

Ministry Of Education And Science Of Ukraine
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
Educational and Scientific Institute of Philology
Department of English Philology and Intercultural Communication

Bachelor's thesis

“Dialects and accents of English in Disney's Little Mermaid”

Yelyzaveta Shcherban

4th year student of the Education Program

‘English Studies and Translation
and Two Western European Languages’

Field of science: 03 “Humanities”

Specialty: 035 “Philology”

Supervised by:

Karaban Anna, PhD

«Допущено до захисту»

Протокол засідання кафедри англійської філології

та міжкультурної комунікації

Протокол № 10 від 27.05.2024

Зав. кафедри _____ д. філол. н., проф. Алла БСЛОВА

KYIV – 2024

ABSTRACT

Disney studio has grown to become a worldwide titan of entertainment, engaging people of all generations and continents. Nonetheless, Disney's impact goes beyond simple amusement and raises important cultural and social issues, which shape our language attitudes and ideologies. This study aims to trace linguistic stereotypes in portrayal of accented characters in animated films. Our discourse analysis concerns the original "Little Mermaid" and its live action production. Results show that these films convey implied stereotypes about standard and non-standard accents. Yet, it was proved that linguistically stigmatized characters are less and less present in productions of 21st century. This research attempts to illuminate implied linguistic ideologies in Disney entertainment industry by means of comparative and diachronic methods of investigation.

A range of non-native English dialects and accents were used in the selected works: Standard British English, Cockney accent, Standard American English, New York, Trans-Atlantic, Caribbean, Jamaican, French, Indian, and Spanish. GA accent was more common in the 1990s, while SBE has recently risen in popularity.

Concerning language hierarchy in films, standard British and American varieties still take the first place. 21st century productions employ significantly more main and secondary non-native characters than in the 20th century. While non-standard accents were mainly utilized for marginal characters, nowadays, they hold a greater importance for the plot development. Disney films are also highlighting more proactive female protagonists.

Keywords: *Linguistic stereotypes, Language ideologies, Animated films, Standard Englishes, Non-standard Englishes.*

АНОТАЦІЯ

Студія Діснея стала світовим титаном розваг, який залучає людей усіх поколінь і континентів. Проте вплив Дісней виходить за межі простих розваг і підіймає важливі культурні та соціальні питання, які формують наші мовні погляди та ідеології. Це дослідження має на меті простежити мовні стереотипи у зображенні акцентованих персонажів в анімаційних фільмах. Наш дискурс-аналіз стосується оригінальної "Русалоньки" та її екранізації. Результати показують, що ці фільми передають імпліцитні стереотипи про стандартні та нестандартні акценти. Водночас було доведено, що лінгвістично стигматизовані персонажі все менше присутні у фільмах 21 століття. Це дослідження є спробою висвітлити імпліцитні мовні ідеології в індустрії розваг Діснея за допомогою порівняльного та діахронічного методів дослідження.

У вибраних творах використано низку англійських діалектів та іноземних акцентів: Стандартна британська англійська, акцент кокні, стандартна американська англійська, нью-йоркський акцент, трансатлантичний, карибський, ямайський, французький, індійський та іспанська акценти. Стандартний американський акцент був більш поширений у 1990-х роках, тоді як британський останнім часом набуває більше популярності.

Щодо мовної ієрархії анімаційних фільмів, то стандартні британський та американський різновиди все ще посідають перше місце. У фільмах 21 століття залучено значно більше головних і другорядних персонажів, які не є носіями англійської мови, ніж у 20-му столітті. Якщо раніше нестандартні акценти використовувалися переважно для епізодичних персонажів, то сьогодні вони мають більше значення для розвитку сюжету. У фільмах Діснея також з'являється більше ініціативних жінок в головних ролях.

Ключові слова: *Мовні стереотипи, Мовні ідеології, Анімаційні фільми, Стандартна англійська, Нестандартна англійська.*

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	6
CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIALECT STUDY.....	8
1.1 Sociolinguistics: key terms and concepts	8
1.2 Variationist sociolinguistics	10
1.3 Standard and Non-standard varieties, English.....	12
1.4 Dialects and Accents of English.....	13
1.5 Language ideologies and attitudes. Stereotypes.....	16
Conclusions to the first chapter.....	18
CHAPTER 2. DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS OF DIALECTS IN DISNEY MOVIES.....	20
2.1 Research design and methodology. Quantitative and qualitative approaches.....	20
2.1.1 Key takeaways from previous studies on the use of accents and dialects in Disney movies.....	20
2.1.2 Relation between gender and language.....	24
2.2 Diachronic case study of a Disney cartoon and its live action counterpart: The Little Mermaid (1989 vs 2023).	27
2.2.1 The plot and major themes	27
2.2.2 Phonetic analysis: The Little Mermaid, 1983	28
2.2.3 Phonetic analysis: The Little Mermaid, 2023	32
2.2.4 Accents distribution (1989, 2023).....	39
2.2.5 Accents and gender (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023).....	41
2.2.6 Accents and age (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023).....	44
2.2.7 Ethnical variety (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023).....	45
2.2.8 Social class (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023)	46
2.2.9 Accents and nature of characters (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023).....	47
2.2.10 Accents and character's role (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023)....	49
Conclusions to the second chapter	52
CONCLUSIONS.....	55
APPENDICES.....	58
Appendix 1: Classification of characters: The Little Mermaid, 1989.....	58
Appendix 2: Classification of characters: The Little Mermaid, 2023.....	59
REFERENCES	60
SUMMARY.....	65

INTRODUCTION

Animation movies and television series have immensely shaped the cultural standards, life expectations, and the mindset of the young ones. Entertaining animations with relatable characters are teaching us essential lessons in life, and morals to live up to. With hard work, the one can attain any goal, honesty and intellect will help you come out ahead, following your dreams and holding on to them can overcome any evil. Such profound ideas have left a long-lasting impression on many generations that goes well beyond light amusement. The audience also passively consumes an abundance of stigma and bias attributed to certain characters in order to achieve certain effects.

By looking into the possible links between accent and character traits, this study seeks to address whether Disney uses accent to build characters and, if so, how strong and important those links are. Secondly, this study aims to carry out diachronic analysis of Disney movies of the 20th and 21st century in order to observe different linguistic ideologies over time.

Such prominent scholars as William Labov, Peter Trudgill, Thomas Callan Hodson, Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, Einar Haugen, Uriel Weinreich, and Sue Ervin-Tripp have contributed to the sociolinguistic studies.

The topic of accents and dialects in Disney movies specifically is becoming more and more prominent. For instance, Rosina Lippi-Green is one of the most cited scientists in this field, and her work “English with an Accent” provides great theoretical material on language ideologies in cartoons.

Due to numerous animated movies, which are becoming more and more intricate and diverse with each year, it is practically impossible to provide conclusive results on representation of accents in cartoons. Therefore, in spite of existing works on given the topic by Sophie Brous, Telma Soares, and Paola van Lierop, there is still space for comparative analysis of different combinations of works based on variables of prestige, age, innate nature, connotation, etc.

Thus, **the scientific problem** present in Disney animations is the never-ending number of productions that vary the previously established results regarding

linguistic stereotypes of certain accents. It is of our scientific interest to trace the manifestation of liberal ideas, feminist movements, and cultural diversity in recent Disney movies.

The **relevance** of this research resides in the idea of promotion of cultural awareness, equality, political correctness and eradication of discriminatory behavior. Therefore, by means of characters' analysis attributing to children's morals and values development, we will investigate these trends in Disney cartoons of the previous and current century. The **aim** of this study is to support or debunk theoretical data from past researches regarding linguistic ideologies in Disney characters. To do so, we have created a map of the **tasks** to complete:

1. Establish the necessary variables for an accent-based sociolinguistic study
2. Define the notions of standard and non-standard Englishes to identify the accents of the characters in selected works.
3. Investigate on the issue of linguistic stereotypes and the notion of iconization.
4. Summarize previous data on the use of accents in Disney animations.
5. Carry out comparative research on the use of accents of English in "The Little Mermaid" 1989, and "The Little Mermaid" 2023.

The **object** of the study is the representation and use of various English dialects and accents in animated films, while the **subject** of the study are the sociolinguistic implications of accents and dialects in represented characters.

In investigation of this topic phonetic analysis, comparative, qualitative and quantitative **methods of research** were employed.

The **theoretical value** lies in enhancing and expanding systematized data and statistics on sociolinguistic correlations with dialects and accents in Disney animated films, whereas its **practical value** is making people more aware of cultural and gender ideologies instilled on us through audiovisual channels.

The paper consists of the introduction, two chapters, conclusions, appendices, references and illustrative materials.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIALECT STUDY

1.1 Sociolinguistics: key terms and concepts

Sociolinguistics concerns in a self-explanatory manner the study of the relation between a language and society. Sociolinguistics embraces such factors as geographical locations, social categories, class, gender, and ethnical background to investigate different speech styles (Van Herk, 2017, p.2). Diachronically, sociolinguistic studies may reveal various aspects of interest for this research, as the changes in perception of social groups over the history, their adaptability to social situations, and manifestation of certain language ideologies. As any other science, it strives to draw some conclusive results, so that they apply universally to the behavior of a broad population (Frought, 2023, p.11).

In other words, the majority of studies must witness approximately the same phenomenon, resulting in approximately identical outcomes. Moreover, such results ought to be reliable: under the condition of reiterating the same observations, the results must remain respective.

The taxonomy of sociolinguistic branches has to be mentioned as well. Evidently, there are many standpoints based on which we can classify its subfields. From the angle of scientific interest, there exist **interactionist** and **variationists** sociolinguistics. Interactionists strive to account for social processes of the language use. Variationists' interest, on the other hand, lies in the studies of language changes based on the social distribution. So, as we can see, the focus is whether social or linguistic in these branches (Heller, 1984).

Moreover, there exist other three branches of sociolinguistics as: **geographical** (dialectology), **anthropological**, or **sociological**. A **geographical** branch is devoted to language variations/dialects, built against the notion of a “norm”. The **anthropological** one mainly focuses on the interplay between culture, language, and cognition. For instance, it examines the specifics of human communication in the social setting, the course of language acquisition, ceremonial

and political gatherings, linguistic expression through media, science, and media. The last one has already been paid tribute is the **sociological** or variationist study social reasons for linguistic variations and change, as well as ideologies and attitudes related to them (Holmes & Wilson, 2008).

When defining variationists field of work, it is worth mentioning, that it majorly pertains phonology, pragmatics, and vocabulary, and to a smaller degree morphology and syntax. It is essential to bear in mind, that when defining a certain variety based on these features, they are not expected to be completely present or absent in order to do so. In most cases, a certain structural or lexical use may simply indicate a preference of speech, rather than a universal norm for the whole group (Holmes & Wilson, 2008).

Sociolinguistics as the term was first used by Thomas Callan Hodson in his article “Sociolinguistics in India” in 1939. At the time this science has only started to be investigated predominantly by Eastern linguists. In the West, however, sociolinguistics has marked its rise only in the 70-ties. Its founding fathers are considered to be Dell Hymes (ethnography of communication), John Gumperz (anthropologist linguistics), Einar Haugen, Uriel Weinreich (language contact) and Sue Ervin-Tripp (children language acquisition), Bernard Spolsky, etc. (Language in Society, 1979)

Among these, Professor Uriel Weinreich (2011) was a very influential figure, who first investigated in depth geographical sociolinguistics. In contrast to previous researches, his lectures were profoundly socio-cultured, the polar opposite to Chomsky’s highly idealistic and universal ideas. Moreover, Weinreich had an immense impact on his student William Labov, who is known to be a pioneer in variation linguistic theories (Spolsky, 2010).

1.2 Variationist sociolinguistics

As mentioned in the previous chapter, variation sociolinguistics is a scientific approach examining the link between a language variation and socially-linguistic characteristics. Simply put, variationists study different ways of expressing the same idea by means of different variables: phonological, morphological or syntactical. As an example, Americans depending on where they live will call Coca-Cola differently (soda, soke, pop), but essential it conveys the idea of the same drink. *Variationist sociolinguistics* firmly believe in the idea that language variation is constant and perpetual, thus it does not fit in the prescriptive approach where a language is governed by universal norms (Gordon, 2012, p.85). Therefore, variation as a phenomenon comes to view in regional and social dialects, calling into question the idea that structure needs consistency. In this manner, variationist sociolinguistics is governed by different variables such as: gender, ethnicity, location, etc.

Variationist approach to sociolinguistics cannot be studied without the figure of *William Labov* and his ground-breaking 1966 paper '*The Social Stratification of English in New York City*' (Labov, 1964). Labov set out to defy Naom Chomsky's theory about "langue" and "parole", underpinning that language undergoes multiple modifications over the time, which do not make the communicative outcome less effective. Thus, his New York study, focusing on phonetic variable of the "ing" and "r" sounds, proved the point that variations may have a degree of regularity as well. Based on the distribution of the "ing" ending among the New Yorkers of working, middle and upper classes, Labov concluded that in the casual setting all groups showed a high index of alveolar [-ɪn] usage. In contrast, when shifted to a more careful speech like reading passages, all groups consistently switched to velar nasal [-ɪŋ-]. These results revealed that we have to take into consideration not only the social class, gender, and status variable, but also the context - speech consciousness (Gordon, 2012, p.81)

A similar study was carried out by *Peter Trudgill*, another variationist from Norwich (Trudgill, 1971). He set out to analyze a correlation between the

pronunciation of “ing” and agreement of the predicate based on the social class, gender, and speech consciousness in England (Bickerton, 1975). The results were similar to those of Labov in the US, concluding a more standardized use of language under scrutiny, the prevalence of marked features among the lower social classes, as well as male participants in contrast to females.

Ultimately, sociolinguists investigate linguistic variations based on phonological, morphological and lexical variables:

Morphosyntax:	Phonology:	Vocabulary:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Zero plurals</i> - <i>Different negators</i> - <i>Progressive aspect</i> - <i>Regularization of regular verbs</i> - <i>Substitution of subject pronouns with object pronouns</i> - <i>Negative Concord</i> - <i>Non marking of plural forms</i> - <i>Word order</i> - <i>Question tags (no? isn't it? not so? is it? hey?)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Sound Split</i> - <i>Merger of sounds</i> - <i>Coalescence</i> - <i>Reduction</i> - <i>Dropping</i> - <i>Rhoticity</i> - <i>Fronting</i> - <i>Flapping</i> - <i>Drawl</i> - <i>Glottalization</i> - <i>Aspiration</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Coinages: teacheress (Indian English)</i> - <i>Borrowings from indigenous languages: (chai, boondock)</i> - <i>Regional equivalents: (trainers BE, sneakers AE, running shoes New Zealand English)</i>

From the standpoint of social categories, the research may deal with numerous non-linguistic variables as: gender, ethnicity, education, income, sexuality, location, belonging to a certain social class, etc.

1.3 Standard and Non-standard varieties, English

The history of standardization of languages traces its roots back to 1500, when European countries claimed one standardized language in order to set some clear geographical boundaries, education system, and national identity. More often than not, the choice has fallen on those languages spoken in the capital or big cities, in contrast to other forms of speech in the state lower in status. With colonization traditions across the world, such tendencies have spread accordingly and set the pattern for language hierarchies of what is now called standard and non-standard varieties. These *SE varieties* are held up as the optimum of educational purposes and used as a yardstick against which other varieties of the language are measured. (Jenkins, 2009, p.33). Thus, the *Standard* is the norm. Moreover, it is taught in schools, and serves for formal writing, it is regionally unattached, conveys minimal variation in form and maximum in function. It is essential not to confuse that a Standard variety is prescriptive in nature, can be spoken in formal, informal, and neutral styles, with any accent.

Consequently, anything that doesn't follow the “rules” is marked as a *non-standard*. As an example, according to the map, the use of copula “was” with plural forms is prominent across the British Isles. Regardless of such prominence, “you was” is considered to be non-standard. (Figure 1, MacKenzie, 2022)

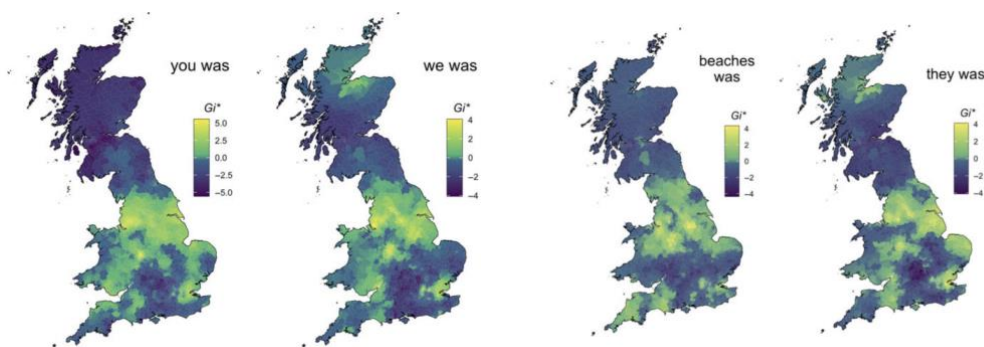


Figure 1: The acceptability of was-leveling with different subjects.

From: Towards an updated dialect atlas of British English. Journal of Linguistic Geography, 10(1), 46–66. MacKenzie et al. 2022, p.60

As scholars fail to provide logical explanations to what makes a standard, (non-standard), the notion of non-standard varieties evokes even more debates. The question is what falls into this category: regional varieties, social dialects, groups with marked accents or anything other than Standard British or Standard American English? Contrary to Jenkin's belief of non-standard inferiority in linguistic subordination, Janet Holmes (Holmes, 2022) is convinced that non-standard varieties may have both *positive and negative connotations*. She intends to use the term vernacular for a non-standard variety in order to omit bias and false implications. To illustrate inconsistency, one study conducted by YouGov asked 2,018 adults which accents they found most alluring and unpleasant in the UK. According to the results, Brummie ranked last, and Southern Irish scored the highest (Rhys, 2015)

In summary, a non-standard variety is quite often referred to as a dialect, and it may have both positive and negative connotations. Codified in dictionaries and grammar books, British and American varieties, are considered to be Standards. (Jenkins, 2014, p.26)

1.4 Dialects and Accents of English

When watching a film, having a phone call or a job interview, we can easily deduce some facts about our interlocutor based on solely their speech. It poses no difficulties to guess if they are a female, male, or a child. As well as tweaking out some features of their accent may inform us on their origin and social background. These intricacies and relations between a speech and social factors fall into the scope of variationist sociolinguistic studies.

There are known to be many varieties of a language, as **dialects, sociolects (mainly youth language), and registers, pidgins and creoles**, where some of them might be considered a borderline between a variety and a separate language (Kovalenko, 2011).

According to Peter Roach (2009), the notion of an accent and a dialect are quite often confused, as an *accent* concerns only pronunciation. Such phonetic

discrepancies may appear not only within one language, but also according to geographical locations, social class, age, and education. Scholars study an accent based on its vowels, consonants, and prosody (intonation and pitch).

Dialect, on the other hand, is more complex and encompasses not only phonetic peculiarities, but also grammar, vocabulary and syntax. According to Wolfram, the term “dialect” refers to those varieties of English whose features have, for one reason or another, become widely recognized.

Over the history of language development, certain dialects acquired different connotations, more often negative as it implies a second sort, unworthy or corrupt variety of a language. Those groups of people speaking a specific form of speech get cast out and marginalized by the mainstream or “right” varieties. - the case of *linguistic subordination*.

Speaking of classification of dialects, they may be divided into *regional*, concerning a particular geographical group and *social*, concerning a specific social group.

Regional features of English languages were first brought to light by Chaucer in his work *The Canterbury Tales*. He showcased not only the characters of various social classes varying from clergy to peasants, but also their regional dialects as Northern Dialect in the Reeve’s tale (Taylor, 2010).

In the context of World Englishes, two varieties still remain on the pedestal of Standardized Englishes: American and British. Despite a significant amount of variance between these two, other Non-Standard regional dialects stand out with no less unique vocabulary and grammar. As an example, South Africans use the term “robot” for British traffic-light, British wellies (Wellington boots) are the New Zealand’s gummies (gumboots). In this respect we regard South Africa, British and New Zealand variations as *geographical dialects*.

In contrast, Received Pronunciation or Queen’s English is perceived as a *social* one, pertaining to the Royal Family, an educated upper-class, the press, and BBC news. In contrast, Cockney (London English) is associated with London’s working class.

Due to the above-mentioned intricacies in differentiating a variety from a language or a social dialect, providing accurate statistics on the number of English dialects poses a challenge. Despite an exhaustive list of varieties that exist in the world, we will try to present the major ones.

Merely in the *British Isles*, there are roughly estimated to be more than 40 accents and dialects depending on the region: Received pronunciation, Estuary, Cockney, Essex, Brummie, West Country, Manchester, Geordie, Scouse, London, Yorkshire, Edinburgh, Devon, Lowland Scots etc.

As there are 50 states in *the U.S.A.* each of them has its own accent and pronunciation style. In the US, we can distinguish between: General American English, AAVE, Eastern New England, Mid-Atlantic dialect (Trans-Atlantic), the dialect of New York City, Philly, Western Pennsylvania dialect, Southern Upland dialects (Appalachian, Hight Tider, Cajun), Chicano English etc.

Oxford English Dictionary database is currently adding more characteristics and information on other *World Englishes* (World Englishes) such as: Australian English, Canadian English, New Zealand English, Indian English, Irish English, Malaysian English, Philippine English, Hong Kong English, Bermudian English, South African English, Nigerian English, and East African English.

Within the scope of our cinematic research, it is indispensable to mention an artificial American variety - *Transatlantic American accent*, fashionable in America during the first half of the 20th century, as it was spoken not only by Hollywood actors and singers, but also by some renowned presidents, as T. Roosevelt (Otero, 2019). Such variety is defined as an acrolect, according to Labov, a social prestige variety. Its main characteristics are the following:

- Tapped r
- Non-rhoticity
- Flapping, /t/ or /d/
- L velarization, /l/ sounds are pronounced darker.
- Yod-dropping, /j/ is normally dropped or deleted.
- Wine-whine merger, w and wh are pronounced the same.

- No æ-tensing: hang [hæŋ]: lap [læp]; bat [bæt]; manage [mænidʒ].
- Father-Bother distinction: father ['fa:ə]; brother ['brʌ:ə].
- Mirror-nearer distinction: mirror [mɪɹə]; nearer [nɪɹə].
- Mary-merry distinction: Mary [mɛəri]; merry [mɛri].
- Lack of happy tensing: happy [hæpi:].
- Lot-cloth assonance: lot [lɒt]; cloth [klɒθ].
- Cot /ɔ:/–caught/ɒ/ distinction.
- Hurry/ʌr/–furry: /ɜ:r/ distinction

1.5 Language ideologies and attitudes. Stereotypes.

Language ideology plays a crucial part in our perception of the world, society, and its inhabitants. We tend to show bias and prejudice towards certain people solely based on their language, accent, or distinct speech features. According to Bonfiglio (Van Herk, 2012, 154 citing Bonfiglio), *“There is nothing in the particular language itself that determines its worth: it is the connection of the language in question to the phenomena of power that determines the value of that language and that contributes to the standardization process.”* As Irvine and Gal (Irvine and Gal, 2000) put this, ideologies about language put linguistic phenomena as a part of the evidence for what they believe to be systematic behavior, aesthetics, or moral differences between certain social groups. Thus, we can deduce mainly three broad linguistic ideologies: **conservative** (asserting the hierarchy of varieties of terms of their dominance), **liberal** (believing in linguistic equality), and **radical** pointing out differences and inequalities.

Sociolinguistics deals with investigating the relations between language and society and its usage in various social contexts (Van Herk, 2012). Consequently, it studies people’s attitudes toward different languages, and without even realizing people tend to classify certain varieties as “normal” or “wrong”, “appropriate” and “inappropriate”. There exist some attitude questionnaires like a matched guise test aiming at uncovering latent attitudes towards languages by presenting participants

with audio recordings of speakers and requesting them to evaluate the speakers based on various characteristics. The variables can be a socioeconomic status, intellectual capacity, and amiability. This allows to assess people's biases and perceptions of certain varieties. The majority of matched guise tests are performed by the *status* scale (education, intelligence, success, and wealth) and a *solidarity* scale (friendliness, goodness, kindness, trustworthiness). For instance, a study done by a prominent sociolinguist Dennis Preston (Van Herk, 2012, p.149) concluded that Americans share the same understanding of linguistically marked and distinct varieties within their country. As a result, southern speech scored higher on solidarity measures and was regarded as relaxed and friendly, whereas the northern scored higher on status measures – fast, smart, with no twang or drawl. Therefore, we can see that even regional dialects within one English variety imply a certain level of prestige or absence of it, correctness or pleasantness, which advanced even further the inequality of English varieties by contributing to the language subordination process.

From the results of the above-mentioned studies on linguistic attitudes, we can't help but mention the notions of *covert* and *overt* prestige. Covert prestige is a term used in sociolinguistics to describe the hidden positive value that speakers unconsciously assign to certain language forms, usually those that are not considered standard or "correct." In other words, covert prestige possesses "street credibility" As controversial as it may sound, a variety that is not publicly recognized and admired holds a certain level of positive prestige. Frequently, the speakers of such vernaculars themselves put down the language they speak. One New Yorker described this talk as 'incontrovertibly dumb' in Labov's 1966 study (Van Herk, 2017, p.150). Although individuals frequently express disapproval of particular language forms, they continue to employ these very forms in their own communication, revealing a discrepancy between their stated beliefs and their actual linguistic preferences. Overt prestige, on the contrary, is used in regard to standard varieties, which are overtly (openly) admired and are identified as a yardstick for correctness, as RP for instance.

To add to the question of the social image of a certain variety, we have to resort to the ideas of Judith Irvine (2000), elaborating on the notion of iconization. It is a phenomenon when certain linguistic features become seen as inherent representations of the social groups they are associated with, reinforcing an ideological notion of those features being necessarily linked to the essence of those groups, even if the connection is actually arbitrary or historically contingent. As an example of manifestation of *iconization* would be RP accent, which is iconized and linked to the “Queen’s English”, as an example of refinement, intelligence, and social status. Similarly, animated movies tend to employ British accents as a part of villain character building, as Scar from The Lion King or Jafar from Alladin.

In conclusion, *language ideologies* are essential to study and manifest themselves across all social spheres of life: media, education, entertainment, and politics. Language ideologies are shared by groups in both conscious and subconscious ways, relating to hierarchy of power and maintenance of inequality.

Conclusions to the first chapter

Sociolinguistics is the study of a language, which delves into its relations with *social factors, class, geographical location, ethnical background, gender and age*. The goal of sociolinguistics is to find universal linguistic patterns that can be applicable to the majority of people. Sociolinguistic branches include interactionist and variationist sociolinguistics, which focus on social processes of language use, geographical (dialectology), anthropological, and sociological.

Variationist sociolinguistics which studies various ways of conveying the same meaning, specifically by means of *phonetic, pragmatic, morphological, lexical and grammatical variables*. An outstanding scientist in this field is William Labov, whose ground-breaking studies which proved that variations may have a degree of regularity, and that social class, gender, and status variables must be considered in the context of speech consciousness.

The history of standardization of languages dates back to 1500 when European countries claimed one standardized language to establish geographical

boundaries, education systems, and national identity. *Standard varieties* are considered the optimum for educational purposes and are used as a yardstick against other varieties of the language. *Non-standard varieties*, such as regional varieties, social dialects, or groups with marked accents, are often referred to as dialects and can have both positive and negative connotations.

When decoding a character's speech, we have to draw a distinction between a *dialect* and an *accent*. While accents pertain solely to pronunciation, dialects cover larger variations within grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. There exist social (Cockney, RP) and regional dialects (American, New Zealand, Caribbean).

As a part of sociolinguistic analysis of English accents and dialects, the notion of linguistic ideology must be mentioned. *Linguistic bias* towards certain ethnical, social or age groups has been proven by various studies as well as matched guise tests. Therefore, historically some dialects have been perceived as low-brow or wrong, while others as more appealing, sophisticated or intelligent. Given that these linguistic stereotypes are present across all spheres of life, they are similarly manifested in the entertainment industry, which is of our scientific interest.

CHAPTER 2. DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS OF DIALECTS IN DISNEY MOVIES

2.1 Research design and methodology. Quantitative and qualitative approaches

In this research, we will attempt to analyze Disney animations of 20th and 21st century as well as their live action productions in order to investigate sociolinguistic implications of accented Disney characters.

Our research design consists of a comprehensive analysis of the accents of every character in the original and live action of “*The Little Mermaid*”. By means of phonetic examination and quantitative approach we will categorize and decode the accents of each character based on predetermined criteria, such as age, gender, nature of the character (protagonist, antagonist, or supporting role), their social class and importance for the plot development. Due to qualitative approach in discourse analysis, we will establish sociolinguistic correlations between a certain use of an accent and the aforementioned variables.

2.1.1 Key takeaways from previous studies on the use of accents and dialects in Disney movies

Disney cartoons are known for utilizing a wide variety of accents and dialects and prescribing them to a specific group of characters. This leads to the reinforcement of certain attitudes towards the varieties of English. One study (Sonnesyn, 2011) showed that from 1995 to 2009 227 out of 372 examined characters spoke *AE variety*, and the rest of them were deliberately given a non-standard variety to dwell on the social status of the character. According to another research (Van Herk, 2012), the main characters typically speak in British or American Standard English. In contrast, foreign accents commonly possess negative connotations and are usually used for antagonists. However, when *BE* and *AE* varieties have clashed together, the latter has a positive motivation in comparison to the other. Furthermore, *AAE variety* has a higher measure and is intended for easy-going, fun people, animals, pets, or unemployed characters.

Judging by this research, we can draw several variables which contribute to the formation of an animated character. These are the following: gender, age, ethnicity or belonging to a certain social or regional community, the nature of a character (protagonist, antagonist), character development, as well as their importance for the story development.

The scriptwriters and directors are prone to employing specific varieties or accent to achieve a certain impression or effect on the audience. One of the most cited and profound researches on the discriminatory qualities of Disney cartoons was compiled by Lippi-Green in her work *English with an Accent* (2012).

In one of her chapters, Lippi-Green taps into the correlation between characters' accents and their nature, based on 24 Disney animations. One of the findings was that the *antagonists* spoke consistently with British accent far more than Mainstream American. The accents of powerful and alluring personalities are often mainstream English. However, characters with *foreign accents* are more likely to be motivated negatively, and are more inclined to possess darker intentions than characters with US English accents. For instance, *French-accented* characters, as in *Beauty and the Beast*, are “those persons associated with food preparation or presentation, or those with a special talent for light-hearted sexual bantering”.

These characteristics are present in the chamber maid, butler, and the cook. In contrast, Belle speaks *SAE*, juxtaposing the educated youth against the rurality of the village. Such stereotypical use of accents was represented not only based on the qualities of a character, but also on their gender and ethnicity (discussed more in the next chapter).

In addition to that, linguistic stereotypes in Disney characters frequently mirror national apprehensions, political or social contexts. To underpin this statement, previous studies analyzed an extensive use of German and Japanese personalities during the Second World War. Similarly, *Russian-accented* characters Natasha and Boris in the animation *Rocky and Bullwinkle* appeared in the fifties. (Lippi-Green, 2012, p.111)

As per actual statistics, the figure from Lippi-Green’s study (2012) showcases the dominance of *SAE*, and *SBE* within the scope of her study. American peripheral dialects, both social and regional, are equally popular as British ones. The percentage of non-English varieties (9%) also could explain a larger interest in non-English ideologies and stereotypes, adding more cultural zest to the plot line (as it was mentioned before with French accents in the *Beauty and the Beast*).

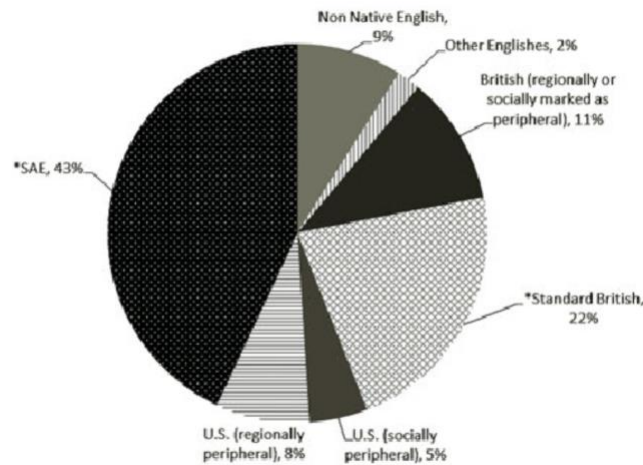


Figure 7.3 371 animated characters by language spoken

Figure 2: Animated characters by language spoken

From: English with an accent : language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States (2nd ed.) Lippi-Green, R. (2012).

The archetypal *British accent* has been receiving a lot of attention both in media and linguistic circles for its notorious “villain” quality. To illustrate that, Patrick Zabalbeascoa in his article called “Some observations on British Accent stereotypes in Hollywood -style films” (Zabalbeascoa, 2021) makes a point that the most recognizable villains all speak in RP accent. Jeremy Irons, a British Oscar-winning actor, is known for voicing most of them: Claus von Bülow in *Reversal of Fortune* (1990), the evil Scar in *The Lion King* (1994), and the equally evil Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992), Simon Gruber in *Die Hard with a Vengeance* (1995), and the evil wizard Profion in the film *Dungeons and Dragons* (2000). Just as Jeremy Irons, a quintessential Thespian of the British stage and screen, embodies the very essence of sophistication and refinement, so is the RP

conveyed to the audience. For this reason, many scholars believe that the villain quality of the British accents is quite often attributed to the linguistic stereotypes about the speaker of a certain variety.

While Lippi-Green carried out quantitative research stating the distribution of accents based on 24 movies, other linguists attempted to investigate the roots of these linguistic attitudes. For instance, Davis and Houck (Davis & Houck, 1992) found that non-RP speakers view speakers of the prestige *Received Pronunciation* (RP) accent (Queen's English or BBC English) as more educated, intelligent, competent, physically attractive, and socio-economically superior. At the same time, RP speakers are judged less trustworthy, kind, honest, and friendly than non-RP speakers. From these results of linguistic subordination, we can trace some roots of the negative stereotypes. Another research by Julia R. Dobrow and Calvin L. Gidney (Dobrow & Gidney, 1998) on villains in children's animation, shows mixed feelings towards British English by the American audience, as the English are portrayed as either refined intellectuals or morally corrupt characters. Dobrow and Gidney attribute it to the previous research showing that American speakers may possess a little sense of inferiority about their own dialects in comparison to British English.

It has to be mentioned that the majority of the Disney animation is produced in the US, British English, perceived with a feeling of foreignness and exotic may often represent the segregation of the good - Americans and the evil - Brits, as “us VS them” category.

Lastly, touching upon the settings of certain animations, it has been stated by Zabalbeascoa, that quite often the cultural background of the characters and the setting does not correspond to the accent they have. It is the case with Aladdin, an Arabian story, where surprisingly Jasmin and Aladdin speak Standard American English (linguistically typical protagonists). Nonetheless, Jasmine's elderly father speaks with a British accent. Similarly, the story of the Lion King, being based in Africa, has no sociolinguistic grounds for Jafar to speak a Standard British variety.

Conversely, Lippi-Green has found more correlations and tendencies in Disney employing *non-English varieties of non-English settings*, which implies

the intricacies of using certain accents not only for character building, but also for spatial and geographical ambiance (Lierop, 2014).

As far as the age variable is concerned, there has not been an exhaustive research stating some factual patterns on the correlation between an accent and the age in animated movies. However, as a part of sociolinguistic study, Eckert, 1998;

Chambers, 2009; Meyerhoff, 2011(Lierop, 2014, p.23) put forward a theory on a stigmatized use of dialects and standard varieties based on the age of the speaker. For instance, children and the elderly are more likely to use non-standard varieties of contrast to females and adult males. The kids and seniors' use of stigmatized varieties is attempted to be explained by the notion of "*linguistic marketplace*". Coined by Pierre Bourdieu, it implies an effective exchange of information, in which the young or the old ones do not participate.

The level of sophistication of any character has to be taken into consideration as well. It does not necessarily convey the sense of evil and goodness, or accordingly an antagonist or a protagonist. It mainly carries a sense of intelligence, seriousness or aloofness and comicality for unsophisticated roles (Urke, 2019). For instance, Sir Tow Mater in Cars (2006) can be cast as an unsophisticated character, very easy going and carefree, whose linguistic character is reinforced by the use of *lowbrow Southern American Accent*. Tow Mater is a good-natured friend with a heart of gold, yet he is rather naive and innocent in many situations, which is clearly juxtaposed to Mc Queen's drive for fame, speed, and ingenuity.

2.1.2 Relation between gender and language

The correlation between the gender and a language has already been presented and studied by Trudgill and Chambers 2009, as one of the non-linguistic variables influencing the use of language. Consequently, it spikes a scientific interest for us either to prove or to debunk this theory based on Disney films.

In the context of modern sociolinguistics, Robin Lakoff's groundbreaking work *Language and Woman's Place* (Lakoff, 1973) released in 1973 tapped into the pragmatics and lexical characteristics of females' speech. Women were more likely

to use the precise color terms, tag questions, “empty” adjectives like “cute”, and hypercorrect grammar contrary to men. Regarding phonological and morphosyntactic variation, women are more probable to use a prestige variety than men, and are inclined to use more sophisticated and innovative forms as well. Similar conclusions regarding women’s speech were made in the studies of Labov and Trudgill. (Mesthrie, Rajend, p.221)

According to Lippi-Green's study, examining 24 movies from 1937 to 2009 and 371 characters with speaking roles, 70% of them were males and respectively 30% were females. This statistic shows *an unequal distribution* of roles in Disney cartoons in the nineties, as well as a great dominance of men.

To go further, we should take a look at the social roles of these characters. The results are the following: *female characters* predominantly take the *domestic setting*, either at home, in a family, as mothers or princess. Only a small percentage plays a role of an unruly outcast, defying social norms. Furthermore, women in the working environment used to perform as nurses, nannies, housekeepers, or waitresses. In contrast, *men* were chiefly portrayed as *job-related* characters: detectives, pilots, doctors, kings, princes, or as hunters, thieves or servants.

These investigations make us realize the scope of the divisions of sexes in terms of careers and lifestyles. Consequently, these ideologies program the youth to follow the path of their favorite on-screen role models.

As far as character’s motivations are concerned depending on their *sex*, females have a higher probability of having good intentions than men (Figure 7.6 Lippi-Green, p.117). From the perspective of character development, *male antagonists* have shown a better likelihood to turn into a protagonist at the end of the story. However, *women antagonists* tend to show no personal development and be one-dimensional. Speaking of the accent distribution, the pattern was mostly negative for foreign characters, whereas positively motivated protagonists for the most part were representatives of SAE or SBE.

Apart from language distribution in cartoons based on their genders, we have to mention the underlying fundamental ideas between the two sexes. The data shows

that in 24 selected animations, nearly a half deals with the subject of romantic relationships and quest for love. Another obtrusive narrative that is instilled on children from the early ages and sets unrealistic expectations that only a fairy-haired innocent girl can find a true love - a prince. For that matter, *romantic leads* majorly speak SAE or SBE with minor exceptions.

All the above-mentioned nuances of the portrayal of Disney characters from the nineties, early 2000s have undoubtedly had a major impact on the identity developments and social hierarchy in the youngsters. The turn of dialects and accents proved to be a great tool in conveying the message of the good and evil, yet unfortunately, at the expense of stereotypes and people of certain varieties.

According to the Lippi-Green study, Disney seems to have taken a firm stand on rather conservative and outdated representations of females and males in terms of their career choices, ethnicity, and social background. Moreover, Chambers point out that “*women use fewer stigmatized varieties or regional dialects than men of the same social group do in the same circumstances*” (Lierop, p.114). Yet, it has to be mentioned, that Sønnsyn (2011) data showed that female characters are more likely to speak SAE or a regional American variety than male characters.

2.2 Diachronic case study of a Disney cartoon and its live action counterpart: The Little Mermaid (1989 vs 2023)

The Little Mermaid has been on the pedestal of Disney classics for years since its first production in 1989. Other movies and even the sequel followed, yet, it didn't gain much popularity, as the 1989 version. In recent years, Disney has launched a trend of remaking old movies into a live action. The Little Mermaid followed, introducing us to even more cultural diversity, accents, and female characters. The 2023 remake has received the barrage of criticism for poorly represented characters, their accents, and consequently linguistic stereotypes. Thus, it serves as a great field of investigation for our diachronic research, presenting an opportunity to track major shifts in linguistic attitudes, gender, age, and class issues.

2.2.1 The plot and major themes

Ariel, a princess of the sea, dreams of a life far from the water as she falls for Prince Eric, a human. She and the sea witch Ursula make a deal, where she gives up her voice in return for legs. Within three days, Ariel must accept the kiss of true love or else Ursula will imprison her. Ariel and Eric's love triumphs over every difficulty. Ariel weds Eric and their worlds become intertwined as King Triton bestows the gift of human life onto her.

It is worth mentioning, that there have been some changes to the plot with the live action remake, which reflect the up-do-date social issues as feminism, generation's problems, acceptance and interest in cultural diversity.

The choice of the female lead for the role of *Ariel*, has already stirred the public, switching from Ariel with a pale skin and ginger hair to the dark-skinned Afro-braided one. Despite the controversies and mixed comments from the audience, we have to admit the bold move from defying stereotypical representation of Disney princesses. Moreover, the production team did not stop with Ariel, but also introduced a new female character Eric's adoptive mother, who tries to influence his son's choice of traveling the world, thus reinforcing prosperous and comfortable life of the royal family with no preoccupations about others. The last

scene where Ariel and Eric finally reunite and get married is accentuated vividly by his mother's significant speech. She states that "*This marriage marks a new beginning for our worlds, who have long been in misunderstanding*". **Queen Selina and King Triton** represent the resentment for the other world, as both of them have lost their partners by hands of a human and conversely a sea creature. Although the theme of peace and reconciliation was implied in the original movie, the live action put more weight into reiterating this idea. Furthermore, the disappearance of parents' judgments and finally recognizing their kids' choices and aspirations reinforces the idea of inclusion and mutual understanding. Concerning more character development, Ariel's sisters had their names changed from *Aquata, Andrina, Arista, Attina, Adella and Alana* to *Tamika, Perla, Caspia, Indira, Mala and Karina*. Furthermore, each one of them is of different ethnicity and consequently has a different accent, implications of which will be discussed further.

Taking into consideration the ethnically diverse cast, retaining their accents, as well as introduction of an additional female character, we can observe significantly more themes of inclusiveness and cultural variety into the live action. Such alterations are employed with the aim to mirror contemporary feminist and diversity movements.

2.2.2 Phonetic analysis: The Little Mermaid, 1983

Before delving into the correlations between the gender, age, social class, nature of characters based on their accents, we will attempt to identify the variety spoken by each character based on phonological features of their speech, prosody, vocabulary, ethnical background and appearance.

1. General American accent

Ariel, Flounder, Eric, Flotsam and Jetsam, Vanessa, and Carlotta speak with a distinct General American English, devoid of any regional or social features.

In the extract below we can observe distinct features of GA, such as: the presence of *rhoticity* in Ariel's speech as seen in *Flounder* (r-colored schwa), lack

of centering diphthongs as result of rhoticity *hurry* ((r-colored open-mid central unrounded vowel)

“*Flounder, hurry up!*” [flaʊndə, 'hɜːi ʌp]

Flounder’s speech is also characteristic of GA accent, as **unreleased** (*held*) “**t**” at the end of the words as in *can’t* and *that*; American diphthong [oʊ] (mid-back rounded vowel) in *know*; **TRAP vowel** [æ] in *can*, characteristic to American phonology.

“*You know I can't swim that fast.*” [ju noʊ aɪ kæn swim ðæ fæst]

As a result of the following phonetic features, we have concluded that Eric speaks GA: **Cot-caught merger** as in *come on*, **yod-coalescence** in *watcha*.

“*Hey, come on, mutt, whatcha doing, huh Max? Good boy, good boy*”

[heɪ, kʌm ɒn, mʌt, 'wʌtʃə 'duːɪŋ, hʌ mæks gʊd bɔɪ, gʊd bɔɪ.]

Despite small appearances on screen, we managed to classify Jetsam and Flotsam’s accents as GA as well. Similarly to Eric, their speech is full of **rhoticity** as in *scared* and **diphthongs** [oʊ] in *don't*.

“*Don't be scared*” [dɒʊnt bi skerd]

Carlotta, Eric’s maid also showcases the same features of GA accent as **rhoticity** in *poor*, and **alveolar nasal sound “ing”** in *feeling*

“*Washed up from a shipwreck. Oh, the poor thing. We'll have you feeling better in no time.*”

[wɑːʃt ʌp frɑːm ə 'ʃɪprek oʊ ðə pɔː θɪŋ wɪl hæv juː 'fiːlɪŋ 'betə ɪn noʊ taɪm]

Due to the following characteristics of Vanessa’s song, we were able to classify her to GA category: **rhoticity** in *mermaid*, **broad vowels** [oʊ] in *ocean*.

“*Soon I'll have that little mermaid and the ocean will be mine!*”

[suːn aɪl hæv ðæt 'lɪtl̩ 'mɜːmeɪd | ənd ði 'oʊʃən wɪl bi maɪn]

2. British Standard (RP)

Grimsby, middle-aged advisor of prince Eric, is the only character making use of Standard British English employing the following features: **Absence of rhoticity**

in words like *birthday* /bɜ:θdeɪ/, *large* /lɑ:dʒ/; **open back rounded vowel /ɒ/** in words like *honor* /'ɒnə(r)/

“Silence! Silence! It is now my honor and privilege to present our esteemed Prince Eric with a very special, very expensive, very large birthday present.”

[[saɪləns! 'saɪləns! ɪt ɪz naʊ maɪ 'ɒn.ə ænd 'prɪvəlɪdʒ tə pri 'zent 'avə ɪs 'ti:md prɪns 'erɪk wɪð ə 'veri 'speʃl, 'veri ɪk 'spensɪv, 'veri la:dʒ 'bɜ:θdeɪ 'preznt.]

3. Trans-Atlantic accent

Given the melodic and highly accentuated prosody of King Triton and Ursula, we have defined them as representatives of Trans-Atlantic accent, which is famous for

a lack of happy tensing as in *lady*, broad American **diphthong vowels [oʊ]** instead of [əʊ] as seen in *know* and *going*; **wine-whine merger**, “w” and “wh” are pronounced the same as in *what* and *with*

“I just don't know what we're going to do with you, young lady.”

[aɪ dʒəst doʊnt noʊ wɪt wi: a:r goʊɪŋ tu: du: wɪð ju:, jʌŋ 'leɪdi.]

Ursula's speech, similarly, is **non-rhotic** as in *starving*, **velarized [ɫ]** as seen in *exiled* and *while*, and **whine-wine merger** in *wasted* and *while*.

“And now, look at me - wasted away to practically nothing - banished and exiled and practically starving, while he and his flimsy fish-folk celebrate.”

[ænd naʊ | lʊk æt mi: | 'weɪstɪd ə 'weɪ tə 'præktɪkli 'nʌθɪŋ | 'bænɪʃt ænd 'egzaɪld ænd 'præktɪkli 'stɑ:vɪŋ | 'waɪt hi: ænd hɪz 'flɪmzi fɪʃfəʊk 'seləbreɪt]

4. New York accent

Scuttle is a representative of an old traditional New York accent, as it makes use of **non-rhotic sounds** as in *hair* /heə/ and *over* /əʊ.və/; **g-dropping** in *pleasing*

“You got an aesthetically pleasing configuration of hair that humans go nuts over.”

[jə 'gɑt ən ,es 'θeɪrɪkli 'pli:zɪŋ kən fɪgʃə 'eɪfən əv 'heə ðæt 'hju:mənz gə 'nʌts 'oʊvə]

Yod dropping is also characteristic to upstate New York speakers, as seen in *knew* /nu:/. Scuttle also pronounces *that* as /dæt/, reinforcing **th-fronting** peculiar to New York accent.

“I knew that” [aɪ 'nu: dæt]

5. Jamaican accent

Jamaican English is a variant of the English language that belongs to the extensive Creole family of the Caribbean region, which is commonly referred to as the West Indies. It encompasses a plethora of unique phonological features. Sebastian's speech is a great representation of this accent, as all of his vowels are highly **accentuated** as in *legs* /liegz/ or *idiot* /idiɔt/. Jamaican variety quite often **alters the vowel onsets** in the word *voice* which is pronounced as /vaɪs/.

As we can see in the abstract below, he replaces the voiced alveo-palatal fricative /z/ **into** /ʒ/ as seen in /legz/-- /legʒ/. **H-dropping** in *her* /ɑr / is another feature of Jamaican accent, which Sebastian utilizes:

“She's got legs, you idiot! She traded her voice to the sea witch and got legs. Jeez, man...”

[[ʃi gat liegz ju 'idiɔt ʃi 'triedid ɑr vɔɪs tu di si wɪf ɑn gat liegz. dʒiez, man...]

7. French accent

When speaking English, French speakers tend to exhibit phonological features that are the most characteristic to their native language, as **guttural “r”, non-aspirated consonants, nasal sounds**. Similarly, the French substitute the English sounds that don't exist in French by their closest equivalents. Therefore, it poses no difficulties to discern Chef Louis' accent for the use of **French expressions** “*Sacre bleu*”, confusion of a short and long [i] sound as in *this* [ðr:s] and *miss* [mɪ:s]

What is this?

How on earth could I miss

In the abstract below, we can also spot **W-V merger** in *sweet* and **guttural “r”** in *crab*

“Such a sweet little succulent crab?”

French accent in English also manifests itself in **substitution of /θ/ and /ð/ by /z/** as with definite article *the* which is not dental.

“Here we go in the sauce”

Overall, most of the characters (five) in the Little Mermaid 1989 speak with **GA** accent with the most prevailing features: rhoticity (r-colored vowels), unreleased "t" at the end of words, American diphthong [oʊ], TRAP vowel [æ], Cot-caught merger, reduced vowels, yod-coalescence. **British English** accent was identified due to non-rhotic and open back rounded vowel /ɒ/. As for **Trans-Atlantic accent**, ranking second after GA, Ursula and King Triton made use of: broad American diphthong [oʊ], wine-whine merger, and velarized [ɫ]. Jamaican accent, however, stood out by highly accentuated vowels, alteration of vowel onsets, replacement of /z/ with /ʒ/, and h-dropping.

2.2.3 Phonetic analysis: The Little Mermaid, 2023

Due to the nature of the live action production, as well as an immense impact of actor's native language and consequently accent, we should take into consideration the origin of an actor/actress executing the role of each character.

1. General American

Although Ariel is played by American actress and singer Halle Lynn Bailey, and Flounder by Canadian Jacob Tremblay, they both retain a General American accent in the movie:

We can observe solely Standard American features in Ariel's speech, as the **diphthong [oʊ]** in *don't*, and **reduced forms** as in *wanna*, and **rhoticity** as seen in *worry* and *more*

“You don't have to worry about me. I just wanna know more about them.”

[[ju: doʊnt hæv tu: 'wʌri ə 'bʌʊt mi: . ai dʒʌst 'wanə noʊ mɔ:r ə 'bʌʊt ðem.]

In similar fashion, we have concluded that Flounder speaks a GA variety for the use of **rhoticity** in *working* and *sharks*; **r-colored NURSE** vowel in *were* :

“We were exploring, and the sharks chased us”

[wi wɜ:r ik 'splɔ:rɪŋ, ænd ðə fɑ:rks tʃeɪst əs]

Identification of Scuttle's accent, however, poses some difficulties due to a mixed ethnical variety of the voice-over actress Awkwafina, who was born in New York into a family of Asian immigrants. Additionally, Awkwafina is known for playing humorous and slightly bizarre characters owing to her deep and vocal fry voice, typical for a young female celebrity of which distinguishes her from the rest. Despite her place of birth, which must have shaped her identity as well as patterns of speech, there are some inconsistencies of sounds production that may pertain to polar different varieties. For instance, the live action of the Little Mermaid featured a new rap song "Scuttlebutt", which caused confusion and backlashes on Awkwafina fake *blaccent* (Brunner, 2023) and stigmatization of Black rap. Scuttle's speech voiced by Awkwafina can be described either as a modern New York Accent with less distinguishable features (like non-rhoticity), or as an attempt to produce GA accent where the actress' roots interfered.

In the piece provided below we were able to identify some features of New York accent as: *clipped speech style*, as in *y'a*, *vocal fry* typical for metropolitan dwellers of her age, *velar nasal coalescence (g-dropping)* in *doing* and *grabbing*

"Hey Ariel, how y'a doin', don't mind me I was just grabbing a snack"

[heɪ 'æri.əl, haʊ jə 'du:ɪn, doʊnt maɪnd mi: aɪ wəz dʒəst 'græbɪŋ ə snæk]

There are also some Southern American features in Scuttle's speech, which are inconsistent to NY accent, as *insertion of a schwa sound* in the diphthongs as in *hair* /hɛər/, *their* /ðɛər/, *monophthongization* as seen in *style* /'sta:l/:

"Humans use these babies to style their hair"

[hju:mənz 'ju:z ði:z 'beɪbɪz tə 'sta:l ðɛər 'hɛər]

Thus, due to some implications in recognizing the features of solely one variety or dialect, we would classify Scuttle in the GA category encompassing the characteristics of both NY and Southern American English.

2. British Standard English

Judging by the phonetic features present in Eric's speech, we identified his accent as Standard British: **non-rhoticity** in *here* /hɪə/ and *mermaid* /'mɜ:mɛɪd/, **TRAP-BATH** split manifested in a long /ɑ:/ sound in *Cartagena*; distinctive **diphthong** /əʊ/ as in *nobody*:

"Nobody usually comes in here. My little mermaid. I found her on the coast of Cartagena"

[nəʊbədi 'ju:ʒʊəli kʌmz ɪn hɪə. maɪ 'lɪl 'mɜ:mɛɪd. aɪ faʊnd hɜ:r ɒn ðə kəʊst əv ,kɑ:tə'dʒi:nə]

In similar manner, Grimsby's speech possess the same phonetic features as: **non-rhoticity** in *servants* /sɜ:vənts/, **TRAP-BATH split**: a long /ɑ:/ sound in *castle*

"According to the servants, she left the castle this morning"

[ə 'kɔ:dn̩ tə ðə 'sɜ:vənts ʃɪ left ðə 'kɑ:sɪ ðɪs 'mɔ:nɪŋ]

Although Vanessa (Ursula's human alter ego) does not appear much in the live action, some small excerpts of her speech and the native accent of her dubbing actor help cast her as a Standard British speaker: extensive **use of alveolar plosives** like /t/ and /d/ sounds in words like *too*, *it*, *but*, and *did*; **non-rhotic** /ɜ/ sound in *word*. In the excerpt below, as seen in *suppose*, we can mark some evident features of RP, as **the diphthong** /əʊ/, and less accentuated or almost absent schwa sound in the first syllable.

"Heroism is a too strong word for it. But I suppose I did save Eric."

[herəʊɪzəm ɪz ə tu: strɒŋ wɜ:d fər ɪt. bət aɪ sə 'pəʊz aɪ dɪd seɪv 'erɪk]

Queen Selina, a new character to the story also showcases identical features of Standard British accent as: **non-rhoticity** in such words as *other* /ʌðə/, **diphthong** /əʊ/ in *almost* /ɔ:lməʊst/, **open-mid back vowel** [ɔ:] in the word *brought*.

"May I remind you that a deadly shipwreck has brought you to us. And now I almost lost you to the other day."

[meɪ aɪ rɪ'maɪnd ju: ðæt ə 'dedli 'ʃɪprek həz brɔ:t ju: tə ʌs. ənd naʊ aɪ 'ɔ:lməʊst lɒst ju: tə ði 'ʌðə deɪ]

Concerning Karina, one of the King Triton's daughters, we were able to identify her accent based on one uniquely British feature as **open and front [a:]** sound in the word *chance* /tʃa:ns/

“They would kill us too, if they had a chance.”

[ðei wʊd kil ʌs tu:, ɪf ðei hæd ə tʃa:ns]

Likewise, Tamika, Karina's sister, who was played by a British actress, has the same Standard British accent, which manifests itself in **non-rhoticity** as in *their* and **glottalization**, as seen in *at* and *did*

“Look at what their shipwreck did” [lʊk ət wɒt ðeə 'ʃɪprek dɪd.]

Recurring features as **non-rhoticity** (*years*, *careless*) and the **diphthong /əʊ/** (*grow*) are also manifested in Caspia's speech in the extract below:

They are careless, Ariel. It will take thousands of years for these corals to grow back

[ðei a: 'keələs, 'æriəl. ɪt wɪl teɪk 'θaʊzənz əv jɪəz fə ði:z 'kɒrəlz tə grəʊ bæk]

When it comes to another daughter of Triton - Mala, identification of her spoken variety posed some difficulties, owing to minimal screen time and lack of data on the actress voicing her. Thus, in order to find more justification for her British accent, we resorted to Karolina Conchet's biography, which according to Reddit, she is Polish American who was raised in American metropolitan North. This assumption accounts for her r-less speech and Slavic features of her speech (as denasalized “ing”, and labio-dental w sounds)

“What's going on with her” [vɒts ɡoʊɪŋ ɒn wɪð hə]

Despite her place of birth, her Asian appearance contributes to the mix of cultures and nationalities in the movie. It's quite probably that Karolina Conchet was cast for the role of Mala specifically for her Asian appearance, which fits perfectly the multi-ethnic casting of the Little Mermaid. Furthermore, Karolina's agent states that she speaks not only Polish but also French, which could also explain her **labio-dental w** sounds in *what's*. Therefore, due to a lack of specific data and knowledge on the intended accent for the character of Mala, we were unable to

identify her accent, as the actress has too diverse ethnical and cultural background each contributing to her accent.

3. Cockney accent

At the beginning of the movie, we see Prince Eric on a ship sailing with his crew. Not only could we hear some distinct RP accents in the background, but also Cockney from an unknown sailor, which implies his London origins. Having identified **glottal stop** in *waters* /'wɔ:ʔəz/ and the **diphthong shifts** from [ei] to [aɪ] in the phrase below, we have attributed him Cockney variety.

“These are dangerous waters” [ði:z a: 'daɪndʒ.əs 'wɔ:ʔəz]

4. Indian English

Indira, one of the Triton's daughters, is played by Simone Ashley, who is linguistically interesting to analyze. Simone Ashley is a British actress of Indian ethnology, who has a perfectly acquired Standard British accent in real life. However, in the film, presumably for the sake of cultural diversity, she utilizes her ethnical Indian accent. Indian accent by Indira manifests itself by **palatalized 'l'** in killed, **non-rhotic sounds** in nearly, and **monophthongization** in “nearly” /ni:li/; **simplified consonant cluster** “rn” as seen in in “fern” [fa:n]

“And they've killed nearly all of the sea fern.”

[ænd ðeɪv kɪl'd ni:li ə:l ɒf ðə si: fa:n]

5. Spanish English

Given that there are two actors of Hispanic origins performing in the Little Mermaid, 2023, their ethnical background has similarly influenced the speech of their characters. For instance, Spanish actor Javier Bardem, playing King Triton shows extensively in his speech the use of **'s' instead of 'z'** in deserved, **devoiced consonant** at the end of the words *deserved* /dɪ'sɜ:rvt/

“They got what they deserved” [ðeɪ gɒt wat ðeɪ dɪ'sɜ:rvt]

Similarly, in the line below we can trace **silent letter “h”** in have /ev/, **non-aspirated consonants** in peculiar, **monophthongization** of the [ou] to [ɔ] as seen in notice [nə'tisəd]

Sebastian, have you noticed that Ariel has been acting peculiar lately?

[se'bastjan | 'ev ju nə'tisəd ðat a'ri:əl hez bin 'aktiŋ pi'kju:l.jə 'leitli]

Perla is one of the King Triton's daughters is played by Lorena Andrea whose parents are Colombian and Spanish, which could have influenced her accent and consequently Perla's. In the lines below we can observe **yod elision** between 'would' and 'you', **trilled ‘r’** in never /never:/ and surface /'sɜ:fes/. Perla also pronounced **“h” silently** as seen in how ['aʊ]. Some of the vowels are also shifted to more accustomed ones in Spanish, as the word stopped below is pronounced with a short fronted [o] sound instead of [ɑ] or [ɒ]. Vowel reduction is also present in Perla's speech as in surface, no schwa sound, but a very distinct **stressed [e]** /'sɜ:fes/

“How would you know? You've never even seen one, you were just a child when Mother died, and Father stopped us going to the surface.”

['aʊ wʊd ju nəʊ | juv 'never: 'iven si:n wən | u wɜ:r dʒast ə tʃaɪld wən 'mʌðə daɪd | end 'fɑðə stɒpt əs 'gɔʊɪŋ tu ðə 'sɜ:fes]

6. Caribbean accent

Sebastian's accent has received a barrage of criticism from the audience for certain exaggerated phonetic features, which were executed poorly by the actor David Diggs, who is not a native Caribbean. For instance, the **monophthongization** of diphthongs has been taken to a greater extreme, as in words “okay” /ɔkij/ or “finds out” /fanz ot/, which though followed the blueprint of the Caribbean vowels production, sounded unnatural due to overly prolonged vowels. Yet, in the end, the actor gives away his original American accent as seen in alright, using **a dark “l”** in “al” and **held “t”** in “right” (Meer, 2021)

“Okay, As long as the King never finds out, everything will be alright”

[ɔkij, æz laŋ æz ðə kiŋ 'neva fanz ot | 'evritiŋ vil bi əl rai]

Despite some previous incongruences, Sebastian utilizes a variety of distinctly Caribbean features in his speech, such as: **cluster reduction** in *nothing* /nʌtʌn/, **th-fronting** in *nothing* /nʌtʌn/, *there* /de:/; **monophthongization of diphthongs** in *wasting* /we:stʌn/ and *doing* /dui:n/, *time* /ta:m/; **highly accentuated unstressed vowels** as in *from* /fram/; **g-dropping** in *swimming* /swimin/ and *flying* /fla:jɪn/

“What are you doing up there? Wasting your time with this know-nothing bird that can’t tell swimming from flying?”

[wat a ju dui:n ʌp de: | we:stʌn jɔ ta:m wɪd dɪs no:-nʌtʌn bɜ:d dæt ka:n tɛl swimin fram fla:jɪn]

Lashana, Eric’s Caribbean maid, also speaks this variety with a similar set of speech patterns as in the extract below: **monophthongization of diphthongs** in *take* /te:k/, *find* /fa:n/, *clothes* /klo:z/, **absence of reduced vowels** with schwa sounds, as in *some* /sʌm/, and **palatalized “l”** in “cleaned” /kli:nd/

“Here, let me take you upstairs, let’s get y’a cleaned up and find you some clothes.”

[hiɜ: | lɛ mi te:k ju ʌp 'ste:z | lɛts get ja kli:nd ʌp ən fa:n ju sʌm klo:z]

7. Trans-Atlantic accent

Ursula, played by American actress Melissa McCarthy, which influences the accent of her character Ursula. Despite her American features of speech, she portrays her character by means of Trans-Atlantic accent, similarly to the Ursula of 1989 version. Ursula’s speech is very melodic and dramatic, which underpinned by the following features: **BATH vowel** in *garden* /'ga:dŋ/, and **non-rhoticity** in *forgive* /fə'gɪv/

“Forgive my aggressive garden” [fə'gɪv maɪ ə'gɹɛsɪv 'ga:dŋ]

Yet, there are some inconsistencies with these sounds, as the typically British features are mixed with the American ones, as the use of **TRAP vowel** in *can’t* /kæ:nt/. Similarly, Ursula pronounces *world* **rhotically** as /wɜ:ld/, yet, *yourself* is non-rhotic /jɔ:'self/

“You can’t live in that world, unless you become a human yourself”

[ju: kæ:nt liv in ðæt wɜ:ld, ən 'lɛs ju: bi 'kʌm ə 'hju:mən jɔ: 'self]

Overall, **Standard British** variety proved to be the most dominant marked by non-rhoticity, alveolar plosives and open-mid back vowel [ɔ:], as well as the use of diphthong [əʊ]. **GA accent**, ranking second in numbers, is easily identified due to rhoticity and the diphthong [ou]. In contrast to Sebastian with Jamaican accent in 1989, the **Caribbean accent** in the 2023 production, besides common highly accentuated vowels and th-fronting, has undergone some alterations in monophthongization of diphthongs, cluster reduction, and g-reduction. **Trans-Atlantic** accent similarly to Ursula's performance in 1989 shows inconsistencies with rhoticity and TRAP-BATH vowels. Among non-native accents, **Spanish English** has to be mentioned, as two characters in 2023 spoke that variety. Spanish accent manifests itself by means of silent Hs, devoiced consonants, trilled Rs, and non-aspirated consonants.

2.2.4 Accents distribution (1989, 2023)

In order to grasp and compare the English varieties used in the 1989 and 2023 *Little Mermaid*, we have compiled a classification table summarizing the characteristics of each character based on the variables of our research.

Delving into the implications of the accents use in the old and new version, we will resort to the actors who voiced their characters as well as their ethnicity in order to dissect the motives behind the director's choices.

First and foremost, as you can see in the tables below, overall there are linguistically diverse characters in the 2023 live action. As predicted, **GA** and **Standard British** variety still predominate. The GA variety is spoken by five characters in the 1989 movie, in contrast to three characters in the live action.

Conversely, while only one character (Grimsby) employs Standard British English, it is spoken by eight characters in the live version.

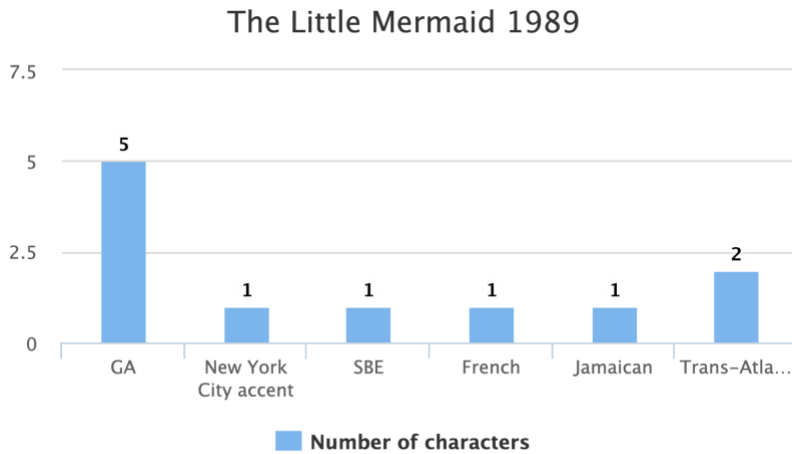


Table 1: 1989, Accent distribution

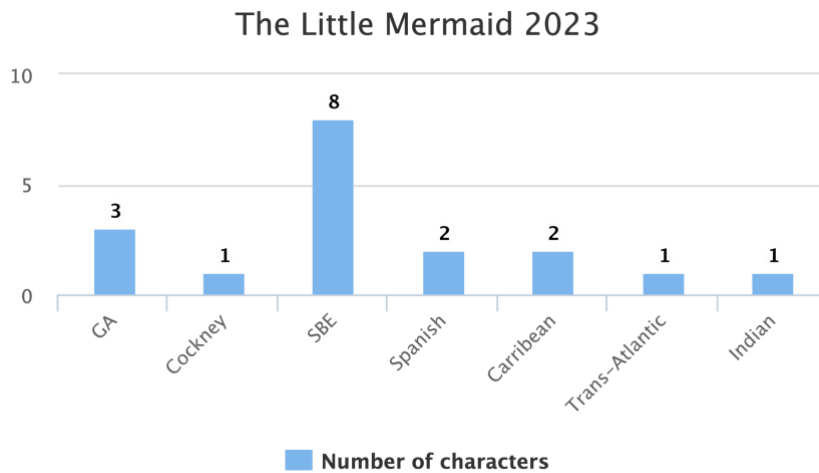


Table 2: 2023, Accent distribution

We can estimate that despite other varieties introduced in the live action, surprisingly the majority still employed Standard British accent. Only one character spoke with *non-standard accent* each (Jamaican, Transatlantic, New York) in the 1989 movie. Similarly, there was one representative for each non-standard variety in the 2023 movie on top of the overall bigger number of varieties (Caribbean, Spanish, Trans-Atlantic, Cockney, and Indian). Judging by the results, we can observe some dominance of *Spanish and Caribbean accents* among the Non-Standard varieties. This statistics could be explained by a great amount of Hispanic population in the US, finally receiving more recognition in the film industry.

2.2.5 Accents and gender in *The Little Mermaid* 1989 vs 2023

To begin with the representation of females on screen, there are more male characters (8) than females (4) (not including the seven daughters of Triton) in the 1989 *Little Mermaid*.

The data also shows that all *female* characters speak the *American Standard variety*, except for Ursula (Mid-Atlantic accent). These findings prove the theoretical background on women’s likelihood of speaking standardized and more refined language. The majority of *male characters* equally speak *GA*, and slightly less *SBE*. Furthermore, similarly to Ursula, King Triton speaks Trans-Atlantic English. Nonetheless, the *non-standard varieties* are reserved solely for male characters. An essential note for the research is that seven daughters of Triton were not included in the list of characters, as they didn’t have a speaking part to reveal their qualities important for the research. Had they been added, it would dramatically change the statistics and the number of female characters. Judging by the statistics below, we can conclude that an equal amount of males and females speak General American English, as well as Mid-Atlantic. Whereas, *SBE* and other *non-standard varieties* are *equally distributed* among the rest of the characters. The tendency proves to be favorable towards American varieties rather than others.

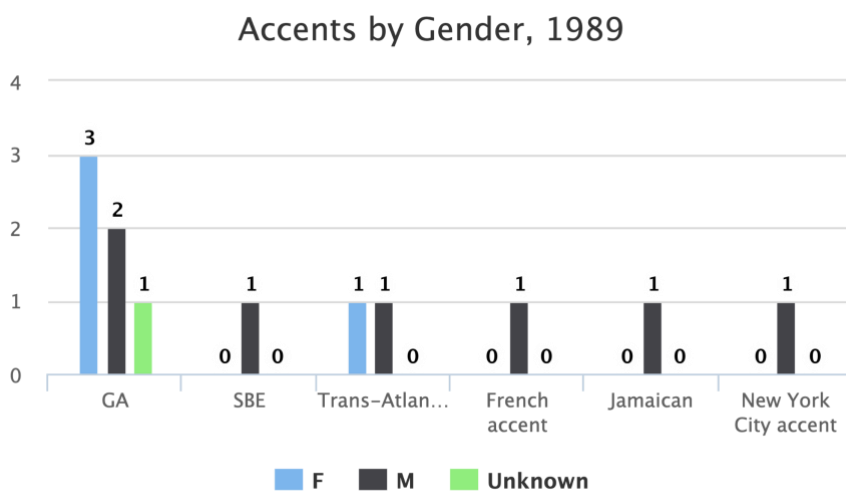


Table 3: Accents by gender, 1989

As far as the variable of gender is concerned in the live action, there are more *female characters* (12) in contrast to *males* (6), the number considerably distinct due to a more elaborate portrayal of Triton’s daughters in the live action.

While there were only 36% of women in *The Little Mermaid* 1989, there are almost twice as many (66, 7%) females in the 2023 production, which already signifies positive tendencies to the majority of female roles in movies.

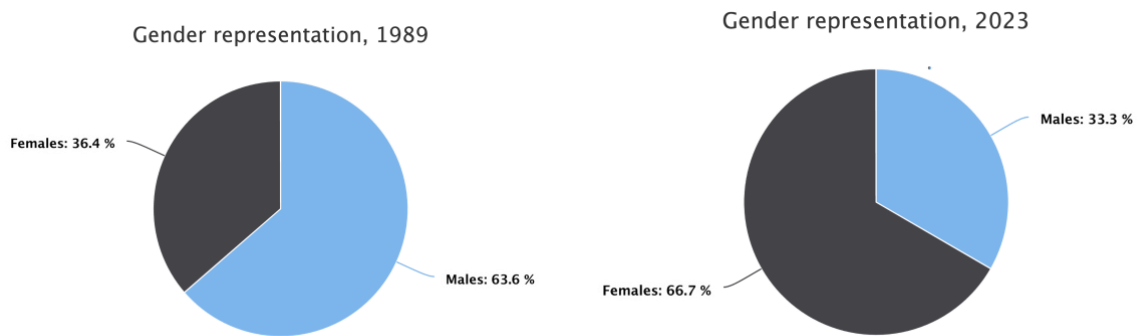


Table 4: Gender representation, 1989 and 2023

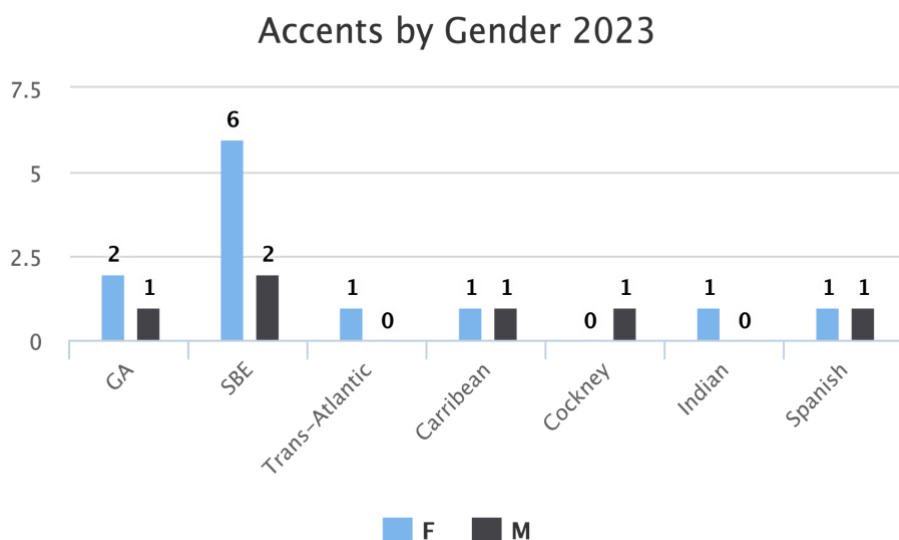


Table 5: Accents by gender: The Little Mermaid 2023

Female characters majorly speak a *British Standard variety*, outnumbering even GA. Although the American Standard is outnumbered, the prestige of the dominant variety (in this case British) still remains as relevant, as in the 1989 animation.

It is worth mentioning that, in contrast to the 1989 version, there is one female character representing each *non-standard variety*. This finding proves a positive switch in feminist movements of the film industry. Nonetheless, the statistic shows that only one male character spoke with a *Cockney accent*, fueling some stereotypes about the sailor's social status as solely a workforce. This issue will be analyzed in depth in the next section on the social class variable.

As per characters' development, *Ariel* in the remake assumes a much more proactive position than her cartoon counterpart. Contrary to the 1989 version, where Eric steers the wheel and kills the witch, in the remake Ariel saves herself, her father, and her love. This only advances further the popular feminist ideology, empowering female characters to take actions instead of waiting for a male savior. Along the way, she seems to be in more control of her story and less constrained by her silence on land. She is not yearning for Prince Eric as much as she is wishing for a world other than the one ruled by her father. All of these developments are undoubtedly positive. Moreover, it contradicts the theoretical background stating that traditionally female characters occupy some domestic and passive roles in the story.

Secondly, *Scuttle*, the seagull in the 2023 version is voiced by a *female* American singer Awkwafina, opposed to the male Scuttle in the 1989 animation. It is disputable whether such changes were applied with some ideological intentions, as these characters did not have a major part neither in plot nor in character development. Nonetheless, the nature of Scuttle remained the same notwithstanding their gender nor accent. It is still a carefree, easy-going, loud, and slightly naive character, presumably knowledgeable of the human relationships.

2.2.6 Accents and age (*The Little Mermaid* 1989 vs 2023)

When using the age variable in our research, it becomes evident that only one adult spoke with British accent in the 1989 production - Grimsby, while both young and older characters spoke the Standard in the 2023 movie.

Consequently, we can deduce that from the point of view of linguistic ideology, SBE was employed as characteristic of wisdom, power, and high social status peculiar to older generations. The young characters spoke exclusively GA variety.

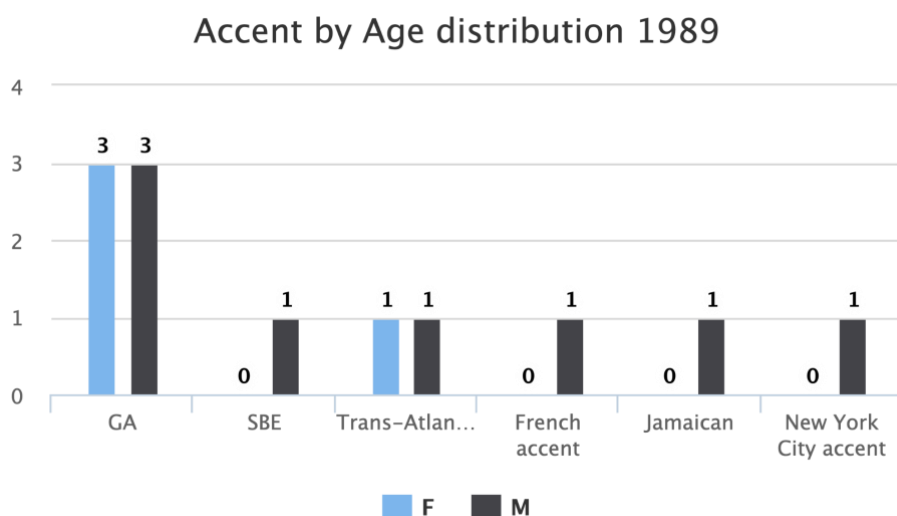


Table 6: Accents by age, 1989

Such tendencies are not apparent in the live action, so the distribution of RP does not show any logical correlations with age. Overall, judging by the results (Table 6), there are more young characters than older ones, employing a plethora of standard and non-standard varieties. As among the British adult characters there are only Vanessa (Ursula's human alter ego), Queen Selina, and Grimsby and Mala, it is improbable to infer that SBE was distributed based on age, social status or the nature of characters.

Concerning the use of Mid-Atlantic American English, in both cinematic productions they are applied to the older characters: King Triton (1989) and Ursula (1989, 2023). Such choices evidently strived to single out Triton and Ursula as representatives of a high social class, power, and refinement.

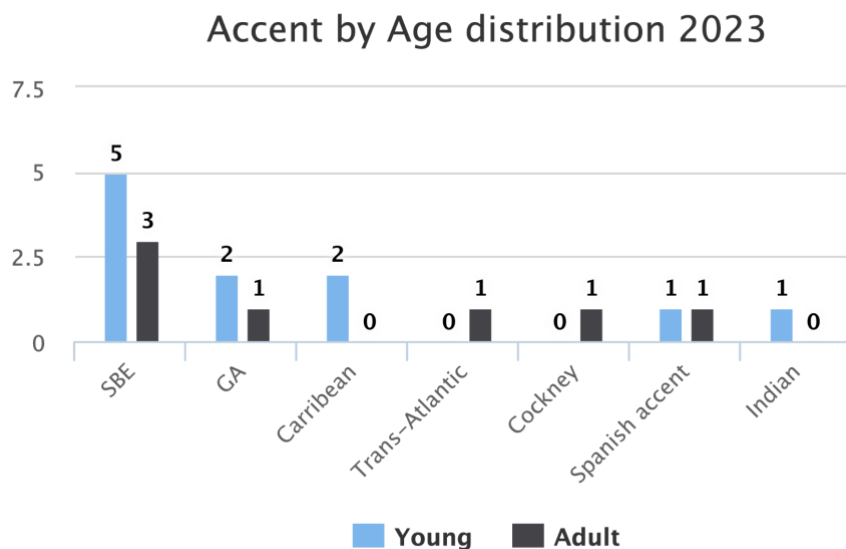


Table 7: Accents by age, 2023

2.2.7 Ethnical variety (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023)

The Little Mermaid 2023 succeeded in transmitting the cultural ideology of diversity even among the family members. Queen Selina, interpreted by Black actress Noma Dumezweni, plays an adoptive mother of Prince Eric, defying ethnical homogeneity in the family. Moreover, Ariel’s father King Triton is played by Xavier Bardem, a *Spanish* character, retaining his *accent* for this role. Prince Eric’s maids also obtained a *Caribbean accent* in addition to the *British* one. These examples are far more diverse than in the first version of the film.

It is also vital to mention some possible implied ideologies behind the seven daughters of Triton, and their further elaboration in the 2023 remake. Despite the fact that their names have been changed, they are still based on the characters of the original movie, which allows us to compare their major qualities from the old version with ethnical representation in the new one.

In contrast to the original daughters of Tritan, who spoke *General American* variety, in the live action, they all speak with *Standard* and *Non-Standard* varieties of English. Some sources state that each of the seven sisters possess some notable characteristics, which presumable could be linked to their ethnical background. For

instance, Mala (played by an Asian model) is portrayed as the bravest of Triton's daughters, determined to preserve the reefs at any costs. She also wears shades of red and pink, contributing to the courageous image. Indira (played by an Indian actress) is described as the most generous of all the daughters of the sea, empathetic, generous, and virtuous. Princess Caspia (*British accent*) is considered as the most self-serving of Ariel's sisters, constantly prioritizing her people, making her a gentle and caring leader. Princess Tamika (Black ethnicity and British accent) has been described as the sea's bravest daughter. Perla played by Lorena Andrea (a British actress of a Spanish and Colombian descent), having kept the *Spanish features in English*, is a great fit to convey the warmth and charisma specific to these cultures.

It has not been stated by the team that such modifications of the daughters have some meaning behind, yet as a part of our research we endeavor to speculate on this matter.

2.2.8 Social class (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023)

Despite initial expectations, the 1989 production proved to be less stigmatized in terms of language use based on the social class. For instance, King Triton speaks with Standard British accent, his daughter Ariel - GA, as well as Prince Eric, all representatives of the higher royal class. Correspondingly, we can observe that Prince's Eric maids, inferior to Prince, utilized the same spoken variety. It remains questionable whether Sebastian's Jamaican accent intended to convey any extralinguistic characteristics. Yet, it is believed that his accent is linked to the musical choices of the cartoon, which is majorly exotic like reggae.

Scuttle's New York accent matches his bossy character, as the New Yorkers are known to be tough, street-smart, and determined. Scuttle is still portrayed as a slightly comical character in his endeavors to explain human objects. Notwithstanding this fact, we immediately grasp his dominant features, as know-it-all character.

The Chef Louis is also a highly stigmatized marginal character whose hyperbolic French accent is underpinned by the image of an exquisite cook. The

French cuisine is recognized as the best one in the world; thus such culinary themes are frequently expressed by the use of French accents.

While standard varieties are less stereotypical as the non-standard ones in the 1989 production, the application of certain accents in the live action showed more linguistic subordination. The situation in the marine world is rather sporadic due to a plethora of accents regardless of social status, Spanish features of King Triton and Perla, Indian and Asian-looking daughters, Jamaican Sebastian and so on. The reverse case happens in the human world. The whole royal family including the Queen, Eric and his advisor speak with SBE accents. Thus, it is based not on age, as in 1989's film, but on social class. Furthermore, some maids speak not only a British variety, but also with Caribbean accent. Carlotta in 1989 was substituted by Lashana in 2023 with heavily exaggerated features of Caribbean accent. This choice can be either explained by the setting of the film, by the coast of the Caribbeans, or stigmatizing their lower position in society.

To reinforce this idea even further, at the very beginning of the movie, we get acquainted with the ship crew of Prince Eric. Immediately, we can hear a mix of two accent: SBE and Cockney. One sailor, in particular, made an exclamation, revealing his Cockney accents with a heavy use of glottal stops and wider diphthongs. Although some sailors spoke SB English, such a marginal moment contributed to the image of the mix of different social classes, origins, and walks of life.

2.2.9 Accents and nature of characters (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023)

In regard to the nature of characters and the link to their accents, firstly it has to be mentioned that the number of antagonists has remained the same in both versions: Ursula, Vanessa, and Flotsam and Jetsam. We will attempt to investigate whether certain varieties and accents have negative or positive connotations in representation of characters.

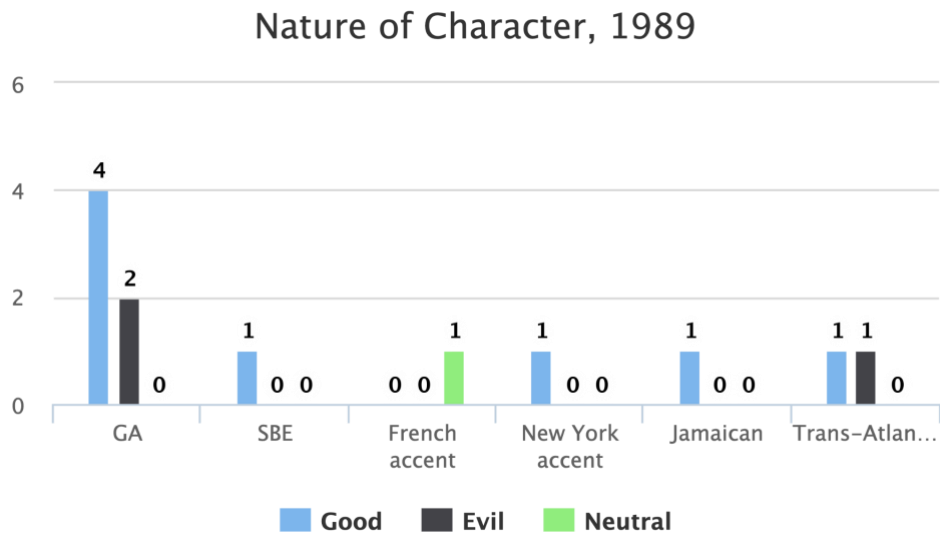


Table 8: Nature of Characters, 1989

Altogether, there are significantly more protagonists in both productions than antagonists. Ursula in 1989 and 2023 speak identically with Trans-Atlantic accent, characteristic of fashionable and prestigious. Interestingly, Ursula as a human, played by Jessica Alexander in the live action, speaks with a pure British accent. Given that the actress comes from London, England, it is not surprising.

What strikes us the most in the figures from both versions, is the switch in negative connotations of GA and RP. For instance, in the 1989 version, Flotsam and Jetsam and Vanessa spoke an American variety, whereas in 2023 Ursula's poopsies do not have a speaking part whatsoever. Therefore, as Ursula remains with Trans-Atlantic accent, Vanessa in 1989 imitates Ariel's American accent, but Vanessa in 2023 retains her actor's accent - British. On the accounts of English nonstandard varieties, the trends remain stable, Caribbean, Cockney, Spanish, Indian, and Spanish varieties are applied by the protagonists in the story. Thus, SBE accent still remains stigmatized negatively more often than not, while non-standard varieties have a positive connotation of warm-hearted people, yet not always oh high social class.

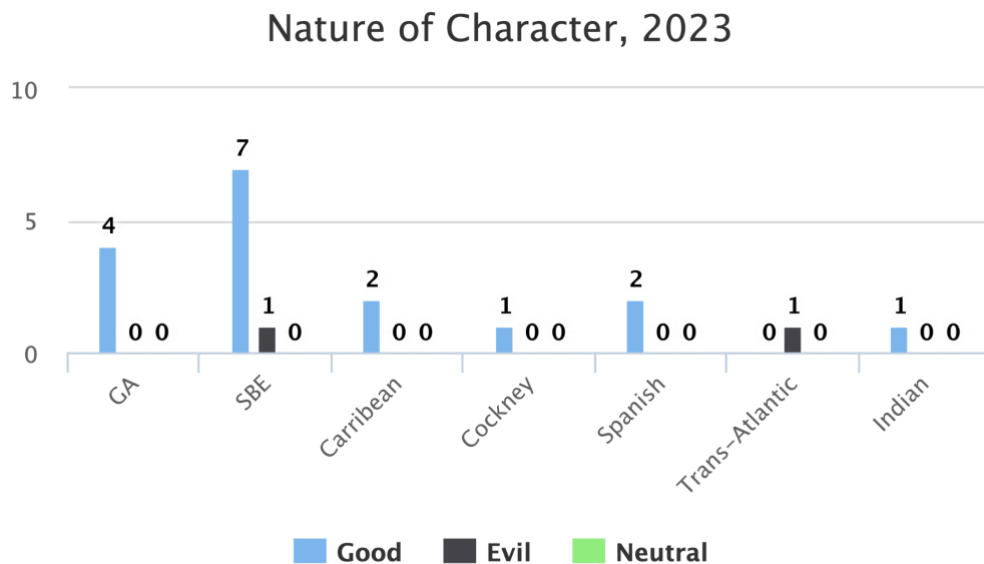


Table 9: Nature of Character, 2023

2.2.10 Accents and character's role (The Little Mermaid 1989 vs 2023)

In order to investigate the correlation between the importance of certain accents and the role of its speaker in the movie, we divided the characters according to their roles: main, secondary, and marginal. Frequently, it poses a challenge to categorize one persona between marginal and secondary role, therefore, in this research the classification choice is based on the following criteria.

The main character is defined as a central person, advancing the plot. For the most part, the main character has an enemy with whom they create the main conflict of the story.

The secondary character's role is less essential for the development of the story, yet mostly highlights and supports the main character so that to illuminate their qualities.

The marginal character have the least amount of screen time (1 or 2 appearances), and serve as a background, and if removed do not alter the course of the story.

According to the above-mentioned characteristics, in 1989 Little Mermaid, there are three main characters (Ariel, Prince Eric, and Ursula), six secondary

characters (Sebastian, Flounder, Scuttle, Flotsam and Jetsam (as one), King Triton, and Grimsby), and three marginal (Vanessa, Carlotta, and Chef Louis)

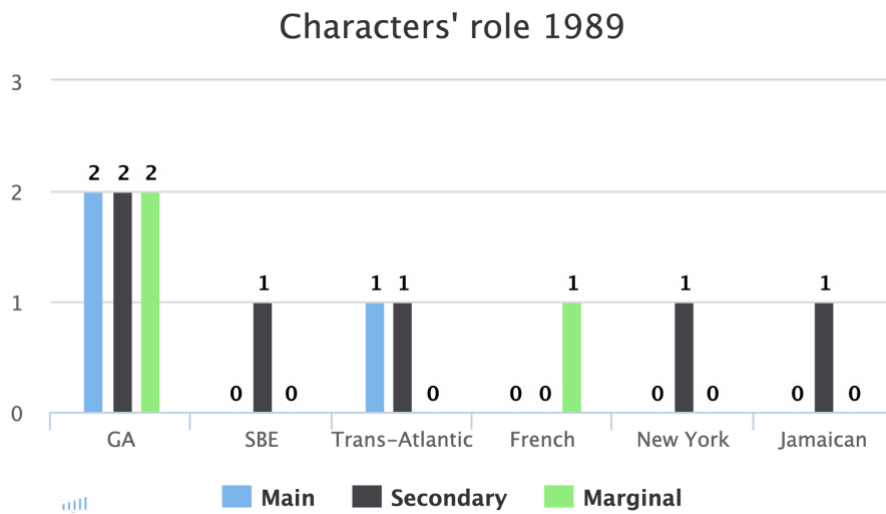


Table 10: Characters' role, 1989

According to the results of the chart, we observe across the board dominance of GA variety, with equally distributed characters based on their importance. Trans-Atlantic accent ranks the second place with one central speaker in the story (Ursula). As no main characters speak SBE, we can assume that it bears no difference whether a secondary speaker speaks a prestige variety (RP) or a non-prestigious variety (Jamaican, and New York). Interestingly, marginal characters speak both GA and French accent. Yet, as per numbers, the prevalence is still after the General American variety.

In 2023 Little Mermaid production, as mentioned before, the prevalence of GA has given way to SBE. Nonetheless, the accents of the main characters have remained almost identical, except for Eric, shifting from American (1989) to SBE (2023).

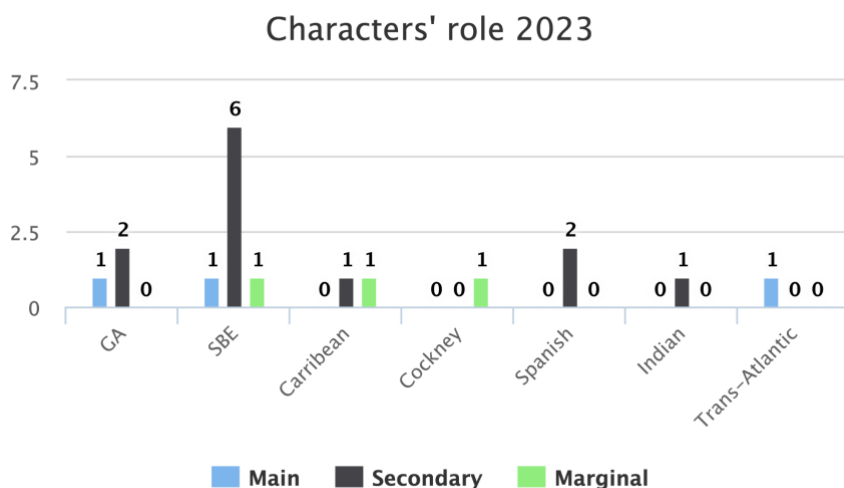


Table 11: Characters' role, 2023

Ariel and Ursula, on the other hand, have retained their original varieties. As all major characters employ each a different variety, we cannot state an evident superiority of one. Concerning secondary characters, among SBE, GA, Spanish, Caribbean, and Indian, there are significantly more SBE supporting characters in ratio 6:2:2:1:1. These findings seem to defy the ideological belief of RP as an all-encompassing dominant variety, for the reason of its attribution to secondary characters rather than the central ones. Despite this data, when compared with 1989 table, we can see that secondary characters have been almost equally given each standard and non-standard variety, whereas in 2023 animation RP accent was favored significantly more than others. What attracts our attention in the secondary character's accent distribution, is the equal amount of GA and Spanish speakers, which showcases a bold entry of Hispanic English speakers from negatively stigmatized varieties to the prestigious and significant ones.

Speaking of marginal characters, the situation has changed drastically in the span of the years. While, the original *Little Mermaid* cast only one marginal character and instilled a stereotypical French accent to Chef Louis, there are more marginal characters in the live action with a variety of accents. By the results in the Table 10, we can observe the SBE, Cockney, and Caribbean accented marginal characters. Given that acclaimed RP is leveled with Cockney, and Caribbean

accents, it is highly improbable to trace some ideological motives behind such accent distribution.

Conclusions to the second chapter

As a part of comparative diachronic analysis of the original Little Mermaid and its live action, we can state some significant changes not only in ethnical representation, but also correlation with gender, age, social class, nature of character, and its importance in the story. As there are more characters in the live action than in the 1989 animation, there are similarly more non-standard varieties represented: Indian, Spanish and Cockney in contrast to Jamaican and New York. Moreover, some characters speak with Trans-Atlantic accent, which conveys some stigma regarding the covert prestige of Hollywood fashion, and consequently the variable of age.

Concerning a gender variable, the representation of female characters has become more evident in the live action, outnumbering the males. While 1989 production featured only four speaking female characters (Ariel, Ursula, Vanessa, and Carlotta), the 2023 employed twelve female characters. On top of that, the 21st century “Little Mermaid” clearly gravitates towards illuminating more women stories, which accounts for introduction of a new influential character - Queen Selina, and gender transition of Scuttle into a female bird. Similarly, the daughters of Triton, all representing different cultures and consequently accents, have also been developed more in the 2023 live action. In contrast to 1989 one, they do not perform “The Daughters of Triton song”, but serve as moral teaching sisters for Ariel, who are wise and caring about the marine nature. Furthermore, concerning the plot, the audience gets a glimpse on Ariel’s mother, who was presumably killed by the humans, which explains King Tritons preoccupations. Conversely, we knew nothing about Ariel’s mother in the original cartoon. Thus, gender-wise, we can observe much more female roles in the modern animations, which is heavily influenced by gender-equality and “Me Too” movements. While there were only 36% of women in The Little Mermaid 1989 (Table 11), there are almost twice as

many (66, 7%) females in the 2023 production, which already signifies positive tendencies to the majority of female roles in movies. Therefore, our comparative analysis does not coincide with the one of Lippi-Green, which stated male majority. Speaking of correlations between an accent and gender, in 1989 three out of four female characters spoke Standard American variety, which proves the data on inclination of women towards standardized languages. In contrast, in 2023 females spoke standard varieties as well as non-standard (SA, SB, Indian, Spanish, and Caribbean), which defies gender stereotypes of Robin Lakoff's study. That is to say, female Disney characters have proven to be more likely to use standard varieties than males.

Speaking of the variable of age, there can be traced some ideological reasoning linked to the RP accent and its older speakers in the 1989 *Little Mermaid* production. Given that only one senior person employed such accent, we could have attributed such choice to the RP ideology of wisdom, royalty, and maturity. Yet, there has been a positive shift against age discrimination in the new version, as our statistics did not show any evident correlation of accent to age. Nonetheless, the use of Trans-Atlantic accent did not undergo any major changes, and is still reinforced by Melissa McCartney in the live action.

Taking into consideration the implicit prestige of American and British standard variety, the situation has remained practically the same when analyzing the representation of different social classes. In spite of changing popularity of RP and GA in both productions, they still are substantially superior over the non-standard varieties. In the 1989 movie, the underwater royal family used to speak in GA or Trans-Atlantic accent, while inland royalty spoke in GA and RP. Given the absence of other ethnic groups in the upper class, we can assume a certain degree of prestige prescribed to Standard English varieties of the past. Conversely, the 2023 production has introduced a variety of ethnically diverse actors with non-standard accents in the royal underwater family (Spanish and Indian), introducing other cultures to the upper echelons. While maids and advisors spoke a mix of varieties of both old and new productions (Caribbean, Jamaican, New York, GA, RP), we can confirm an

attempt to removing the stigma between prestigious and non-prestigious varieties based on the social class. However, Caribbean-accented characters in both movies held a lower social position (Sebastian in 1989, 2023 and Lashana in 2023).

When analyzing the nature of character in relevance to a specific accent, Ursula spoke with Trans-Atlantic accent in both productions, stigmatizing the Hollywood speech in a rather negative way. Given that the 1989 antagonists Vanessa and her poopsies spoke in GA, and 2023 Vanessa used RP accent, we can state an overall inclination towards Standard varieties of evil characters. As a matter of fact, every non-standard character in both movies was either neutral or good-natured. Thus, not only SBE has an inherent evil connotation, but also GA and Trans-Atlantic accent. Similarly to previous studies on accents, non-standard English speakers proved to be either aloof, careless, and funny (Sebastian and Scuttle).

Concerning the importance of characters, the 1989 production shows evident preference towards GA accent for major characters, and RP or non-standard varieties for secondary and marginal. We have seen a positive shift in 2023 *Little Mermaid*, as accents were distributed among main and secondary characters without accent preference.

CONCLUSIONS

As a part of the research, we have attempted to make a comparative analysis of Disney films based on two variables: original animation and its live action production; animation of the 20th and 21st century. In the course of our investigation, we succeeded in expanding systematized data and statistics on sociolinguistic correlations with dialects and accents in Disney animated films. Moreover, we managed to identify the accents of every speaking character as either standard or non-standard English. When diachronically investigating the selection of movies: “The Little Mermaid” 1989 and “The Little Mermaid” 2023, we classified each character’s accent according to the following variables of variationist sociolinguistic approach: gender, age, ethnicity, social class, the nature of character, importance of the role. This was done in an endeavor to establish the presence of linguistic ideologies attributed to specific characters with certain accents and to trace either positive or negative shifts in their representation over decades.

The choice of these films mainly was predicated on a great variety of non-native accents as well as English dialects, among which we can observe both standard and non-standard varieties: including: Standard British English, Cockney accent, Standard American English, New York, Trans-Atlantic, Caribbean, Jamaican, French, Indian, and Spanish accents.

After through comparative analysis of both productions of “The Little Mermaid”, and character’s accents, social status, age, and nature, we have concluded that there has been a shift in popularity from GA accents in the nineties to SBE in contemporary productions regardless of age, social class or nature of a character. Yet, given that both GA and SBE are examples of Standard Englishes, we can still see the iconization of this variety mainly used for the royal family (Eric, Ariel, Grimsby, and Queen Selina). Similarly, the artificial Trans-Atlantic accent still remains popular for portrayal of powerful and older people as King Triton and Ursula in 1989, contributing to the iconization of this accent and its prestige. Nonetheless, there’s been an immense change in representation of various non-

native cultures and accents in the live action. Despite linguistic stereotypes towards ethnic groups that were put forward by Lippi-Green, Triton's daughters were given different names to the original, all of different race they maintained their voicing actors' accents as well: Spanish, Indian, American, and British. Furthermore, new Ariel is of African American descent, while her father - King Triton speaks with a Spanish accent. Therefore, we can state that in contrast to the 1989 version of the Little Mermaid where the royal family spoke standard English variety - GA, the live action exemplifies accent diversity in the higher social class. The live action proved to be not only ethnically diverse, but also more feminist. The issue of gender and accents has undergone significant changes, as Ariel alongside with her sisters are all of different ethnicities. Moreover, more female characters were introduced in 2023, such as the Queen Selina and Scuttle transitioned into a female bird. Concerning the social position of females in Disney cartoons, Ariel assumes more responsibility and leadership when killing Ursula, in contrast to Prince Eric, does that in the 1989 version. In this manner, we are presented with an image of a young lady, who fights for her love, and also does not end up a damsel in distress, but rather the forcing action of the plot development.

Thus, 21st century films and live actions show a great number of positive changes in eradication of linguistic stereotypes, a greater number of strong female characters, as well as introduction of non-native English accents. However, there are still some instances of stigmatized characters of lower class based on their background and non-standard accents, such as Caribbean-speaking maid and Scuttle.

Our linguistic study succeeded in supporting and debunking certain findings of previous researchers linked to linguistic stereotypes and iconization of some varieties. For instance, indeed, Standard British and American accents remain the most widely used ones for both protagonists and antagonists, whereas non-standard varieties are typical of superficial or lower class representatives. Yet, a British accent and Trans-Atlantic accent is more likely to have a villain implication till these days. Furthermore, the use of foreign accents has overcome past limits and now is used for protagonists and main roles as well (King Triton in 2023). As far as the gender

studies are concerned, movie productions have undertaken drastic measures to represent more powerful female characters of various backgrounds: Ariel - played by a Black actress in 2023 movie, Lashana - Caribbean maid of prince Eric in 2023 action, Scuttle transforms from a male bird into a female. Moreover, The Little Mermaid in 2023 gives more showtime to all daughters of Triton, underlying their various accents and ethnicity). Female characters of the 21st century no longer reside in a domestic setting, and are constructed as independent, proactive warrior-like females.

Thus, these findings of our research not only enhance the already existing theoretical database of linguistic stereotypes and the use of accents in Disney cartoons, but also raise awareness to the positive changes in linguistic ideologies towards non-standard varieties of English, elevating them to the same rank as standard varieties, regardless of gender and social class.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Classification of characters: The Little Mermaid, 1989

Character	Voiced by	Gender	Age	Nature	Role	Accent:
Ariel	Jodi Benson	Female	Young	Good	Main	GA
Prince Eric	Christopher Daniel Barnes	Male	Young	Good	Main	GA
Sebastian	Samuel E. Wright	Male	Adult	Good	Second.	Jamaican
Flounder	Jason Marin	Male	Young	Good	Second.	GA
King Triton	Kenneth Mars	Male	Adult	Good	Second.	Trans-Atlantic
Ursula	Pat Catroll	Female	Adult	Evil	Main	Trans-Atlantic
Scuttle	Buddy Hackett	Male	Adult	Good	Second.	New York
Grimsby	Ben Wright	Male	Adult	Good	Second.	SBE
Flotsam and Jetsam	Paddi Edwards	Unknown	Adult	Evil	Second.	GA
Carlotta (the maid)	Edie McClurg	Female	Adult	Good	Marginal	GA
Vanessa	Jodi Benson	Female	Adult	Evil	Marginal	GA
Chef Louis	René Auberjonois	Male	Adult	Neutral	MArg	French

Appendix 2: Classification of characters: The Little Mermaid, 2023

Character	Voiced by	Gender	Age	Nature	Role	Accent:
Ariel	Halle Bailey	Female	Young	Good	Main	GA
Prince Eric	Jonah Hauer-King	Male	Young	Good	Main	SBE
Sebastian	Daveed Diggs	Male	Adult	Good	Second.	Jamaican
Flounder	Jacob Tremblay	Male	Young	Good	Second.	GA
King Triton	Javier Bardem	Male	Adult	Good	Second.	Spanish
Ursula	Melissa McCarthy	Female	Adult	Evil	Main	Trans-Atlantic
Scuttle	Awkwafina	Female	Adult	Good	Second.	GA
Grimsby	Art Malik	Male	Adult	Good	Second.	SBE
Flotsam and Jetsam	Not voiced	Unknown	Unknown	Evil	Marginal	
Lashana (the maid)	Martina Laird	Female	Adult	Good	Marginal	Carribbean
Vanessa	Jessica Alexander	Female	Adult	Evil	Marginal	SBE
Queen Selina	Noma Dumezweni	Female	Adult	Good	Second.	SBE
Sailor	Unknown	Male	Adult	Neutral	Marginal	Cockney
Mala	Karolina Conchet	Female	Young	Good	Second.	SBE
Karina	Kajsa Mohammar	Female	Young	Good	Second.	SBE
Indira	Simone Ashley	Female	Young	Good	Second.	Indian
Perla	Lorena Andrea	Female	Young	Good	Second.	SBE
Tamika	Sienna King	Female	Young	Good	Second.	SBE
Caspia	Nathalie Sorrell	Female	Young	Good	Second.	SBE

REFERENCES

1. Bickerton, D. (1975). Peter Trudgill, *The social differentiation of English in Norwich*. (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 13.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974. Pp. X + 211. *Journal of Linguistics*, 11(2), 299–308. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022226700004631>
2. Brunner, R. (2023, May 23). *Awkwafina's Awkward 'Little Mermaid' Rap "The Scuttlebutt" Shows She's Learned Nothing From "Blaccent" Backlash*. Decider. <https://decider.com/2023/05/23/awkwafina-awkward-little-mermaid-rap-the-scuttlebutt-blaccent-backlash/>
3. Davis, L. M., & Houck, C. L. (1992). *Can She Be Prestigious and Nice at the Same Time? Perceptions of Female Speech in Hoosierdom*. *American Speech*, 67(2), 115–122. <https://doi.org/10.2307/455449>
4. Dobrow, J. R., & Gidney, C. L. (1998). *The Good, the Bad, and the Foreign: The Use of Dialect in Children's Animated Television*. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 557(1), 105–119. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716298557000009>
5. Fought, C. (Ed.). (2023). *Sociolinguistic variation : critical reflections*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195170399.001.0001>
6. Fridland, Valerie. (2002). *The Social Dimension of the Southern Vowel Shift: Gender, Age and Class*. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 5. 233 - 253. 10.1111/1467-9481.00149.
7. Gordon, M. J. (2012). *Labov: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
8. Hamilton, Karen C (2009), *"Y'all Think We're Stupid: Deconstructing Media Stereotypes of The American South"* Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 491. <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/491>
9. Heller, M. (1984). *Sociolinguistics: Theory*. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 5, 46–58. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190500001793>
10. Holmes, J., & Wilson, N. (2022). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (Sixth edition.). Routledge.

11. Hughes, A., Trudgill, P., & Watt, D. J. L. (2012). *English accents & dialects an introduction to social and regional varieties of English in the British Isles* (5th ed.). Hodder Education. (p. 75-80)
12. Irvine, J.T and Gal, S. (2000) *Language ideology and linguistic differentiation in P. Kroskrity, (Ed.), Regimes of language: Ideologies, politics, and identities.* Santa Fe: School of American Research Press 35-84 Accessed from : <https://web.stanford.edu/~eckert/PDF/IrvineGal2000.pdf>
13. Jenkins, J. (2014). *Global Englishes : a resource book for students* (Third edition.). Routledge.
14. Joseph, T. (2010). *Chaucer's Uncanny Regionalism: Rereading the North in The Reeve's Tale.* *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 109(4), 468–489. <https://doi.org/10.5406/jenglgermphil.109.4.0468>
15. Kovalenko, G. (2011). *Lexicology of the English Language.*
16. Labov, W., Ash, S. & Boberg, C. (2005). *The Atlas of North American English: Phonetics, Phonology and Sound Change.* Berlin • New York: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110167467>
17. Labov, W. (1964). *The Social Stratification Of English In New York City.* ProQuest Dissertations Publishing: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/302149177>
18. Lakoff, R. (1973). *Language and woman's place.* *Language in Society*, 2(1), 45–79. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0047404500000051>
19. Lierop, P. (2014). *Linguistic character building: The use of accent in the Pixar Animation Studios' animated features* (1995-2013). <https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/handle/1887/35819>
20. Lippi-Green, R. (2012). *English with an accent : language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203348802>
21. *Language in Society*, (1979) 8(1), “The origins of Sociolinguistics”, (141–141.)<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500006102>

22. MacKenzie, L., Bailey, G., & Turton, D. (2022). *Towards an updated dialect atlas of British English*. *Journal of Linguistic Geography*, 10(1), 46–66. doi:10.1017/jlg.2022.2
23. Maguire, W. (2016, June 30). *Exploring morphosyntactic variation in dialects of English across the world*. *English Today*, 32(4), 70–72. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s026607841600033x>
24. Meer, P. (2021). *Select phonetic and phonological features of Caribbean varieties of English: An overview*. . <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/Q98AD>
25. Mesthrie, R. (2011). *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (pp. iii–iii). Cambridge University Press.
26. Pereira, J. (2019, July). *Mid-Atlantic English: A critical appraisal*. <https://minerva.usc.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10347/23765/1/Otero%20Pereira%20C%20Jos%C3%A9%20Manuel.pdf>
27. Rhys, S. (2015, August 18). *Do people find your accent nice or unappealing? Find out here*. *The Mirror*. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/most-and-least-attractive-accents-6270249>
28. Roach, P. (Peter J. (2009). *English phonetics and phonology : a practical course* (4th ed.). Cambridge University Press.
29. Sevinj, M. (2015, October 2). *American Variety of English Language*. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 5(5). <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v5n5p159>
30. Soares, Telma O. (2017). *Animated Films and Linguistic Stereotypes: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Accent Use in Disney Animated Films*. In BSU Master's Theses and Projects. Item 53. Available at <https://vc.bridgew.edu/theses/53>
31. Sønnesyn, J. (2011). *The use of accents in Disney's animated feature films 1995-2009: a sociolinguistic study of the good, the bad and the foreign*. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/30810179.pdf>
32. Spolsky, B. (2010). *Ferguson and fishman: Sociolinguistics and the sociology of language*. 10.4135/9781446200957.n1.

33. Trudgill, P.J. (1984, January 1). *Applied Sociolinguistics*.
<https://library.shu.ac.uk/lms/freebooks/appliedsociolinguisticstrudgill1984.pdf>
34. Trudgill, P. J. (1971). *The social differentiation of English in Norwich*.
 Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/socialdifferenti0000trud>
35. Urke, Å. B. S. (2019). *Accents in Wonderland: An Attitudinal Study of the Use of Accents in Disney's Originals and Remakes*. Retrieved May 21, 2024, from
<https://bora.uib.no/bora-xmlui/handle/1956/19949>
36. Van Herk, G. (2017, November 29). *What Is Sociolinguistics?* John Wiley & Sons.
http://books.google.ie/books?id=lMk2DwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=what+is+sociolinguistics+van+herk&hl=&cd=1&source=gb_api
37. Walsh, O. (2021, October 21). *Introduction: in the shadow of the standard. Standard language ideology and attitudes towards 'non-standard' varieties and usages*. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(9), 773–782.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1813146>
38. Wolfram, W. (2015). *American English: dialects and variation* (Third edition., Vol. 45). Wiley.
39. Weinreich, U. (2011). *Languages in contact : French, German and Romansh in twentieth-century Switzerland*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
40. Wolfram, W., Myrick, C., Schilling-Estes, N., & Schneier, J. (2016). *American English (Third edition.)*. Wiley Blackwell. (p.2 – 25)
41. World Englishes. (n.d.). <https://www.oed.com/discover/world-englishes?tl=true>
42. Zabalbeascoa, P. (2021) “Some observations on British accent stereotypes in Hollywood-style Films”, *The dialects of British English in fictional texts*. Routledge p.133-150.

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIALS

43. Marshall, R. (Director). (2023). The Little Mermaid [Video]. <https://www.disney.co.uk/movies/the-little-mermaid>.
44. Mermaid, C. T. L. (n.d.). *The Little Mermaid/Transcript*. The Little Mermaid. https://littlemermaid.fandom.com/wiki/The_Little_Mermaid/Transcript
45. Musker, & Clements (Directors). (1989). Little Mermaid [Video]. <https://www.disneyplus.com/en-gb/movies/the-little-mermaid/5MpPFhS8FTXh>.

SUMMARY

Неможливо заперечити той факт, що студія Дісней була і залишається гігантом мультиплікацій, створюючи неймовірні образи різноманітних героїв, що в той чи інший спосіб формують наше бачення світу, культур та людської природи. Це дослідження має на меті дослідити саме лінгвістичний аспект Діснейвських мультфільмів як і минулого століття, так і сучасності. Ми безпосередньо дослідимо соціолінгвістичний аспект, формування мовних упереджень, та стигматизації певних персонажів залежно від їх походження, соціального або регіонального діалекту.

Ми маємо на меті спростувати або підтвердити вже наявну теоретичну базу щодо співвідношення певних акцентів зі статтю, роллю, віком, важливістю та природою персонажа у мультфільмі. Для цього було проведено порівняльне дослідження по "Русалоньці" 1989 та 2023 року. Теоретична цінність цієї роботи полягає у поглибленні та розширенні даних про акценти та діалекти в індустрії розваг, тоді як практична цінність полягає у підвищенні обізнаності людей про культурні та гендерні ідеології, які нав'язуються нам через аудіовізуальні канали.

Ретельно проаналізувавши фонетичні особливості обох версій "Русалоньки", а також соціальний статус, вік та характер персонажів, ми виявили зміну популярності від акцентів загальноамериканської англійської (GA) у 90-х роках до стандартної британської англійської (SBE) у сучасних адаптаціях, незалежно від віку, соціального класу чи характеру персонажа.

Трансатлантичний акцент все ще залишається популярним для зображення владних і старших персонажів, таких як король Тритон та Урсула у версії 1989 року. Однак, варто зазначити, що в адаптації 2023 року відбулися значні зміни у представленні різних етнічних культур та іноземних акцентів. Дочки Тритона, до прикладу, отримали нові імена порівняно з оригіналом, кожна з них має різну расову приналежність і зберегла акценти своїх акторів: іспанський, індійський, американський та британський. Крім того, нова Аріель

має афроамериканське походження, тоді як її батько, король Тритон, говорить з іспанським акцентом. “Русалонька” 2023 не лише продемонструвала етнічну різноманітність, а й стала більш феміністичною. Аріель бере на себе більшу відповідальність і лідерство, вбиваючи Урсулу, на відміну від принца Еріка, який робить це у версії 1989 року. Так само персонаж Скаттл змінив стать і став жіночим персонажем в ігровій версії 2023 року.

Наше лінгвістичне дослідження успішно підтвердило та спростувало деякі висновки попередніх дослідників. Дійсно, стандартний британський та американський акценти посідають перше місце як для протагоністів, так і для антагоністів. До прикладу, переважна більшість героїв в “Русалоньці” розмовляла зі стандартним американським акцентом, в той час як “Русалонька” 2023 року стандартний британський акцент був домінантним аж для 8 героїв. Крім того, трансатлантичний американський акцент, що поєднує в собі фонетичні риси американського та британського акценту досі використовується в сучасних мультфільмах. Трансатлантичний акцент відрізняється своїм мелодійним та драматичним звучанням. До прикладу, Урсула, антагоніст в “Русалонці”, розмовляє з цим акцентом в обох його версіях. В 1989 версії трансатлантичний акцент був притаманний також Королю Тритону, з чого можемо зробити висновок, що його використання не залежить від позитивної чи негативної конотації героя, а скоріше від його віку, важливості, та соціального статусу. Варто зазначити, що використання іноземних акцентів вийшло за межі минулих обмежень і тепер застосовується також для протагоністів та головних ролей (наприклад, король Тритон у 2023 році з іспанським акцентом).

Що стосується гендерних досліджень, кіновиробництво вжило рішучих заходів для представлення більш сильних жіночих персонажів різного походження: Аріель, у виконанні чорношкірої актриси у фільмі 2023 року, Лашана, карибська покоївка принца Еріка у фільмі 2023 року, введення нових персонажів, як прийомна мати принца Еріка, у виконанні чорношкірої акторки британського походження. Щобільше, “Русалонька” 2023 року приділяє

більше екранного часу всім дочкам Тритона, підкреслюючи їхні різноманітні акценти та етнічну приналежність (іспанський, індійський). Жіночі персонажі 21 століття більше не обмежуються домашнім середовищем, а зображуються як незалежні, активні та вольові особистості. До прикладу, Аріель (“Русалонька” 2023) наносить останній удар Урсулі та перемагає її на відміну від 1989 версії. Безумовно, ми можемо пояснити ці зміни сучасними феміністичними рухами та боротьбою жінок за рівні права та можливості, що відображаються в кінематографі також.

Таким чином, фільми 21 століття та їх адаптації демонструють значну кількість позитивних змін у подоланні лінгвістичних стереотипів, збільшенні кількості жіночих персонажів, а також введенні нестандартних англійських акцентів (карибський, індійський, каджунський, південноамериканський, та іспанський). Однак, все ще трапляються поодинокі випадки стигматизації персонажів на основі їхнього походження та акценту, як, наприклад Рей, комічний персонаж з каджунським акцентом, або Лашана, представниця робочого класу та королівської прислуги з карибським акцентом.