

Linguistic Features of Male Characters in Disney Animated Movies

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Abstract

The present study investigates the linguistic features of male characters in three Disney animated movies: *Tangled* (2010), *Frozen* (2013) and *Moana* (2016). It adopts Coates' (2016) framework (developed from Holmes 2013 and Herbert 1998) of men's language (e.g. commands and directives, swearing and taboo words, interruption, questions and compliments) and Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice). The findings reveal that the linguistic feature that mostly characterizes male Disney characters' language is *asking questions* followed by *giving orders and directives* since asking questions that seek short answers and giving orders directly and indirectly indicate dominating the conversation. The third male linguistic feature is *impersonal compliments* followed by *taboo and swearing* words. Finally, *interruption* was the least used linguistic male feature. In all reported instances, the male characters interrupted the female characters because they felt superior.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Disney, Gender, Males' Language.

1. Introduction

The present study investigates the linguistic features of male characters in three Disney animated movies: *Tangled* (2010), *Frozen* (2013) and *Moana* (2016). More details about these films are provided in the Appendix. *Animate* as a word is derived from Latin *animatus*. When English borrowed it, it was given the meaning of 'liveliness' (Spencer 1973, 454). However, the history of *animation* has started much earlier than cinematography which refers to motion photography of pictures where sequential real images are used to produce motion pictures (Spencer 1973, 454).

Perhaps, the most prominent animation technique in the 20th century is the *traditional animation* (Spencer 1973, 454). However, to cope with the latest developments, Masson (1999) maintains that even cinematography has been digitalized and thus, computer animation has gained more popularity producing three-dimensional pictures, compared to the traditional two-dimensional motion-picture¹.

Gabler (2007) pinpoints that Walt Disney started his drawn animation experiments in his parent's garage in the late 1920s and finally developed his famous character, Mickey Mouse. However, despite

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Walt Disney's death in 1966, the production company did not stop producing box-office successful animated movies. While some production companies kept producing movies with certain themes that targeted certain audiences, Disney responded to audiences' desires. Thus, Disney animations became suitable for all age groups, not just children (Wasko 2013, 212).

Disney movies have been analyzed from different angles. Perhaps one of the most interesting investigations of Disney movies was related to analyzing the language used by the characters in these movies. The significance of the study reported here can be appreciated in light of the fact that the main roles in these movies were given to females, and thus most linguistic studies on the movies were dedicated to studying female linguistic features (Lakoff 2004; Hibbler 2007; Bi 2010; Itmeizeh and Ma'ayeh 2017; De Leeuw and Christa 2018; Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah 2021, among others).

Hibbler (2007) examined representations of male characters and masculinity in Disney animated movies from a social perspective. The movies were produced between 1930 and 2007. The focus of the study was on physical description, socioeconomic status, sexuality, family structures and practices in addition to aggression. As is clear, linguistic features of male characters were not addressed .

Itmeizeh and Ma'ayeh (2017) studied the linguistic features of both male and female characters in two Disney movies, namely *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Brave* (2012). The study compared the frequency of occurrence of hedges, tag-questions, empty adjectives and politeness between two distant periods, i.e. 1937 and 2012. They concluded, on the basis of descriptive statistics, that women used these features less frequently than men in the first period. In contrast, the picture had completely changed in the second period. A major problem of this study is that the two selected periods are too distant, which makes the comparison ungrounded. This actually left the door open to examine the linguistic features of male characters in Disney movies in a more systematic and detailed manner, which we claim our study does.

A relatively recent study of the language of Disney movies is Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2021). The researchers investigated female Disney characters' linguistic features in three animated movies in 1990s: *Mulan*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Pocahontas*. The study adopted two frameworks, namely, Lakoff's (2004) forms of women's language and Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional approach to CDA. The study concluded that hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms and hedges were the linguistic features that mostly characterized female Disney characters' language. As is clear, the researchers have not addressed the linguistic features of male characters, which motivated us to step in and devote a whole study to filling in this gap.

The current study examines the linguistic features used by male characters in Disney animated movies in the 2010s in light of two frameworks, namely, Coates (2016) and Fairclough (1995). Below is a brief account of CDA, and the adopted theoretical frameworks.

2. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Selected Frameworks

Lakoff (1975) offered an extensive analysis of men's and women's language. She observed that men's way of speaking is often more direct, assertive, and mature. In contrast, women typically use a

softer approach, often employing figurative language and more courteous words. Later, Lakoff (2004) identified 10 characteristics of female speech patterns, including lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonations for statements, use of vague adjectives, specific color descriptions, intensifiers, extremely correct grammar, exceptionally polite expressions, avoiding harsh swear words, and strong emphasis. She further suggested that societal norms and expectations influence the ways that men and women speak, leading to distinct language differences observed between genders.

Van Dijk (2009) contended that the goal of Critical Discourse Studies is to analyze some serious social problems in a way that shows the various forms of social power abuse and how these problems lead to social inequality. He focused on the semantic macrostructures that study global meanings: “These are mostly intentional and consciously controlled by the speaker, and most importantly, they represent the meaning or information most readers will memorize best of a discourse”. By contrast, ‘Local meanings’ refer to the meaning of words (also called lexical discourse), and study the coherence and other relations between propositions, such as implications and presuppositions.

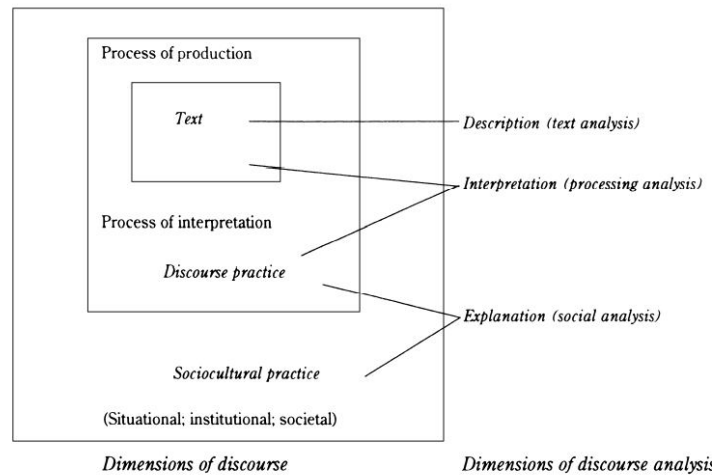
Below is a brief account of Coates’s (2016) and Fairclough’s (1995) frameworks which were adopted by the current study. It is worth noting that Coates (2016) was developed from Holmes (2013) and Herbert (1998) of men’s language. Thus, they are also highlighted in this brief.

Coates (2016) identified the following linguistic features of men’s language: commands and directives, swearing and taboo words, interruption, questions and compliments. She suggested that men use commands and directives, especially when they were in the same-sex groups, e.g. Give me the pliers! Get off my steps! They use commands to establish status differences between themselves by using aggravated directives, e.g. ‘I want the wire cutters right now’. Women, by contrast, typically use more ‘mitigated’ directives such as: Let’s go around Subs and Suds (Coates 2016, 95).

Herbert (1998, 55) found that while women used more compliments with first or second person focus (I like your hair that way, and your hair looks good short), men preferred the impersonal (third person) forms (nice haircut!). Holmes (2013, 127) pointed out that when complimenting others, men use minimal patterns such as Great shoes! more than women. Additionally, women tend to compliment each other on appearance (Wow, you look gorgeous today), whereas men compliment each other on possessions or skill (I would imagine you must have a very high IQ).

Questions are another feature of men’s language. Holmes (2013) contended that in public and formal contexts men generally ask more questions than women. Holmes (1989b) analyzed the questions asked by EFL learners and concluded that male learners tended to ask ‘response restricting’ questions which are intended to elicit a short specific response such as ‘May’s query any brothers and sisters?’, while female learners asked more ‘facilitative questions’, which seek more elaborate answers such as ‘How do you get on with him?’. Finally, interruption is the last mark of men’s language. Holmes (2013) states that men interrupt women more than women interrupt men.

Fairclough (1995, 133) illustrates a framework of CDA where he analyzes discourse in three dimensions as shown in the Figure below.



As evident in the Figure, the first dimension of discourse is the *text*, whether spoken or written, where vocabulary, grammar, intonation and discourse markers are analyzed. This stage of analysis is referred to as *description* or *text analysis*. *Discourse practice* is the second dimension which gives interpretation to the discourse, thus referred to as *interpretation* or *processing analysis*. The text is analyzed in context taking into consideration interpretations of speech acts (e.g. promising, asserting, commanding, exclaiming, requesting, warning, congratulating, thanking, insulting, advising, and greeting). The third dimension of discourse is the *sociocultural practice* which links the relationship between the textual features (micro-level) and the sociocultural and historical issues, such as hegemony, power, gender, race and ideology (macro-level). This final stage of analysis is referred to as *explanation* or social analysis. According to Fairclough (1989, 26), “explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects”.

3. Literature Review

This section is divided into two subsections; the first has an international flavor while the second touches on gendered studies in the Arabic-speaking communities.

3.1 International Studies

Broadbridge (2003) examined the differences between female and male language in conversation styles using conversation recordings that contained two men and two women who work in an English Language school in Tokyo. The analysis of transcriptions was divided into four sections: conversational dominance, verbosity, swearing and vulgar language, and tentative assertive speech styles. The results indicated that men have interrupted the conversation more often than women. The study showed that 80 percent of the vulgar terms were used by men and 20 percent by women who in turn used more hedges that signify tentative speech. In addition, the usage of taboo and swear words appeared to be used more frequently by men.

Further, Karlsson (2007) studied gender-related differences in language use. Actually, the case of this study contained 80 students who came from two different schools in a small village in the north of Sweden. The findings uncovered differences between males and females. While 70 percent of males used hedges and the expression (I really felt so...), only 30 percent of females used them in their answers. Second, males interrupted females on three different occasions. Third, commands and directives and impolite language appeared to be unconsciously used much more by males.

Although most studies on gender linguistic differences were conducted in the western world, some were conducted in the East. Subon (2013) investigated gender differences in the speech of women and men in Malaysian contexts. Ten men and women from Siburan district were chosen randomly as the case study. This district was chosen due to the diversity in its community. Subon aimed to identify the differences in linguistic features in men and women speech, their preferred topics of conversation, and who uses politer linguistic features. Data were collected through recordings and direct observations as well as semi-structured interviews. The study found that the major differences observed were related to addressing, using questions, humor, use of adjectives and verbs, politeness, and choices of topics in conversations where women tended to use all of them more than men. However, a small difference appeared in the use of affirmatives, filters, and hedges that men tended to use more.

Yousef (2018) discussed the gender linguistic crossing and the use of untypical linguistic features by men and women. The research aimed to characterize the linguistic features of men (*number of words, more taboo words, disruptive interruptions, and articles directives*) and women's linguistic features (*first person pronouns, more intensifiers, empty adjectives, emotion terms, family words, minimal responses, hedges, hedged directives, and overlaps*). The researcher followed the content-text analysis method and the descriptive method. The findings showed that men, in some contexts, used features that are commonly correlated with women's language such as *hedges, intensifiers, and the first person pronouns*. The competitive style of men that appeared in using the first person pronoun (I) was to preserve their power and status and to defend their opinions and ideas. In this research, men used *agreement* more to indicate alignment with other's opinions that to agree with theirs.

Juwita, Sunggingwati, and Valiantien (2018) investigated the difference in language use between men and women in *The Devil Wears Prada* film. The researchers used Lakoff's theory about language features of men. Juwita et al. (2018, 46) used the descriptive method to analyze the collected data and adopted the qualitative method originally used by Mack et al. (2005). The researchers found that male characters in the movie used four out of six language features of men: (1) *asking direct question to gain information* (i.e. not tag questions), (2) *swearing and taboo words usage*, (3) *minimal response*, (4) *explicit commands and ungrammatical forms of speaking*, while *compliments* and *theme feature* were left out. The researchers also found that female characters used seven out of ten of language features of women: (1) *lexical hedges or fillers*, (2) *avoiding swearing and taboo words*, (3) *using polite forms*, (4) *using empty adjectives*, (5) *tag questions*, (6) *intensifiers*, and (7) *specific color terms*, and did not use language features such as: *ungrammatical forms, rising intonation on declaratives, and emphatic stress*. The study provided a good example of how both genders can use their language to switch their role and change how they express themselves.

Putra, and Prayudha (2019) examined men and women's language features in the TV show titled *America's Got Talent* from which the data were collected. The analysis showed that three male's language features were used by male judges in the videos of the show, i.e. (1) *direct forms*, (2) *interruptions*, and (3) *swear words*. The findings agree with Coates (2004) that men swear and use more taboo words than women. In addition, male speakers are more likely to interrupt others than female speakers.

Widyanita and Pasaribu (2019) focused on how male and female characters in the movie *Me Before You* express compliments. The researchers employed a descriptive qualitative method in analyzing the data from the subtitle of the movie. The researchers found there were four compliment functions that were used by male and female characters in the movie, namely expressing admiration, solidarity, conversation strategy and reinforced desired behavior. The use of compliments is highly affected by the traits of the characters and the plot narrating how the lead male character undergoes the transitions to be a better person.

3.2 Gendered Studies in the Arab Context

Many sociolinguists have been deeply intrigued by the study of differences in language use between men and women in Arabic-speaking communities over the past ten years (e.g., Hamdan 2011; Malkawi 2011; Hamdan and Hamdan 2013; Al-Harashsh 2014; Hamdan and Natour 2014; Banikalef 2019, among others).

As for Arab studies and specifically Jordanian ones, Malkawi (2011) explored the distinct ways men and women communicate during three social events: celebrations, offering condolences, and expressing gratitude after a feast, as well as farewells. Through a questionnaire assessing participants' responses in these scenarios, she deduced that women tend to use an urban dialect as a means of displaying prestige, believing it holds higher status in Jordanian society.

Hamdan (2011) identified certain lexical and syntactic traits in Arabic novels that may suggest the author's gender. There were noticeable variations in the use of elements like tag questions, the choice between verbs and nouns to begin paragraphs, slang, and certain taboo or euphemistic terms. Male writers were more direct in using sexual terms, while female writers were more reserved, reflecting societal norms that discourage women from using explicit sexual language. The frequent presence of slang in texts might indicate a female authorship. Additionally, female writers often began paragraphs with verbs, whereas male writers leaned more towards nouns. Female novelists also tended to use tag questions more than their male counterparts.

In a subsequent investigation, Hamdan and Hamdan (2013) examined prevailing beliefs about whether professional writers, especially those in the literary field, could detect linguistic features that might signal the author's gender in works by Arab male and female novelists. The study involved ten Jordanian writers who were native Arabic speakers—five men and five women. They were invited to share their perspectives on possible gender-based differences in writing styles. Interestingly, the male

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participants offered little insight into their own writing but identified several traits they believed typified male-authored texts (526):

1. A stronger reliance on logical and intellectual language
2. Effective use of vocabulary associated with traditionally masculine themes such as sexuality and fatherhood
3. Distinct lexical choices compared to women in expressing notions like strength, vulnerability, determination, affection, and loyalty
4. More elaborate and vivid depictions of settings, narratives, and characters

Conversely, the female participants reflected on their own writing but did not comment much on that of their male counterparts. According to the study, the characteristics commonly linked to women's writing included (526):

1. Frequent use of interrogative sentences
2. Emphasis on fine and nuanced details
3. Smaller casts of characters
4. Emotionally charged endings
5. Clear and straightforward language, favoring direct sentence structures and widely-used vocabulary
6. Rich portrayal of relationships within family and social circles
7. Minimal engagement with science fiction as a genre
8. Predominant use of the first-person perspective
9. Frequent repetition of synonymous expressions
10. Preference for longer sentence structures
11. Frequent inclusion of emotional language and references to the body, motherhood, domestic life, and color imagery
12. Transparent and easily understood language
13. Use of simple, imaginative metaphors

The authors concluded that the outcomes of their study aligned with broader international research on gender and language, reinforcing the argument that differences in male and female writing styles are substantive rather than merely perceived.

Al-Harabsheh (2014) reported on the linguistic differences between males and females in Jordanian Spoken Arabic. The study highlighted distinct variations in their communication styles. Women often sidestepped direct confrontation and disagreement and prioritized maintaining a harmonious relationship with the other interlocutor. Moreover, they frequently employed facilitative strategies to engage other speakers in the discussion, showcasing their adept conversational skills and a more collaborative approach than men.

Hamdan and Natour (2014) posited that the translation of in-text citations in scholarly research is a serious problem for English-into-Arabic translators because of gender sensitivity of Arabic compared to English. All reporting verbs in Arabic are inflected for gender. Suppose the Arabic translator comes across the following sentence in a research paper, how would s/he translate 'Sander pointed'?

Sander (1972) pointed out that the widely quoted ages of acquisition for speech sounds, based on the earlier studies cited in table 3.1, are misleading if taken to reflect acquisition.

Which of the two forms would be selected: أشار ساندر (taking Sander as a male) or أشارت ساندر (taking Sander as a female)? The study which was corpus-based showed that the academic translations of three books from English into Arabic had inflected all reporting verbs for one gender, i.e. the masculine, thus producing faulty and unnatural translations because the translators had neutralized the gender of all cited authors as if they all were male researches. The study concluded that translators should do whatever possible to identify the gender of cited authors. The problem aggravates once one knows that the APA style of documentation offers zero assistance to English-Arabic translators as it does not require spelling out the full first name of authors in the list of references. In the example above, the list shows Sander, E, where E may stand for Erick or Eve. In this case E was for Erich, thus the accurate translation is أشار ساندر.

Banikalef (2019) investigated gender inequalities in the Jordanian community's usage of speech actions in Facebook status updates. The status updates were gathered over a two-month period in Arabic, English, and net-speak. Banikalef (2019, 410) found that males were more aggressive while females were more expressive. Furthermore, empty adjectives and terms relating to *special feminine interests, such as color, fashion, and hair*, were some linguistic traits that separate females' language from males' language.

In view of the foregoing, the current study's sole focus is on the linguistic features of male characters in a selected sample of Disney animated movies directed to children. In particular, it seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What are the linguistic features used by male characters in Disney animated movies?
2. How can these features be analyzed in Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of CDA?

4. Methodology

4.1 Corpus and data collection

The corpus consists of three Disney animated movies from 2010-2019. The average length of each movie is 80-100 minutes. The movies are selected on the basis of their popularity according to Netflix², an online database for movies, TV series, and TV programs. Table (1) shows the selected movies with their release date and duration and number of the selected scenes:

Table 1: Release Date, Duration of the Selected Disney Animated Movies and the Number of Selected Scenes

Movie Title	Released Date	Movie Duration	Number of selected scenes
Tangled	2010	1h/40min	33
Frozen	2013	1h/42 min	21
Moana	2016	1h/43 min	23

4.2 Overview of the Three Animated Movies

The three films incorporate important and clear male roles linguistically. Only scenes and excerpts relevant to male linguistic features are collected. The following are brief descriptions of the movies.

(1) **Tangled (2010):** Flynn Rider is the country's most wanted-and most charming-gangster. At one point, he hides out in a mysterious tower where he is taken as a hostage by Rapunzel, a beautiful teen with 70 feet of golden hair. Flynn can sometimes be a bit arrogant, but in fact he has a sensitive heart. He falls in love with Rapunzel who is a naive and young girl locked up by the witch who took her from her parents. Meeting with Flynn enabled her eventually to escape into the world outside.

(2) **Frozen (2013):** An iceman called Kristoff and his reindeer Sven help Anna to set out on a journey in order to find her sister, Elsa, who has the power to convert any object or person into ice. Having spent many years of his life without any real contact with the outside world, Kristoff becomes a loner, grumpy, selfish and a bit lazy. However, through his love and relationship with Anna, Kristoff turns into loving, respectful, selfless and sacrificial. Finally, due to his love for Anna, Kristoff risks his life and happiness, without hesitation, for the sake of Anna.

(3) **Moana (2016):** Moana is an adventurous teenager who sails out on a heroic mission to save her people. Meanwhile, Moana meets a demigod Maui, who guides her in her journeys. They sail together across the open ocean running into enormous monsters and impossible events. On the personal level, Maui is arrogant, short-tempered, pretentious, egoist and mischievous. As he is sly, Maui easily beats his opponents being greatly feared by villains and monsters in the sea. Since he was poorly raised, Maui spent a majority of his life living with threatening insecurity. As a result, he started to perform godly deeds for mankind's benefit so as to gain the love and appreciation that his parents deprived him.

4.3 Data analysis

The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative descriptive analysis is meant to answer the first question of the study regarding detecting the linguistic features used in male characters' discourse in Disney animated movies throughout 2010-2019. The study is solely devoted to identifying and analyzing the male characters' *linguistic* features.

The framework adopted to study male Disney characters' linguistic features is mainly taken from Coates' (2016, 94-101) framework (3rd edition), developed from Holmes (2013) and Herbert (1998). The linguistic features taken from these sources include the following: (1) commands and directives, (2) swearing and taboo language, (3) impersonal compliments, (4) questions, and (5) interruptions.

To analyze the selected excerpts of male characters' language in Disney animated movies, the study applies Fairclough's (1995, 97-98) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) three-dimensional framework. The linguistic features are analyzed through the following dimensions: *text*, *discourse practice*, and *sociocultural practice*.

1. Text (description)

It analyzes the linguistic features such as vocabulary, structure (active/passive/tense/aspect), tone and intonation, and discourse markers are analyzed. This kind of analysis is known as *description* or *text analysis*.

2. Discourse practice (interpretation)

Discourse practice entails interpreting the discourse in a logical coherent way. This kind of analysis is usually dubbed as *Interpretation or processing analysis*. Therefore, the text is analyzed as a discursive/ conversational practice instead of a linguistic one.

3. Sociocultural practice (explanation)

It associates the textual features (micro-level) and the socio-cultural and historical issues, such as *gender, race, hegemony, power and ideology* (macro-level). This last stage of analysis is concerned with explaining the social factors that determine language use.

5. Results

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the three movies under study. The qualitative analysis is performed within Fairclough's three dimensional framework.

5.1 Quantitative Analysis

This section gives answers to the first research question: *what are the linguistic features used by male characters in Disney animated movies?* Table 2 below introduces the five linguistic features along with their sums, percentages, means and standard deviations. The last column shows the rank of these features, i.e. the most frequently used feature is given rank (1) while the least is given (5).

Table 2: Linguistic Features Used by Male Disney Characters in 2010-2019

Linguistic Feature	Sum	Percent	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank
Commands and directives	110	33.13	55.5	31.90	2
Swearing and taboo language	23	6.93	12	6.78	4
Impersonal Compliments	53	15.96	27	15.44	3
Questions	131	39.46	66	37.96	1
Interruptions	15	4.52	8	4.47	5
Total	332	100	166.5	95.98	-

Table (2) shows that the linguistic features known as Coates (2016) and Holmes (2013) of men's linguistic features are attested 332 times in the corpus. As is clear, *questions* are the most used linguistic feature (39.5%). *Commands and directives* come second (33.1%). *Impersonal compliment* come third place (16%). Finally, the least two linguistic features used were *swearing and taboo language* (7%) and *interruptions* (4.5%).

Having analyzed the results quantitatively, the study will now look into the qualitative analysis by taking each of the five features and analyzing it through two excerpts taken from the 2010s selected Disney animated movies.

5.2 Qualitative analysis

The following section provides a qualitative answer for the research questions: '*What are the linguistic features used by male characters in Disney animated movies?*' And '*How can these features be analyzed in Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of CDA?*'.

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For the reader's convenience, the linguistic features are underlined in each excerpt (extracted from the films) which is supported by a context that was created by the researchers after watching the three movies. Each excerpt was prefaced by a short context, summarizing it. This context was created by the authors after watching the movies; put another way, this is a short summary of the excerpt.

One to two excerpts are chosen to represent each of the five linguistic features in each of the three movies.

5.2.1 Questions

Questions were the most frequently used linguistic feature by male Disney characters.

Below are some examples of male questions attested in the movies.

Excerpt 1 (*Frozen* 2013, min 41:22-32)

Context: Anna was not convinced that Hans was a stranger (the prince who proposed to her). Therefore, Kristoff (the person who saved Anna and then became her husband) wanted to convince her that Hans was a stranger and not different from any other human being, so he asked her some questions related to Hans. All these questions were just to prove she was wrong.

Kristoff: Didn't your parents ever warn you about strangers?

[she looks at Kristoff and slides away]

Anna: Yes, they did. But Hans is not a stranger.

Kristoff: Oh yeah! What's his last name?

Anna: Of-the-Southern-Isles?

Kristoff: What's his favorite food?

Anna: Sandwiches.

Kristoff: Best friend's name?

Anna: Probably John.

Kristoff: Eye color?

Anna: Dreamy.

Kristoff: Foot size?

Anna: Foot size doesn't matter.

Kristoff: Have you had a meal with him yet? What if you hate the way he eats? What if you hate the way he picks his nose?

Anna: Picks his nose?

Kristoff: And eats it.

When Anna mentioned that she got engaged to somebody on their first meeting, Kristoff started asking Anna many questions about that *stranger* (Hans). Some of these are negated intonational questions (e.g. Didn't your parents...?) to show Kristoff's disapproval. Others are informal ones with ungrammatical structure, i.e. lacking an auxiliary verb (e.g. Eye color?). Kristoff also used a discourse marker (Oh yeah!), but he was sarcastic as he believed that Hans was a stranger. Kristoff kept on asking questions one after the other to express his dissatisfaction with Anna's answers. All he meant was just to prove that Anna was wrong to get engaged to somebody on their first meeting. These questions may have been

asked because of jealousy, whereas, Anna's answers show her ignorance. On the sociocultural level, when men feel jealous, they start to ask their female companions short direct questions that may not even be relevant. They do not seek getting answers to these questions.

Excerpt 2 (Moana 2016, min 45:38)

Context: When the Kakamura (coconut pirates) attacked them, Moana asked the ocean to help her, but Maui told her that the ocean isn't helping her and that she should help herself. He asked her to spin the sail but she didn't know how to sail the boat. So, he asked her in surprise, "You don't know how to sail?"

Moana: They're... kind of cute. Ocean, do something, help us!

Maui: The ocean doesn't help you. You help yourself. Tighten the halyard, bind the stays! ...you can't sail?!

Moana: I... I am self-taught? Can't you shapeshift or something?

In this excerpt, Moana was hesitant (e.g. They're... kind of cute, I... I am self-taught?) because she was not sure how to get help. Maui, on the other hand, was confident that the ocean cannot help her. When he discovered that she cannot sail, Maui asked Moana directly and surprisingly if she knows how to sail a boat by giving a negative intonational question (you can't sail?). Finding herself in an embarrassing situation, Moana answered his question by a question (I... I am self-taught?). Culturally, when people are surprised about other's abilities, they tend to ask negative questions, i.e. negative intonational questions that have a negated auxiliary, such as (you can't sail?). This is more convenient than asking an affirmative question, (Can you sail?).

In general, men's questions in the above-mentioned excerpts express challenge or disagreement. These questions are usually 'response restricting' ones that can be answered in one or few words. Sometimes these questions are asked to show sarcasm e.g. (Foot size?).

5.2.2 Commands and directives

As mentioned earlier males usually give explicit commands especially in the same-sex groups. Swann (2011) found that boys always dominate class interaction. Generally speaking, while women use more 'mitigated' directives such as: *y'all let's use these first and then come back*, men tend to choose aggravated directives to establish status differences. As West (1998) posited, male doctors prefer to use aggravated forms such as imperatives: *Lie down, Take off your shoes and socks*, while female doctors prefer more mitigated forms, hence phrasing their directives as proposals for joint action: *So let's stay on what we're doing*.

Excerpt 3 (Frozen 2013, min 42:22)

Context: Kristoff and Anna ran away from the wolves, and Kristoff asked Anna to take care of herself.

Anna: What are they?

Kristoff: Wolves.

Anna: Wolves? [the wolves chase them] What do we do?

Kristoff: I got this. Just don't fall off and don't get eaten.

Anna: But I wanna help!

Kristoff: No!

Anna: Why not?

Kristoff: Because I don't trust your judgment.

Anna: Excuse me?!

While Kristoff and Anna were arguing about love in the cart, Kristoff spotted many wolves surrounding them. So, he directly asked her not to fall off and not to be eaten by the wolves. He started his command with a discourse marker 'just' which indicate specifying what the addressee has to do. As they were both in danger, Kristoff took the lead to save both of them. Since there was no time to discuss the rescue options, Kristoff gave orders to Anna. He was not requesting, rather he was giving commands. Since males are generally physically stronger than females, they take advantage of this in dangerous situations to give commands and directives to their female companions. This is shown by the commands that Kristoff gives to Anna. This indirectly reflects his pride. He was giving commands as he sees himself her savior and protector. He also showed his superiority when he told her that he does not trust her judgment.

Excerpt 4 (Moana 2016, min 54:57)

Context: When they arrived in the kingdom of monsters to save the hook. Maui asked Moana to stay with the chicken because it was dangerous to go with him.

Maui: Oh, ho, no, no, no... That's just the entrance... to Lalotai.

Moana: Lalotai ? Realm of Monsters. We're going to the Realm of Monsters.

Maui: We? No. Me. You are gonna stay here with the other chicken. That's what I'm talking about.

As they landed and saw the entrance to the realm of monsters, Maui started climbing and Moana wanted to go with him, but he forcefully asked her to stay down with the chicken. In fact, Moana was not scared; rather, she was excited. It was Maui who was worried. Maui was using very short phrases (We? No. Me.) The discourse marker 'No' usually attracts the addressee's attention as it negates what precedes. In addition, Maui was using contractions (e.g. gonna). As a male demi-god character, Maui gave a direct command to Moana to stay with a chicken. This command was very forceful as he used the 2nd person pronoun 'you' with the command. In dangerous situation, males usually give commands and directives to their female companions in a way that shows their superiority and their handling of the situation.

To conclude, it is very clear that the male characters in the three movies under study used commands and directives with the other characters. This linguistic feature was generally the second highest used characteristic among the five male linguistic features. In most cases, male characters used directives and commands to show their superiority over the female characters.

5.2.3 Impersonal compliments

Compliments are used to encourage a particular desired behavior (Holmes 1988a). When complimenting others, men use 3rd person compliment (i.e. without first or second person pronouns) such as *Great shoes!* significantly more than women (Holmes 2013, 127).

Excerpt 5 (Frozen 2013, min 52:49)

Context: When Kristoff and Anna arrived to Elsa's castle, they saw amazing ice. So Kristoff said he would cry because of the beauty of the castle adding that it is flawless.

Anna: Ha-ha. Thank goodness! Catch! [she drops off and lands into Kristoff's arms] Thanks! That was like a crazy trust exercise. [She hops off his arms and goes over to join Olaf] [They reach the ice staircase Elsa had built, they look up in amazement at Elsa's ice palace].

Kristoff: Now that's ice. I might cry.

Anna: Go ahead. I won't judge. [She starts walking up the ice staircase, Sven goes to follow her but slips on the ice and scrambles as his hooves keep slipping.]

Kristoff: Wow, Flawless.

When they arrived at the castle which was made of ice, Kristoff was marveled at the beauty of the castle. He felt that the icy castle had no mistakes whatsoever. He used a discourse marker 'Wow' which expresses fascination and excitement. He also used a very positive adjective that shows that something is perfect, i.e. (flawless). As a male character, Kristoff used 3rd focus compliment to express his fascination by the beauty of the castle. He used a very strong compliment word to describe it. When taken or fascinated by something, people usually use very strong adjectives to describe it, e.g. flawless, fascinating, fabulous, etc.

Excerpt 6 (Moana 2016, min: 49:13)

Context: When Moana saved the heart from the pirates, Maui was very happy about Moana's achievement. He congratulated her.

Moana: Coconuts. Hah... Got it. Oo... Oohh... Hey. Yeah... We did it!

Maui: Congratulations on not being dead, curly. You surprised me. But I'm still not taking that thing back. You wanna get to Te Fiti, you have to go through a whole ocean of bad. Not to mention Te Ka. Lava monster? Ever defeat a lava monster?

Moana: No. Have you?

As Moana saved the heart from the pirates, Maui called her 'curly' as some sort of compliment. He also congratulated her directly using the word 'congratulations'. He also expressed his surprise (You surprised me). Maui used 3rd person focus compliment by calling her 'curly'. He used a speech act (congratulation). When men admire women's achievements, they tend to use 3rd person focus compliment in order to avoid using 2nd person focus which could be interpreted as direct flirtation.

To conclude, most of the interpersonal compliments used by male characters were the 3rd person focus compliments. In some cases, there were some 2nd person focus compliments used for certain purposes. However, there was no single excerpt that reflected a 1st person focus compliment. In general, interpersonal compliments were used less frequently than 'questions' and 'commands and directives'.

5.2.4. Swearing and taboo language

As mentioned earlier in the literature review, the belief that men use swearing and taboo words more than women is widespread (Coates 2016, 97). Actually, the examples in this subsection, do not illustrate real swear and taboo language. They are words with negative meanings. This may be ascribed to the fact

that the selected movies are directed to children who are not supposed to be exposed to taboos and swear words.

In this subsection, the researchers present some examples related to the use of taboo words.

Excerpt 7 (*Tangled* 2010, min 38:04)

Context: When Flynn and the princess entered the restaurant, the people there knew him. So, Vladimir (one of the Vikings) asked him, pointing to his picture, is that you? Flynn removed Vladimir's finger to find out that his nose was bigger than its normal size and said this is really a mean thing.

Vladimir: Is this you?

Flynn: Ugh, now they're just being mean.

Hook Hand: Oh, it's him all right. Greno, go find some guards. That reward is going to buy me a new hook.

Flynn and the princess entered the restaurant, and were surrounded by many savage Vikings. They showed him a picture of himself with a very big nose. He was wanted because he was thought to be a thief. Seeing his big nose, he used 'Ugh' as a discourse marker to express his resentment and disgust. Then, he commented that 'That was mean'. As Flynn felt offended because they drew him with a big ugly nose, he found himself in a situation where he could only defend himself by uttering expressive bad words (i.e. mean) to those who drew him. Socially, when people feel offended, they excuse themselves to use swear words.

Excerpt 8 (*Frozen* 2013, min 38:03)

Context: Kristoff was pleading with the seller that he only had ten, so Anna asked him what was happening in the northern mountain. Kristoff was unhappy about the seller and he asked Anna to let him deal with this fraud (meaning the seller).

Kristoff: Ten's all I got. Help me out.

Oaken: Okay. [He puts the carrots forward on the counter] Ten will get you this and no more.

Anna: Okay, just tell me one thing. What was happening on the North Mountain? Did it seem magical?

[Kristoff pulls down the scarf on his face and looks at Anna]

Kristoff: Yes! Now, back up while I deal with this crook here. [Suddenly Oaken stands revealing his very tall stature]

Oaken: What did you call me?

[Oaken walks outside carrying Kristoff with one arm]

Kristoff: Okay. Okay, I.. [Kristoff hits his head on the sign then Oaken throws him] Ow! Woh! [Kristoff lands in the snow ahead]

Oaken: Bye bye!

Kristoff was fully covered with ice when he entered the shop. He argued with the seller about the price and as he was not satisfied with that. His sounded angry as he told Anna to back up while he deals with that bad man, so Kristoff called the seller a 'crook', hence insulting and upsetting the latter too much. Oaken was surprised and asked in astonishment: (What did you call me?). As a result, for the insult, Oaken threw Kristoff outside in the snow. Socially, when men feel they are fooled, they defend themselves by calling others names and using bad language.

In conclusion, most movies barely had bad language in this decade. More importantly, the excerpts taken from these movies did not actually reflect bad language per se. There was no single swearing or taboo words. Rather, the excerpts found were somehow more like negative comments. This is because Disney movies target children of young age who are not supposed to be exposed to swearing and taboo language.

5.2.5 Interruptions

As Coates (2016, 111) states, interruption reflects dominance since interruption deprives people their right of speech. In other words, it expresses the dominance of the interrupter. This linguistic feature was one of the least used ones. Nonetheless, below are some examples showing how this linguistic feature was used by male characters.

Excerpt 9 (*Frozen* 2013, min 41:57)

Context: Kristoff could hear voices around him, so he interrupted Anna by closing her mouth, so he could hear the voices clearly.

Kristoff: Stop talking. [sensing something Kristoff stops the sled]

Anna: No, no, no. No, no, no. I'd like to meet these... [Kristoff puts his hand over Anna's mouth]

Kristoff: No, I mean it. [Anna shoves his hand away from her mouth] and goes to say something] Sshhh!
[Kristoff stands, holds up the lantern and looks around them when suddenly he notices a pack of wolves approaching them from behind] Sven, go. Go! [Sven takes off]

Anna: What are they?

Kristoff: Wolves.

Anna: Wolves? [the wolves chase them] What do we do?

Kristoff heard wolves' voices around him, so he interrupted Anna and closed her mouth in order to hear the voices clearly. He used a discourse marker (Sssh) to silence her and he ordered her to stop talking.

Interruption can take place by words or gestures. Kristoff feels that he is superior and in a position to interrupt and give orders. Interruption is often a manly behavior especially when people are in danger. However, women also interrupt men when they are in dangerous situations. To interrupt others, people may use verbal or non-verbal language (i.e. gestures and body language).

Excerpt 10 (*Moana* 2016, min 37:09)

Context: When Moana discovers Maui on the island, she begins to speak about who he is and how he transformed, but Maui interrupts her and corrects her information that he is the hero of men.

Maui: Boat! A boat! The gods have given me a (screams)

Moana: Maui, shapeshifter, demigod of the wind and sea. I am Moana...

Maui: Hero of men.

Moana: Wh..What?

Maui: It's actually Maui, shapeshifter, demigod of the wind and sea, hero of men. I interrupted, from the top, hero of men. Go.

When Moana discovers Maui on the island, she begins to speak about who he is and how he transformed, but Maui interrupts her and corrects her information that he is the hero of men. He did not let her introduce herself. Maui interrupted Moana on their first meeting because he thought he had the right to interrupt others as he is a demi-god and the other person (Moana) is a female. Being a demi-god, Maui had high self-esteem which led him to be arrogant and gave him the excuse to interrupt and correct others.

Socially, people in higher positions feel they can interrupt others as they are more dominant.

To conclude, male characters interrupted their female companions. In specific, Moana (2016) had the highest number of interruptions among all movies. This is because of Maui's demi-god character that is characterized by arrogance.

6. Discussion

The qualitative analysis showed that the most frequently used linguistic feature by male Disney characters was *Questions*. It reflected men's language as showing conversational dominance since in all their minor roles under study, they used questions that elicit short answers to indirectly show their superiority in the situation. This supports Broadbridge (2003) who examined the differences between female and male language due to the differences in conversational dominance among others. Broadbridge found that men tend to dominate conversation more than women. Holmes (1988b) found that male learners tended to ask 'response restricting' questions that are intended to elicit a short specific response such as '*any brothers and sisters?*', while female learners asked more 'facilitative questions' which seek more elaborate answers such as '*How do you get on with him?*'. In this study, we also found that men initiate their conversations with questions so that they determine how to steer the topics discussed.

By contrast, this study disagrees with Subon (2013) who found that women use particular linguistic features such as *asking questions*, humor, intensifiers and indirect speech. In specific, women tend to use tag questions rather than direct questions. Similarly, while Juwita et al. (2018) and Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2021) found that women tend to ask *Tag Questions*, the study reported here found that men use direct questions that seek short answers. In other words, women ask tag question to seek approval and/or as a hedging strategy, whereas men ask direct questions that do not necessarily seek approval. In fact, asking questions that seek short answers indirectly indicates dominating the conversation because it shows that the questioner does not have time for details.

The second highest male linguistic feature is '*Commands and Directives*'. It was evident that male characters under study used it highly. This result, in fact, agrees with Karlsson (2007) who also studied gender-related differences in language use. Karlsson found that *Commands and Directives* appeared to be made unconsciously by men. By the same token, Yousef (2018), who discussed the gender linguistic crossing and the use of untypical linguistic features by men and women in their speech, also found that *Directives* is a male linguistic feature, whereas women's linguistic feature is characterized by *Hedged Directives* among others. By the same token, Al-Yasin and Rababa'ah (2021, 128) found that women use various kinds of hedges especially lexical hedges such as 'you know', 'sort a'. Finally, explicit *Commands and Directives* were found to be a male linguistic feature by Juwita et al. (2018) as well. In

this study, it was found that male characters used short direct commands, e.g. (don't fall off and don't get eaten) that were mostly asked to their female companions usually accompanied by aggressive intonation.

Generally, it can be concluded that *questions* and *commands and directives* are the most used linguistic features by male characters in Disney animated movies since they were used in a large number of utterances made by the male characters. Recall that the male characters in the selected movies had some higher positions such as army leaders, gang leaders or princes. This indicates that men feel that they have the authority to give orders and ask questions. On the other hand, *interruptions and swearing and taboo language* were least used in the three decades because these are Disney characters which are directed to children.

The third male linguistic feature is *Impersonal Compliment*. Recall that men use 3rd person focus which entails excluding 1st and 2nd pronouns (Herbert 1998, 55). For instance, in *Frozen* (2013), Kristoff complimented the palace by saying (Wow, flawless). It seems that no study has addressed this topic (men's compliment) except for Juwita et al. (2018) who mentioned that 3rd person compliment is a male linguistic feature. Perhaps, most scholars look at *Compliments* as a female linguistic feature because they do not take into account the three different types of compliment where men use the 3rd person focus compliment (e.g. Holmes 1988b; Wu 2008; Cai 2012). One recent study (Widyanita and Pasaribu 2019) focused on how male and female characters in the movie "Me Before You" express compliments. The researchers found there were four compliment functions that were used by male and female characters in the movie: *expressing admiration, solidarity, conversation strategy and reinforced desired behavior*. Furthermore, the use of compliments is highly affected by the traits of the characters and the plot which helped reveal how the male character becomes a better person when using compliments.

As for the fourth linguistic feature, *Taboo and Swearing* words, the study did not find as many occurrences of such words compared with the previous three features. This study is congruent with some previous studies such as Broadbridge (2003) which found that taboo and swearing words were used more frequently by men. Similarly, Juwita, et al. (2018) concluded that swearing and taboo words are one of the six language features of men they found. Coates (2004), Yousef (2018), and Putra and Prayudha (2019) all found the same result. However, both men and women swear more in the company of their own sex. By contrast, male characters' use of swear words drops dramatically in mixed-sex conversations but still it is more than females' swear words (Gomm 1981 and Gao 2008). Moreover, Gao (2008) argues that gender differences also exist in the use of different types of taboo words; while female characters use *insult* words more frequently, male characters use *obscene words* instead.

Finally, interruption was the least used linguistic male feature. Men interrupt women more than women interrupt men (Brooks 1982; Mulac et al. 1988; Holmes 2013; West 1998). They even tend to interrupt each other. Kiesling (2007) points out that interruption can be a strategy for claiming dominance. Subon (2013) also found that men usually interrupt women to exhibit domination and control over the conversation. In all reported instances in this study, the male characters interrupted the female characters because they felt superior. In fact, interruption often sounds vulgar. The findings of this study

agree with Broadbridge (2003), Karlsson (2007), Yousef's (2018) and Putra and Prayudha (2019) who all found that male speakers are more likely to interrupt others than female speakers.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The main aim of the present study was to investigate male Disney characters' linguistic features. The study revealed that the linguistic features that mostly characterized male Disney characters' language are: *asking response-restricting question*, and *commands and directives*. They directly and indirectly reflect males' presumed superiority. Male Disney characters also used *3rd person compliments*, and *swearing and taboo words*. This implies that male Disney characters are portrayed as men who have their stereotypical linguistic features. The least linguistic feature used was *interruption*. In light of these results, further research is recommended to study Disney movies from different periods of time. Future research may investigate para-linguistic features, such as prosody and gestures, in cartoon movies as they may be as gender-specific as the linguistic features.

السمات اللغوية للشخصيات الذكورية في أفلام الرسوم المتحركة التي أنتجتها ديزني

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الملخص

بحثت الدراسة السمات اللغوية للشخصيات الذكورية في ثلاثة أفلام رسوم متحركة من إنتاج ديزني: تانغلد (2010)، فروزن (2013) ومونا (2016). واستخدمت لهذه الغاية الإطار البحثي لكوتس (2016) (الذي جرى تطويره من إطار هولمز 2013 وهيرت 1998) للغة الذكور (مثل الأوامر والتوجيهات، والشتائم والكلمات البذيئة، والمقاطعة، والأسئلة، والإطراء). كما وظفت إطار فيركلو (1995) ثلاثي الأبعاد لتحليل الخطاب النقدي (النص، وممارسة الخطاب، والممارسة الاجتماعية والثقافية). وكشفت النتائج أن السمة اللغوية التي ميزت شخصيات ديزني الذكورية تمثلت في طرح الأسئلة متبوعة بإعطاء الأوامر والتوجيهات، ذلك أن طرح الأسئلة التي تتطلب إجابات قصيرة علاوة على إعطاء الأوامر بصورة مباشرة أو غير مباشرة يشيران إلى سيطرة المستخدم على المحادثة. أما السمة اللغوية الثالثة للذكور فتمثلت في عبارات الثناء غير الشخصية وفي استخدام الكلمات البذيئة والشتائم، وأخيراً، كانت مقاطعة المتحدث السمة الأقل استخداماً. وفي جميع الحالات التي جرى رصدها، كانت الشخصيات الذكورية تقاطع حديث الشخصيات الأنثوية لشعورهم بالتفوق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل الخطاب النقدي، ديزني، النوع الاجتماعي، لغة الذكور.

Endnotes

- ¹ “In traditional 2D animation, everything was hand-drawn, frame by frame. In 3D animation, you animate your characters and objects in a 3D environment using 3D animation software to manipulate these characters and objects. While drawing is an added benefit, it is not a necessity in 3D animation” (Jones, The differences between 2D and 3D animation).
- ² Netflix, Inc. “is an American subscription streaming service and production company based in Los Gatos, California. Launched on August 29, 1997, it offers a film and television series library through distribution deals as well as its own productions, known as Netflix Originals”.

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