Discrimination in a Land Far, Far Away – Stereotyped Dialects in Animated Children's Films

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

"A child is helpless in choosing what is to be engraved on his mind during the formative years. The awesome responsibility is assumed, for better or worse, by us adults." – Walt Disney, founder of The Walt Disney Company (Smith 2001: n.p.)

"And you could say to me, will a four or five year old really understand that? And I'd say to you, well, they're smarter than we sometimes give them credit for." – Jeffrey Katzenberg, CEO of DreamWorks Animation (Moorhead 2016: n.p.)

1. Introduction

Storytelling is an integral part of human community, "a basic human vehicle for gaining and imparting knowledge" (Griffin 2009, 258). According to Rosina Lippi-Green storytelling and thereby storytellers have a crucial role in a child's life (cf. Lippi-Green [2]2012: 101). Storytelling, as it can be deduced from the word itself, consists of the story and the act of a speaker passing said story on to an audience. It is this act of telling that has changed dramatically with the rise of technology. A narrative can now, since the rise of mass media, be passed from one entity to a large audience including both sound and imagery. Giroux and Pollock argue that because children are constantly learning, more so than adults, they are "one of the primary targets of the corporate-mediated teaching apparatus that engages in public pedagogy" (Giroux and Pollock [2]2010: 6). "Public pedagogy", in other words, is the active attempt to shape values as well as experiences (cf. Giroux and Pollock [2]2010: 6). As primary producer of successful children's movies, the Walt Disney Company is thus also one of the most powerful storytellers in America. As a result, Disney and other companies like it have vast influence "on socialization and the development of identity – for both self and other" (Lippi-Green [2]2012: 126). Elizabeth Freeman therefore calls children's films "portable professors" (Freeman 2005: 85). With entertainment systems not only at movie theatres but at home and even in cars, the reach of these new storytellers is virtually all-encompassing with potentially constant access. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the average American child spends about seven hours a day on entertainment media such as television, computers, or tablets (cf. "Media and Children" 2015: n.p.) – arguably a larger portion of time in the waking life of an American child than spent on any one other activity.

It is often wrongly assumed that animated children's films need no further investigation since they are made for children, abiding to the legal guidelines

concerning violence or language. Although these movies don't depict the "extreme violence that has become central to many other forms of popular culture, they do carry cultural and social messages" (Giroux and Pollock [2]2010: 93). With each re-watching of a film, its sociocultural values are repeated over and over again to the viewer. Even more considerable is the cumulative effect of films that all depict consistent sociocultural values thus reinforcing the message (cf. Lippi-Green [2]2012: 103). A child watching an animated film is consequently involved in much more than a "simple act of consumption" because it "involves a complex process of coding/decoding and appropriating cultural meanings" making the films function not only as means of entertainment but as a sort of "ideological apparatus" (Belkhyr 2012: 705). As these new-age storytellers become more and more powerful, it is crucial to pay attention to the kind of messages they are sending:

> At issue for parents, educators, and others is how culture, especially media culture, has become the primary educational force in regulating the meanings, values, and tastes that legitimate particular subject positions—what it means to claim an identity such as male, female, white, black, gay, straight, citizen, or noncitizen. (Giroux and Pollock [2]2010: 2)

What one can gather from Giroux and Pollock's statement above is that media companies have become so powerful in the lives of children that they can significantly influence the way in which those children see themselves and others. Considering this power to shape children's perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs should not be underestimated and closely examined. Therefore, the above described power of defining the self and other[1] for the audience is the subject of this study. More specifically, it is the way in which language variation is used to help portray such sociocultural values, i.e. in what way the accent or dialect used by the film characters might convey particular attitudes concerning race, sex, gender, what counts as American, what is foreign, and so on. One premise for this study is that children can distinguish variation in language and form an opinion thereof. According to Richard R. Day, who has studied children's attitudes toward language extensively, "children as young as 3 are able to make language attitudinal judgments which reflect adult beliefs

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[1] "Many theorists have employed the concept of Otherness as a way to describe the process whereby those in power in a culture define subordinate classes as unlike themselves, or as 'other.' By keeping subordinate classes at this symbolic distance, the dominant class can maintain its power through language and other relatively covert means in a seemingly natural way." (Brabham 2006: 70)

prevalent in the speech community" (Day 1982: 116 qtd. in Pandey 2001: 1). The speech community Day mentions would now have to include the world presented by children's films as they have become part of everyday life and have taken on the role of an educational authority, as previously discussed.

This Master's thesis will therefore examine if language is presented in connection to coded stereotypes or in ways which convey discriminatory messages for on the basis of race, gender, or class and whether the animated children's films thereby send messages of linguistic and/or cultural inferiority. I will begin my analysis with a discussion of linguistic stereotyping and how it has been used by authors, playwrights and filmmakers in the past and why, to them, it still crucial on stage or on screen today. I will follow this introduction to stereotyping with a short discussion of existing stereotypes of different varieties of English. How exactly a character will be coded in terms of his or her language variety, role in the story, and moral status will be explained in a short overview of my methodology. Having thereby outlined the preliminary assumptions for my study, I will first discuss an overview of dialect and accent use in general in all ten movies before moving on to discussing particular presentations of specific dialects. For the individual analysis of the specific language varieties, already existing stereotypes will serve as a basis for investigating whether such stereotypes are upheld or broken or whether new stereotypes are created. In addition, overall trends will be examined in order to gage any cumulative effect that the films may have. In order to understand the consequences that the depictions of linguistic varieties may have, I will try to place depictions in the relevant current cultural context assuming that the audience consists largely of US American children who live in the United States. Lastly, more general conclusions will be drawn in the last section about Disney, DreamWorks, and the findings of this study.

2. Linguistic Stereotyping and Its Purpose in Media

The following sections will first examine the nature and meaning of stereotypes in order to lay the groundwork for a short discussion of linguistic stereotyping and how it was used on the stage historically and continues to be used in the present day.

2.1. What is a (Linguistic) Stereotype

Social psychologists describe stereotypes as a necessary set of "cognitive skills, as one form of category among many that allow us to organize information" (Seiter 1986: 15-16). One might thus say that the process of stereotyping is a process of categorization which, according to Tajfel, would help establish "simplicity and order where there is complexity and nearly random variation", turning "fuzzy differences between groups […] into clear ones, or [creating] new differences […] where none exist" (Tajfel 1969: 82-83 qtd in Kristiansen 2001: 137). Such categorization then helps us "understand our social environment: just as we categorize objects in order to understand them, we also categorize others and ourselves into large or small groups" (Kristiansen 2001: 136). While this use of stereotypes as a necessary and automatic tool for organization of the perceived world is most definitely an important part of the stereotypes' existence, the definition offered by social psychology is incomplete. Journalist Walter Lippmann[2], the term's coiner, emphasizes a stereotype's "capacity to legitimize the status quo" or, as Seiter calls it, its "hegemonic potential" (Seiter 1986: 16). Categorization, and thereby stereotyping, consequently

> is believed to produce two basic, relatively automatic effects: the distortion of perception such that intragroup similarity and intergroup difference are accentuated, and evaluative and behavioural discrimination favouring the ingroup. Both are considered fundamental of stereotyping. (Oakes et al. 1994: 37 qtd. in Kristiansen 2001: 136)

Knowing the way categorization draws clear lines on a spectrum of variation and then defines the thereby created groups by accentuated characteristics which differentiate them, it is logical that such category creation applies to linguistic variance as well. As Kristiansen puts it,

> [i]f linguistic continua, in form of progressive accentual differences throughout the social and regional dimensions, undergo the same processes of accentuation as other continuous dimensions, the end-result is a series of apparently homogeneous and distinct linguistic subcategories, or stereotypes. (Kristiansen 2001: 141)

The stereotyped linguistic category is made artificially homogeneous to allow for a clear division of the spectrum of variation and is defined by constructed labels which make it clearly distinguishable from other such categories. As Kristiansen points out, this not only influences the way people perceive a particular linguistic variety, but

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[2] Walter Lippman first used the term "stereotype" in his book *Public Opinion* published in 1922 (Seiter 1986: 16).

> [i]f a choice of a particular linguistic stereotype (or a nearby variant of it) leads us psychologically to the whole of a social category through a process of metonymy, it will also evoke the corresponding social stereotype. In other words, both social and linguistic stereotypes may be associated with the social categories and work metonymically with respect to the category as a whole. (Kristiansen 2001: 142)

A particular linguistic stereotype can, of course, only be associated with a particular social stereotype if the two are part of the same system of meaning making, in this case US cultural and cinematic discourses. According to Cutler, the linguistic variety is then, in the mind of the audience, associated with a particular group and the stereotypes attributed therewith. The connection between them is labeled as first order indexicality (cf. Cutler 2013: slide 13). In a second step, building on this first order indexicality, the association to the group is skipped leading to a direct association between the linguistic variety of that group and a character stereotype (cf. Cutler 2013: slides 13-14). If a New York City accent, for example, is associated with people from New York City who in turn are believed to be rude, then a second order indexicality would lead to the association between speaking with a New York City accent and being rude.

2.2. Linguistic Stereotypes in Media

"Stereotypes have been associated with the mass media since the term first gained currency" (Seiter 1986: 19). They have been the topic of literature, theatre, and film as for example in David Sedaris' *Me Talk Pretty One Day* (2000), George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* (1994, first presented on stage in 1913), and Tom Hooper's *The King's Speech* (2010). Much more often, however, linguistic stereotypes are not at all the topic in focus but an integral part of the production process. Before talking about why exactly, stereotypes, language, and performances aimed at a large audience are so intricately connected, the concept of performance and especially performance of language needs to be clearly defined. Chomsky, for example, uses the term 'performed language' for language in use (cf. Bell and Gibson 2011: 556). For him it stands in contrast with linguistic competence which is the "knowledge of the abstract rules of language, untarnished by the actual infelicities of actual used language" (Bell and Gibson 2011: 556). For the purpose of this paper, we will consider performance "as a special mode of situated communicative practice, resting on the assumption of accountability to an audience for a display of communicative skill and efficacy" (Baumann 2000 qtd. in Bell and Gibson 2011: 556). This, however, would mean that even instances of reported speech or for that matter any instance where "a speaker in

everyday conversation steps out into a performance mode" are considered performance as well (Bell and Gibson 2011: 557). We will thus make a clear distinction between such 'everyday performance' and 'staged performance' which Bell and Gibson label as "the overt, scheduled identification and elevation (usually literally) of one or more people to perform, typically on a stage, or in a stage-like area such as the space in front of a camera or microphone" (Bell and Gibson 2011: 557). All language analyzed in this study will hence be considered 'staged performance'.

Important for this study is how the 'staged performance' includes active choices in respect to language variety used for the performance. Script writers and producers do not simply make a choice regarding language at random, but instead use it as an important tool of storytelling:

> Because different varieties of English are associated with speakers from different regions and social backgrounds it is possible to deduce information about speakers' backgrounds from the way in which they speak. In everyday life, the way in which someone speaks provides clues about where they come from, what social group they belong to, what kind of education they received, and so forth. This is something that authors and filmmakers make use of in various ways, not the least of which is to provide background information about characters and locations. (Hodson 2014: 3)

The practice of using and manipulating language in order to "draw character quickly, building on well-established, preconceived notions associated with specific regional loyalties, ethnic, racial alliances or economic status" is not at all a development of the movie industry (Lippi-Green [2] 2012: 104). In his article on the performance of language on the Early Modern English Stage, Andrew Fleck considers the difficulty dramatists in 1600 faced when trying to find "a way to present another tongue without turning their stage into an incomprehensible Babel" when their audience was not versed in any language other than English (Fleck 2007: 205). Using language variation was a way to signal locality, origin, and other background information without making the character's speech unintelligible for the audience.

Just like playwrights 400 years ago, filmmakers are aware of their target audience when developing a movie. Filmmakers are not only aware of, but dependent on their audience for their continued professional success. In order to receive the most positive, or rather most lucrative, audience feedback, the films, and everything therein, must cater to the viewer. Bell and Gibson use Allen Bell's concept of audience design to describe such efforts. According to Bell's model, "speakers design their style for their audience" (Bell 1984: 159). As a result, any variations found in a speaker's

language "are accountable as the influence of the second person and some third persons, who together compose the audience to a speaker's utterances" (Bell 1984: 159). Every character's speech is thus designed with the film's audience in mind. As Jannis Androutsopoulos states:

> communication in the fictional world is embedded into the communicative relation between the 'author' (or 'producer') and the 'reader' (or 'audience'). This distinction is theoretically and analytically necessary if we are to account for the fact that sociolinguistic choices at the fictional level are constrained by audience design at the level of target audiences. (Androutsopoulos 2012: 140-141)

On a fairly obvious level, audience design in the case of children's films might be visible in aspects such as child-friendly language without inappropriate or overly complicated vocabulary. On a deeper level, the language clues used have to be recognizable for the audience. Filmmakers use language variation to give information about their characters, as previously established. In order to decode such clues, the audience must be familiar with the way "a certain stylistic variant operates as an index for a certain social meaning" (Bell and Gibson 2011: 559).

Such indexicality is established because "[e]vents of language use can be perceived to form sets of 'likeness' when two forms co-occur within a frame" (Silverstein 2006 as cited in Bell and Gibson 2011: 560). An index thus does not perfectly resemble the referent but instead "reference[s] it through association and co-occurrence" (Bell and Gibson 2011: 560). Consequently, the representation of linguistic variation is not an accurate rendition but instead a recognizable version.

As discussed, the use of any particular linguistic variety (or representative version thereof) is not employed to simply signal the character's language variety but to give information on the character's background. Filmmakers therefore use referee design which "involves the initiative of use of linguistic features to index a targeted reference group" meaning that "[l]inguistic forms receive their social meaning (especially in their origin but also in actual interaction) through association with classes of typical speakers" (Bell and Gibson 2011: 560). As a result, all language variation brings with it an associated meaning about the speaker which is learned through the observation of co-occurrence of the variation with certain constructed categories of speakers. Staged performance serves a platform for the presentation of such co-occurrences and thus "provides a forum where an audience's attention can be drawn to indexical relationships, reinforcing some social meanings and reinterpreting

others" (Bell and Gibson 2011: 560-561). The perceived categories of speakers are groups of people which the audience can recognize and to which they can ascribe a particular identity. Bell and Gibson refer to such recognizable identities as "characterological figures" (cf. Bell and Gibson 2011: 562). Characterological figures can be well-known real-life or fictional individuals (Barack Obama or Harry Potter, for example) or the members of an iconic social group (such as lawyers or truck drivers) (cf. Bell and Gibson 2011: 561). In other words, "[t]hese personas embody particular sociocultural values and positioning, and thus imbue a register with those qualities" (Bell and Gibson 2011: 561). Just like the linguistic variety chosen as part of a staged performance might differ from its referent, a performed characterological figure is not trying to pass as the actual individual, but to "display the approximateness of their renditions" (Bell and Gibson 2011: 562). It is not necessary to create a perfect copy (which of course is in itself not possible) as long as the audience can recognize the represented variety or figure.

In some cases, the filmmakers may even "choose not to aim for a fully accurate rendition of dialect speech because of audience comprehension" (Hodson 2014: 61). In order to prevent an obscuring of meaning caused by the audience's inability to understand what is said, dialects might be stylized using one of the following sociophonetic processes. The speaker of the attempted dialect might only select certain features of the dialect and omit others, over- or undershoot "the characteristics or frequency of features of the targeted variety," or mis-realize some of the features either drawing on already existing stereotypes or simply due to incapability (Bell and Gibson 2011: 568). Accordingly, any deviation between the stylized performance and the language variety it is meant to represent might be accidental or strategically planned. Beyond using stylization to imitate dialect, "English can be made to suggest the foreign through 'patois' – English spiced with sounds or small portions of a foreign language – offering [yet another] possibility for marking language or speakers as foreign while not […] obscuring the meaning" (Fleck 2007: 209).

In short, filmmakers rely on stereotyped characters that will trigger an immediate association to certain sociocultural values in their audience. Children learn to make such associations from a reoccurring connection between certain socio-cultural values and a stereotyped category if it is shown to be connected repeatedly. As filmmakers, both Disney and DreamWorks utilize talking characters to tell their films'

stories. Language is therefore an integral part of animated movie production and movie consumption, as it is with other performed media. As Lippi-Green explains, in real life

> [w]e use language variation to construct ourselves as social beings, to signal who we are, and who we are not and do not want to be. Speakers choose among sociolinguistic variants available; their choices group together in ways which are obvious and interpretable to other speakers in the community. This process is a functional and necessary part of the way we interact. It is not an optional feature of the spoken language. (Lippi-Green [2]2012: 66)

When analyzing language in movies, however, one cannot speak of natural conversation. The dialogue is of course meant to mimic real-life conversation, but "is always an imitation" since it has been "scripted, written and rewritten, censored, polished, rehearsed, and performed" (Kozloff 2000: 18 qtd. in Hodson 2014: 13). Even non-scripted lines are "judged, approved, and allowed to remain" (Kozloff 2000: 18 qtd. in Hodson 2014: 13). Movie language is therefore very different from the real-life language it imitates, but Lippi-Green's argument that using a particular language variety is not optional is nonetheless true. Once a writer or producer decides to give a character a voice and to let them speak, he or she must make a choice as to what language variety the character uses. In real life these choices occur subconsciously but, as discussed, film dialogue is not left to chance but carefully prepared and performed.

2.3. Linguistic Stereotypes and Ideologies

We have established that filmmakers use accent or dialect in order to give background information about their characters (cf. Pao 2004: 355). At this point it is important to note that the use of "standard" or "non-standard" forms of language does not automatically mean negative stereotyping in the representation of a character. It is only when the linguistic features are coupled with certain character traits or particular behaviors that one can draw any conclusion about the values carried in the representation. Androutsopoulos states that

> a character-based approach assumes that linguistic choices in cinematic discourse become meaningful through their assignment to particular characters and their deployment in the dialogic contrasts against the backdrop of (dominant) language ideologies. (Androutsopoulos 2012: 147)

Such language ideologies show, for example, in "the asymmetric organization of character repertoires, protagonists typically align to mainstream legitimate language, and code-contrasts come to accentuate […] character contrasts" (Androutsopoulos 2012: 148). In other words, protagonists are often portrayed as speakers of a "standard"

variety and if a different character is meant to stand in stark contrast to said antagonist, he or she might be portrayed as a speaker of a "non-standard" variety. This again shows the importance of analyzing not only the linguistic variety assigned to a character but their entire role including their behavior, their function in the plot, and other relevant characteristics.

As cultural products, films are not independent from cultural and societal realities; they emerge from these realities as a response with the purpose "to inform, persuade, or dissuade particular beliefs among certain groups" (Pimentel and Velázquez 2009: 7). Hence, films are on the one side products and, at the same time, shaping influencers of culture. While all utterances are somehow marked, the individuals actively choosing their renditions might not purposely be participating in the perpetuation of stereotypes but are simply messengers, or perhaps even victims, of the cultural discourse (cf. Pimentel and Velázquez 2009: 7). Media representations therefore "simultaneously reinforce both contemporary and historical notions of race, gender, and sexuality" (Lugo-Lugo and Bloodsworth-Lugo 2009: 169). At this point it is crucial to mention that the filmmakers' intentions are irrelevant for this study. The analysis focuses on the audience's perspective and how viewing the films might influence them. The question at the center of the study is therefore not why the filmmakers made certain choices regarding characters' speech but whether stereotyped performances which might convey racist or sexist ideologies are present.

3. Stereotypes of British and American Varieties

3.1. Standard Varieties and Why They Are Problematic
Lippi-Green emphasizes that in linguistic terms, all spoken languages remain equal (cf. Lippi-Green 2012: 8). In other words, no language variety is, in linguistics terms, better or worse than another. This should then hold true for all spoken varieties of language as well. Nevertheless, it can't be denied that some value is assigned to all language varieties and the existence of such values is most commonly explained with the existence of so-called language ideologies. According to Milroy

> [c]ertain languages, including widely used ones such as English, French and Spanish, are believed by their speakers to exist in standardized forms, and this kind of belief affects the way in which speakers think about their own language and about 'language' in general. (Milroy 2001: 530)

Looking at Milroy's statement, one can say (1) that not all languages have a 'standard' version, (2) that in those languages that do have a standard version, this standard version does not actually exist but is only believed to exist, and (3) that the belief of its existence changes the way people of that language community think. The process of standardization, Milroy says, promotes uniformity of the internal form of language and bans all invariance (cf. Milroy 2001: 531). Standardization, he emphasizes, imposes uniformity where there is variation, making invariance "itself an important defining characteristic of a standardized form of language" (Milroy 2001: 531). The need to impose such invariance, shows that in reality, the standardized form does not exist; instead of said standardized form, a wide diversity of forms coexist. Furthermore, since this imagined "standard" then comes to serve as a sort of "measuring rod or yardstick" (cf. Milroy 2001: 532) against which all other forms of language are compared. Consequently, the standardization of one form of language simultaneously means a "de-standardization for those varieties that are not selected to serve in this way" (Hodson 2014: 25). Milroy stresses that for such a standard/non-standard dichotomy to emerge, the "ideology of standardization and […] the centrality of the standard variety" need first be accepted (Milroy 2001:534). He explains:

> Plainly, dialects cannot be labeled 'non-standard' unless a standard variety is first recognized as definite and central. In this conceptualization, the dialects become, as it were, satellites that have orbits at various distances around a central body – the standard. (Milroy 2001:534)

Milroy's argument can be boiled down to the idea that if something is defined by deviating from something else, that something else first needs to be established and accepted. If something is, for example, labeled as non-human, the label is only meaningful if a concept of what it means to be human already exists. The label "non-standard" thus depends for its meaning on the established definition of "standard". With the clearly defined "standard", there can then be varying degrees of deviation for the "non-standard".

The hierarchy that is thereby created (measured by closeness to the "standard") is often discussed with the concept of standard language ideology (SLI) which Lippi-Green defines as

> a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogeneous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model

the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class. (Lippi-Green 2012: 67)

Considering Lippi-Green's argument, it follows that the "standard" variety not only serves as an entity against which other varieties are compared, but that it is also perceived as the best possible variety. This bias toward the standard language form is aided by the associated prestige. "Commonly 'standard variety' has been equated with 'the highest prestige variety', rather than with the variety that is characterized by the highest degree of uniformity" (Milroy 2001: 532). The degree of prestige thus outweighs the degree of uniformity making prestige one of the most important characteristics of the "standard" language form. It should be noted, however, that "if it does happen to be true in a given case that the standard variety is identical with the highest prestige variety, it does not follow that high prestige is definitive of what constitutes a 'standard'"(Milroy 2001: 532). This is made obvious more easily in fields other than linguistics. If one looks to the fashion industry, for example, a mass-produced, machine-woven, and therefore highly standardized piece of fabric has much less prestige value than does a hand-woven fabric. "[B]ecause prestige is attributed by human beings to particular social groups and to inanimate objects," (Milroy 2001: 532) such as language, no forms of language can be said to have any sort of innate prestige. Instead the value is assigned. As a result, speakers connected with the standard form are labeled "as superior in qualities such as intelligence, ambition, wealth, success and education" by both speakers of other varieties and those perceiving themselves as using the "standard" form (Luhmann 1990: 333 qtd. in Pandey 2001: 1). Standard language ideology is thus furthered both from the inside of the "standard" variety speech community and from the outside by speakers of other varieties.

"An extremely important effect of standardization," as Milroy labels it, is "the development of consciousness among speakers of a 'correct', or canonical, form of language" (Milroy 2001: 535). All members of such standard language cultures accept and further the ideology of standard language, firmly believing in its 'correctness' (ibid.). The form is not questioned and there is no need for justification for rejecting all other forms. Consequently, "everybody knows it, it is part of the culture to know it, and you are an outsider if you think otherwise" (Milroy 2001: 536). This ideology is fed and upheld over and over by those who have "a vested interest in the concept" (Lippi-Green 2012: 56) such as writers and publishers of books, dictionaries, or other

media that are meant to teach "standard" American or British English. Not only does this "standard" English become more and more fortified by such promotion, it also becomes legitimized, making all other forms illegitimate "in the popular mind" (Milroy 2001: 547). This legitimization of "standard" English establishes it as English in its "correct" form. Any variety that deviates from the "standard" is consequently perceived as an "incorrect" form of English.

Marking something as either "standard" American English or "standard" British English (or RP, Received Pronunciation) becomes rather problematic considering the aforementioned idealized and accordingly imagined property of either variety. Lippi-Green attempted to use the term *mainstream* in the first edition of her book in order to avoid the term *standard* but eventually came to the conclusion that she was merely swapping one inaccurate term for another (Lippi-Green 2012: 62). Her solution for the second edition was as follows:

> If you recall, syntacticians use an asterisk to mark utterances which are judged grammatically inauthentic. I am adapting that practice here, and will use *SAE to refer to that mythical beast, the idea of homogeneous, standard American English. (Lippi-Green 2012: 62)

I will adopt this method and use *SAE* to label "standardized" (and idealized) American English and *RB* for "standard" British English. Baring in mind the theory of standard language ideology, it will be interesting to examine whether such ideology is upheld in the films as well.

The following sections will discuss how certain varieties of English are presented on stage or in the media. After a first analysis of the films and the characters presented therein, all varieties not depicted in the corpus were erased from this section so that it now only includes varieties relevant for the analysis and discussion of this paper. It is therefore by no means a complete list of American and British varieties of English or possible foreign accents. The features listed for each variety do not make for a complete list but are a guideline for stereotypical features often associated with the variety. This also means that they are not necessarily representative of how the variety is spoken, only of how it is represented. This will give a base for (1) coding the characters in the film corpus according to their language variety and (2) analyzing how the already existing stereotypes are either perpetuated or broken.

3.2. American Varieties

3.2.1. *SAE

As thoroughly discussed above, a "standard" form of spoken American English does not exist. Nevertheless, "there remain some relatively common pronunciation (and other) features" that justify speaking of an "American English" (Kretzschmar 2008: 42-43). This hypothetical standardized form is spoken by people:

- with no regional accent;
- who reside in the Midwest, Far West or perhaps some parts of the Northeast (but never in the South);
- with more than average or superior education;
- who are themselves educators or broadcasters;
- who pay attention to speech, and are not sloppy in terms of pronunciation or grammar;
- who are easily understood by all;
- who enter into a consensus of other individuals like themselves about what is proper in language. (Lippi-Green 2012: 60)

It is considered unmarked, or as Kretzschmar puts it, it "can best be characterized as what is left over after speakers suppress the regional and social features that have risen to salience and become noticeable" (Kretzschmar 2008: 43). Overall, *SAE pronunciation has a noticeably different stress pattern from *RP and other world Englishes because it often preserves secondary stress which means that vowels are more fully-realized as for example in [ˈsɛkrəˌtɛri] (*SAE) versus [ˈsɛkrɪtri] (*RP) (Kretzschmar 2008: 49). Other phonological features that distinguish *SAE are listed below.

Phonological elements (consonants)	
Intervocalic *t* is usually realized as a tap or flap	*latter/ladder* are homonyms
/t/ is often voiced prevocalically in consonant clusters (-kt-, -pt-, -ft-, and –rt)	*Starter* is pronounced [stɑɚdɚ]
/t/ is deleted from –nt- clusters between vowels	*winter/ winner* are homonyms
palatal glide /j/ in words like *cure*, *music* remains but is lost in other words such as *Tuesday*, *coupon*, *neurotic*	*cure* is pronounced [kjʊɚ]

*Table 1 - Features of *SAE consonant pronunciation as listed by Kretzschmar 2008: 48*

The table below compares *SAE and *RP vowel pronunciation.

	*SAE as shown by Kretzschmar (2008)	*RP as shown by Upton (2008)
KIT	ɪ	ɪ
DRESS	ɛ	ɛ
TRAP	æ	a
LOT	ɑ	ɒ
STRUT	ʌ	ʌ
FOOT	ʊ	ʊ
BATH	æ	ɑː ~ a
CLOTH	ɔ, ɑ	ɒ
NURSE	ɚ	əː
FLEECE	i	ɪː
FACE	eɪ	eɪ
PALM	ɑ	ɑː
THOUGHT	ɔ, ɑ	ɔː
GOAT	oʊ	əʊ
GOOSE	u	uː
PRICE	ɑɪ	ʌɪ
CHOICE	ɔɪ	ɔɪ
MOUTH	aʊ	aʊ
NEAR	iɚ, ɪɚ	ɪə
SQUARE	ɛɚ	ɛː
START	ɑɚ	ɑː
NORTH	ɔɚ	ɔː
FORCE	ɔɚ	ɔː
CURE	jʊɚ	ʊə ~ ɔː
happY	i	i
lettER	ɚ	ə
commA	ə	ə

*Table 2 - Vowel Pronunciation of *SAE as shown in Kretzschmar 2008: 44 and *RP as shown in Upton 2008: 241-242*

3.2.2. Southern American English

The dialect of the American South is certainly yet another illusion as one homogeneous dialect form does not exist. Nevertheless, it is probably one of the most recognizable

dialects to people from outside of the speech community. This, of course, is only possible because there is a sort of stereotyped version, marking the speech of the American Southerner with a set of recognizable features. Lippi-Green found that Northerners, mostly because they remain unaware of regional difference within the Southern United States, "produc[e] the one-size-fits-all accent when attempting to 'sound Southern'" (Lippi-Green 2012: 221). She affirms that there "seems to be a strong urge to synthesize the South into a single population" and argues that this is done based mostly on the South's distinction from the North (Lippi-Green 2012: 222). If the South, in the mind of an outsider, is defined primarily by being different from the North, it would be most logical to define its language with features that are most distinct from the language used in the North. This is a list of "what most Northerners expect to hear when venturing south of the Mason-Dixon line":

- the merger of /i/ and /e/ before nasal sounds (so that *pin* and *pen* are both [pɪn], *hem* and *him* are both [hɪm]
- the monophtongization of /ai/ to /a/ in words like *tie*, *rice*, and *dime*;
- *you all* or *y'all* for the second personal pronoun" (Lippi-Green 2012: 214).

Bernstein argues that the inaccurate representation of the Southern dialects not only distorts the idea of the dialect itself but perpetuates a stereotype of the Southerner as slow-speaking and slow-witted (Bernstein 2000: 339). It is interesting to note that "[f]ictional Southern characters produce regionally marked features more often and in more varied contexts than do their real-life counterparts" (Bernstein 2000: 339). The exaggerated dialect form might be used by film producers in order to make the dialect more easily recognizable to a broad audience. Furthermore, it might be used in order to enhance the character's characteristics which the producers know the audience associates with the form of speech. Bernstein lists the following features as especially prominently portrayed in film but not accurately representing Southern speech as used in reality:

- *ya'll* as occurring in singular contexts (Bernstein 2000: 339)
- the distinction between /w/ and /hw/ as in *wheelbarrow, whinny, wharf* (Bernstein 2000: 341)

He also suggests that Southern dialect features might be underrepresented in a character's way of speaking if the desired image is positive (Bernstein 2000: 342). While Bernstein argues that stage Southern is used mostly to draw a negative image of its speakers, Lippi-Green describes the Southerner's stereotype as depicted on television as much more varied. She declares that film and television depict

> Southerners who do not assimilate to Northern norms [i.e. speak a Northern variety of English] [as] backward but friendly, racist but polite, obsessed with the past and unenamored of the finer points of education. If they are women, they are sweet, pretty and not very bright. (Lippi-Green 2012: 228)

In addition, the Southern hero as shown in film relies on "intelligence [which] is native rather than acquired" relying on an idea that "[i]n contrast to the Northern construction of intelligence which is closely linked to a high level of education, there is a construction of Southern intelligence that has more to do with common sense and life experience" (Lippi-Green 2012: 225). Following Lippi-Green's argument, speakers of Southern American English are stereotyped as lacking formal, institutional education but as witty and knowledgeable for everyday life.

One such hero is Huckleberry Finn. With barely any schooling, Huck is dependent on this sort of inert Southern intelligence. Instead of leaving Huck's accent to the imagination of the reader, Mark Twain adamantly attempted to represent his dialect in written form, thus creating a sort of literary stage variety (cf. Tamasi 2001: 133). While creating such a stage variety, "an author generalizes the features" which would then lead to a misrepresentation of the actual dialect and its variations (Ives 1971: 153 qtd. in Tamasi 2001: 133). Read in almost every classroom across the United Stage, this literary stage dialect has great potential to influence the way people perceive the Southern dialect. Some of the most prominent features used by Mark Twain to represent Southern speech are as follows:

Phonological elements	
/a/ for /aɪ/	*I'm* is pronounced [ãm]
G-dropping	*leavin'* instead of *leaving*
Grammatical elements	
Lack of *was/were* distinction	I was, you was
Multiple negation	"I don't have no problem."
Non-standard contractions	*ain't, hain't, warn't, dasn't*
'em used instead of *them*	"I see 'em."

Table 3 - Features of Southern American English in Film and Literature as listed in Tamasi 2001: 134

3.2.3. AAE

African American (Vernacular) [3] English is spoken by a large group of people and yet, when seen in films or on television, it is not always portrayed by people who actually speak it in real life. Bucholtz and Lopez argue that although the variety is sometimes

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[3] For the purposes of this paper, I will use the term *AAE (African American English)* rather than *AAVE (African American Vernacular English)* because labeling the variety as a vernacular variety defines it only in relation to a "standard", which should be avoided.

used by European American actors, it becomes "racialized, or ideologically linked to categories of race, through processes of linguistic representation" (Buchholtz and Lopez 2011: 680). This, they state, is not due to the mere fact that the variety is used, but that it is "othered" by marking it as inauthentic when used by white actors:

> In keeping with dominant mediatized representations of AAE, European American actors' use of the variety is typically limited to the non-fluent and often inaccurate use of restricted set of stereotypical lexical, phonological, and grammatical features. The films positions such language use by white speakers as inauthentic, but in so doing they also position linguistic difference as essentialized racial difference and, hence, reassert the normativity of white language and culture, even as African American elements are appropriated into whiteness. (Bucholtz and Lopez 2011: 684)

The variety is marked as non-white, as racially "other" and lends itself as a descriptive marker of this particular racial "other". Although the films in their data set varied in release date and genre, Bucholtz and Lopez found that there is a consistency in the construction of what they call "Mock AAE" (cf. Buchholtz and Lopez 2011: 686). Prominent features of Mock AAE are listed in the following table.

Phonological elements	
Postvocalic /r/ deletion or vocalization	*door* is pronounced [doʊ], *your* is [joʊ], *number* is [nʌmbə]
Postvocalic /l/ deletion or vocalization	*told* is pronounced [toʊd]
Fortition of word-initial voiced interdental fricative	*the* is pronounced [də] and *this* is [dɪs]
/a/ for /aɪ/	*I'm* is pronounced [ãm]
Phonological language game	"This is my sizzle. For rizzle, my nizzle."
Grammatical elements	
Regularization of third person singular verb form	"I has an idea."
Regularization of past tense	"Y'all growed up good."
Multiple negation	"Hey, I won't tell nobody."
Zero copular	"Why you trippin on me?"
Invariant *be*	"People be getting weird up in here."
ain't as the negative form of *be* and *have*	"That ain't cool! "

Table 4 - Features of Mock AA(V)E as listed in Bucholtz and Lopez 2011: 687, 688, 690

According to Brabham, media depiction of AAE speakers (both those who are actual speakers of AAE and those who contrive it) often portray the speaker as either native, even savage, as slave-figure, or as clown or a combination two or all three (Brabham 2006: 65-67). The stereotype of AAE speakers as shown on television or in film thus conveys the message that in general they are not very educated, prone to slapstick humor, and, Brabham states, with traits of ignorance, laziness, and cowardice (Brabham 2006: 65). Overall, speakers of AAE are therefore depicted with mostly negative character stereotypes.

3.2.4. New York City English

New York City is by far the largest metropolitan area in the United States. According to Matthew J. Gordon not only the city itself but "[t]he speech of New York City holds a special place in American public consciousness" (Gordon 2008: 69). Together with the American South, New York City "top[s] most Americans' lists of places with the most recognizable accents" (Gordon 2008: 69). Gordon also says that this salience, however, is the product of heavily stigmatized characteristics that are assigned to the dialect (Gordon 2008: 60). As a whole, speakers of the dialect are stereotyped as tough, lacking in education, and "street smart" (Gordon 2008: 60). Overall, the dialect is thus perceived as a working class dialect. As New York City has the largest population of all cities in the United States with a vastly diverse population of over eight million people, speaking of *a* New York accent is fiction. The stereotyped New York speech, or "Brooklynese", is thus a construct in the public mind rather than a true representation of the language spoken in the five NYC boroughs. The fact that New York City speech seems to be somehow associated with Brooklyn in particular (as can be deduced from people calling it "Booklynese") is misleading since "[e]very feature attributed to this local dialect corresponds to the features of working class New York City speech as described in the literature with no reference to Brooklyn" (Labov et al. 2006 qtd. in Newman 2014: 18). The variety is thus based on the idea of working class speech rather than a specific part of New York City. Some of the most "salient stereotypes of New York City speech" are *r*-lessness, glottalization, /ng/ variations and the deletion of /h/ in /hj/ clusters (Gordon 2011: 74-75) all of which are listed along with some examples in the table below. While this stereotype most likely does describe (at least in part) the variety spoken by some New Yorkers, Newman notes that there is much variation between different speakers and even in the speech of a single speaker

(Newman 2014: 1). Although the stereotypical New York City speech prescribes a consistent *r*-lessness, whether or not a person drops their /r/ depends both on the speaker and his or sociocultural background as well as the particular speech situation (Newman 2014: 1). The table below thus does not reflect a realistic depiction of New York City speech but instead shows the most stereotypical features of "Brooklynese" as imagined by people who are not from New York City.

Phonological features	
r-lessness (non-prevocalic /r/ is vocalized)	*Here* sounds like [hɪə] and *cart* is pronounced [kɑət]
/t/ glottalization	*bottel* is pronounced [bɑʔl]
[ŋg] as a variant of /ŋ/	*Long Island* is pronounced [lɔŋgɑɪlənd]
deletion of /h/ in /hj/ clusters	*human* is pronounced [jumən]

Table 5 - Features of stereotypical New York City speech as presented by Gordon 2008: 74-75

3.3. British Varieties

3.3.1. *RP

No audience would be surprised to find characters with a British accent in a Shakespeare play, an episode of Downtown Abby, or apparently any Hollywood film that features a dastardly evil villain. According to British film critic and well-known media personality, Barry Norman of *The Daily Mail*, there is a clear rule which applies to the casting decisions for big budget Hollywood movies: "bad guys British, good guys anything but" (Norman 2010: n.p.). Norman's claim that there is a trend according to which Hollywood casts British actors to play the 'bad guys' has not been subject to any scholarly analysis. Nevertheless, the phenomenon has been heavily discussed in the media. A collection of popular sources is valuable nonetheless because it shows just how much this topic occupies people and it outlines how British characters are perceived by the general public. And Brits playing Hollywood villains is not a new trend at all with classic examples such as Basil Rathborne playing the evil Sir Guy de Gisborne in *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) or George Sander giving his voice to the vicious Shere Khan in *The Jungle Book* (1967). *The Guardian* columnist Arwa Mahdawi says that this history of putting speakers of British English in the role of the 'bad guy' means that by now "a British accent has become Hollywood shorthand for 'evil genius that can charm your mother over dinner then blow up the world after dessert'" (Mahdawi 2014: n.p.). BBC AMERICA's Kevin Wicks makes a similar claim saying that "British accents also double as convenient shorthand for 'arrogant, 'elitist,' and 'not to be trusted'" (Wicks 2010: n.p.).

As if to prove that the "British villain trend" not only exists in the mind of media critics, BBC AMERICA devoted a whole month to the phenomenon: September, 2010, was named "Accent of Evil month" and during every weekend thereof the network aired American films featuring villains with a British accent (cf. Wicks 2010: n.p.). More recently, the British car brand Jaguar tried to take advantage of what one could now consider a stereotype rather than simply a trend. During the 2014 Super bowl commercial segment, the company ran a spot titled "Rendez-Vous" featuring British actors Ben Kingsley, Tom Hiddleston, and Mark Strong. With heavy English accents, the three men talk about why the British are often chosen as villains while venturing across London to attend a kind of villain summit. One of the first reasons they mention is "maybe we just sound right" ("Big Game Ad - British Villains Rendezvous | Ridgeway Jaguar", 00:00:20) followed by arguments such as "we're always one step ahead" ("Big Game Ad", 00:00:48), we have "a certain style" ("Big Game Ad", 00:00:57), "we're obsessed by power" ("Big Game Ad", 00:01:05), and our "stiff upper lip is key" ("Big Game Ad", 00:01:24). The clip ends with the statement "Oh yes, it's good to be bad" ("Big Game Ad", 00:01:53) which, to the audience, reaffirms the stereotype of the evil Brit. Jaguar not only uses and reaffirms this stereotype, the company justifies it. By listing stereotypical English characteristics as reasons why Brits make the perfect villain, Jaguar presents being evil as a quintessential result of being British.

Since it is clear that there certainly seems to be a Hollywood preference for villains with a British accent, the question remains why it is a British accent in particular. Norman notes that it's not only a British accent but more particularly an English accent that is used for villains in popular movies (cf. Norman 2010: n.p.). "They don't sound Welsh or Scottish or Irish – they sound English" (Norman 2010: n.p.). While this question why an English accent might be used to portray evil characters in film has not, like the investigation into the overall trend, been scholarly analyzed or discussed, there are a few theories brought forth by film critics and columnists. Mahdawi for example argues that "[a] history of colonisation means that much of the world has good reason to classify this sort of establishment English as an accent of evil" (Mahdawi 2014: n.p.). Mahdawi thus believes that it is a perceived lingering threat of the British Empire which stopped at nothing on the quest to conquer the world that makes British actors the perfect "bad guy" in the mind of many. Wicks

on the other hand explains the phenomenon from a more practical perspective saying that "[o]ne of the more convenient, and oddly effective, ways of representing foreign speech is to simply have everyone talk like Mary Poppins" (Wicks 2010: n.p.). A British, or an English, accent requires no subtitles and yet the audience can easily make out that the speaker is not US American (or at least a speaker of *SAE).

Interestingly, Mahdawi argues that "Hollywood's villainous Brits may be playing out their final act" (Mahdawi 2014: n.p.). "Thanks to Kate and Wills, Harry Potter and Downton Abbey, everyone seem[s] to have a soft spot for the Brits," she claims (Mahdawi 2014: n.p.). Considering Mahdawi's view, it is interesting to see whether the film corpus of the current study shows any trends pointing to such a decline in evil characters with a British accent.

As mentioned in section 3.1., a true "standard" English dialect does not exist. The presumed "standard" (labeled here *RP) does include features which, for the purpose of allocating a dialect category, are appropriate for describing the dialect as a whole. One feature which most drastically distinguishes *RP from *SAE is the fact that "[r]hoticity is never a feature of RP" (Upton 2008: 226). *Worse*, for example, is pronounced [wə:s] (cf. Upton 2008: 226). A list of *RP vowel pronunciation is given in section 3.2.1. where it is presented in direct comparison to *SAE (see Table 2) and hence will not be shown here.

3.3.2. Scottish English

Scotland as it is portrayed on stage is one of the most elaborately embellished illusions of a nation and its people one can find. One stereotype is followed by another "ranging from kilts and bagpipes to tightfistedness and Presbyterianism" (Görlach 2002: 88). The way Scottish English has been depicted by and to outsiders deviates significantly from the way Scottish English is actually used. The tradition of the stage and literature Scottish goes far back in time and even playwrights in the Victorian era made use of "stage Scottish" (cf. Görlach 2002: 92). The language form used, according to Görlach, is nothing more than

> a predominance of basically English texts that rely on dated humour relating to deer-stalking, lexical items like *lads* and *lasses*, *cairns*, *braes*, *hennies* and *hizzies*, and a great deal of short exchanges of the *no'-bad-ava'* and *gey-and-guid* type, but very seldom longer passages in tolerable Scots. (Görlach 2001: 93)

In other words, Scottish English as presented on the stage consisted often of only very short passages if any but mostly Scottish lexical items that were tossed into English as it was spoken in London at the time. Later, during the 19th century, playwrights still resorted to stage Scottish, which again was "merely a pastiche consisting of his normal stage English [as spoken on the London stage] interspersed, with no attempt at verisimilitude or even consistency, with a few Scots forms" (Görlach 2002: 93). Cecelia Cutler from the City University of New York gave insight into more recent representations of stage Scottish at the 5th International Conference on the Linguistics of Contemporary English (Sept. 25-29, 2013). Her presentation looked at four recent animated children's films and how Scottish English was represented in each movie. Analyzing the movies *Shrek* (2001), *How to train your dragon* (2010), *Tintin* (2011), and *Brave* (2012)[4], she found that there were some iconic features that were used by the majorities of characters with a Scottish accent. The fact that she refers to them as "iconic" shows that they function as indexes more than they are an exact representation.

Phonological elements	
tapped [ɾ] or alveolar trilled [r]	*Great* sounds like [grɛt]
/ɪ/ sounds more like [ɛ]	*it's* sounds like [ɛts]
Vowel lengthening of /o/ and /u/	*pull* and *pool* are homophones
/a/ for /aɪ/	*I'm* is pronounced [ãm]
Lexical items	
wee	small
bairn	child
laddie, lassie	boy, girl
bonnie	pretty
kirk	church

Table 6 - Features of Stage Scottish as listed in Cutler, 2013: slides 7, 8, 9

As already mentioned, the "Scottish" stereotype varies greatly or it might be more accurate to say that it encompasses many different characteristics. A very important fact that most likely changed the way Scottish English as well as "Scottishness" were presented in the media is its new prestige status owed to an association with being cool, smart, and attractive (cf. Coupland et al. 2007 qtd. in Cutler 2013: slide 5). While Shrek, the ugly, sloppy, and uneducated ogre was still depicted speaking Scottish English much closer to the stage Scottish of the past (cf. "Pixar was brave to keep the Accent" 2012: n.p.), new films such as *Snow White and the Huntsman* combined the

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[4] *How to train your dragon* (2010) and *Brave* (2012) are also part of this study

main character's physical attractiveness with a much heavier Scottish accent (cf. Cutler 2013: slide 21). In an interview, Craig Ferguson, a Scottish actor and voice actor for the movie *Brave*, said that he believes "people's ears are much more attuned to authenticity in accents now" (Craig Ferguson qtd. in Huver 2012: n.p.). Consequently, one might then assume that stage Scottish is merely Scottish English put on stage. Kelly Macdonald, however, immediately followed her colleague's comment saying "I'm Scottish and I've read things that have said I have a terrible Scottish accent. People don't know" (Kelly Macdonald qtd. in Huver 2012: n.p.). Her experience shows that even a native speaker's Scottish accent does not match the idea of Scottish English in the mind of the public. Stage Scottish therefore continues to exist as a rendition of the idea of Scottish English.

3.4. Foreign Accents in English

3.4.1. Hispanic English

"Vamanos! Let's go!" – A phrase most US American children will recognize immediately as Dora the Explorer's signature saying. According to de Casanova, Dora was only "the first in a recent wave of animated educational children's programs featuring Latino main characters and dialogue in Spanish" (de Casanova 2007: 456). De Casanova explains this relatively new large presence of Spanish in English-language US American television with the fact that white audiences will embrace (or at least tolerate) the use of Spanish dialogue" (de Casanova 2007: 460). As with English, Spanish spoken in the United States is very heterogeneous, with a variety of dialects and many variations of combining Spanish and English. "Place of birth, personal immigration history, community compositions, educational level, knowledge of other languages, socioeconomic status, and other factors account for this diversity in language use" (de Casanova 2007: 459). The Spanish presented in television programs such as Dora the Explorer depict only Standard Spanish lacking any regional markers or, in some cases, even Spanish with English pronunciation (cf. de Casanova 2007: 470). The result is a portrayal of the Spanish-speaking community as void of any diversity, resulting in a pan-Latino concept.

> In US English-language media the erasing of distinctions between Latinos is facilitated by the fact that Latino characters often speak accented English instead of (regionally specific or class-specific) Spanish. This separation of Spanish language from national origin or Latino subgroup membership allows for the social

construction of a Latino subject lacking historical, national, and linguistic specificity. (de Casanova 2007: 457)

The same holds true for a homogenized Spanish accent in English that shows no differentiation in speaker background or heritage. Besides the fact that the accent is often homogenized, Mastro and Behm-Morawitz found that compared to both black and white characters on US primetime television, Latinos were "significantly more likely […] to be depicted with an accent" (Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005:120). A heavy accent thus becomes part of the Latino stereotype. Another very prominent feature of the staged Latino dialect is code-switching: "a switch into a second […] language while conversing in one language" (de Casanova 2007: 460). Switching between Spanish and English is therefore also considered stereotypical for speakers of Hispanic English.

Charles Ramirez Berg (1990) also discusses Latino stereotypes, but most of the time speaks of "Hispanic stereotypes" thus including all those whose heritage leads back to Spanish roots as opposed to only those with Latino American heritage. He argues that there are six stereotypes most often assigned to Hispanic characters in films, noting that "[m]ost Hispanic characters in film and television have usually been one or another of these six types" but that in some cases multiple stereotypes are combined and in other cases the stereotypes are superficially altered (Ramirez Berg 1990: 294). The first stereotype he discusses is "El Bandito", a "Mexican bandit" who was a popular figure in many westerns (cf. Ramirez Berg 1990: 294). The bandit is described as "treacherous, shifty, and dishonest," "emotional, irrational, and usually violent" (Ramirez Berg 1990: 294). His female counterpart, "The Halfbreed Harlot", is lusty, hot-tempered, with the function "to provide as much sexual titillation as current censorship standard will permit" (Ramirez Berg 1990: 295). "The Male Buffoon" and "The Female Clown" are simple-minded characters who are meant to be funny because they fail to master "standard" English and childishly regress into emotionality (cf. Ramirez Berg 1990: 295). One of the most common stereotypes, however, is "The Latin Lover" marked by his "suavity and sensuality, tenderness and sexual danger" (Ramirez Berg 1990: 296). He, too, has a female equivalent, "The Dark Lady", who is "mysterious, virginal, inscrutable, aristocratic – and alluring precisely because of these characteristics. Her cool distance is what makes her so fascinating to Anglo males" (Ramirez Berg 1990: 296).

However, there are varieties of English with an influence of Spanish to varying degrees and are not the result of a native speaker of Spanish speaking English and therefore cannot be considered a Spanish-language foreign accent. It is necessary to keep this in mind when analyzing how Hispanic English is used in the films. Characters from Spanish-speaking countries who speak some form of Hispanic English can be assumed to have an accent due to the fact that they are not native speakers of English. Other characters might be depicted as born and raised in the United States and as speaking a variety of English with Spanish influence.

3.4.2. Slavic/Eastern European Accent

According to Wallace, the nationality-less, oversimplified combination of several cultures into one stereotype as discussed with the pan-Latino or even pan-Hispanic concept, the different countries, cultures, and languages of Eastern Europe and even parts of Asia have been subject to the same process with the result of a pan-Slavic/Eastern European stereotype (cf. Wallace 2008: 35). Using the example of the popular 2006 film *Borat*, Wallace states that "many Americans seem to believe they are hearing Kazakh when listening to the film, but the mix of languages is actually much more complex – and nonsensical" (Wallace 2008: 45). The supposed Kazakh is actually a mixture of Polish, Hebrew, Romanian slang, Armenian with words of other languages tossed in when their sound quality "sounds like it fits" meaning that they are used to satisfy the expectations an American audience might have of hearing a language from the Slavic region (Wallace 2008: 45-46). The written language presented is even less accurate, as it often is no more an assembly of seemingly random Cyrillic letters, or, as Wallace phrases it, "looks like a cat walked over a Cyrillic keyboard" (Wallace 2008: 45-46). The non-sense writing is then labeled with English subtitles (cf. Wallace 2008: 45-46) which lets the audience assume that what they are seeing is the actual written representation of a language.

The artificial homogeneity of the language itself is reflected in a seemingly uniform accent that all people of pan-Slavic heritage display when speaking English. In the mind of the western audience, the linguistic Slavic stereotype has since its conceptualization become linked to a behavioral stereotype: a kind of tribal and primal violence (cf. Wallace 2008: 43). Wallace notes that an altogether primitive quality is assigned to the stereotype (cf. Wallace 2008: 43) which can in some cases be a rather

negative image but might in other cases produce a positive romanticized nostalgia for "simpler" times.

3.4.3. Scandinavian Accent

Although Scandinavia consists of five separate countries, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, and Finland, and although Scandinavians have distinct cultural images for each country, "non-Scandinavians see them as a cultural unity" (Schaad 2008: 201). Putting all five countries into one category is an example of the aforementioned categorization and the thereby accompanied homogenization process. The stereotype of the archetypal Scandinavian is perpetuated through portrayals of characters in books, films, advertisements, television, and other media (cf. Schaad 2008: 201). Most commonly, Scandinavians are stereotyped as healthy, beautiful, blond, blue-eyed, strong, outdoorsy, and modern (cf. Schaad 2008: 221-222). Overall, Schaad says, Scandinavia, to Americans, represents something "exotic" and completely different from all that is familiar (cf. Schaad 2008: 207). With this expectation of a region so different from the United States comes the belief that Scandinavia is free of what Schaad calls "McDonaldization", the infatuation and saturation with American consumer products such as fast food chains or Hollywood movies (cf. Schaad 2008: 225). One might therefore say that Scandinavia is stereotypes as a romanticized version of "old Europe". Andersson and Hilson argue that Scandinavia is by many even imagined as a utopia that is modern on the one hand but untouched by all that is bad about America and globalization (cf. Andersson and Hilson 2009: 220). An important part of this imagined utopia is the fact that a " utopia is […] a place of the desirable, but also a place of the impossible" which shows why a certain way of thinking or way of life is possible in the utopian context, Scandinavia in this case, but impossible "in the specific time and place of the observer" (Andersson and Hilson 2009: 220-221). In other words, according to the stereotype of Scandinavia as a utopia, what is possible in Scandinavia in terms of how one lives and experiences life may not at all be possible in the United States.

4. Past Studies

One of the most comprehensive studies analyzing language varieties used in animated children's movies is Lippi-Green's 2010 study which included 38 full-length animated

feature films by the Walt Disney Company (Lippi-Green 2012: 101-129). The analysis built on an initial study (published in 1997) of 24 films and was extended to include all full-length, fully animated movies produced by Disney until 2009. After examining character role, motivation, and language variety, Lippi-Green found that

- 20 percent of native English speakers were portrayed as evil but 40 percent of non-native speakers were presented as "bad guys",
- 90 percent of all characters spoke an American or British variety of English,
- only 34 of the 91 characters (37 percent) that were in a role where they would not logically speak English were depicted with a foreign accent,
- All principle characters in a romantic lead were speakers of either *SAE or *RP.

In addition, Lippi-Green analyzed how speakers of AAE and English with a French accent were depicted in particular. She found that speakers of AAE were depicted

- in humanoid animal form rather than as humans,
- as unemployed and simple having no other life goal than to be happy and play music.

The consistent depiction of the (predominately the male) AAE speakers as unemployed simpletons, Lippi-Green argues, creates a negative stereotype that could have a detrimental influence on how children, who are exposed to this consistent, stereotype depiction, see speakers of AAE (cf. Lippi-Green 2012: 122-124)..

The way linguistic varieties are depicted in animated children's films by Disney, Lippi-Green concludes, supports "standard language ideology" which "proposes that an idealized nation-state has one perfect, homogenous language" and "becomes the means by which (1) discourse is seized, and (2) rationalizations for that seizure are constructed" (Lippi-Green 2012: 68). Although "non-standard" varieties were also part of Lippi-Green's analysis as well as of her discussion, her main focus was a comparison of characters depicted as native speakers of English and characters depicted with a foreign accent. This study will therefore also consider the individual "non-standard" varieties (as Lippi-Green did with AAE) in order to provide and analysis for the specifics representations thereof.

Anjali Pandey only analyzed two films, *The Jungle Book* and *The Lady and the Tramp* concluding that they give "a glimpse into the working of 'linguicism'" (7) which is used "to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnable-Kangas 1988: 13 qtd. in Pandey 2001: 7-8). In other

words, Pandey found a systematic discrimination of certain characters on the basis of their speech. One example of such "linguicism," according to Pandey, can be found in the division of the characters in *The Jungle Book* into the independent and smart characters of *SAE and the dumb-witted, codependent, and non-individual speakers of other varieties of English that can only exist as part of a mob (Pandey 2001: 6-7). This strongly suggests that the discrimination based on linguistic varieties builds on other forms of discrimination as for example racism, using pre-existing notions of prejudice and intolerance.

In a separate study, Daren Brabham examined the role of the character Donkey, voiced by Eddie Murphy, in the DreamWorks 2001 feature *Shrek*. Brabham writes that Donkey's "colloquial, black speech is coupled with traits of ignorance, cowardice, or slapstick comedy" leading to a connection of a social stereotype with a linguistic variety (Brabham 2006: 65). It is this idea that Donkey is made to fit stereotypical images of African Americans that occupies most of Brabham's analysis and he concludes that Donkey's speech is not only used to mark him as a "black other" but to underline his cultural and intellectual inferiority (cf. Brabham 2006: 65). These three studies do not sum up to a complete list of studies that have been conducted on the presence of sexist, racist, and classist depictions of characters in animated children's films. Thus far, Lippi-Green's study is the only more comprehensive study that has been done, however. As explained, her study is at first quite broad which allows her to make some more general conclusions about dialect use in animated children's films but her discussion is limited to the depiction of only a few particular speech varieties thus giving need for further study.

5. The Current Study

5.1. Corpus Selection

While Lippi-Green's research yielded interesting and significant results, the study now lies several years in the past and thus includes no films that were released after 2009. Since then, the wave of newly released Disney movies has in no way ebbed. Consequently the selection of films for this study included movies released after and during the year 2010. By looking at a group of recently released movies only, we allow

for the possibility of comparison with Lippi-Green's findings of older (or at least less recent) films.

As discussed, Lippi-Green's study considered only movies produced by Disney. While other studios certainly existed, there is no doubt that Disney held a sort of monopoly in the business of successful animated children's films for a long time. The list of most successful animated movies since (and including) 2010 shows clearly that Disney now has serious competitors. The top animated children's movies in terms of US gross income are produced most dominantly by DreamWorks Animation Studios and Walt Disney Animation Studios but Illumination Entertainment and Warner Animation Group also have a few highly successful movies (cf. "Top-US-Grossing Animation Titles" 2015: n.p.). Since the bulk is attributed to DreamWorks and Disney who therefore hold the largest share of the market and thus are most influential for children's impressionable minds, only their movies will be considered for this study.

To be selected as part of the corpus, the films had to (1) be full-length feature films; (2) be fully animated; (3) be produced by Disney Animated Studios or DreamWorks Animation Studios; and (4) have been released during or after the year 2010. From that list, the ten most successful movies were then chosen based on dollars grossed in the US. While many of the movies are highly successful on an international level as well, only US numbers were considered since the films are often voiced over in other languages or slightly altered if screened outside of the United States. Furthermore, the movies were selected based on dollars grossed because it implies that either a lot of people saw it or it was seen more than once by a portion of the audience and either way one can assume that those movies are most watched and therefore exert the biggest influence.

The length requirement for the selected films is based on a similar assumption: only full-length feature movies were considered because the sheer length of the film allows for a deeper establishment of its characters (cf. Fouts et al. 2006: 16). The result is "a greater sense of familiarity" with and "identification [of] the characters, thereby creating a situation in which the happenings, emotions, and potential lessons in a movie may have a greater impact on children" than short film clips or videos (Fouts et al. 2006: 16). Lastly the list was filtered to exclude any sequels. This ensured that the selection was not dominated by one particular movie, its sequels, and its characters thus allowing for a more diverse group of films and characters. Choosing ten different

films allowed me to draw conclusions that are likely more representative of animated children's films (since 2010) and are not simply based on one particular story and its characters. Spinoffs, on the other hand (for example *Puss in Boots*), were included in the list because they usually feature a very different set of characters than the original movie and thus add further to the study.

Considering all selection criteria mentioned above resulted in the following film corpus:

Movie Title	Production Studio	Year of Release	Gross US[5]
Frozen	Walt Disney Animation Studios	2013	$400,736,600 (IMBd)
Inside Out	Walt Disney Animation Studios	2015	$356,454,367 (IMBd)
Brave	Walt Disney (Pixar Animation Studios)	2012	$237,283,207 (IMBd)
Big Hero 6	Walt Disney Animation Studios	2014	$222,487,711 (IMBd)
How to Train Your Dragon	DreamWorks Animated Studios	2010	$217,581,231 (IMBd)
Tangled	Walt Disney Animation Studios	2010	$200,821,936 (IMBd)
Wreck-It Ralph	Walt Disney Animation Studios	2012	$189,412,677 (IMBd)
The Croods	DreamWorks Animation Studios	2013	$187,165,546 (IMBd)
Home	DreamWorks Animation Studios	2015	$168,792,497 (IMBd)
Puss in Boots	DreamWorks Animation Studios	2011	$149,234,747 (IMBd)

Table 7 - Corpus selection

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[5] All details regarding US gross box office income were taken from IMBd which is the website for the *International Movie Database.*

5.2. Methodology

5.2.1. Geographical and Temporal Setting

Following Lippi-Green's (2010) study, the films were put into one of three categories based on each film's setting. The categories used for by Lippi-Green were as follows: stories set in (1) English-speaking lands, (2) non-English-speaking countries, and (3) mythical kingdoms "where it would be difficult to make an argument for one language or another as primary" (Lippi-Green 2012: 116). For the purpose of this study, the last category was extended to include fictional (or science-fictional) worlds. Besides a geographic category, Lippi-Green also looked at the time period in which the story of each movie was set, but found no significant influence of the supposed time period on the linguistic varieties portrayed (cf. Lippi-Green 2012: 110). Furthermore, her categories to describe the time setting mixed with categories for geographical setting ("Displaced in time, outside the U.S.," "Mythical, fantastic or science fiction setting," and "Here and now" (Lippi-Green 2012: 110)) which made them difficult to assign. Three categories describing solely the time period for each film's setting were therefore created for this study. The films were marked as set in (1) the past, (2) the presence, or (3) the future.

5.2.2. Characters

For the actual linguistic analysis, the current study used Lippi-Green's methods as a base once again and every character was coded for the language variety used based on "a mix of phonetic transcription, quotes of typical syntactic structures, and marked lexical items" (Lippi-Green 2012: 113). If the voice actor was clearly contriving a dialect or an accent, the character was coded for the language variety which was most likely intended to be depicted. The aforementioned descriptions of the stage varieties of different accents and dialects were used as a reference to determine the variety. They did not, however, serve as an exclusive determiner for coding.

In addition to the language variety, characters were coded in terms of their role in the story. In order to prevent irrelevant data from skewing the results, only characters with spoken lines were analyzed and counted as part of the total amount of characters. Characters that simply appeared on screen but had no spoken lines were disregarded. Once qualified for the study, a character was marked as either "principle character" if the story revolved mainly around him or her and if his or her actions had a

significant influence on the plot. All other characters were marked as "minor characters."

In a second step, all characters were put into a category for moral status or motivation. Characters were either marked as (1) "protagonist" if they were the central hero or heroine of the story, (2) "good" if they were helping the protagonist, (3) "antagonist" if they were working against the hero or heroine, or (4) "neutral" if their intentions were unclear, they neither helped nor foiled the hero or heroine, or their part in the story was too marginal to determine any kind of motivation. In some cases, characters were depicted as "evil" which did not necessarily mean that they were antagonists, but rather depended on display of violence, accounts of having been violent or intentionally having done harm to others. Lastly, it is important to note that all language presented in song was disregarded for this study. This also means that characters that only had singing roles but no spoken lines were excluded from the study.

5.2.3. Analysis and Discussion Format

For the discussion of the language variation used by the different characters, Jane Hodson's *Dialect in Film & Literature* (2014) served as a guideline. Hodson did not represent the speaker's language variety in the transcription but instead "used standard spelling for all words, regardless of the pronunciation the actor uses" (Hodson 2014: xiii). For the discussion, she then picked out the linguistic features she wanted to highlight (Hodson 2014: xiii). The current study will follow the same steps, using standardized spelling for presenting spoken lines and then using the International Phonetic Alphabet to discuss specific features.

6. Analysis and Discussion

The corpus yielded 239 characters with speaking roles that were considered for the analysis of this study. Character who were depicted with a variety of English or a language that does not exist outside of the film(s) were put into the linguistic category "other" and then discussed individually if of interest.

6.1. Using Language Variety to Put the Story on the Map

As discussed, each movie was put into a category based on its geographical setting. The distribution was as shown in figure 2.
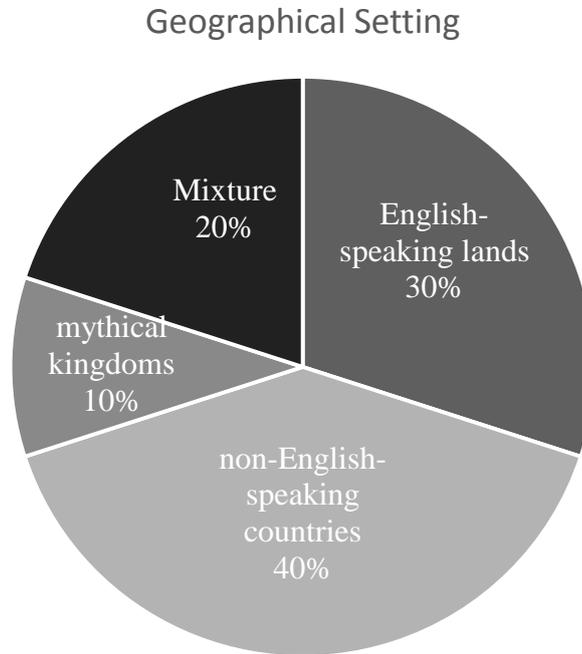
Geographical Setting

Figure 1

Stories set in non-English-speaking countries make up the largest single category 40 percent (four films). This is particularly interesting when comparing it to Lippi-Green's study, which showed that the majority (59 percent) of Disney films before 2010 were set in English-speaking places like the United States, Great Britain, or Australia and only 25 percent were set in non-English-speaking countries (Lippi-Green 2012: 116). Looking more closely, it is important to isolate the films produced by Disney in order to truly compare the current study to Lippi-Green's. Half of the Disney films took place in English-speaking countries (see figure 2). Nevertheless, the amount of Disney films set in English-speaking lands decreased between Lippi-Green's study of movies before 2010 and the current study of movies released since then.

Geographical Setting Disney
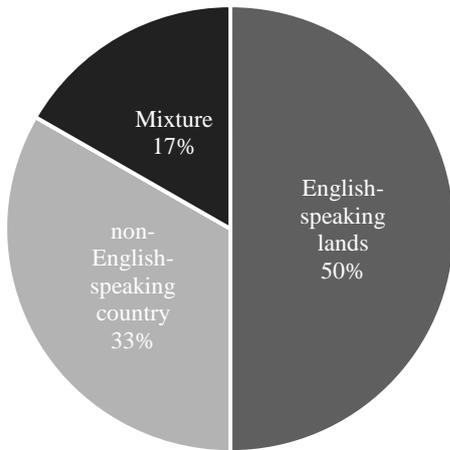
Figure 2

Geographical Setting DreamWorks
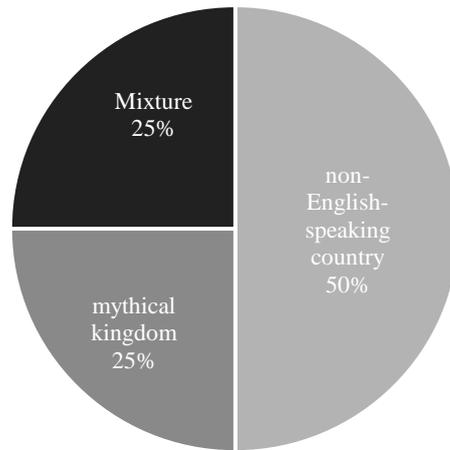
Figure 3

Geographical setting by itself, however, is relatively irrelevant for this study as it only becomes interesting when discussed in relation to the language varieties spoken by the characters. First, a quick overall look shows that despite the fact that only 30 percent of all films are set in an English-speaking country, 83 percent of all 239 characters are

Language Spoken in the Films - Broad Overview
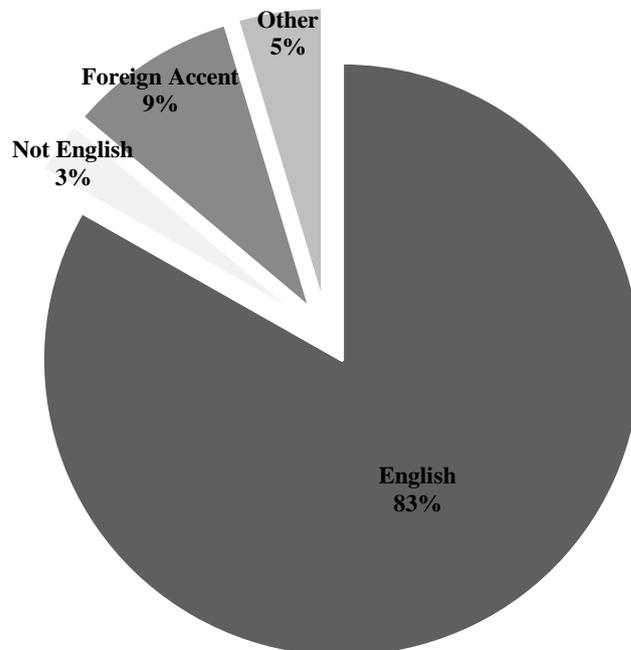
Figure 4

native speakers of English. Considering this limited use of foreign accents or

languages, it is interesting to take a closer look exactly how characters speaking with a foreign accent or speaking a language other than English are used. A total of 22 out of the 239 characters speak with a foreign accent and 19 of them are depicted in a non-English-Speaking setting. While the overall amount of characters depicted with a foreign accent is very low, the proportionate number depicted in a foreign setting is high. This can most likely be attributed to the producers' use of foreign accent to signal location as part of the long-standing theatrical tradition discussed in section 2.2. A closer discussion focusing on the portrayal of the individual foreign accents depicted in the films will follow in sections 6.3.1. – 6.3.3.

6.2. The Sound of Antagonism

Besides the question whether language is used to not only mark geographical location, there was a second important research motivation for this study. The study was conducted in order to find out whether there is a correlation between a character and his or her language variety which is repeatedly used for a similar character type. This would lead to the establishment of new or upholding of already existing stereotypes. For this purpose, the characters were characterized as being either a protagonist (the hero of the story), a good character (a character helping the protagonist), a neutral character (if they neither helped nor foiled the hero of the story), or an antagonist (a character deliberately trying to foil or harm characters in the protagonist group). Looking at the resulting groups in relation to the language varieties spoken, there seems to be little correlation. 69 percent of the characters are speakers of either *SAE or *RP, i.e. a "standard" variety of English. The remaining 31 percent of characters either speak a "non-standard" variety of American or British English, have a foreign accent, speak a language other than English, or speak English with linguistic features that are not associated with any variety of English (e.g. the aliens in Disney's *Home*, 2015). Exclusively regarding the category of antagonists, 26 percent speak something other than *SAE or *RP. This shows that there is only a minimal difference in the overall proportion of *SAE and *RP speakers compared to speakers of other varieties and the "standard"/"non-standard" distribution for the antagonist category.

The results show that what is much more interesting than a mere quantitative ratio of "standard" to "non-standard" speakers, is a consideration of protagonists' language varieties compared to their antagonists' language varieties. First, a comparison of the two groups shows that in six out of ten films, the main antagonist is

depicted with a language variety which is different from that of the protagonist. Important for any evaluation of this number is a note that two of the films, DreamWorks' *The Croods* (2013) and *How To Train Your Dragon* (2010), don't feature any speaking antagonists at all. It follows that six out of eight films with a story including speaking antagonists feature an antagonists who uses a different language variety than the protagonist. With a trend this defined, a strategy becomes evident according to which the juxtaposition of protagonist and antagonist, good and bad, is supported and made more obvious through choice of language variety. An example would be the witch in Disney's *Brave*, who speaks *RP and thus sounds very different from the protagonist, Merida, a speaker of Scottish English. Not only can the audience now use visual clues and plot development to identify the 'bad guy', but they can hear a clear difference as well. In DreamWorks' *Puss in Boots* (2011), Jack and Jill depicted as physically very unattractive and inherently evil because they enjoy killing and use violence on a regular basis in order to benefit themselves. Throughout the story, they work against Puss, the hero and protagonist. The fact that Puss is different from Jack and Jill, fighting on opposite sides, is reinforced by linguistic difference as well: Puss speaks with a Hispanic accent while Jack and Jill are speakers of Southern American English. Yet another example is Ralph (*Wreck-It Ralph*, Disney, 2012), a speaker of *SAE, whose antagonist, King Candy, is linguistically differentiated as he is portrayed with a lisp. Filmmakers use linguistic variety not only to paint a character by itself but in relation to other characters of the story.

The concept of using different linguistic varieties to clearly distinguish between the protagonist(s) and the antagonist(s) of a story is further supported by a story in which the main antagonist is not revealed as such until the end. The Duke of Weselton is altogether an unfriendly and extremely selfish character who seems to pose the biggest threat to Queen Elsa and her sister in *Frozen* (Disney, 2013). The power-hungry and strange character speaks an approximate of *RP which distinguishes him from the royal sisters, both of whom speak *SAE. Unlike the duke, Prince Hans of the Southern Isles appears helpful and caring. The fact that Hans is not marked with a different dialect than the protagonists saves the big surprise until the end when he turns out to be just as power-hungry and actually evil. Hans is from a different kingdom outside of Arendelle, the home of the two main characters, and it would have only been logical that he speaks a different language variety especially since all other guests from

37

outside the kingdom do speak something other than *SAE. The filmmakers deliberately chose to make Hans a speaker of *SAE, however. The revelation of Hans' true intentions was undoubtedly meant to be shocking and unexpected; the fact that the filmmakers assigned him a *SAE dialect might be explained by the idea that any other language variety would have sparked suspicion. This shows that accent and dialect are not only tools filmmakers use to mark location but also to mark a character as belonging or not belonging to the same group as the hero of the story.

Lippi-Green found a similar tendency of using accent in order to mark characters as evil. Instead of looking at different dialects and accents, Lippi-Green focused on characters with a foreign accent and found that Disney depicted 40 percent of characters with a foreign accent as evil, which significantly differed from the 20 percent of native speakers marked as evil[6] (cf. Lippi-Green 2012: 117). Considering these findings of Disney films before 2010, it is all the more interesting that there were no antagonists with foreign accents in the film corpus of the current study at all. Not one film featured an antagonist with a foreign accent. As discussed above, this is not due to an absence of characters who speak English with a foreign accent. While it cannot be said that the portrayal of English speakers with foreign accents is necessarily positive, the ten films included in this study do not make an association between antagonism and foreign accent.

The question whether antagonism "sounds" different in recent animated children's films can thus be answered with "yes". In 75 percent of the films featuring a speaking antagonist, the antagonist speaks a variety of English different from the variety the protagonist speaks. Androutsopoulos claims that linguistic variety is used to create a stark contrast between the protagonist and other characters (especially if the contrast is to be enhanced), as discussed in section 2.2. Having found that both Disney and DreamWorks producers make use of linguistic varieties to separate protagonists from their antagonists, this study supports this claim. In addition, however, Androutsopoulos argued that the protagonist is typically depicted as a speaker of a "standard" variety while characters to whom he or she stands in contrast are given "non-standard" dialects (cf. Androutsopoulos 2012: 148). This particular pattern could

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[6] While Lippi-Green describes her coding methods for the linguistic varieties presented in her film corpus, she fails to explain which criteria were used to say that a character was either good or evil. Especially the group of evil characters must thus be seen with some caution as the selection criteria might be nothing more than the analysts' personal judgement. It follows that such wariness must be taken for any comparisons as well.

not be confirmed for the majority of films in this study. Similarly, could the tradition of using foreign accent to mark antagonism no longer be found in the current film corpus and it would be interesting to investigate exactly how this break in tradition came to be. Unfortunately, such an investigation goes beyond the means of the current study. For now, the question remains that if not with foreign accents, how are the antagonists portrayed and how are characters speaking specific varieties of English depicted?

6.2.1. *RP and the Legacy of the "British Villain"

A simple quantitative analysis showed that the antagonist category is not marked more heavily with "non-standard" varieties than the category of protagonists and neutral characters. A closer examination of the antagonist category reveals that after speakers of *SAE (the majority with 61 percent), speakers of *RP make up the second largest group of antagonists. Three characters in the antagonists category speak *RP which might seem like an insignificant number at first but is highly interesting when looking at the group of *RP speakers overall. This section will focus on a more thorough discussion of the depiction of the "British Evil".

As discussed, some people, including *The Guardian* columnist Arwa Mahdawi, believe that the evil Brit character is being replaced. Finding that 42 percent of *RP speakers are depicted as evil or antagonistic compared to only nine percent of *SAE speakers who are depicted as such, the results of this study do not support any such claim. Three films depict an evil or antagonistic character who speaks an approximate of *RP. Mother Gothel in Disney's *Tangled* (2010) and the Duke of Weselton in Disney's *Frozen* (2013) are depicted as classic bad guys who only look out for themselves and take advantage of others. Both are obsessed with power, confirming, at least in part, the depiction of *RP speakers as put forward by the Jaguar commercial. The third character, the witch in Disney's *Brave* (2012), is not inherently evil but she is selfish enough to leave Merida stuck with the spell gone wrong because she had made other plans. All three show no remorse for having hurt others thus showing that they see nothing wrong with being bad. Their contentment for having come up with evil plans shows that they, just like the Jaguar villains, even enjoy being evil. Hence, the way in which the three characters are presented draws on the "British villain stereotype" and therefore further perpetuates it.

As speakers of *RP, all three characters are linguistically distinguishable from the hero or heroine of the story which might point to Wicks' theory that a British accent is a practical tool to represent the foreign, the other, without confusing an American audience (Wicks 2010: n.p.). This is further supported by the appearance of three citizens of Arendelle, the fictional kingdom of *Frozen* (Disney, 2013), speaking *RP. Set in Norway (or a fictional magical version thereof), the filmmakers could have used Norwegian accents for the characters. Instead, they chose to give the crowd British accents in order to show that the story takes place outside of the United States, in a foreign land. Giving the characters a British accent is not a logical choice in regards to the story and its setting but a means to easily geographically displace the story in the mind of the audience. The setting of Norway is marked visually and through references to some cultural stereotypes but linguistically the characters are marked as Norwegian, as non-American, with *RP, which seems to be the stand-in for all foreign varieties.

Interestingly, all movies portraying villains or antagonists with an *RP dialect as well as the use of *RP to mark "foreignness" are produced by Disney. Of all DreamWorks characters in the film corpus, only one is depicted as a speaker of *RP: Heathcliff, the Butler (*Big Hero 6*, 2014). Heathcliff also embodies some of the stereotypical features presented in the Jaguar commercial. He most definitely has a "certain style" as he is always well-kempt, dressed meticulously in a tuxedo. His "stiff upper lip" helps him remain calm even in dangerous situations. Despite all that, Heathcliff is not a villain but helps the protagonist and his friends. Since Heathcliff is a rather minor character with little screen time, the filmmakers use the British accent to quickly establish his character, a tactic discussed in section 2.2. Building on already existing character stereotypes associated with speakers of *RP, the filmmakers avoid lengthy introductions and the need for background information.

The *RP speaker of DreamWorks is portrayed with the cool, suave characteristics the Jaguar villains list, while the Disney *RP speakers only possess the negative qualities (obsession with power and the enjoyment of being evil). Just as this study's findings do not support the claim that the portrayal of *RP speakers as villains is disappearing from the Hollywood screen, it cannot exclude the possibility that a more positive image of the *RP speaker (as seen in the portrayal of Heathcliff) could be emerging simultaneously. What can be said is that Disney depicts 50 percent of it's *RP speakers as villainous or antagonistic, a significant amount. The other 50 percent

of Disney *RP speakers are used by the filmmakers to depict the characters as foreign. Whether negative, positive, or simply foreign, the image of the *RP speaker as portrayed through the films clearly serves a specific purpose: it differentiates them from other characters (who are not speakers of *RP).

In case of the upholding of the "evil" stereotype, the concept of "demonizing" as discussed in Fouts et al. might apply. According to Fouts et al., demonizing is

> [t]he attribution of "evil" onto a person engaging in harm doing or "bad" behavior
> […] regardless of whether harm doers are, in fact, truly "evil". (Fouts et al 2006: 15)

In the context of the Hollywood trend of using British actors to play the villains, the films in this study might further aid such attribution of "evil" onto speakers of *RP in the mind of the American audience. The demonizing of a speaker of *RP on screen (by the filmmakers) could then lead to a continuation of such demonizing into the world outside of the film (by the audience). Fouts et al. state that "[t]he tendency to demonize results, in part, from the activation of evilness schema when exposed to particular cues such as through observing stereotypes of evil persons" (Fouts et al. 2006: 15). The repeated presentation of the "evil Brit" stereotype on screen might lead to such evilness schemas in the imagination of the viewers which in turn may set the process of demonizing speakers of *RP in motion.

6.2.2. Speech Impairments as a Marker of Linguistic and Social 'Disorder'

Out of the 239 characters only two have a speech impairment, more specifically a lisp. Jangles the Clown from *Inside Out* (Disney, 2015) and King Candy/Turbo from *Wreck-It Ralph* (Disney, 2012) are both native speakers of English with a lisp. The fact that the two characters have a speech impediment alone would not be worth mentioning if it were not for the particular way in which they are depicted. King Candy/Turbo is the main antagonist of the story; Jangles is a representation of Riley's fear of clowns and, while not a true antagonist, is considered bad and scary by the protagonist of the story. Although the characters occupy different roles, their physical appearances bear certain similarities. Jangles is, as one might suspect, portrayed with typical clown features: a big red nose, curly, blue hair, and floppy shoes. His eyes are vivid green and he carries an oversized mallet. King Candy is first depicted as a small king with a large bow-tie and a large, red nose. Although he is depicted as human, his features make him look clownish as well. When his disguise falls away and reveals

him as Turbo, his eyes are shown gleaming green-yellow and his face appears distorted by a grimaced smile. What makes both characters appear uncanny and perhaps un-human is not the fact that they have curly blue hair or floppy shoes; it is rather that the representation of both Jangels and King Candy/Turbo does not conform to our standards, our expectations. A very large, red nose, gleaming eyes in neon colors, and oversized accessories do not obey the accepted conventions of how a person should look. The clowns' physical appearances disturb the order on which these conventions for human looks are built. They are a threat to said order as they are, in a way, disorder.

The depiction of the only characters who speak with a lisp as representations of something which does not conform to western norms, labels the language impairment as something all-together "other" and perhaps even non-human. The characters are both physically and linguistically, visually and aurally, "other" because neither their appearance nor their speech fit the western standards. The speech impairment is used as a tool to make the already strange even more so. Such labeling could have detrimental impact on the way the audience perceives people with language impairments in other parts of their lives as well. Especially children, who are prone to exhibit microaggressions, might readily adopt this view of people with speech impediments as negative "others". The films are a reflection of society's animosity toward all those who do not subscribe to its norms. Seeing that these films help shape the way in which the audience, especially children, perceive the world, they can at the same time be considered shapers of culture. The films therefore not only reflect the negative attitudes toward people with speech impediments but broadcast and perpetuate them.

6.3. Foreign Accents that Sound So Familiar

Although the film corpus showed no antagonists with foreign accents, both Disney and DreamWorks make use of foreign accents to signal that the story takes place outside of the United States or to paint a character a certain way. Exactly how individual foreign accents are portrayed will be the focus of the following sections.

6.3.1. The Scandalous Scandinavian

One example of using accent to mark the geographical setting of a story can be found in the character Oaken from Disney's *Frozen* (2013). The story is set in the kingdom of Arendelle, a fictional monarchy located in the fjords of Norway. While the characters

should naturally speak Norwegian, or, since the story takes place in the past, some older form of Norwegian, all main characters speak *SAE. Oaken, the owner of "Wandering Oaken's Trading Post and Sauna," is the only character depicted with a heavy Scandinavian accent. The most noticeable feature is the tag *yah* he adds to statements and questions, marking even a sentence that otherwise follows English grammar rules, as clearly not *SAE or *RP. One example of Oaken's use of *yah* is given below.

Oaken: Just the outfit and the boots, yah? (*Frozen*, 00:38:34)

Furthermore, the fact that Oaken is not a native speaker of English is also shown through his use of a limited vocabulary that forces him to describe things rather than say them with the appropriate words:

Oaken: I will add a quart of lutefisk so we have good feelings. (*Frozen*, 00:38:29)

He uses the term "to have good feelings" instead of simply saying "to be happy" which shows that he lacks the appropriate English vocabulary to say what he means to. This is made even more obvious in his use of the word "lutefisk." He uses the Norwegian term for the traditional Scandinavian lye fish, which simultaneously marks him as a non-native speaker of English and as Scandinavian.

While Oaken's Scandinavian accent certainly serves as a marker of locality, it also means that it marks him as inherently Scandinavian. The other characters are merely marked as Scandinavian by the context in which they find themselves (they are residents of the kingdom of Arendelle). Oaken, with his heavy accent, is not as dependent on his context, to be recognizable as Scandinavian. When examined by himself, he could therefore be taken as representative of Scandinavian culture. This image of Oaken as *the* archetypal Scandinavian is aided by an assembly of other stereotypes: his knitted sweater with traditional Norwegian designs, his blond hair and blue eyes, his overly friendly communication, the fact that he owns a sauna, and his strong, tall build. But while Oaken's physical appearance is certainly overdone, it is a two second cut to his family in the sauna that solicits the most discussion. Oaken's family depicted in the sauna consists of four children and a man. The children are never explicitly said to be Oaken's and there is no commentary labeling the relationship of the two men but Oaken does refer to them as his family. Nevertheless, the scene does suggest that Oaken is homosexual and is happily raising four children

with his partner. This is especially interesting considering that *Frozen* was released in November of 2013, just a few short months after an important ruling of the United States Supreme Court on same-sex marriage[7] and in the midst of a heated debate about same-sex parenting. Oaken, his family, and his possible homosexuality were widely discussed on social media, earning the film comments such as "the Most Progressive Disney Movie Ever" (Luttrell 2014: n.p.) and "Frozen: Disney's Icebreaker – How the 'House of Mouse' and the box office-busting Frozen put gay rights and feminism back on the agenda" ("Frozen: Disney's Icebreaker" 2014: n.p.). There is no doubt that including a gay character in a Disney film is big step for the company, but the way in which the character is portrayed is crucial in order to determine whether the decision was in fact as progressive as some claim. As discussed, Oaken is the only character in the entire movie featured with a Scandinavian accent. Just on a linguistic basis alone, he is clearly "othered", which is further supported by his living space far out in the mountains, away from the castle and away from civilization. Consequently, if Oaken is interpreted as Disney's first gay character and gay parent, then the message is anything but positive: a gay lifestyle and same-sex parenting are possible only on the outskirts of society, isolated from civilization and all those involved are inherently different and "other" as demonstrated by their obvious and clearly marked difference in speech.

By including a character like Oaken, Disney automatically becomes part of the public negotiation of the view on same-sex relationships/marriage and same-sex parenting. As discussed, Oaken is presented as inherently different from all other characters of the movie which in itself is an important comment on him as a character and on his way of life. At the same time, his heavy Scandinavian accent marks him as very Scandinavian. If now read in the context of the stereotype of Scandinavia as modern but also utopian, Oaken's depiction signals to the American viewer that same-sex marriage is okay, but only in modern countries like Norway. Children are almost definitely unaware of such stereotypes and for them such an interpretation is quite possibly out of the question. Nevertheless, the message of "othering" same-sex parenting and ostracizing it to a rural area might lead children to adopt this view of

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[7] On June 26, 2013, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in favor of same-sex marriage (and same-sex parenting) in the case *Dennis Hollingsworth, et al., Petinioners v. Kristin M. Perry, et al.*. For further detail see Dennis Hollingsworth, et al., Petinioners v. Kristin M. Perry, et al.. 570 U.S. ___(2013). No. 12-144. Supreme Court of the United States. (June 26, 2013). Supreme Court of the United States – Opinions. Web. 10 Mar. 2013.

same-sex parenting as something that does happen but should be regarded as complete "other" and which needs to be removed from the center of society.

6.3.2. The "Latin Lover" Conquers Hearts, and Spain

Looking at the 22 characters who are depicted with a foreign accent, an uneven distribution quickly becomes obvious. 19 of the 22 characters speak with a Hispanic accent of some sort. Here it is important to note that 16 characters are part of DreamWorks' *Puss in Boots* (2011) which is set in Spain and they most likely serve as a marker of locality. The three remaining characters appear in the movies *Big Hero 6* (Disney, 2014), *Inside Out* (2015), and *Frozen* (Disney, 2013). Four out of the ten films analyzed as part of this study therefore depict characters with a Hispanic accent, making it the most frequently depicted foreign accent – both, by number of characters depicted and by number of films depicting characters speaking it.

About 15.1 percent of the total population of the United States today is Hispanic[8] (cf. "People and Society: United States": n.p.). Keeping in mind the idea that to an American audience, Hispanic accents are very familiar and largely associated with people living in the United States, the use of the Hispanic accent in the movie *Puss in Boots* is particularly interesting. As mentioned, the movie is set in Spain which means that it is not surprising to see a Spanish accent used in order to paint character and setting. This, however, is just where it gets interesting. The Spanish accent used in the movie is spiced with words that are part of Latin American culture such as *Chupacabra*. The Latin American fable monster is mentioned over and over with complete disregard for cultural incongrinuity. Spanish and Latin American features are simply mixed to create a pan-Hispanic concept. This grouping together of different nationalities and cultures is additionally supported visually when the characters venture through a vast dessert with large cliffs of red stone which resemble parts of Mexico and the Southwestern United States, but not Spain. The erasing of nationalities and cultural differences is an example of the aforementioned artificial homogenization which is part of the process of stereotyping.

The main character of the story, Puss in Boots, is depicted with a heavy Hispanic accent. Puss introduces himself to the audience as a "bad kitty" and as a

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[8] "[T]he US Census Bureau considers Hispanic to mean persons of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin including those of Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican Republic, Spanish, and Central or South American origin living in the US who may be of any race or ethnic group (white, black, Asian, etc.)" (CIA World Factbook, "People and Society: United States").

"furry lover". With his well-practiced charm and his many sexual partners, Puss easily fits Ramirez Berg's stereotype of the "Latin Lover" as well as "El Bandito". He is no beginner when it comes to seduction but quickly dismisses his female companions once the night is over which becomes clear in the very beginning when he confuses the name of his nightly companion with that of another. At the very end of the movie, Puss even declares himself a "Latin Lover" thus re-establishing and further perpetuating stereotype:

> Puss: This is the story of a cat who became a hero, an outlaw dedicated to justice, and a lover of beautiful women. A great, great lover…really, it is crazy! (*Puss in Boots*, 01:19:16)

While Puss is only one of 16 characters in the film speaking with a Hispanic accent, one could argue that his depiction as the "Latin Lover"/ "El Bandito" stereotype has nonetheless impact on an overall image of this speaker group for the audience because he is the main character, the hero, of the story. The connection between the Hispanic accent and the "Latin Lover"/ "El Bandito" stereotype is further strengthened by the fact that Puss' female counterpart, Kitty Softpaws, is portrayed as the female version of the same stereotype, a mixture of the "Dark Lady" and the "Halfbreed Harlot", as described by Ramirez Berg. She, too, is depicted with a heavy Hispanic accent. While other minor characters of the film speak with a Hispanic accent as well, Puss and Kitty are the only main characters who do so and it follows that their depiction deserves particular attention.

The representation of speakers of English with a heavy Hispanic accent as "Latin Lovers" is further supported when a Brazilian helicopter pilot appears in the movie *Inside Out* (Disney, 2015). The character is the "tall, dark, and handsome"-type and is shown to the audience as part of a memory played back in Riley's mom's head. The all-female crew of feeling control officers sigh and giggle at the sound of the pilot's voice and accent. Crucial to the depiction of the helicopter pilot is the juxtaposition with the character of Riley's father. It is only when Riley's mom gets frustrated with her husband that she thinks back to her adventures with the Brazilian. As a result, the two men stand in stark contrast to one another: Riley's dad as white, safe, slightly boring but responsible and the helicopter pilot as non-white, exciting, sexual, intriguing but irresponsible. And not only are the two men inherently different from one another, they also sound different. While Riley's dad, the loyal and responsible husband, speaks *SAE, the helicopter pilot, the "Latin Lover", is clearly

marked with a Hispanic accent. By contrasting the two, the helicopter pilot is portrayed as clearly not white and *SAE-speaking thus labeling him (and other speakers of Hispanic English) as not part of the "standard" and therefore dominant group of society.

Examining the portrayal of the accent itself, a few aspects stand out. As pointed out by de Casanova as a stereotypical feature of Hispanic English, frequent code switching can be found in the speech of characters in the current film corpus. In the first five minutes of the film, Puss code switches several times:

> Puss (ordering a drink at a bar): One leche, please! (*Puss in Boots*, 00:04:03)
>
> Puss (speaking to the other guests in the bar): I am but a humble gato in search of his next meal. (*Puss in Boots*, 00:04:44)

In both cases, Puss uses a Spanish word in the middle of an English sentence and, interestingly, neither *leche* nor *gato* are translated for the audience. This might point to two things: first, an American audience is assumed to have knowledge of at least some basic Spanish words, or second, it might be evidence of de Casanova's claim that "white audiences will embrace (or at least tolerate) the use of Spanish dialogue" (de Casanova 2007: 460) as discussed in section 4.2.3. It might, of course, be both at the same time. While the two above-mentioned examples only included single words, Puss later speaks a full sentence in Spanish for which, again, no translation is given:

> Puss: No hablo inglés. (*Puss in Boots*, 00:10:06)

According to Fleck, the use of foreign languages on stage dates back to times even before Shakespeare; he says that short phrases, although they might surpass a literal understanding by the English-speaking audience, serve their purpose if the sense is conveyed through context and inflection (cf. Fleck 2007: 208). Without sacrificing audience comprehension and thereby risking frustration, the filmmakers can use bits of Spanish in order to enhance a characters Hispanic accent.

A drastically different example is seen in the character Honey Lemon from Disney's *Big Hero 6* (2014). In an interview, US American actress Genesis Rodriguez, who gave Honey Lemon her voice, describes the character as "100 percent Latina" ("BIG HERO 6: Interview with Genesis Rodriguez", 00:02:20). When asked why Honey Lemon pronounces the main character's name Hiro with a trilled /r/-sound, Rodriguez said they chose to give Honey Lemon a Spanish accent when pronouncing Hiro's name because "it's more endearing to her to say it in Spanish" ("BIG HERO 6:

Interview with Genesis Rodriguez", 00:02:31) explaining further that "sometimes you express yourself in different languages when you want to emote things and that was definitely something we were trying to figure out, how we were going to portray her as Latina" ("BIG HERO 6: Interview with Genesis Rodriguez", 00:02:35). Interestingly, Honey Lemon only speaks with a Hispanic accent in one instance other than the pronunciation of the main character's name. When clearly excited, she tells her friends to take a group picture saying "Foto! Foto!" [fʊtʊ! fʊtʊ!] (*Big Hero 6*, 00:16:17). Rodriguez's claim that Honey Lemon uses a different language to emote herself seems weak considering that there are far more emotional situations throughout the film, in all of which the character speaks *SAE. In the interview, Rodriguez suggests that she and the filmmakers tried to show just how Latina Honey Lemon is but, at least linguistically, there is little trace of it in the actual film. It is difficult to say why so few linguistic markers were chosen to depict the character as Latina but the dissonance between Rodriguez's th*r*ough and through Latina Honey Lemon and the *SAE speaker with a few quirky features on screen remains interesting.

One possible answer might be Honey Lemon's age. While all the other characters with Hispanic accents are adults of at least 30, Honey Lemon is the only character that is depicted as a young college student putting her age between 18 and 21. She is therefore by far the youngest character depicted with a Hispanic accent. To children whose main exposure to Latinas and Latinos is through media, depictions such as Honey Lemon might as a result presume that younger speakers from the Hispanic community do not use marked dialect features but that older speakers do. In any case, Honey Lemon is only one out of 22 characters and therefore is not representative how the majority of speakers with a Hispanic accent are portrayed. For the majority of characters depicted with a Hispanic accent Mastro and Behm-Morawitz's claim that Hispanic characters are stereotyped as having a heavy accent (cf. Mastro and Behm-Morawitz 2005: 129), as described in section 3.4., holds true.

6.3.3. The Pan-Slavic, Pan-"Bad Guy"

Only one out of the 239 characters speaks with an Eastern European accent but the instance nevertheless gives reason for discussion. In Disney's *Wreck-It* Ralph (2012) the main character, Ralph, attends a 'bad guys' anonymous ("Bad-Anon") meeting

where he meets Zangief, an Eastern European wrestler who declares with heavily accented English that he had an epiphany when starting to question his evil doings.

> Zangief: I am Zangief, I am bad guy. I relate to you, Ralph. When I hit bottom, I was crushing man's skull like sparrow egg between my thighs. And I think, why do you have to be so bad, Zangief? Why can't you be more like good guy? Then I have moment of clarity: If Zangief is good guy, who will crush man's skull like sparrow's egg between thighs? (*Wreck-It Ralph*, 00:04:32)

Zangief is the only member of Bad-Anon who is clearly marked as violent and, worse, as a murderer. Although he is merely trying to help Ralph, he is clearly defined as "bad" or "evil" because an audience can be assumed to be acquainted with societal norms according to which murder is unlawful. For the purposes of this paper, he was nevertheless labeled as "neutral" because his actions neither help nor foil Ralph. Even more interesting than his confession of having killed at least once is Zangief's belief that it is impossible for him to be good. Being bad is his fate, his role in society, and it is his duty to continue being bad. Consequently, Zangief's "evilness" is not presented as a choice but as an inherent obligation.

Considering now Wallace's (2008) discussion of the pan-Slavic stereotype of violent and primitive behavior, Zangief is its perfect incarnation. Before the audience learns anything about Zangief's actions, intentions, or morals, his accent marks him as foreign, more specifically, as Eastern European/Slavic. Although he is not displaying any violence at that moment, he caters to the "violent Slavic" stereotype when he talks about his violent behavior. The fact that he not only killed the man but did so by crushing his skull with his thighs implies a kind of primitive nature, a raw and animalistic behavior.

Zangief is of course only a single character and consequently one cannot speak of a cumulative effect concerning the representation of this particular accent and speakers thereof in the film corpus. Nevertheless, if seen in the context of the already existing concept of the "primitive and violent Slav," Zangief is one character in a whole tradition of similar ones. He is a continuation, a perpetuation of said stereotype. One could argue that the audience might not be familiar with the already existing stereotype because of their young age and unfamiliarity with other film genres. In such a case, Zangief's depiction nevertheless could have great impact on audience perception because his unique behavior might be associated with his unique way of speaking. Since he is the only speaker with an Eastern European/Slavic accent, no

counter examples are presented in this corpus that might break or interrupt the association.

6.4. Depicting Native Speakers of "Non-Standard" English

The goal of this study was not only to analyze how characters depicted with foreign accents are portrayed but also to take a closer look at the depiction of characters speaking "non-standard" (here meaning not *SAE and not *RP) varieties of English. The following sections discuss how specific speech communities and their varieties of English are depicted in the ten selected animated children's films.

6.4.1. Scottish English – Vikings, Scotsmen, and a *Brave* Princess

Two films feature characters speaking Scottish English. The first, *Brave* (Disney, 2012), is set in the Highlands of medieval Scotland and the fact that 13 out of 14 characters speak with a Scottish accent can be attributed to the practice of using language variety to mark place. Twelve out of the 13 characters speaking with a Scottish accent can be labeled as speakers of modern Scottish without any regional markers. While most voice actors cast for the film are actually Scottish-born and the Scottish English spoken in the film thus is most likely fairly accurate, the filmmakers did make sure to only use Scottish English features to a degree that would still let American audience understand the characters without effort. Specific lexical features, for example, are limited to a vast amount of *wee*s and *lad*s and a few other Scottish vocabulary words sprinkled in here and there. Phonologically, the audience gets exactly what they expect to hear: trilled [r], /ɪ/ sounds like /ɛ/, /ay/ is pronounced /ɑː/, the vowels /o/ and /u/ are stretched and lengthened, and so on. An example is given below:

> Merida: It's just my bow! (*Brave*, 00:09:47)

Spoken by Merida, the heroine of the story and speaker of Scottish English, the sentence is a good example of the specific vowel pronunciations as it sounds like [ɛts ʤʌst mɑː buː].

One character, however, calls for a more careful analysis: MacGuffin Junior. The eldest son of the MacGuffin clan comes to Dunbroch Castle along with the eldest sons of the clans Macintosh and Dingwall in order to compete for the hand of the first-born Dunbroch, Merida, the heroine of the story. MacGuffin Junior stands out even before the competition begins: his heavy Doric accent makes him impossible to understand, for the audience as well as for all other characters of the story. Whenever

he talks the other characters pause in confusion then ignore him and pretend that nothing was said at all. Such reactions diminish the importance given to his words and thereby to him as a person as well. This is supported further by his performance in the competition. Merida chooses archery as the discipline which will determine the competition's winner, thereby giving it grave importance. None of the competitors are particularly good archers but the vain Macintosh Junior hits the target close to the middle and the dumbly Dingwall Junior hits it dead-center, if only out of luck. MacGuffin Junior, on the other hand, does not even hit the target with his arrow at all which makes him the worst of the three, not only at archery but also in the competitions for the heroine's hand in marriage. Even the conceited guy with anger management problems and the unintelligent, very unattractive guy are depicted as more suitable than the character who talks differently. The heavy regional Scottish dialect, the Doric dialect, hence is depicted as ridiculous and incomprehensible with its speakers being unable to communicate and undesirable. It could be argued that the audience would most likely not recognize MacGuffin's dialect as Doric which means that the depiction thereof can be taken as representative for all regional Scottish, maybe even British, dialects that deviate significantly from modern Scottish English or even from *RP pronunciation.

The second film in the corpus featuring Scottish English is *How to Train Your Dragon* (DreamWorks, 2010). Of the 13 characters in the story, six are speakers of *SAE and seven speak Scottish English. Interestingly, this division of dialect is accompanied by a division in age: on Berk, a fictional island settled by Vikings and the setting of the story, all adults speak Scottish English while all children, or teenagers rather, speak *SAE. The adults see the dragons that frequently come to the island to steal food as threatening monsters that need to be killed but the children quickly recognize that the dragons are simply trying to defend themselves and are in fact friendly. The linguistic difference of the two group helps emphasize the generational divide in the way they think. It is unlikely, however, that this is the sole reason for which the filmmakers chose to differentiate the characters linguistically. Since the film was produced in Hollywood, the filmmakers might have attempted to make the characters of Hiccup and his friends more relatable for their audience, US American children. The question remains, however, why the filmmakers chose to give the adult characters a Scottish accent at all. For Vikings, a Scottish accent is not the most logical,

or historically accurate, choice. And yet, Stoick the Vast, Gobber the Belch, and Phlegma the Fierce along with the other adults living on Berk are speakers of Scottish English. According to Cutler's discussion, Vikings with Scottish accents are the product of second order indexicality (cf. Cutler 2013: slide 13). The Vikings might therefore have been assigned Scottish accents not because they are supposed to be Scottish but because they are strong, fearless, rough warriors and the filmmakers believe that a Scottish accent signals just that. This second order indexicality is in its function an already existing stereotype which is connected not to Scotland or Scots but to speakers of Scottish English.

Overall, all speakers of modern Scottish English are depicted positively in the two films. Noteworthy, still, is the fact that in both films they are depicted as positive, yes, but in a romanticized context of simpler times. No speakers of Scottish English occur in any of the films set in the present or in the future, but only in the past. And in both cases, the culture of the speakers is rough with lots of fist fights and crass humor. *Brave* has its characters wearing kilts and playing the bagpipes just as Görlach describes. The brave and tough Vikings in *How to Train Your Dragon* as well as the clansmen in *Brave* are funny and nice but are also depicted as "ugly, sloppy, and uneducated," characteristics Cutler found in Shrek, an ogre speaking Scottish English, featured in the DreamWorks Animation film *Shrek* (2001). Cutler assigned these barbaric characteristics to past depictions of Scottish English speakers, saying that a new stereotype of the smart and attractive Scot was taking over the screen (cf. Cutler 2013: slide 24). The current study shows that the rustic, rural Scot is by no means an image of the past as it is still well alive, at least in animated children's films.

Nevertheless, the cool, smart, and less unsophisticated image, which Cutler describes as the new depiction of Scottish English speakers, seems to be emerging simultaneously. Merida and her mother, Queen Elinor, are depicted as speakers of Scottish English which means that, linguistically speaking, they are part of the same community as the clansmen. As opposed to the mal-behaved men, the two women are smart, strong, and physically attractive, passively running the kingdom by influencing the men's decisions. The new prestige status Cutler claims is assigned to Scottish English can thus be found represented through the two female characters. As this study showed, Scottish English is assigned predominantly to male speakers and interestingly, is used differently when assigned to female characters. While this study was not able to

do that, it would be interesting to examine whether male and female characters overall are depicted differently linguistically. In this particular case, one cannot say that there seems to be a trend to depict female speakers of a particular "non-standard" variety more positively than male speakers for a lack of information.

6.4.2. New York City Speech – The Working-Class Dialect

The depiction of the New York City dialect in the films analyzed in this study was particularly interesting. Not because it was depicted as particularly negative or positive, but because half of the speakers were depicted as policemen. Out of the ten films, four depicted speakers of New York City English resulting in a total of eight characters out of which four were portrayed as members of the police force. No other group of speakers is depicted in connection with one particular occupation with this kind of frequency. This depiction of half of the speakers as policemen becomes even more interesting with the fact that there are no policemen in any of the films who are not depicted with a New York City dialect. As a result, the question why policemen in particular are depicted with a New York City accent across a variety of films produced by both Disney and DreamWorks arises. There is no scholarly research that has looked into the correlation of the depiction of a character as part of the police force and as a speaker of New York City English. What has been studied, however, is the association of New York City speech with working class status (as discussed by Gordon 2008). If New York City speech is heavily associated with the working class, then the depiction of police officers as speakers of New York City speech might be more about the working class status of the profession rather than the profession itself. All of the police workers represented in the films occupy a rather low position in the force, indicating blue-collar workers rather than well-paid captains or agents. In addition, all speakers of New York City speech in the films are male. This, too, might point to a representation of working class characters because the working class, in the mind of the American audience, is perceived "in masculine terms since work, and especially manual labor, [is] still considered a masculine activity" (Bettie 1995: 128). The group of speakers is not only consistently male, but all characters except for one are white. The one exception is the imaginary friend Bingbong (*Inside Out*, Disney, 2015), who is "part elephant, part cotton candy, and part dolphin". With the pink fantasy animal as the only non-white representation, the group depiction relies on additional characteristics of the

working class stereotype which is imagined not only primarily male but also primarily white (cf. Bettie 1995: 128). According to Bettie "the historic 'making of the American working class,' as well as its representation in culture, makes it difficult to envision white women and people of color as working-class" (Bettie 1995: 134). The characters as depicted in the films are a perfect manifestation of the imagined American working class and their representation as speakers of the New York City dialect might lead to an association of the two by the audience. Especially since the representation of working class characters with a New York City accent is used in several movies and by both production companies, one can speak of a cumulative effect. Children exposed to the repeated depiction of characters speaking with a New York City accent as working-class might deduce that all speakers of New York City speech must have working class status which in turn they might learn or have learned to associate with being white and male.

6.4.3. Southern American English – A Spectrum of Good and Evil

Southern American speech is represented by four characters in the film corpus. Two of the characters are good/neutral (Fix-It Felix Jr. and Jack Andy Beanstalk) and the other two are evil antagonists (Jack and Jill). Looking at both, the two bad and the two good/neutral characters, Bernstein's claim that Southern American dialect features are underrepresented when filmmakers want to draw a positive image (cf. Bernstein 2000: 342) seems to hold true. Fix-It Felix from Disney's *Wreck-It Ralph* (2012) is, as the name suggests, a fixer of things, a helper, the hero of his game. Fixing windows and walls is Felix's duty and when he is done fixing everything that was broken, he, a blue-collar worker, is celebrated as a hero. Felix speaks with a Southern American dialect but only uses few features and his dialect is mostly limited to lexical features:

> Felix: Jiminy-jaminy.... Look at that high definition. Your face; it's amazing! (*Wreck-It Ralph*, 00:24:34)

> Felix: You're one dynamite gal. (*Wreck-It Ralph*, 01:01:00)

Felix uses the expression *jiminy-jaminy* which, along with other peculiar expressions, is his way of avoiding swear words. His efforts to avoid use swear words at all costs of course makes for more child-appropriate language but also appears to be a sign of southern politeness. The word *gal*, although it was not listed as one of the most salient stereotypes of Southern speech, is most definitely a lexical item that is widely used in the Southern United States to refer to a girl or woman (cf. Thomas 2008: 106).

Jack Andy Beanstalk from *Puss in Boots* (Disney 2011) is not a hero like Felix, but he is also not an evil character. His Southern American accent is certainly stronger than Felix's with some phonological and grammatical features as shown in the following examples:

> Jack Andy Beanstalk: "Happiest day of my life when he left!" (Puss in Boots, 01:04:20)

> Jack Andy Beanstalk: "I traded the family cow for them beans […] that's how I got eight to ten." (*Puss in Boots*, 01:04:35)

The character's speech shows some of the most stereotypical phonological features (as discussed in section 4.2.2.): the vowel in *I*, *my*, and *life* is /a/ instead of /aɪ/ and the merger of /i/ and /e/ is clearly audible in Jack's pronunciation of *ten*. He furthermore makes use of the demonstrative *them* hence using grammatical dialect features as well unlike Felix, who mostly stuck to lexical and very few phonological features. Although Jack Andy Beanstalk is not depicted as evil, he is portrayed as rather strange. While talking to Puss, he keeps pulling his hands out of the shackles that restrain him to one wall of the cell in order to gesture along with what he is saying just to stick his hands right back into the handcuffs without noticing that he is actually free of them. As a result, he appears slightly unintelligent. He does, however, have extensive knowledge about the beans, the golden goose, and the consequences of stealing which points to a kind of wisdom which Humpty Alexander Dumpty, a much more educated character, lacks. Here, Lippi-Green's claim that Southern characters rely on an intelligence that is the result of life experience and common sense in contrast to the Northern construction of intelligence which relies on a high level of education, seems to be supported. As already mentioned, even Felix, a celebrated hero, is a blue-collar worker whose wits get him and others out of tricky situations, relies on intelligence based on common sense rather than education.

The two characters of Felix and Jack Andy Beanstalk with their light Southern dialect are contrasted by Jack and Jill ruthless villains whose Southern American dialect are much heavier, much more noticeable.

> Jack: You looking for something? [Ju lʊkɪn fɔ sʌmθɪn] (*Puss in* Boots, 00:10:05)

> Jack: I been thinking." [a bɪn θɪŋkɪn] (*Puss in* Boots, 00:08:10)

> Jill: And don't even think about skimping on them baby muffins. [æn doʊn ivən θɪŋk əbaʊd skɪmpɪn ɑn ɛm bæɪbi mʌfɪns] (*Puss in* Boots, 00:07:50)

As shown in the spoken lines by Jack and Jill above, the two consistently drop the /g/ at the end of words, use the demonstrative *them*/*'em*, and pronounce words like *I* like [a] which are some example of their heavily marked speech. Besides the features just mentioned, Jack and Jill speak noticeably slower than many of the other characters. In addition, they are outsmarted by Puss and co. pointing to a confirmation of the stereotype of the slow-speaking and slow-witted Southerner discussed by Bernstein (cf. Bernstein 2000: 339). Overall, the depiction of Jack and Jill complies much more with the negative representation of speakers of Southern American English described by Bernstein than the more positive image Lippi-Green paints. Not only are Jack and Jill depicted as bad characters, they are villains that stop at nothing in order to benefit themselves. Without thinking, they shoot a hotel guest in order to get a room in the already booked-out hotel.

Looking back over all four characters, the representation of speakers of Southern American English in this film corpus confirms the hypothesis that a light Southern American accent is used by the filmmakers to draw positive character while a heavy Southern American dialect is employed to draw negative character. The result is a spectrum on which the degree of feature usage directly correlates to how a character is portrayed. The heavier the accent, the more negative the portrayal of a character.

Lippi-Green writes that to her, as a child growing up in the Midwest, "a Southern accent came to symbolize a very limited and peculiar set of characters" through the representations of speakers in the media (Lippi-Green 2012: 217). Considering the image of Southern American characters in the film corpus, her experience is most likely still shared by children today. Children whose exposure to a Southern American accent is primarily through films like the ones analyzed in this study might come to adopt the fragmented and distorted view of what it means to be from the American South. In addition, the portrayal of linguistic deviation as directly connected to deviation from societal norms and moral conscience, presenting a young and impressionable audience with the idea that the more a speaker diverges from the "standard" variety, the worse that speaker is as a person. The result is the upholding and the promotion of standard language ideologies.

6.4.4. AAE – The Approximated and Appropriated Dialect

Characters speaking African American English appeared in only two of the films: *Home* (DreamWorks 2015) and *Inside Out* (Disney 2015). The fourteen-year-old Gratuity is one of the main characters in DreamWorks' *Home* (2015). Although she is a speaker of AAE, her speech is only marginally different from *SAE. According to Lippi-Green, there seems to be a Disney tradition to portray the "language of the main African American characters [as] only slightly distinct from that of their Anglo counterparts" (Lippi-Green 2012: 124). Seeing that Gratuity is shown using only phonological and some lexical features but no grammatical features at all, DreamWorks may be continuing said Disney tradition. Some examples of her speech are given below:

> Gratuity: Our tradition is to punch you in the nose. Hold still! (*Home*, 00:18:40)
>
> Gratuity: It's not infested. (*Home*, 00:20:30)
>
> Gratuity: Let's have some tunage! (*Home*, 00:20:50)

African American English as spoken by Gratuity deviates from *SAE only in her /t/-dropping in /ts/ cluster which shows in her pronunciation of *Let's* [lɛs] and *It's* [ɪs] and the postvocalic /l/ deletion in words like *hold* [hoʊd]. Her use of the word *tunage* might be the result of youth speech rather than a sign of AAE as it was not listed as a marked dialect feature which is directly associated with AAE.

Such portrayals have led to upset responses by critics who argue that a character represented as African American both culturally and linguistically does, in the eyes of the Walt Disney Company, not deserve to be a hero or heroine, prince or princess (cf. Lippi-Green 2012: 124). As a result of being depicted as a hero or heroine, the character is approximated linguistically, physically, and culturally to white US American speakers of *SAE. The fact that a character portrayed as (slightly) African American is consequently problematic rather than being a progressive attempt at promoting equality. Giroux and Pollok argue that film producers do not use African American characters to promote equality at all, but that they do so only to cater their products that follow (dolls, t-shirts, etc.) to a larger market (cf. Giroux and Pollock 2010: 123). They believe that filmmakers are after monetary gain that comes from not only the films themselves but the accompanying products and that African American audience would purchase more if the movie involved African American characters. In order not to limit financial success by only appealing to minority groups, the characters

have to display characteristics of the minority while still appealing to the majority. Portrayed using only very few features of AAE, Gratuity is identifiable as African American but, mostly using *SAE, remains "mainstream" enough to be relatable for speakers of *SAE as well. The depiction of Gratuity might have detrimental consequences to both children belonging to a minority group as well as children belonging the majority group of US society. Gratuity's *SAE with occasional features of AAE might suggest to children of both groups that in order to be successful, like the heroine in the film, one needs to abandon most socially or regionally marked linguistic features or at least limit one's use thereof. DreamWorks' decision to portray their heroine as a speaker of AAE is therefore by no means only positive as it might convey to a child watching the film that one should strive to limit deviation from society's "standard", at least linguistically.

The second speaker of AAE is depicted in a similar way. Riley's new teacher (*Inside Out*, Disney, 2015), unlike Gratuity, is only a minor characters with very few lines. She cannot be considered a protagonist but is depicted as genuinely nice and caring. She, too, is depicted using only phonological features that differ from *SAE but no grammatical or lexical items associated with AAE. The following example shows the teacher's limited AAE dialect:

Teacher: Get out your history books! (*Inside Out*, 00:25:12)

The teacher's speech follows "standard" grammatical structure and abstains from using any marked lexical items. She does, however, pronounce *your* [joʊ]. Considering the list of stereotypical AAE features, both Gratuity and Riley's teacher use a very small percentage of features which, one the one hand may change the way people imagine AAE but it also marks them as possibly not very stereotypical speakers of AAE.

Home (DreamWorks 2015) features a second character that uses AAE features. Captain Smek, leader of the alien nation Boov, is voiced by Steve Martin, a white US American and *SAE speaker. The fact that Martin imitates AAE points to a deliberate use in order to paint the character. The clearly inauthentic use, as described by Bucholtz and Lopez (cf. Bucholtz and Lopez 2011: 684), makes the resulting speech sound strange and unnatural. This is enhanced by the fact that Captain Smek is not consistently depicted using Mock AAE. Instead, AAE features are tossed into the character's speech occasionally for comic effect. The following line is a good example:

Captain Smek: Give daddy some sugar! [gɪv dædi sʌm ʃʊgɑ] (*Home*, 00:01:30)

58

Captain Smek speaks the line above while giving a speech to his people trying to entertain them and thereby gaining popularity. Captain Smek's use of AAE for comic effect not only influences the way he as a character is depicted but also marks the variety as somehow inherently comical. It is here that we see the labeling of AAE as inauthentic, as a kind of voice acting one does to achieve a certain effect which, according to Bucholtz and Lopez, "also position[s] linguistic difference as essentialized racial difference and, hence, reassert[s] the normativity of white language and culture, even as African American elements are appropriated into whiteness" (Bucholtz and Lopez 2011: 684). AAE becomes as a linguistic tool for speakers of *SAE rather than a valid variety of English. Considering now that Gratuity, the heroine of the story, is depicted with only very few features of AAE and that Captain Smek, the evil and manipulative antagonist, uses AAE features although he is a speaker of *SAE, a problematic overall picture emerges. AAE is positioned in a way that suggests limiting its use is positive and using AAE features is negative. This is further supported by several characters (soldier and Calhoun's fiance in *Wreck-It Ralph*, Disney, 2012 as well as Grauity's mother in *Home*, DreamWorks, 2015) who are physically depicted as African American but speak *SAE devoid of any "non-standard" dialect markers. Considering that all those characters including those who speak limited AAE are shown to be positive characters and the only character who deliberately adds AAE features is portrayed as negative, children who are exposed to this particular depiction may assume a similar attitude toward the use of AAE.

6.5. Other trends

6.5.1. Love and Family Sound Like...Homogeneity

In the previous section, this paper has established that this film corpus shows a clear trend according to which antagonists are presented as different from the protagonists in terms of linguistic variety. Considering this, a look at how characters and their lovers are depicted linguistically is interesting in contrast. Out of the twelve couples depicted in the films, only one couple consists of two speakers of different varieties. In *Wreck-It Ralph* (Disney, 2012), Fix-It Felix and Sergeant Calhoun fall in love and get married at the end of the movie. The two characters are depicted as physical opposites with Felix being very short, his animation style representative of early computer game design, while Calhoun is twice as tall as him and animated like a more modern video game.

The physically contrasting pair looks somewhat comical together and their unlikeness is enhanced through their linguistic differences: Felix is a speaker of Southern American English while Calhoun speaks *SAE. Their love across linguistic differences stands out among the other couples depicted in the films. In all other cases, the two characters involved speak the same linguistic variety: their linguistic likeness reinforces visual likeness. Jack and Jill from *Puss in Boots* (DreamWorks, 2011), for example, are booth speakers of Southern American English and are both depicted as tall, heavy, and very unattractive. Grug and Ugga, a caveman and cavewoman from DreamWorks' *The Croods* (2013) are of the same stalky physique and both speak *SAE. Puss and Kitty (*Puss in* Boots, DreamWorks, 2011) both speak English with a Hispanic accent and are both slender cats of the same size. The list goes on, showing that characters who are in a relationship share physical and linguistic traits. Felix and Calhoun are therefore an exception to the rule with the rule being: lovers not only look alike but sound alike too. This is supported by the aforementioned decision by Riley's mom (*Inside Out*, Disney, 2015) to marry the man who, like her, speaks *SAE rather than stay with the Brazilian helicopter pilot who, with his Hispanic accent, sounds so different from her. The linguistic homogeneity of dating or married couples supports traditional Disney values which Giroux and Pollock (2010) describe as

> the image of conservative, white American family values – values in which the heterosexual patriarchal family unit becomes normalized, wrapped in the patriotic and nostalgic aura of a bygone era of small-town Midwestern Protestant ideals. (Giroux and Pollock 2010: 205-206)

But the image of the linguistically homogeneous lovers is not the only message concerning love and family values that seems to persist through the film corpus. Consistent with Lippi-Green's findings, the majority of parents[9] are depicted as speakers of "standard" varieties of English. Examining parent couples where a mother and a father are both present, only one couple does not consist of two *SAE speakers. Elinor and Fergus, Merida's parents in *Brave* (Disney, 2012), are speakers of Scottish English which can simply be attributed to the fact that the story is set in Scotland and that all characters, except for the negligent witch, speak a Scottish language variety. Two-parent households, in general, are labeled with a standard variety thus marking

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[9] The character Oaken from Disney's *Frozen* (2013) was excluded from this discussion because his relationship to the children and the man in the sauna is never explicitly explained. This, as previously explained, does not mean in any way that the depiction of Oaken and his family is not significant but for lack of clarity it was not included here.

the constellation of children along with both a mother and a father as "standard" and normal. Combining "standard" language varieties, in particular *SAE, marks the nuclear[10] family as societal norm for the American audience. This is more drastically supported by the portrayal of other family constellation such as the single parent households depicted in *Home* (DreamWorks 2015) and DreamWorks' *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010). The story's heroine is the only child depicted as a speaker of AAE and, interestingly, also one of two children depicted as being raised by only one biological parent. There are other cases where a child (or several children) is orphaned and then raised by only one person, but Gratuity and Hiccup are the only children growing up in a single parent household. Gratuity is a speaker of AAE living inside the United States and Hiccup, although a speaker of *SAE, lives on a fictional island in Europe. Not only does this label single parent households as non-standard, at least linguistically and possibly thereby as socially, but it also built on the stereotype that households with only one parent are not part of the white, *SAE America, but exist in socially marginalized minority groups such as the African American community. Not only is single parenting labeled as non-standard, but Gratuity's behavior shows her filling a role far beyond her age (such as driving a car) suggesting the need for children of single parent households to grow up quicker than children with both parents present. This idea that there is a sort of imbalance in single-parent households is depicted linguistically as well. It is only in single-parent households that a child is depicted with a different variety of English from their parent (Gratuity is a speaker of AAE while her mother speaks *SAE and Hiccup speaks *SAE but his father is depicted with a Scottish accent). As a result there is a sort of linguistic dissonance between the children and parents of single-parent household which makes the overall depiction of the household less harmonious and makes the members of the household appear less close to one another. The depiction of the single parent family is thus painted negatively.

Taken from her biological parents, Rapunzel (*Tangled*, Disney, 2010) is raised by Mother Gothel, an evil witch who uses Rapunzel and her magical powers to gain eternal youth. Rapunzel grows up unknowing that Mother Gothel is not her biological mother and is shown as inherently unhappy. She is unsatisfied with her life, wanting to break free from the duties of living with Mother Gothel but feeling too guilty to leave her behind. The oppressive single parent who lays too much responsibility on the child

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[10] The nuclear family describes a set of parents and their (biological) children.

61

is depicted as a speaker of *RP which immediately signals to the audience that something about her is different. Rapunzel is shown yearning for a different life thinking that there must be something more, something better for her. Breaking free from the linguistic other, Mother Gothel, Rapunzel flees the single parent constellation and is reunited with her biological parents with whom she lives happily ever after. The fact that Rapunzel is shown content after having returned to living with her parents implies that she now has all she yearned for: the nuclear family with both parents. Although one might argue that Rapunzel is simply glad to have escaped Mother Gothel, it is nevertheless significant that the happily ever after consists of being part of the nuclear family. Disney hence further perpetuates its "role as a defender of conservative family values" (Giroux and Pollock 2010: 94).

The representation of the nuclear family as societal norm through linguistic terms, brings with it the association of good parenting and *SAE. This is indirectly supported by the portrayal of non-standard speakers as unfit parents. Jack and Jill (*Puss in Boots*, DreamWorks, 2011) talk about starting a family and having children. Jill's immediate objections to changing their lifestyle of high jacking and murdering people to settling down marks her as inept to be a mother. Jack's response is problematic in a different way:

Jack: We'll raise it wild, like a squirrel or somethin'." (*Puss in* Boots, 00:08:45)

The fact that Jack compares children to squirrels and suggests raising his offspring like animals makes him appear ignorant and incompetent when it comes to child care. The characters' heavy Southern American dialect makes for a very negative depiction. On the aforementioned spectrum, Jack and Jill are portrayed with the heaviest Southern American dialects. As this paper established, Bernstein's theory that a heavier dialect is associated with more negative attributes, held true for the films analyzed in this study. It follows that Jack and Jill should be attributed with the negative stereotypes associated with Southern American speech. Some of the most negative stereotypes describe speakers of Southern American English as hillbillies, hicks, and all-together ignorant people (cf. Lippi-Green 2012: 218). In the example above, Jack's idea of child raising exhibits the use of the ignorant hick stereotype labeling the two not only as backwards, uneducated, and ignorant of modern progress but also as rejecting the rules of society and therefore living outside the law, all of which makes them unsuitable to be responsible parents. The fact that Jack and Jill never get to actually have children

since they are prosecuted for all their crimes spending the rest of their lives in prison. While arguably they truly might not be suitable as parents, it is interesting that the only couple portrayed as such consists of two "non-standard" variety speakers.

"What a person expects to hear is tied very closely to what he or she expects to experience" (Lippi-Green 2012: 217). A child who is exposed to the repeated representation of the nuclear family as the ultimate societal norm and, moreover, the necessary base for a happy life, may come to think that in order to be both "normal" and happy one needs to be part of a traditional nuclear family. The representation of the only child speaking AAE as part of a single parent household and the overall depiction of single-parent households as (linguistically) less harmonious combined with the depiction of two non-standard variety speakers as unsuitable parents is additionally problematic. The concept of the happy nuclear family is not only established as standard, it is presented as only available to or achievable by people who conform to the linguistic norms of the majority. Minority speech communities, or families in which at least one speaker is depicted with a "non-standard" variety, in turn are presented as not standard and far away from the nuclear family.

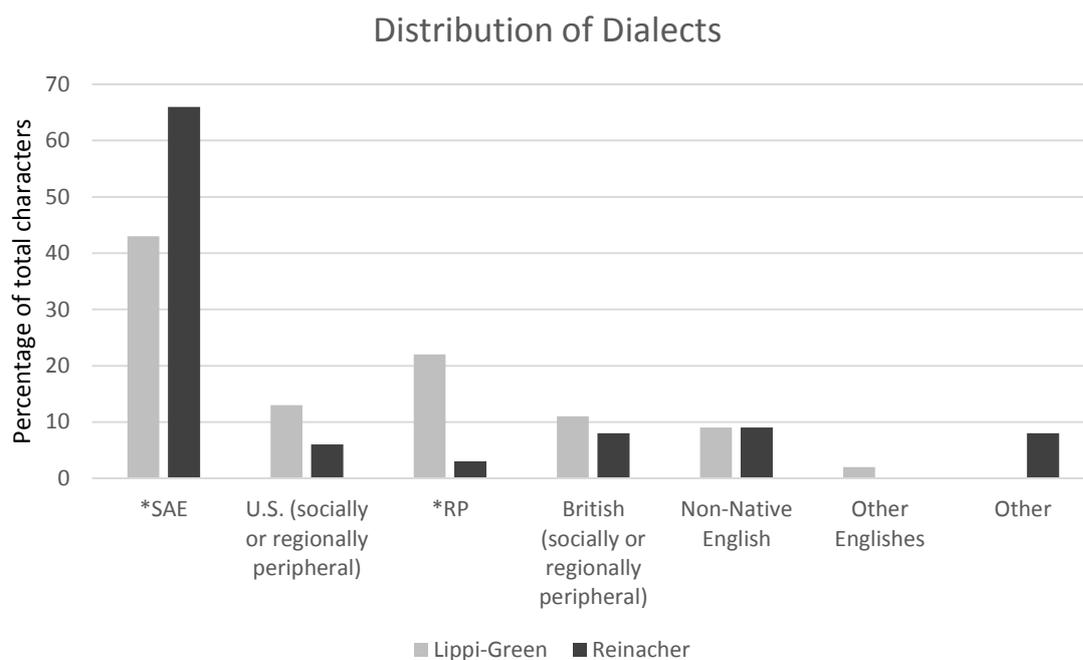### 6.5.2. Changes over Time (from pre-2010 to the current study)

Figure 5 – A comparison of dialect usage in Lippi-Green and the current study

One goal of this study was to establish a comparison with the findings of Lippi-Green's study. Considering that Lippi-Green only included films until 2010 and the study at hand analyzed films since 2010, it is possible to draw a comparison of how the use of language variety in animated children's films might have changed over time. An overall comparison, as visualized in figure 5, shows some similarities as well as drastic differences. First, the percentage of characters with foreign accents (Figure 5, "Non-Native English") is exactly the same. Just under ten percent of characters speak English with a foreign accent. As already discussed in regards to antagonism, within that 10 percent Lippi-Green found that in Disney movies before 2010, 40 percent of characters speaking with a foreign accent were marked as evil (Lippi-Green 2012: 117). For the purposes of this study, a distinction between characters acting as antagonists and those clearly depicted as evil was made. The absence of antagonists with foreign accents was already discussed earlier in this paper but even if one takes into consideration characters who are depicted as evil, only a single character speaking with a foreign accent is depicted as such. Compared to the 40 percent in the pre-2010 corpus, that is only about four percent in the post-2010 corpus of evil (and antagonistic) characters with foreign accents. These numbers suggests that this particular trend (foreign "bad guys") may be declining over time.

A second category that immediately stands out, especially when visualized in the diagram, is the category "Other". The corpus of the current study included language varieties such as "Zombie English," Boov language, a made-up and unintelligible alien language, and a language consisting only of key board signs and sounds. Since these languages and language varieties would not have fit in any of the categories for language variety Lippi-Green used in her study[11], it can be assumed that no such language varieties were depicted in her film corpus. Although eight percent might not sound like a large portion of the characters in the film corpus, it is the third largest category. Furthermore, compared to zero percent prior to 2010, the large difference renders the number significant. Now the question remains why the older films depicted no characters speaking fictional languages or dialects and in recent films there are quite a few.

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[11] The categories used by Lippi-Green were "*SAE," "*Standard British," "U.S. (regionally peripheral)," "U.S. (socially peripheral)," "British (regionally or socially periphera marked as peripheral)," "Non Native English," and "Other Englishes" (cf. Lippi-Green 2012: 115).

Without additional knowledge it is difficult to answer the question with certainty but research shows that the occurrence of zombies, aliens, and other beings like them have appeared frequently on the Hollywood screen since September 11th, 2001. The explanation for the increased use of invented dialects and languages might therefore lie in an attempt to relocate "evil" from the foreigner to a new enemy that is much more difficult to define. According to Bishop, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center were followed by possibly "the largest wave of paranoia for Americans since the McCarthy era" and American popular culture has since been shaped by the realization that Americans cannot feel as safe as they once thought in their own country (Bishop 2009: 17). The enemy of the American people was suddenly no longer outside the nation but had invaded the American space and seemed to lurk in the center of American life in the form of sleeper cells (cf. Muntean and Payne 2009: 247). The fear that anyone could be infected and affected by the illusive enemy was represented in the zombie infection or alien invasion (cf. Bishop 2009: 24). The new "other" was inhuman and the increased use of new language varieties might reflect an attempt to linguistically represent this "other" because it is differentiated from any variety already spoken by humans.

The new "other" in the film corpus is only sometimes depicted as inherently evil, however. Oh (the name of the character), the friendly Boov in DreamWorks' *Home* (2015), for example, is not evil at all and, in the end, even becomes part of a human family. Nevertheless, some aliens, zombies, and other non-human creatures are portrayed as evil as for example the zombie attending the BadAnon ("Bad Anonymous") meeting in *Wreck-It Ralph* (Disney, 2012) or the evil Boov leader, Captain Smek, in *Home* (DreamWorks, 2015). The relocation of evil from the foreigner is split. Partially it is assigned to this inhuman "other" and partially it is now found in characters who are native speakers of English (not necessarily speakers of a standard variety, but native speakers). The consequential message sent to the audience is that evil is not a threat that emanates from a country outside of the United States but a danger that looms within US society itself as well as a menace that is incarnated in a being that is non-human both visually and linguistically.

Also noticeable is the drastic decline in the use of *RP and other British varieties. Lippi-Green found that 33 percent of all characters spoke either *RP or a different British variety. The film corpus of this study showed that merely eleven

percent of characters were depicted with either of the two. Analyzing the reasons behind this change goes beyond the means and the purpose of this study but might be an interesting topic for future research, especially if similar trends can be observed in other film genres as well. What this study did find is that, despite of the overall decline in characters speaking a British variety, the stereotype of the English villain continues to be used in animated children's films.

In addition to a less frequent presentation of characters with British accents, characters speaking socially or regionally marginal US varieties occur less often as well. Instead, characters are more frequently depicted as speakers of *SAE. In the pre-2010 corpus not even half the characters spoke *SAE (only 43 percent were depicted as speakers of *SAE) while in the post-2010 corpus far more than half of the characters (66 percent) were speakers of *SAE. The increased representation of *SAE speakers creates a picture of a seemingly more homogeneous speech community. By implying that the majority of speakers use *SAE (or an approximate thereof) the films support standard language ideology. The concept of promoting this "correct" form of the English language is further supported by how DreamWorks chose to depict the Boov in *Home* (2015). Exactly how the Boov and their language are depicted will be discussed in the following section.

6.5.3. SLI as Shown through the Depiction of Aliens

In *Home* (DreamWorks 2015), the Boov are an alien people that come to earth in search of new home. Although they have developed fairly advanced technology, the Boov do not understand earthly life and understand CDs as a party snack and footballs as fruit. Unlike most other language varieties already discussed in this paper, Boov English only differs from *SAE in grammatical form but follows *SAE rules of pronunciation. The Boov use the definite article where, according to *SAE prescriptive grammar, there should be none. A few instances of this overuse are shown in the following examples:

Oh: Pardon the me, friend! (*Home*, 00:01:20)

Oh: Can I come into the out now? (*Home*, 00:18:01)

In *SAE neither *me* nor *out* should be preceded by the definite article *the*. While the Boov use the definite article when, according to *SAE rules of grammar they should not, they leave it out when using the definite article would be appropriate:

Oh: Today is best day ever! (*Home*, 00:00:40)

Marking a particular day, the use of *the* to label *day* would be necessary if following *SAE rules. One can consequently not only talk of an under- or overuse of the definite article, but a misuse altogether. But the misplacement of definite articles is not the only feature that clearly distinguishes the way the Boov speak from *SAE. Boov language often uses nouns where *SAE prescribes the use of adjectives as one can see in the following examples:

Oh: I am very excitement to make a new fresh start! (*Home*, 00:01:48)

Oh: Humanspersons are happiness and joy forever. (*Home*, 00:05:04)

Instead of using the adjectives *excited*, *happy*, and *joyful*, Oh uses the respective nouns *excitement*, *happiness*, and *joy*. A different example shows yet another case of word class confusion by the Boov:

Kyle: You are arresting! (*Home*, 00:12:57)

The ending *–ing* is in this case inappropriate as Kyle should have said *You are arrestED* if he followed the rules of "standard" English. In this particular example, the choice of the wrong ending even leads to a change in meaning as one could now interpret the sentence as stating that Oh is the one carrying out the arrest rather than the one being arrested. Moreover, if the word *arresting* is understood as an adjective, it would make Kyle's statement a compliment and not a declaration of police arrest. Either way, Kyle's speech depicts him as ridiculous as his mistakes alter the meaning of what he is trying to convey.

In addition to these unique features, the Boov are depicted using features that are common in other "non-standard" varieties of English as well such as using the third person singular verb form for the first person as well or the unsplit construction *for to* in infinitival purpose clauses. As a result, the language of the Boov appears as a "non-standard" form of English but one which deviates not just slightly but drastically from the grammatical rules of "standard" English. Depicting the Boov as the speakers of a dialect that not only sounds different from "standard" English but disregards some of its most basic grammatical rules might send a problematic message to the viewers. They are aliens who cannot tell the difference between food and garbage, who do not recognize one of their own because of a drawn-on beauty-mark, and who do not understand human needs. If this dialect, which is deviates significantly from the

"standard" form, is assigned to a group of speakers who are not able to grasp simple things, the resulting message might be that the deviation is due to the same inability. Showing how aliens that are not able to imitate human life are also unable to "correctly" imitate human language, English in particular, reinforces the problematic idea that there is grammatical "correctness". Combined with the depiction of the majority of characters (including three out of four princesses) as speakers of *SAE, the suggestion of a "standard" English perpetuates standard language ideology in the corpus as a whole. Such standard language ideology also perpetuates a hierarchy according to which "[l]exical constraints accentuate the viciousness or stupidity of the characters who speak non-standard varieties of English" (Pandey 2001: 7). The result is an "asymmetrical relation of power in which speakers of Standard English are placed in positions of authority" (Pandey 2001: 7). Children who are exposed to the depiction of the Boov, may be reminded by their speech of real-life non-native speakers of English. With the message of standard ideology embedded in the depiction, children may as a result be encouraged to discriminate against non-native speakers of English (or even native speakers who do not follow "standard" grammar rules).

7. Conclusion

Animated children's films seem to be rapidly fired onto movie screens across the United States and the world with hundreds of new movies in 2015 alone ("Most Popular Animated Feature Films Released in 2015" 2015: n.p.). Children are exposed to these films not only in theatres but, thanks to new technology, can take their favorite animated film wherever they go. Because children are still constantly learning, they are an especially impressionable audience (cf. Giroux and Pollock [2]2010: 6), an audience to which movie production giants such as the Walt Disney company and DreamWorks Animation cater their stories. With their new access to essentially every part of a child's life granted with in-home, in-car entertainment systems, and even portable handheld devices, the influence that filmmakers can exert on children has increased significantly. Giroux and Pollock therefore describe the films as "teaching apparatus[es]" where filmmakers "engage in public pedagogy" (Giroux and Pollock [2]2010: 6) allowing them to shape the way children see the world, themselves, and others. Going even further, Belkhyr states that the films are not only a "teaching apparatus" but an "ideological apparatus" (Belkhyr 2012: 705). As new-age storytellers

such as Disney and DreamWorks continue to become more and more powerful, it is therefore crucial to examine exactly what kind of ideologies this mass movie production apparatus is packaging into their films and delivering to the door step of the American home and homes worldwide. This Master's thesis therefore analyzed how linguistic variation is used and depicted in these animated children's films and what messages are thereby sent to the audience.

In order to examine whether media aimed at children depict linguistic varieties in a way that supports racist, sexist or classist ideologies, the ten most successful animated children's films by Disney and DreamWorks released since (and during) 2010 were chosen as object of this study. Disney and DreamWorks are the two most prominent producers of such animated children's films, holding the largest share of the market and therefore having the most access to their audiences (not only because their movies tend to be the most successful but also because they produce such a vast amount of films every year). All characters with spoken lines in the ten fully-animated, full feature-length films were marked based on their language variety. A comparative analysis as well as an individual discussion of particular varieties of English showed that there were noticeable trends in how language variety is used by the filmmakers.

One such trend is the continuation of an established theatre tradition to use language variety on stage to signal geographic location of a play. Both Disney and DreamWorks depict characters with foreign accents or a particular variety of English in order to geographically locate their stories. Disney's *Brave* (2012) is an excellent example thereof because the story is set in Scotland and 13 out of the total 14 characters are depicted with a Scottish accent. Another example if DreamWorks' *Puss in Boots* (2011) which is set in Spain and which portrays the majority of characters with a Hispanic accent. In both cases the language variety used is associated with one or more specific geographical region(s). A different tactic of using a British English accent to mark not a specific geographical setting but to signal to an American audience that the story takes place outside of the United States as proposed by Wicks (2010) was also found. For example, in Disney's *Frozen* (2013) some minor characters are depicted speaking *RP which, considering the Norwegian setting, is not a logical choice based on the story's geography but instead simply represents foreign speech signaling to the audience that the story takes place not in the United States but elsewhere.

In addition to using language variety to mark geographic location, the film corpus showed that both production companies utilize already existing stereotypes connected to certain varieties of English and thereby further perpetuate them. *RP is thus not only used as a general marker of foreign speech but also operates as a characteristic of the "British villain". A long-lasting Hollywood trend to cast British actors for the role of the villain across different film genres has turned into a stereotype that has not only been discussed heavily in popular media but was recently used in a advertisement by the British car brand Jaguar. The film corpus showed that Disney, too, makes use of this stereotype but, as opposed to the Jaguar commercial, portrays its villains (or antagonists) who speak with a British accent almost exclusively with negative features.

Like the "British villain", the "Latin Lover" (or its female equivalent, the "Dark Lady") is a previously identified stereotype that reappears throughout the corpus. The characters Puss in Boots and Kitty Softpaws (*Puss in Boots*, DreamWorks, 2011) are the most prominent depictions of said stereotype because, as main characters of the story, they hold a large amount of screen time. Combined with features of "El Bandito" and the "Halfbreed Harlot", the "Latin Lover", Puss, and the "Dark Lady", Kitty, are depicted with loose morals and an outwardly aggressive sexuality accompanied by a heavy Hispanic accent. Consequently, the character stereotype is presented not only in connection with people of Hispanic descent but with the stereotyped linguistic variety of Hispanic English. The portrayal of speakers of English with a Hispanic accent as belonging to the "Latin Lover" stereotype is further supported by a minor character, the helicopter pilot in Disney's *Inside Out* (2015). While Puss and Kitty are shown as compatible partners for one another, the depiction of the helicopter pilot in stark contrast to the character of Riley's dad, marks the "Latin Lover", and thereby (at least certain) speakers of Hispanic English, as an unfit partner for a white woman belonging to the *SAE-speaking majority group (in this case Riley's mother). Overall, these depictions perpetuate the idea that speakers of Hispanic English exist in a context that is separate from speakers of *SAE and "mainstream" society.

In general, the depicted version of the Hispanic accent, just like the stereotypical Scandinavian or Slavic/Eastern European accent, lacks any sign of specific nationality or cultural context. All three are examples of categorization described by Tajfel as a way to establish order where there is chaos, uniformity where there is seemingly random variation creating clearly defined groups that are imagined

as separate from other such groups (cf. Tajfel 1969: 82-83 qtd in Kristiansen 2001: 137). Such efforts to clearly define a group that is actually very diverse leads to an artificial homogenization, resulting in an imagined sameness of all members of the group. Thus, this process of stereotyping tends to, on the one hand, highlight intragroup similarities and, on the other hand, accentuate intergroup difference (Oakes et al. 1994: 37 qtd. in Kristiansen 2001: 136). This artificial homogenization is particularly extreme in the example of the pan-Slavic/Eastern European linguistic stereotype. The stereotype category includes a vast amount of different languages and combines into one stereotype speakers from diverse national and cultural backgrounds. The only character in the corpus depicted with this pan-Slavic/Eastern European accent is street fighter Zangief. In keeping with the stereotype of the primal, violent Slav, Zangief is portrayed as the most physically violent of all 239 characters. This overgeneralization can be dangerous as it oversimplifies categories leading to a fragmented and distorted view of the world. Children whose exposure to speakers of some varieties is limited to the representations given in media may adopt this distorted view based on overarching, broad stereotypes.

The way in which both Disney and DreamWorks make use of such pre-existing stereotypes may lead to what Cutler calls "second order indexicality" in the mind of the audience. While the association of a certain characteristics with a particular stereotyped group is first order indexicality, second order indexicality is a second step in which the well known character type is connected to not the group but, for example, their language variety (cf. Cutler 2013: slides 13-14). While being violent is a stereotype of people from the stereotyped (imagined) geographic area of Eastern Europe and the Slavic region, Zangief is not presented in any connection to this imagined space. Instead he is depicted in a video game world in the United States. In the mind of the audience, his character stereotype might therefore become connected to speakers with a pan-Slavic/Eastern European accent. Jack and Jill (*Puss in Boots*, DreamWorks, 2011) are another example of a stereotype that is no longer used in connection with people from a certain region but instead speakers of a certain variety. There is no logical explanation for Jack and Jill's Southern American accent especially considering that the story is set in Spain and that the majority of characters are depicted with a Hispanic accent. It can therefore be assumed that the filmmakers use the linguistic variety as a

tool in order to achieve a certain effect, trigger a certain recognition in the audience, and convey a certain message.

Analyzing some of these messages more closely yielded interesting findings. The Walt Disney Company is widely known to stand for rather conservative family values with the nuclear family as the most valuable asset in modern life (Giroux and Pollock [2]2010: 40, 94). The films analyzed as part of this study showed two overall trends regarding family values: (1) Disney continues to send messages supporting such traditional views on family, parenting, and marriage in their more recent films and (2) DreamWorks Animation does so as well. One very drastic example, this study showed, can be found in the depiction of couples. Out of twelve couples, eleven are portrayed as two partners speaking the same linguistic variety of English. This leaves only one set of partners, Fix-It Felix and Calhoun in Disney's *Wreck-It Ralph* (2012), who are shown speaking different varieties and in this particular case the difference in speech was used to enhance the depiction of the characters as physically different. The depiction of a linguistically mixed couple is thus an exception in this corpus. The consistent depiction of partners with the same variety of English might suggest to an impressionable audience that dating, or even marriage, should be between two people who are like one another. While compatibility unarguably plays an important role in a successful relationship, the message sent by Disney and DreamWorks might be read as a discouragement of inter-linguistic and thus inter-racial or inter-class relationships. This is further supported by the portrayal of Riley's mother in Disney's *Inside Out* (2015), an *SAE speaker. She is shown having actively dismissed a partner who is linguistically (as well as racially and culturally) different from her (the aforementioned helicopter pilot, a speaker of Hispanic English) in order to marry someone who is linguistically (as well as racially and culturally) like her (Riley's father, a speaker of *SAE). As a result, the cumulative effect of the consistent values portrayed in Disney and DreamWorks films in regards to partner selection may promote, in the mind of the audience, a concept of desired linguistic (and therefore racial and cultural) homogeneity.

Furthermore, the study showed that the films' message of such desired homogeneity does not apply when it comes to same-sex relationships or same-sex parenting. The only potentially homosexual character, Oaken in Disney's *Frozen* (2013), is clearly "othered" by means of linguistic variation. With his heavy

Scandinavian accent, Oaken is noticeably distinct from all other characters of the story. As the only character who is depicted as possibly in a homosexual relationship and as maybe raising children in said relationship, Oaken and the way in which he is depicted need to be regarded rather critically. Although Disney received much praise (as well as scorn from conservative and often religious viewers) in online media, a closer analysis in this study showed that simply depicting a potentially gay character is not necessarily progressive at all. In fact, this study found, Disney's portrayal of Oaken is in fact still very conservative as it labels homosexual people as inherently different, even "other", especially by linguistic means. Oaken and his family are ostracized (by Disney) to a place outside of the city and removed from society. Children growing up in the midst of a heated debate over same-sex parenting and other topics concerning LGBT rights, may perceive Oaken's depiction as an affirmation that these "non-traditional" family values are possible but only outside of society.

Same-sex parenting is not the only "non-traditional" family constellation that is criticized in the films produced by Disney and DreamWorks. While not originally a focus of this study, the corpus revealed that single-parenting households were depicted as "non-standard" and as unharmonious by linguistic means. Interestingly, both children growing up with only one biological parent were depicted with a different variety of English than their parent and at least one speaker in the family was depicted with a "non-standard" variety. This labels the members of the household as less uniform, less belonging to one another (at least linguistically) and depicts the overall concept of the single-parent household as "non-standard" as marked by the presence of "non-standard" linguistic varieties. This is further supported by the character of Rapunzel (*Tangled*, Disney, 2010) who leaves the single-parent household (again presented with linguistic dissonance between child and parent) and seeks refuge in a nuclear family with her birth parents. The nuclear family, as found in the corpus, is depicted as both "standard", with the majority of nuclear families depicted as speakers of *SAE, and desirable as shown by Rapunzel's longing for it and its depiction as harmonious by means of linguistic homogeneity of its members.

Consequently, both Disney and DreamWorks use linguistic variation in order to convey messages of conservative values regarding relationships and family. Children who are constantly exposed to these films (and others like them) are therefore not only consuming entertainment media but are involved in a "complex process of

coding/decoding and appropriating cultural meanings" (cf. Belkhyr 2012: 705). Messages packaged into entertaining stories and emanating from theatre screens, home televisions, car entertainment systems, and other new technologies may thus profoundly influence how children perceive themselves and others, what it means to be gay or straight, to be part of a nuclear family or a single-parent household, what harmonious amorous relationship should be, what is "standard" and what is "non-standard", etc.

This study proofed that filmmakers use linguistic variation to mark a character as (linguistically) distinct from other characters. Moreover, in extreme cases, as for example the character Oaken (*Frozen*, Disney, 2013) as discussed above, characters are not only labeled as "different" but as altogether "other". Such "othering" is a process by which those in a position of power mark others as inherently different from themselves thereby justifying a complete symbolic separation (cf. Brabham 2006: 70). Oaken is "othered" because of his "untraditional" lifestyle which does not fit into the Walt Disney concept of family and raising children. The study showed that "othering" also occurs throughout the corpus in connection to the problematic depiction of particular ways of speaking meaning that characters are "othered" not on the basis of certain characteristics or behaviors but based on the way they speak. Two characters in the corpus are portrayed with a speech impairment, more specifically a lisp, and both are depicted as clown-like figures with features that visibly do not conform to Western norms of how a person should look. Combining these features with a speech impediment enhances the concept of non-conformity on a linguistic level as well as making it clearly audible that the characters deviate from the linguistic "standard". Using speech impediments as a tool to linguistically "other" characters also enhances the depiction of the speech impairment itself, in this case a lisp, as "non-standard" and even "other". Consequently, a negative image of speech impairments as markers of "otherness" emerges.

Similarly, the characters whose speech deviates most from grammatical standards are portrayed as an alien people who have come to invade earth and take over the planet as their new home. The aliens have an extensive English vocabulary but their grammatical mistakes often lead to meaning changes of what they are trying to say by, for example, their misuse of the definite article (misuse as dictated by the prescribed grammatical rules of English). Their inability to speak grammatically

"correct" English is therefore both ridiculed and marked as a characteristic of aliens, non-citizens that invade the United States in their search for a new home and life. In the midst of a reoccurring debate about immigration with new immigration reforms appearing before the Senate several times a year[12], illegal aliens entering the country is a topic all too familiar to a US American audience. While children are almost definitely too young to be actively involved in the debate, they are likely to be confronted with terms such as "legal alien" and "illegal alien" at some point in their childhood. Although these are official terms used for people immigrating to the United States and not beings from outer space as depicted in Disney's *Home* (2015), children might learn to discriminate against those who do not speak grammatically "correct" English and to deduce from a grammatically "incorrect" speech that the speaker is not "us", is "other", is "alien".

The concept of labeling one form of language as "correct" or "standard" simultaneously marks all forms that deviate from it as "incorrect" or "non-standard" (cf. Milroy 2001: 534). Not only is the "standard" variety then perceived as the most grammatically "correct" form but it is usually equated with the highest prestige value (cf. Milroy 2001: 532). This hierarchy is not innate as, in linguistic terms, all varieties are equal, but instead is assigned and labels the speakers of the "standard" form as superior in intelligence, success, wealth, and education (cf. Luhmann 1990: 333 qtd. in Pandey 2001: 1). This is believed to be true by both speakers of the "standard" variety and by speakers of other, "non-standard" varieties. This bias toward the abstracted and idealized "standard" variety is defined as "standard language ideology" or "SLI" (cf. Lippi-Green 2012: 67). This study showed that Disney and DreamWorks both participate in the maintenance and perpetuation of such standard language ideology. For one, the ten films analyzed as part of this study depict speakers of *SAE as "norm" therefore disseminating the superiority of the "standard" variety speech and its speakers. Speakers of "non-standard" varieties are often depicted as a continuation of already existing stereotypes which, although not always necessarily negative, propagate a homogenized categorization of a speech community. Often, these "non-standard" varieties are presented in stark contrast to the "standard" variety (*SAE in

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[12] The ongoing debate can be found reflected in articles like "Immigration Politics at the Court" in *The New York Times* (NYtimes Editorial Board 16 Apr 2016), "Immigration in the United States – Senators unveil immigration reform plan" in *The Washington Post* ("Immigration in the United States" 28 Jan 2013), and "Immigration Debate: What's More Important, Boarder Security Or Protecting Immigrant Workers" in *Forbes Magazine* (Parish Flannery 9 Sep 2013).

the case of most Disney and DreamWorks animated children's films release during and after 2010). The contrasting of speakers and varieties to the "standard" (imagined as most superior) marks them as linguistically, culturally, and intellectually inferior. The farther a variety deviates from the grammatical "standard", the prescribed rules of the English language, the more that variety is depicted as negative or as altogether "other". This became evident in the analysis of the depiction of Southern American English where a "light" accent defined by mostly lexical and phonological features was positive but those using grammatical dialect features as well, and thus had a heavier accent were depicted negatively. This was further supported by depictions of the "other" which was noticeably marked as such by linguistic means, discussed above using the example of aliens. Disney and DreamWorks therefore both promulgate standard language ideology. Labeling "non-standard" forms as "other" also means that Disney and DreamWorks establish themselves as part of the dominant group which accordingly is not "other". Such categorization is often accompanied by an immediate hierarchic ordering favoring the ingroup and thus discriminating against the outgroup. The ingroup/outgroup distinction was realized in the corpus also through the linguistic differentiation between protagonists and antagonists fostering the idea of a necessary distrust toward speakers of varieties different from one's own language variety.

In conclusion, the original research question of this Master's thesis, whether recent animated children's films portray linguistic varieties in a way that support problematic ideologies regarding race, class, and gender, can be answered with "yes". As this study showed on the basis of the ten most successful animated children's films released by Disney and DreamWorks since 2010, these films are laden with stereotypes and ideologies. Targeted at children, who are constantly involved in learning and are therefore an especially impressionable audience, the films have a vast potential influence on how their audience sees both themselves and others. Engineered to legitimize the status quo by using linguistic means, Disney and DreamWorks films should therefore be regarded critically and studied further. Just because the films adhere to legal guidelines regarding violence and language, they should by no means be considered harmless. Problematic ideologies that may not be overtly visible and yet could have a detrimental amount of influence through a cumulative effect need to be analyzed through a critical lens. Scholars, parents, educators, and politicians alike should openly address and carefully criticize the messages sent by media giants such as Disney and DreamWorks because those who are most vulnerable to them cannot.

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