* are a parody of the characters in *The Godfather*, as evidenced by the fact that the head bosses of the families have very similar names (Don Lino in *Shark Tale* and Don Vito in *The Godfather*). Additionally, in both movies the characters partake in violent and criminal activity. Finally, *The Godfather* takes place in New York City and, like *Shark Tale*, features some New York/Italian-American accents. The use of the New York dialects in *Shark Tale*, in addition to helping to portray the mafia sharks as tough and violent, also ties the movie intertextually to the movie *The Godfather*. This is similar to Bucholtz's (2001a) finding discussed earlier regarding the ways in which use of British English in science fiction

conventions ties these interactions intertextually to previous enactments of fantasy. In the present study, the use of New York English ties this interaction intertextually to previous enactments of the New York mafia and further strengthens the association between New York English and toughness.

The movie *A Bug's Life* also projects an image of New York English speakers as tough and violent. This movie tells the story of an ant names Flik who sets off in search of some "warrior" bugs to help fight off some grasshoppers that are threatening his ant colony. Flik travels to "the city" to look for some bugs who might be able to help him. When he reaches the city, he finds himself in the midst of many bugs rushing around. Most of these bugs are portrayed as speakers of New York English and are depicted as pushy and violent. The scene where Flik reaches the city is shown in Example 10 below:

Example 10
(1) Bug 1:   Get outta the way!
(2) Flik: Oh, sorry.
(*Flik bumps into a bug*)
(3) Bug 2:   Ow, watch **where** [r-less] **you're** [r-less] goin'!
(4) Flik: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to do that.
(*Flik's attention moves to a bar across the way, where the owner kicks a customer out*)
(5) Owner: I'll show you who's **tough** [dentalized *t*]! (*kicks customer out*) And **stay**
                  [dentalized *t*] out!
(6) Flik: Tough bugs! (*runs over to the bar and stands in doorway, marveling at the bar*)
                  Wow!
(7) Bug 3:   (*pushes past Flik to get into bar*) Move it!
(*After taking in the scene of the city bugs at the bar, Flik tries to approach one*)
(8) Flik: Pardon me sir, I- I was wondering if I could talk to you for a moment. I
                  represent a colony, uh, of ants. And I'm looking- I'm looking for tough bugs.

In Example 10 above, certain phonological features are present in the city bugs' speech that marks it as New York English, such as the non-rhoticity (line 3) and the production of alveolar stops as slightly dentalized (line 5). Lines 1, 3 and 7 above, which show the

bugs yelling at Flik to get out of the way and to watch where he is going, paint them as pushy and rude bugs who get annoyed and angry quickly. Line 5, which shows a New York English-speaking bug kicking another bug out of his bar, suggests that these are both tough and violent. Indeed, the owner even explicitly remarks about his (and the other bug's) toughness (line 5). Flik as well, in line 6, openly acknowledges the tough nature of the New York English-speaking bugs around him.

Another notable point regarding the interaction shown in Example 10 is the very different ways in which Flik, an SAE speaker, and the city bugs, speakers of New York English, are portrayed. As has been shown, the city bugs are consistently portrayed as tough, pushy, and violent. Flik, on the other hand, is depicted as much more polite and non-confrontational. This is first evident in line 2, where, after a city bug has yelled at him to get out of the way, Flik responds with a polite and deferential "I'm sorry." This occurs again in line 4, where Flik is shown apologizing again to a very annoyed city bug. Moreover, in line 8, Flik speaks very politely to a city bug, using the phrase "pardon me," referring to the bug as "sir," and prefacing his request with the statement "I was wondering if I could talk to you for a moment." All of these elements of his statement work to portray Flik as a polite and respectful bug. The pushy and tough attitudes of the New York English-speaking bugs are thus juxtaposed with the polite and deferential tone of the SAE-speaking bug, which serves to enhance the tough nature of the New York English-speaking bugs.

In the above interactions, then, the New York English speakers are portrayed as tough and violent, and are contrasted by SAE speakers who appear polite and respectful. The New York dialects, in conjunction with the content of the talk, function to reproduce and sustain the stereotype of New Yorkers as hot-tempered, pushy, and prone to violence.

5.2.4 "Positive" Portrayals of Dialects and Their Speakers: Minnesotan English

Lippi-Green (1997) discusses the idea that although not all stereotypes are overtly negative, they are nevertheless usually restrictive and limit the ways in which we view and understand people and their actions. For instance, she finds that animated movies tend to portray characters with French accents as either being associated with food preparation or being skilled in sexual banter (1997, 100). While these are not overtly negative stereotypes, they still promote a narrow portrayal of French people that does not acknowledge the diversity in people's life experiences. In this section, I discuss a similar finding in my own study regarding the portrayal of speakers of Minnesotan English.

One common stereotype about Minnesota and its inhabitants is that they are nice and hospitable people who seek to avoid conflict. An examination of my data revealed several such portrayals among characters with Minnesotan accents. For instance the movie *Over the Hedge*, which is about a group of foraging animals who live in an area that is increasingly becoming suburbanized, includes two married porcupines named Lou and Penny, both of whom are speakers of Minnesotan English. Example 11 below, which depicts a scene early in the movie when the animals are just coming out of hibernation,

illustrates Penny and Lou's friendly and nice nature. The bolded items below represent

some of the distinctive features of their Minnesotan dialects.

Example 11
(1) Lou: Good morning, everyone! Just a super-duper morning, **eh**?
(2) Penny: Ah, **jeepers**!
(3) Lou: Whoa, not lookin' so good around the eyes there, hon.
<several lines omitted>
(4) Lou: Ya know what, how 'bout I **take** [dentalized *t*] the **day** [dentalized *d*] shift?
(5) Penny: Oh Lou, that'd be just super!
(6) Lou: Alright, kids, you heard your mother. And now, you listen to me. Shape up
                  there. (*gets tackled by kids*)

In Example 11, some of the phonological, syntactic, and lexical features that help to mark

Penny and Lou's speech as Minnesotan English are the production of alveolar stops as

slightly dentalized (line 4), the question tag *eh*, and the exclamatory word *jeepers*. In this

interaction Lou and Penny are portrayed as very positive and upbeat people. In line 1,

when Lou is saying "good morning" to the other animals, he also proclaims that it is "just

a super-duper morning." This utterance paints him as a very cheery person. Additionally,

when he notices that Penny is looking tired and offers to watch the kids for the day,

Penny replies, "Oh Lou, that'd be just super!" The multiple usages of the superlatives

"super" and "super-duper" serve to portray Penny and Lou as extremely cheerful and nice

(and perhaps simple and naïve). Furthermore, although Lou attempts to be authoritative

with his children in line 6, this attempt is unsuccessful, as his kids proceed to tackle him.

This interaction suggests that Lou is in fact so nice that even his own children do not

consider him to have much authority. The Minnesotan accents, in conjunction with the

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nature of the interaction, work to reproduce and sustain stereotypes about Minnesotans as overly nice.

This portrayal of Minnesotans is also present in the movie *Cars*, which tells the story of a hotshot racecar who ends up in an old, rundown town (called Radiator Springs) that is deserted and gets few visitors. In one scene of the movie, shown in Example 12 below, the townsfolk notice a couple of visitors, Minnie and Van, approaching the town and prepare to welcome them. Minnie and Van are a married couple who in fact end up in Radiator Springs unintentionally after getting lost, and Minnie is a speaker of Minnesotan English (Van is an SAE speaker). In the interaction below, Minnie is portrayed as open, friendly, and non-confrontational.

Example 12

(1) Minnie:	**Van** [raised and tensed vowel [ɛə]], I just don't see any **on**-ramp [fronted [a]] **anywhere** [ɛnihwer].
(2) Van:	Minnie, I know exactly where we are.
(3) Minnie:	**Yah** [ja:], we're in the middle of nowhere.
(4 Van:	Honey, please.
(5) Sally:	Hello! Welcome to Radiator Springs, gateway to Ornament Valley. Legendary for its quality service and friendly hospitality. How can we help you?
(6) Van:	We don't need anything, thank you very much.
(7) Minnie:	Well, honey, ask her directions to the Inter**state** [pure [e] vowel].
(8) Van:	There's no need to ask for directions. Minnie, I know exactly where we're going.
(9) Minnie:	He did the **same** [pure [e] vowel] thing on our trip to **Shakopee** [fronted [a] in first syllable]. You know, we were headed over there for the **Crazy** [pure [e] vowel] **Days** [pure [e] vowel], and we-
(10) Van:	Okay, okay. Really. We're just peachy, Okay?

In this example, the phonological features that help to mark Minnie's speech as Minnesotan English are the raising and tensing of the vowel [æ] as seen in line 1 (which is also a more general feature of the Northern Cities Shift (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes

2006, 147**))**, the fronting of [a] vowels (line 1 and 9), production of "wh" as [hw] (line 1), pure [e] vowels (line 7 and 9), and the production of "yeah" as [ja:]. The mention of the Minnesotan city Shakopee also marks Minnie as a Minnesotan.

In this interaction, Minnie tells Van that they are lost, which he stubbornly denies. When Sally, one of the Radiator Springs residents, offers them help, Van turns down this offer. Minnie, on the other hand, is much more open to receiving help, as seen in line 7. In contrast to Van, then, who is depicted as rather stubborn, Minnie is portrayed as open and amiable. Furthermore, despite Van's continual rejection of Minnie's assertions that they are lost and her suggestion that they ask for help, Minnie does not get angry and indeed maintains a very positive attitude and cheerful tone of voice, which helps to portray her as non-confrontational and not easily provoked. Furthermore, after Van has rejected Sally's offer of help, Minnie turns to her and starts talking to her (line 9), telling her that Van behaved similarly on another trip. She goes on to give more details about the trip, until she is interrupted by Van in line 10. Minnie's eagerness to make conversation and provide specific details about her and Van's life to a stranger reveals her open and friendly nature. Moreover, the fact that Van impatiently interrupts her in line 10 suggests that Minnie would have kept talking for a while otherwise, which again serves to highlight her open (and perhaps naïve) nature. The use of Minnesotan English for Minnie's character thus reproduces and sustains a stereotype of Minnesotans and friendly and compliant, which helps to enhance Minnie's image as an overly nice character.

One important point that must be noted regarding the interaction in Example 12 is the fact that it also reproducing other stereotypes that may help explain the character portrayals. For instance, Minnie and Van's interactions with each other reproduce a stereotype of males as unwilling to stop and ask for directions during car trips, with females usually urging them to do so. In this sense, then, it could be argued that Van's and Minnie's portrayals as stubborn and open respectively are in fact a result of gender stereotypes and not regional stereotypes. However, the fact still remains that Minnie, the friendly and open character, is portrayed using Minnesotan English while Van, the stubborn character, is not portrayed using Minnesotan English (even though they do appear to be from around Minnesota, as evidenced by the mention of Shakopee). This suggests that the Minnesotan dialect does indeed evoke an image of the speaker as friendly and compliant, and can be used to enhance such a portrayal of a character.

Although the portrayals of Minnesotans discussed above are not overtly negative, as they do not imply any negative personality traits, they are still limiting and they project a rather one-dimensional view of Minnesotans. Moreover, portraying a group as nice and submissive trivializes them and diminishes their power. This was evident in Example 11, which painted the Minnesotan English speakers as characters who were not even perceived as authoritative by their own children. Thus, even stereotypes that are more "positive" are nevertheless dangerous and potentially damaging.

5.2.5   The Complexities of Portrayals—The Multiple Faces of SAE

Although I have demonstrated above the ways in which a particular dialect aids in

characterization by reproducing one particular stereotype, it should also be pointed out

that a dialect can indeed be associated with multiple social meanings and identities. In

this section, I consider one such dialect, that of Standard American English, that is

associated with at least three different identities, depending on the context within which

the talk is situated: an identity of beauty, perfection, or familiarity; a "villain" identity;

and a nerdy or "uncool" identity.

5.2.5.1 SAE as Beautiful, Ideal, and Familiar

Lippi-Green (1997) notes that children's animated films often feature a romantic plot line

that includes the main protagonist and another character in the movie. Indeed, of the

seventeen movies I examined, twelve feature a protagonist involved in a romantic

relationship. Lippi-Green argues that although the media have criticized these movies for

their unrealistic portrayals of men with overly muscular bodies and women with

extremely tiny waists, little attention has been paid to the language used by characters

who are lovers. Examining the accents used by these lovers, Lippi-Green finds that lovers

overwhelmingly are speakers of Standard American English. In my own study, the

characters who are lovers in fact are overwhelmingly speakers of SAE, regardless of the

setting of the movie. In fact, all of the twelve couples feature at least one lover who

speaks SAE, and eight feature both lovers as speakers of SAE. This finding raises the

question of why this apparent association exists between love and standard speech. One possible explanation is that children's movies tend to portray the world as a place where lovers end up in an ideal situation and live "happily ever after." It is possible that the use of standard accents is meant to signal this ideal situation, which would suggest that standard accents are seen as the most ideal form of speech. It is also possible that, given that lovers are generally portrayed as physically beautiful and attractive, SAE is employed for such characters because it too is perceived as beautiful and attractive. Another explanation may be that lovers tend to be characters that the audience is expected to root for and feels a connection with. Perhaps the use of standard accents is an attempt to foster this sense of familiarity, which would suggest that standard accents are most familiar and comfortable to us. It appears, then, that in these instances, SAE carries with it connotations of beauty, perfection, and familiarity, and can be used to create such an identity.

5.2.5.2 SAE as the Villain

As was discussed in Section 5.1.2, a broad examination of the data suggested that foreign-accented characters are not being portrayed as the "bad" characters as often as they were before. Indeed, examining the main villain of each movie reveals that in fact six of the seventeen villains are speakers of SAE. In fact, more villains speak SAE than any other dialect. While this finding must be interpreted cautiously given that only seventeen of all recent animated movies were examined, nevertheless it is still a finding

that warrants further examination. Such an examination reveals a common theme throughout movies that feature a villain who speaks SAE, namely that the bigger evil that the villain represents is consumerism, industrialism, and corporate greed. This appears to be a new theme in animated movies, as it is not mentioned by either Lippi-Green or Pandey. One movie that includes this portrayal of SAE speakers is *Over the Hedge*. This movie, in which the villain speaks SAE, centers on a group of foraging animals that are trying to survive in an increasingly suburban environment. The villain is a businessperson, Gladys, who is the president of the neighborhood's homeowners' association. Gladys appears through the whole film dressed in business attire and constantly doing business on her cellular phone, signaling her status as a businessperson. She drives an SUV with her name on the license plate and several dollar signs following the name, all of which mark her as a wealthy person.

Much of Gladys' speech also aids in this identity-creation of her as a greedy and materialistic corporate worker with little respect for nature. For instance, in one scene of the movie presented below in Example 13, one of the animals (a squirrel named Hammy) pretends to be rabid and scares some girl scouts, who run and tell their mom (named Janice) what they saw. Gladys overhears this and approaches Janice about it.

Example 13
(1) Gladys: I'm sorry, Janice. Did I just hear them say rabid squirrel?
(2) Janice: Oh I think they might just be overreacting.
(3) Gladys: But what if they're not! What if we have a potential pandemic on our hands? Vermin, running loose, spreading disease, and…lowering our property values?
(4) Janice: (*pause*) Yeah. I have a casserole in the oven. Gotta run.
(5) Gladys: Fine. You worry about your casserole, and I'll worry about the end of suburban peace and tranquility!

In this interaction, Gladys expresses her displeasure at the idea of the animals invading the neighborhood. Her choice of the word "vermin" (3) to describe the animals, a word that carries negative connotations, signals this opposition to the animals and portrays her as a person unsympathetic to the plight of animals whose environment has become increasingly overtaken by humans. Moreover, her initial remarks about a "potential pandemic" that could " spread disease" paint her as a person seemingly concerned with public safety. However, these remarks are juxtaposed by her next utterance "lowering our property taxes," which reveals her true concern about the invading animals. The juxtaposition of being concerned with public safety versus being concerned with making money calls even more attention to the fact that Gladys is a greedy businesswoman. Furthermore, Janice's responses during this interaction indicate that she thinks Gladys is overreacting. Her utterance in line 4, which includes a dismissive "yeah" and a remark that she needs to tend to the "casserole in the oven," reveals her lack of concern about the issue and conveys the sense that she thinks Gladys is being melodramatic. The juxtaposition of Gladys' extreme remarks and Janice's dismissive attitude helps to portray Gladys as overly preoccupied with business and money. Gladys' extremism is also revealed again in line 5, where she tells Janice to worry about her casserole while she worries about "the end of suburban peace and tranquility." Her utterances in this interaction thus paint her as a greedy businessperson with little sympathy for the plight of animals, or even of other humans.

Other instances of Gladys' speech (and other visual markers discussed above) serve to portray her clearly as a power-hungry businessperson. For instance, examples 14 and 15 below showcase Gladys' business-oriented nature and her inability to interact with people in a non-business fashion.

Example 14
(1) Gladys: (*on phone*) Hi, this is Gladys Sharp. Your president? Of the homeowners' association? Right. The homeowner's charter, which you signed, says the grass is supposed to be two inches, and according to my measuring stick yours is two-point-five.

Example 15
(1) Gladys: (*approaches some neighbors who are gathered on the street looking at Ozzie the opossum, who is playing dead*) Debbie, I don't remember seeing a permit out for a gathering! Groups of more than one…

In Example 14, Gladys is talking to a fellow neighborhood resident, but instead of referring to herself as "your neighbor" she refers to herself as "your president." This signals her business-oriented attitude towards the people around her, and perhaps also her desire for power and control. Furthermore, her declaration that the neighbor's grass is half an inch higher than in should be and that she measured it herself paints her as an extreme person obsessed with the rules of the homeowner's association. This portrayal is also conveyed in Example 15, where she sees some neighbors in the street and insinuates that they need a permit for gatherings larger than one person. These scenes and others portray a clear picture of Gladys as someone obsessed with business. Furthermore, the use of dialect factors into this situation in an important way. Corporate America and those who represent it are often expected to conform to the standard, and these people (prototypically) speak with standard accents. Gladys' speech is consistently standard, and

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perhaps could even be called superstandard. For instance, the word "pandemic" in Example 13 may signal a formal and educated register, which is one use of superstandard English described by Bucholtz (2001b). Such language projects a clear picture of Gladys as an educated businessperson who speaks a very standard form of English, which helps portray her as a stereotypical businessperson. In this setting, then, SAE aids in the creation of Gladys' identity as a greedy businesswoman by reproducing a cultural stereotype that associates corporate America with the standard language.

5.2.5.3 SAE as Nerdy and Uncool

Bucholtz (2001b) raises the possibility that SAE, which is often viewed by many scholars as an unmarked form, in fact can carry marked racial attributes. She argues, through an examination of the linguistic practices of a group of high-school students who have labeled themselves as "nerds," that these students construct an identity of themselves as "white nerds" partly through their use of a marked, superstandard form of SAE that signals a resistance to current trends and an embracing of uncoolness and intelligence. Because "coolness" in this high school community generally involves participation in elements of youth culture that had their origins in African American culture, to position oneself against this "coolness" is to in effect position oneself against these traditionally Black practices, which highlights one's "whiteness" and marks the person racially as "hyperwhite" (86). Some elements of the superstandard English used to project this

"white nerd" identity include the use of a formal and educated register and a nasal quality to a voice (Bucholtz 2001b, 2006).

While neither Lippi-Green nor Pandey discussed the portrayal of SAE-speaking characters as nerds, there are at least two instances in my data of SAE-speaking characters being portrayed in an "uncool" or nerdy fashion similar to Bucholtz's description of the high-school "nerds." In one short scene of *Mulan*, depicted below in Example 16, several guardian ancestors are fighting about the possibility of Mulan's identity being revealed in the army. One ancestor (Ancestor 4) is shown calculating on an abacus while worrying aloud about the fate of the Fa family. In this interaction, Ancestor 4, who speaks with a nasal voice, is portrayed as nerdy and as a constant worrier.

Example 16
(1) Ancestor 1:   I knew it! I knew it! That Mulan was a troublemaker from the start!
(2) Ancestor 2:   Don't look at me, she gets it from your side of the family.
(3) Ancestor 3:   She's just trying to help her father.
(4) Ancestor 4:   (*nasal voice*) But if she's discovered, Fa Zhu will be forever shamed, dishonor will come to the family, traditional values will disintegrate!
(5) Ancestor 5:   Not to mention they'll lose the farm!

In Example 16, Ancestor 4's statements reveal that he is extremely worried about Mulan being discovered. His progression through increasingly dire outcomes, ending with a rather extreme statement about values disintegrating completely, portrays him as being overly worried about the situation. His concern over the fate of traditional values also suggests that he is a stickler for tradition and the rules. Both of these traits suggest an uncoolness. Moreover, the depiction of the abacus suggests that he is skilled at mathematics and is intelligent, which can be seen as nerdy qualities (Bucholtz 2001b).

Also, the use of the word "disintegrate" instead of a more casual word like "disappear" signals a more formal and educated register, which also helps to mark his "nerdiness" and "uncoolness." This formal and educated identity is juxtaposed by Ancestor 5's utterance about the family losing the farm. Ancestor 5 is portrayed as a farmer holding a pitchfork, an identity that is generally associated with a rural, and sometimes uneducated, lifestyle. Ancestor 5's appearance and remark thus help to highlight Ancestor 4's formal and educated identity, through a juxtaposition of the two characters. Moreover, Ancestor 4 speaks with a somewhat nasal voice, a quality that has been linked to nerd identity (Bucholtz 2006). This nasality of his voice, combined with the images of uncoolness portrayed visually and in the content of his utterances, helps to create a nerdy and uncool identity for the guardian ancestor.

In the movie *Madagascar*, which tells the story of four animals that live in a zoo in Central Park until they accidentally end up in Madagascar, Melman is an SAE-speaking giraffe who is a hypochondriac and constant worrier. These traits, along with the superstandard language he occasionally uses, help to portray him as uncool and nerdy. This can be seen in Example 17 below, in which the zoo animals (Marty, Alex, Gloria, and Melman) discover that they are in crates and being transferred to another zoo. When Melman first wakes up he does not realize he is being transferred. However, when the others mention this to him, he starts worrying.

Example 17
(1) Gloria: Are you okay?
(2) Melman: Yeah, no I'm fine. I often doze off while I'm getting an MRI.
(3) Alex: Melman, you're not getting an MRI.

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(4) Melman:	CAT scan?
(5) Alex:	No! No CAT scan! It's a transfer! It's a zoo transfer!
(6) Melman:	Zoo transfer?! Oh no. No, no, I can't be transferred. I have an appointment with, uh, Dr. Goldberg at five! There are prescriptions that have to be filled! No other zoo can afford my medical care! And I am not going HMO!

Melman's utterances above reveal his preoccupation with his health and the extent to which he worries about it. When informed about the zoo transfer, he starts listing all of his worries about the consequences of a transfer (line 6), stating that he has an appointment with the doctor, that there are "prescriptions that have to be filled," and that "no other zoo can afford [his] medical care." His remarks here help portray him as uptight and not cool or laidback. Melman also uses some language that can be seen as superstandard. His talk of an "MRI," "CAT scan," "medical care," and "HMO" signals a formal and educated register. This interaction portrays Melman as an animal who is well versed in medical discourse. This use of superstandard language, in conjunction with his worrisome nature, helps to portray Melman as uncool and nerdy.

Along with being portrayed as a constant worrier, Melman is also portrayed as somewhat socially inept and ignorant about certain social rules for speaking, which also helps enhance his "uncool" and nerdy image, since nerds are often viewed as "social underachievers" (Bucholtz 2001b, 85). As the philosopher H.P. Grice argued, in order for conversations to run smoothly, interlocutors must work together to understand and to be understood (Curzan and Adams 2006). Grice outlines four "conversational maxims" that he claims are critical to a successful interaction, one of which is a rule that utterances should be informative, but should not be more detailed than necessary (known as the

maxim of quantity). Another is that utterances should be relevant (the "maxim of relation"). However, Grice also pointed out that interactions are sometimes facilitated through the violating of these maxims. In the context of character portrayal, such violations are intentional and serve a purpose in the conversation. In Example 18 below, in which Melman wakes Alex up to tell him that Marty has left the zoo, Melman violates the conversational maxims of quantity and relevance, which helps to portray him as socially inept and uncool.

Example 18
(1) Melman: (*trying to wake Alex up*) Alex!
<several lines omitted>
(2) Alex: What is it, Melman?
(3) Melman: Okay, okay. (*exhales deeply*) You know how I have that bladder infection, and I have to get up every two hours? Well, I got up to pee? Um, and I looked over at Marty's pen, which, you know, I usually don't do. I don't know why, but I did. And this time, I looked over-
(4) Alex: What, Melman? What's going on?
(5) Melman: It's Marty. He's gone!

In this exchange, Melman's purpose for waking Alex up is to inform him that Marty is missing. However, as illustrated in line 3, Melman prefaces this with a discussion of his "bladder infection" that causes him to get up "to pee" every two hours. He then talks for a while about how he does not usually look over at Marty's pen, but for some reason did so tonight. These remarks are all a preamble to his main point that Marty is missing. However, they are both unnecessary and irrelevant, and they violate the maxims of giving only as much information as needed and of being relevant. Indeed, the fact that Marty interrupts Melman in line 4 further emphasizes the fact that Melman is providing more information than necessary. By violating these conversational maxims, Melman's

ignorance of social rules of speaking is revealed. This social ineptitude is another sign of Melman's nerdy and uncool personality, and helps to convey a portrayal of SAE and its speakers as nerdy and uncool.

Taken together with the other portrayals of Standard American English, it becomes clear that a dialect can carry several different social meanings, depending on the context in which the speech is couched. As Coupland (2007, 23) discusses, language forms do not have unique and fixed social meanings, but instead acquire their meanings from the contexts of interactions. Here, SAE has been shown to have at least three different associations in different settings: that of an ideal, a villain, and a nerd. These different cultural associations reveal the complexities of portrayals of accents in general, and of SAE in particular. Furthermore, these findings complicate previous findings about the use of SAE in animated films (e.g., Lippi-Green 1997), which tended to portray SAE rather one-dimensionally as a perfect dialect and do not discuss any alternative portrayals of the dialect. The findings of the present study suggest that more attention ought to be paid to other identities besides "perfection" and "familiarity" that may be associated with the use of SAE.

5.3   New Trends in Children's Animated Films

A comparison of the portrayal of accents in recent animated films with those found in earlier studies (Lippi-Green 1997; Pandey 2001) reveals some noticeable differences between the earlier and later films. First, we found an indication of an increasingly

positive portrayal of foreign-accented characters as "good" characters. We also discussed the potential notion of "SBE as the villain" as an older, classic conception of evil. This was supported by data from the movie Shrek, which was argued to be a parody of traditional fairytale movies. Furthermore, a more descriptive examination of the dialect has revealed a potential villain identity for SAE-speaking characters. These changes and their implications for accent use in children's animated films are discussed below.

5.3.1   New Conceptions of "The Villain"

In my examination of the different identities of SAE, I discussed a potential villain identity that may be linked to SAE in recent animated films given its associations with the area of business and its connotations of a world of corporate greed that shows little concern for nature or humanity. Although this was discussed with respect to just one movie, *Over the Hedge*, indeed other movies exhibit this trend as well. For instance, the movie *Monsters, Inc.* is a movie about a power company ("Monsters, Inc.") that sends monsters to scare young children in the middle of the night so that these screams can be used to generate electricity for the monsters' city, Monstropolis. One of the villains in this movie is the CEO of the company, Mr. Waternoose, a monster who speaks SAE. Waternoose, reacting to a looming energy crisis, participates in a plan to capture children in order to physically extract their screams from them, which would generate enough power to keep the company from failing. This villain is thus portrayed as a businessman who will stop at nothing to keep the company from going under.

Such portrayals point to the emergence of a broader and more complex conception of the role of "the villain." Villains in the traditional fairytale format tend to be unattractive and fearsome individuals, often with dark, harsh physical features (which contrasts sharply with the attractive portrayals of the protagonists). However, in more recent movies, the villains are people who are associated with corporate America, big business, and industrialization that destroy the environment. Indeed, the villain need not necessarily speak Standard American English, but in fact any standard or unmarked form of language that could be associated with industrialization and business. For instance, one of the villains of the movie *Finding Nemo* is an Australian-English speaking girl named Darla whose uncle, a dentist who also speaks Australian English, captures the protagonist (a fish named Nemo) and plans to give him to Darla as a pet. Although neither Darla nor the dentist speaks SAE, this is due to the fact that the movie is set in Australia. These characters' accents, then, could be seen as unmarked in this setting. This unmarked accent, like the one in *Over the Hedge*, is attached to ideas of the evilness of impinging on nature's territory. Indeed, at one point in *Finding Nemo* a character (a shark) remarks, "Humans—think they own everything," which points explicitly to the theme of humans taking over natural environments. Moreover, another shark follows up the first shark's utterance with the remark, "Probably American." This signals that, despite the fact that *Finding Nemo* is set in Australia, the movie is in fact a critique of the greediness of American industrialization. A similar sentiment regarding human greediness is also present in *Over the Hedge*, where a raccoon named RJ remarks that "for humans, enough

is never enough." Again, given that the movie's target audience is American (and the fact that this movie is set in America), this also can be viewed as social commentary on American society.

This new conception of the villain as big business and as industrialization has important implications for the use and portrayal of dialects in children's animated films. As was discussed earlier, insofar as the American business sphere expects interactions to be conducted using standard language, there is an association between SAE and business. SAE is thus being used to project an identity of "evil businessperson," and is increasingly being negatively associated with corporate evil. Furthermore, as standard and unmarked language is increasingly used to portray the villain, there may also be an increasing acknowledgement on the part of animated films of diversity and "otherness." For instance, the movie *Happy Feet* contains elements and themes that touch on the acknowledgment of diversity and individual differences. The movie revolves around the Emperor penguins' initial rejection – and eventual acceptance – of Mumble and his tap-dancing (which, again, is not normal for these penguins). The plot itself, therefore, stresses the acceptance of individual diversity. Thus, characters that are "different" in this movie, such as the Hispanic English-speaking penguins, are portrayed as "good" characters. This may represent a trend away from the earlier concept of foreigners as "evil." It is important to note, however, that even characters with foreign accents that are not portrayed as evil may still be stereotyped negatively, as was demonstrated earlier in the case of the Hispanic English-speaking penguins in *Happy Feet*. This increasing

acknowledgment of diversity on the part of these films may also explain the increase in the overall positive portrayals (in terms of the character role of "good" or "bad") of foreign-accented characters and the overall amount of foreign and regional US dialects.

5.3.2   *Subverting Societal and Linguistic Stereotypes*

As mentioned earlier, the most traditional fairytale format involves several components, including opening with the words "once upon a time," princesses and their ideal Prince Charmings, an unattractive villain, and such medieval and fantasy elements as castles, knights, and dragons. While this describes the most traditional form of the fairytale, even later conceptions in animated movies still tend to contain basic plots of good versus evil, attractive heroes and heroines, and little to no mention of the social world outside of the film (aside from the establishment of setting, in some instances). However, some of the most recent movies make a clear attempt to subvert such stereotypical portrayals of the fairytale—and, in doing so, subvert other social and linguistic stereotypes as well. The most notable example of this is the movie *Shrek*, a parody of traditional fairytales that focuses on an ogre, Shrek, who is on a mission to reclaim his swamp that has become overrun with fairytale creatures who have been banished from the land of Duloc by its ruler, Lord Farquaad. Shrek makes a deal with Lord Farquaad to rescue a princess in exchange for his swamp back. In order to understand how the movie functions as a parody, it is necessary to first understand more about the process of subverting stereotypes.

Bauman (1978, 15) discusses that all performative acts must first signal a frame within which to interpret the messages being conveyed in the performance. This process of framing is also called "keying." This keying is essentially a means of instructing the audience about how to interpret the performance. In the case of performances that subvert traditional ideologies, these keyed frames are then reframed and juxtaposed with images and messages that contrast with the original keyed frame.

According to Bauman (1978, 21), one way in which to key performance is through the use of special formulae that mark the performance as a specific and identifiable type. In fairytales, he claims, the frame can be keyed by the opening words "once upon a time." Indeed, the movie *Shrek* opens with Shrek narrating the following lines from a storybook: "Once upon a time there was a lovely princess…She was locked away in a castle guarded by a terrible fire-breathing dragon…She waited in the dragon's keep, in the highest room of the tallest tower, for her true love and love's first kiss." Here, the fairytale format is keyed through phrases and ideas such as "once upon a time," "a lovely princess," "true love" that are characteristic of traditional fairytales. However, immediately after this, we see a green hand (belonging to Shrek) tear a page out of the book, laugh, and remark, "Like that's ever going to happen." Here, we see a sharp contrast between the idyllic nature of the storybook and the pessimism of Shrek that subverts the traditional fairytale format and forces us to reevaluate how we are going to interpret the actions and interactions that occur in the movie. This juxtaposition of the

traditional fairytale with a harsh reality occurs elsewhere in the film, such as Example 19

below when Shrek first finds the princess, Fiona:

Example 19
(1) Shrek: Are you Princess Fiona?
(2) Fiona: I am, awaiting a knight so bold as to rescue me.
(3) Shrek: Oh, that's nice. Now let's go!
(4) Fiona: But wait, Sir Knight. This be-ith our first meeting. Should it not be a wonderful, romantic moment?
(5) Shrek: Yeah, sorry, lady. There's no time.

Here, Fiona's use of the lexical item such as "knight" (line 2) signals the traditional

fairytale format again. Additionally, her use of syntax such as "be-ith" (line 4) is

associated with an older form of English and medieval times. Again, then, this helps to

key a fairytale frame. However, this fairytale format is subverted by Shrek's utterances.

For instance, Shrek's use of the term "lady" in line 5 to refer to Fiona conveys some

disrespect and indifference to her status as a princess and damsel-in-distress. Although

the address term "lady" can function as a marker of politeness (e.g., Lady Diana), in the

present context, it does not appear to be functioning in this manner. Instead, it appears to

be evoking connotations of informality or familiarity. One indicator of this is the fact that

Shrek does not follow the term with the princess's name (i.e. Lady Fiona). The use of the

term "lady" by itself indicates that it is being used in the less formal and more general

sense of the word. Shrek's casual and dismissive remark "yeah, sorry" also signals that

the term "lady" is being used in a casual and dismissive manner. Furthermore, his

utterance "Oh that's nice. Now let's go!" in line 3 also signals his indifference to Fiona's

situation as a damsel-in-distress. This contrasts sharply with the "wonderful, romantic

moment" that Fiona describes in line 4 and that would be expected in the first meeting of a princess and her rescuer in traditional fairytales. The juxtaposition helps to subvert and reshape the traditional fairytale stereotype of "love at first sight" and an ideal relationship between the knight and the princess.

Shrek features other elements that also serve to subvert stereotypes of not only traditional fairytales, but also children's animated films more generally. For instance, adult humor and swear words are generally elements not seen as appropriate for movies oriented towards children. However, several scenes in Shrek do in fact feature allusions to such mature elements. For instance, one scene features the following lines sung in a song:

> Don't make waves, stay in line
> And we'll get along fine
> DuLoc is perfect place.
> Please keep off of the grass
> Shine your shoes, wipe your—face.

Although the first few lines of this song rhyme as expected, the last two do not rhyme. Indeed, the last line features an abrupt stop after the word "your" is uttered, and there is a slight pause before the word "face" is uttered next. This, along with the fact that the previous line ends with the word "grass," indicates that the last word of the last line is in fact supposed to be "ass." However, as such a swear word cannot be uttered explicitly in a children's animated film, it needs to be alluded to by the means described above. In this way, the movie manages to subtly challenge the traditional notion of children's films as not containing any mature themes.

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The fact that *Shrek* parodies and challenges the traditional fairytale format has some important consequences for the use and portrayal of stereotypes and dialects in this, and indeed other, films. First, Shrek, who is a rather unconventional hero because he is an unattractive and crass ogre, speaks in a Scottish English dialect. This use of a non-SAE dialect for a character who is a lover challenges the idea that lovers must speak SAE.[21]

The popularity and success of *Shrek* may have also motivated the subversion of social and linguistic stereotypes observed in other films. For instance, the movie *Madagascar* features a monkey named Mason who speaks SBE and is portrayed as very intelligent and refined; he is at times shown reading a newspaper and sipping tea, both of which reproduce stereotypes of speakers of SBE as refined. However, in one scene (shown in Example 20 below) where Mason is talking with a monkey named Phil (who signs but does not speak), the interaction serves to reproduce and then subvert the stereotype of SBE speakers as dignified and mature. The bolded items represent some of the SBE features of Mason's speech.

Example 20
(1) Mason: I **heard** [r-less] Tom Wolfe is speaking at Lincoln **Center** [r-less]
(2) Phil: (*signs something to Mason*)
(3) Mason: **Well** [clear *l*] of **course** [r-less] we're going to throw poo at him.

In Example 20, some phonological features that help to mark Mason as a speaker of SBE are non-rhoticity (lines 1 and 3) and the use of a voiced lateral alveolar approximant

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[21] However, it could also be argued that the fact that Shrek is an imperfect character and lover who speaks with an accent in fact serves to uphold the stereotype that SAE is the perfect accent that represents perfect relationships.

("clear [l]") post-vocalically (line 3). In this interaction Mason's refined nature is signaled through his interest in hearing journalist and author Tom Wolfe speak at the Lincoln Center, which portrays him as educated and scholarly. However, his utterance immediately after regarding "throw[ing] poo" portrays a very immature and uncivilized picture of him. The juxtaposition of the two identities serves to construct and then challenge the stereotype of SBE-speakers as sophisticated and refined.

These recent developments in animated movies, while fascinating in their own right, also have important implications for the portrayals of certain dialects and their speakers, as has been illustrated in this section. Newer conceptions of the "villain" have led to more negative portrayals of SAE speakers and more positive portrayals of speakers with foreign dialects. Additionally, the emergence of movies such as *Shrek* that make attempts to subvert stereotypes about the traditional fairytale format has led to an increase in the challenging of linguistic stereotypes as well. Future investigation of these emerging trends may shed even more light on changing attitudes and portrayals in animated films.

CHAPTER 6

BROADER IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study, building off of work done by Lippi-Green (1997) and Pandey (2001) regarding the use of accent in animated movies, examines recent animated movies in an attempt to understand how accents are employed as a tool for characterization, how such characterization helps to maintain or challenge societal stereotypes, and how certain character portrayals have changed or remained the same in the past fifteen years of children's animated films. A broader and more in-depth analysis revealed that stereotypes (both negative and positive) of groups such as New Yorkers, African Americans, Hispanics, and Minnesotans are reproduced and maintained in recent animated films. The analysis also revealed newer trends in animated films that have important implications for accent portrayal, such as new conceptions of the villain role that complicate earlier findings of portrayals of standard dialects, a celebration (or at least recognition) of diversity and the "other" (a trend that may account for an apparent overall increase both in the presence of foreign and regional American dialects in recent films and in the portrayals of foreign-accented characters as "good" characters), and overt attempts to subvert the traditional fairytale format and challenge societal and linguistic stereotypes. In this section, I discuss some of the broader implications of these findings, focusing on their potential implications for the reinforcement of stereotypes in children, for the notion of linguistic subordination and the entertainment industry's role in this, and for our

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understanding of how and why societal attitudes towards certain groups are changing or, in some cases, remaining the same.

6.1   Potential Repercussions of Portrayals: The Reinforcement of Stereotypes

Animated films, with their optimistic portrayals of the world as an ideal place, are generally seen as light-hearted and endearing, and are thought to be relatively innocuous. However, these movies may not be as harmless as they appear; as a detailed examination of the data revealed, certain negative stereotypes of dialects and their speakers are reproduced and maintained in modern children's animated films. Speakers of AAVE and Hispanic English are portrayed as irresponsible and lazy, and speakers of New York English are portrayed as tough and violent. Indeed, even supposedly "positive" portrayals of characters serve to maintain stereotypes, such as the portrayal of Minnesotans as extremely nice and submissive. Such portrayals, even if they are not numerous, are nevertheless potentially harmful, insofar as they participate in the maintenance of stereotypes of social, ethnic, and regional groups. As Hewstone and Giles (1986) discuss, stereotypes are extremely resilient and resistant to being undermined. Portrayals that serve to sustain stereotypes thus only strengthen them.

Furthermore, one major target audience group of animated films is young children, who may adopt these stereotypes about groups that they have not yet come into contact with, thereby prematurely biasing them towards or against individuals belonging to these groups. Indeed, although research regarding the ability for children's attitudes to

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be affected by television or film has been relatively sparse, the work that has been done suggests that portrayals in television and film can indeed influence the attitudes of young children (e.g., Peterson and Thurstone 1933; Bogatz and Ball 1971; Durkin and Judge 2001). Thus, these films do indeed have the potential to reinforce stereotypes in young children. Additionally, as these animated films are generally viewed as light-hearted and harmless, the serious messages being conveyed in them have the potential to remain unnoticed and unaddressed. It important, therefore, to call attention to the stereotypes present in recent animated films, and work to challenge them. If the situation does not change, these movies will continue (whether intentionally or not) to promote stereotypes of dialects and their speakers.

6.2   Implications for Theories of Language Subordination

As has been discussed above, language and language variation are intricately tied to socio-political contexts and social positioning. As Scollon and Scollon (2003, 7) point out, all semiotic systems are systems of power relationships and positioning. Likewise, Simpson (1993, 6) states that language is closely tied to the socio-political context in which it resides. Berg (2002, 22) argues that negative stereotyping is a means through which dominant groups can maintain their power over subordinate groups. Such an attitude is also adopted by Lippi-Green (1997) as a framework for understanding portrayals in animated films. As discussed above, Lippi-Green argues that dominant institutions, such as the entertainment industry, participate in the process of linguistic

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subordination, in which certain linguistic varieties are subordinated while others (in this case, Standard English) are promoted. This is achieved partly through portraying speakers of non-mainstream varieties negatively and portraying speakers of mainstream varieties in a positive light. Giroux (1996) similarly argues that Disney movies promote a White, middle class society and ignore the regional, ethnic, and social diversity of our society.

The findings of the present study do in some ways support the notion of linguistic subordination by dominant groups. For instance, I found that many speakers of AAVE, Hispanic English, and New York English were portrayed negatively, while many (though not all) SAE speakers were portrayed positively as ideal or familiar. Such negative portrayals of non-mainstream varieties and positive portrayals of SAE may aid in the linguistic subordination of the former and promotion of the latter. On the other hand, certain findings of my study also appear to complicate our understanding of the process of linguistic subordination. The broad, quantitative analysis in fact revealed an increase in portrayals of foreign-accented speakers as good characters. Furthermore, the descriptive analysis revealed an emerging trend of the villain as a speaker of a standard variety. The descriptive analysis also revealed the possibility of an emerging theme surrounding the acknowledgment (and possible celebration) of diversity. Such findings appear to challenge the notion that dominant institutions promote the standard variety at the expense of others. Indeed, it appears in these cases that the entertainment industry is actually subordinating the standard by associating it with the concept of "villain."

Although more work is needed to fully understand this newer portrayal of SAE and its consequences for theories of linguistic subordination, nevertheless it is important to raise these issues and call attention to them.

6.3   Implications for Understanding Societal Attitudes

Given the link discussed earlier between attitudes about language and attitudes about people, it is not illogical to presume that examining how language attitudes change or remain constant can facilitate our understanding of societal attitudes that are changing or remaining constant. Research on language attitudes has in some instances revealed the ways in which changing social attitudes can alter language attitudes. Coupland and Bishop (2007) conducted a study that examined Britons' language attitudes towards different varieties of British English, comparing them to a similar survey that had been conducted thirty years earlier. The results revealed both stability and change in certain language attitudes. For instance, while the findings indicated that Britons continued to rate standard English varieties highly with respect to prestige and social attractiveness, they also revealed that younger respondents accorded less prestige and social attractiveness to standard varieties than older respondents and also rated stigmatized varieties more highly than older respondents. These age differences suggest a changing attitude towards both standard and nonstandard English varieties among Britons. Similarly, Mugglestone (2003) explains that before 1960 Received Pronunciation (RP) in Britain was viewed as an unmarked and "accent-less" variety that was viewed as

"correct" and "proper." However, after the 1960s, RP began to be viewed as a marked

variety that indexed elitism and exclusivity, a change that may have resulted from an

increasing interest in regional diversity.

The findings of the present study also suggest that certain language attitudes may

be currently undergoing change, prompted by changing social attitudes towards certain

groups. For instance, my study found a new portrayal of SAE (and indeed standard

varieties in general) and its speakers as villains who are associated with concepts of big

business, industrialization, and a corporate America that is threatening nature. Such

negative portrayals may reflect changes in (at least a portion of) society's attitude

towards these institutions. It is possible that there is a growing dissatisfaction in society

today with big business and mass manufacturing and an increasing interest in smaller

businesses and small-town America. Perhaps evidence for this can be seen in recent

media portrayals of major businesses such as the fast-food restaurant McDonalds (e.g.,

Morgan Spurlock's (2004) documentary *Super Size Me* and Eric Schlosser's (2001) book

Fast Food Nation, both of which attracted much public interest), and in the increasing

public interest in supporting local businesses and in natural and organic products that are

not mass manufactured. Similarly, movies such as *Over the Hedge*, *Happy Feet*, and

Finding Nemo, all of which feature themes related to humans encroaching on nature's

territory, suggest an increasing awareness (and disapproval) in society of people and

institutions that disturb or destroy the natural environment. Indeed, recent discussions and

debates in public forums (e.g., popular media outlets) over the potential effects of global

warming lend credence to this idea of an increasing public awareness and concern over environmental issues.

The finding of an increase in the presence of foreign and regional US accents in recent animated films, which suggests a potential growing recognition (and perhaps celebration) of the diversity of our society, may also represent an emerging critique of White, middle-class America as the unmarked norm. Some potential supporting evidence for this emerging attitude is a growing popularity of the website *stuffwhitepeoplelike.com*. This website is a satirical web-log that features updated entries about the interests of "white people" (although, to be exact, the website appears to be an attempt to capture the interests of a particular group of young, middle-class White Americans). In attempting to neatly categorize and demarcate the interests of White people, this website in fact mocks the attempts of mainstream America to categorize and stereotype others who belong to marked ethnic and social categories. Thus, this website establishes "White American" as a marked, "other" group whose attitudes, interests, and behaviors can be easily categorized and delineated. More research is needed, however, in order to confirm these claims regarding an increasing critique of White America.

Lastly, although it is important to discuss attitudes that are currently undergoing change, it is equally important to point out those attitudes that appear to be remaining constant, such as the portrayal of African Americans. The results of the present study indicated a portrayal of AAVE that closely resembled those found by both Lippi-Green (1997) and Pandey (2001). In all studies, portrayals were found of AAVE-speakers as

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irresponsible. The fact that this linguistic attitude is remaining constant, despite a change in attitude towards other varieties and despite a wealth of sociolinguistic research that demonstrates the legitimacy and value of AAVE and its speakers, is a curious finding that suggests a persistent and abiding societal stereotype about African Americans (Smitherman 1977; Rickford and Rickford 2000; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006). Such a long-lasting stereotype may signify an ongoing societal struggle to come to terms with African American culture and its place in American society. However, the issue must be examined further before such speculative claims can be reliably confirmed.

An examination of accent portrayal in recent animated films, then, not only provides insight into how accents are employed for characterization, but also aids in—and occasionally complicates—our understanding of broader issues related to the performance of style in animated films, such as the phenomenon of linguistic subordination and the evolution of societal attitudes. Perhaps more importantly, however, such an examination exposes a number of new questions and directions for further research. Has Standard English truly become the new "villain?" Are we indeed witnessing a growing recognition—or even celebration—of diversity? Indeed, there is still much work to do in order to fully understand the complexities of accent portrayal in these movies, and hopefully the present study offers some compelling reasons to delve deeper into the nature and effects of stylistic performance in children's animated films.

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