ALICE IN LOCALIZATIONLAND: AN ENGLISH-FRENCH TRANSLATION AND TRANSMEDIA STUDY OF DISNEY CHARACTERS' SPEECH IN FILMS AND VIDEO GAMES

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INTRODUCTION

Disney: films, music, books and… **video games**

1990s: transmedia approach to reach a diverse audience (Madej & Lee, 2020: 2)

→ E.g. *Aladdin* (1993), *The Lion King* (1994), *Hercules* (1997)

→ Very few text strings (action/platform games)

Nowadays: *Epic Mickey* (2010), *Disney Infinity 3.0* (2015), *Disney Magic Kingdoms* (2016)

→ Localization/linguistic research possible

INTRODUCTION

Disney Dreamlight Valley (Gameloft, 2023):

- RPG (substantial amount of text);

- "Animal crossing like" => No audio;

- 33 characters from the Disney/Pixar universe;

- Translated into 7 languages;

- Segmentation of text data by character;

- Extraction with UnityAssetRipper (Pritts, 2024)

📁 Goofy	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Kristoff	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 LionKing	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Maui	06/09/2024 16:14	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Merlin	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Mickey	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Minnie	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Moana	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 MotherGothel	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Nala	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 PrinceEric	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Remy	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Scar	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Scrooge	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers
📁 Simba	16/01/2024 21:08	Dossier de fichiers

LITERATURE REVIEW

No or few studies on:

The translations of the films (EN>FR), as highlighted by Marchand (2012);

The localization of the *Disney Dreamlight Valley* video game;

The transition from the film medium to the video game medium (Disney universe).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research mainly in pragmatics and sociolinguistics.

Most of them: analyses of Disney characters in the light of the Lakofian theses (1975).

Two main issues:

1) Research of widely varying quality
2) Does not question Lakoff's work, despite criticism (Coates, 2003)

➡️ Lack of precision/biased analysis/contradictory results

LITERATURE REVIEW

Noticeable trend:

"[…] prince characters have once again become more feminine in their behaviour, princesses have become progressively more androgynous over time". (Hine *et al*.; 2018 : 9)

According to sociolinguistic research (all based on Lakoff 1975), women in Disney films:

- Use fewer imperatives than men (Mahmoud, 2021: 14)

- Use more polite language (>< insults and threats) (Mahmoud, 2021; Al-yassin and Rabab'ah 2021: 136)

- Use more intensifiers (Azmi *et al*., 2016: 238)

- Express more often their uncertainties (through modal auxiliaries, lexical hedges) (Itmeizeh and Ma'ayeh, 2017: 35 ;

- Ask more questions (Azmi *et al*., 2016: 238-239)

- Use more empty adjectives (Azmi *et al*., 2016: 237; Al-yassin and Rabab'ah 2021: 131)

AIMS

1) Identify the linguistic differences between Disney Dreamlight Valley and Disney films (if any).

2) Determine whether there are any significant differences (in terms of language) between the characters in the game .

3) Look at gender differences from a sociolinguistic perspective.

4) Examine dubbing and localization data from a translation perspective and determine whether references to the original works are present and correctly localized.

Four disciplines:

- ❖ Sociolinguistics
- ❖ Pragmatics
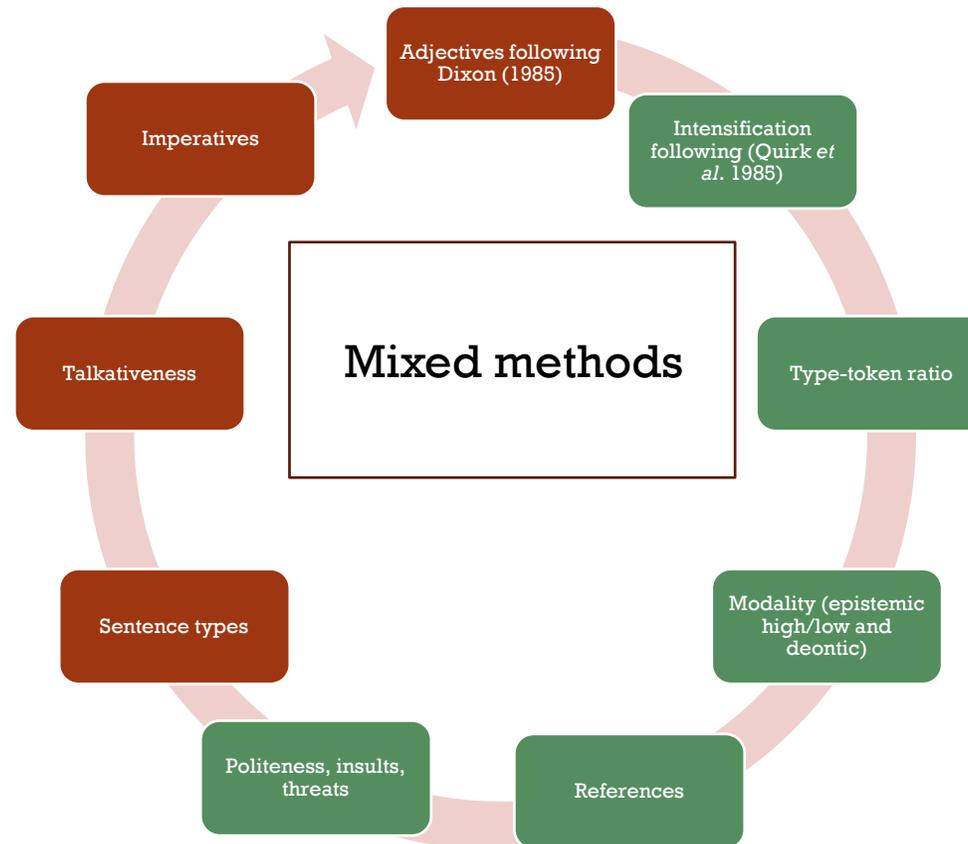- ❖ Localization & audiovisual translation

METHODOLOGY: DATA GATHERING AND SELECTION

- **6 characters selected** → determined by the number of tokens in the game

- **100 segments per character for the game and all for the films** (songs excluded): Excel sheets. **Audio + dubbing data (FR)**: extracted from Disney+ with TamperMonkey (Biniok, 2024) + manual correction → highly time-consuming

- **Localization data**: extracted with UnityAssetRipper. Cleaned with Regex and aligned, at sentence level, with LFAligner (+ manual correction).

- Total: 2300 segments

CRITERIA

Adjectives following Dixon (1985)

Intensification following (Quirk *et al.* 1985)

Type-token ratio

Modality (epistemic high/low and deontic)

References

Politeness, insults, threats

Sentence types

Talkativeness

Imperatives

Mixed methods

THREATS, POLITENESS AND INSULTS

	Nala	Scar	Moana	Maui	Anna	Kristoff
Politeness (game)	5(5)	1(1)	8(8)	8(8)	9(9)	12(12)
Politeness (film)	3(3)	4(3)	5(4)	4(4)	20(18)	0(0)
Insults & threats (game)	**0(0)**	**12(12)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**
Insults & threats (film)	**0(1)**	3(3)	**9(7)**	10(8)	**0(0)**	1(1)

- Scar's villainous side is exacerbated in the game, in stark contrast to the other characters (absolutely nothing)

- Women tend to be more polite in films, whereas in games the results are more even (with the exception of Scar)

- As far as films are concerned, the results are more nuanced than in the literature.

	Film (EN)	Film (FR)	Game (EN)	Game (FR)
Nala	**0,48**	0,47	**0,30**	0,31
Scar	**0,41**	0,42	**0,36**	0,34
Moana	**0,30**	0,31	**0,28**	0,32
Maui	**0,36**	0,35	**0,33**	0,35
Anna	**0,29**	0,31	**0,28**	0,29
Kristoff	**0,38**	0,40	**0,30**	0,32

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: TTR

- TTR systematically lower in the game than in the films.
- Results must be nuanced (number of tokens not homogeneous).
- E.g. Nala has a high score for films -> she doesn't talk much.
- However, this is still an indicator

(Scar, The Lion King 1994 : 00:40:33)

Yet, out of the ashes of this tragedy, we shall rise to greet the dawning of a new era... ...in which lion and hyena come together, in a great and glorious future!

Sachant que malgré notre infinie douleur, nous nous relèverons pour saluer l'avènement d'une ère nouvelle dans laquelle les lions et les hyènes s'uniront pour ériger l'avenir en un glorieux édifice.

(Scar, Gameloft 2023)

Well, {PlayerName}, your neighbors have earned a respite from my carnivorous appetite.

Eh bien, {PlayerName}, tes voisins ont gagné un répit de la part de mon appétit carnassier.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: INTENSIFICATION

As Lakoff's notion of intensification is imprecise, we have adopted the typology of Quirk *et al.* (1985)

Intensification: "an intensifying subjunct indicates a point on an abstractly conceived intensity scale; and the point indicated may be relatively low or relatively high." (ibid.: 589)

- Systematically **higher use of intensifiers in the game** than in the film

- In the game, **women intensify (*boosters*) more** than men ($\chi 2(1)$ =16.154, p < 0.05)

- Often translated with cognates

- Losses in both media, but for different reasons:

- more omissions in the dubbing

  *So you're not **at all** afraid of her?*

  Vous n'avez donc pas peur d'elle ?
  (Kristoff, Frozen 2013 : 00:51:04)

- In the game, there are omissions, but also shifts between functions of degree and emphasis (epistemic)
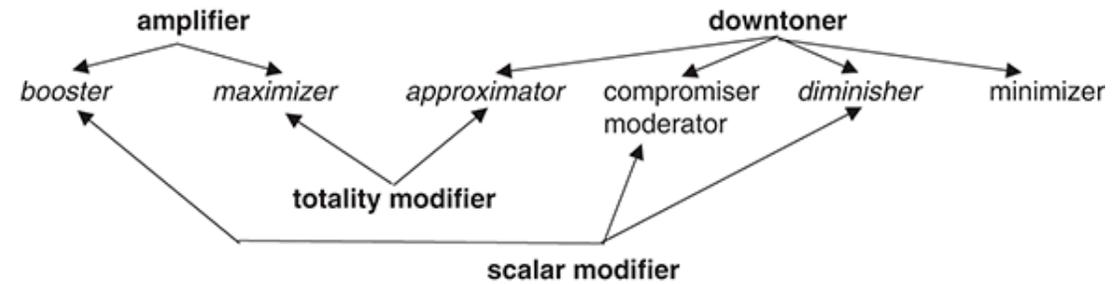
  It's **very** cool.

  C'est définitivement cool.

Schéma de Claridge *et al.* (2024), basé sur Quirk *et al.* (1985).

	Nala	Scar	Moana	Maui	Anna	Kristoff
Maximizer (film)	0(0)	1(1)	1(2)	0(1)	0(0)	2(1)
Maximizer (game)	1(1)	3(3)	1(1)	2(2)	1(1)	1(1)
Booster (film)	**5(2)**	**4(1)**	**5(4)**	**4(3)**	**8(17)**	**4(5)**
Booster (game)	**23(20)**	**13(10)**	**17(15)**	**12(11)**	**15(11)**	**7(7)**
Approximator (film)	0(0)	1(0)	0(1)	1(0)	1(1)	1(1)
Approximator (game)	0(0)	1 (1)	0(0)	1(2)	0(0)	1(1)
Compromizer (film)	1(0)	1(0)	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	1(2)
Compromizer (game)	1(0)	5 (1)	1(4)	5(3)	2 (2)	8(6)
Minimizer (film)	0(0)	1(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Minimizer (game)	0(0)	2 (1)	0(0)	0 (1)	0(0)	1(1)
Relative frequency (game)	**14,3‰ (10‰)**	**13,7‰ (6,9‰)**	**11,7‰ (10,1‰)**	**11,2‰ (8,4‰)**	**12,6‰ (10,1‰)**	**11 ,3 ‰ (7,5‰)**
Relative frequency (film)	**12,6‰ (4‰)**	**7,4 ‰ (1,7‰)**	**4,3 ‰ (5,1‰)**	**3,1‰ (1,6‰)**	**4,6 ‰ (9,2‰)**	**8 ‰ (7,5‰)**

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: MODALITY

Lakoff's notion of lexical hedges covers the notion of uncertainty, which corresponds to a form of epistemic modality.

Modality "refers to opinion or judgment of the speaker on the content and speech function of the clause." (Suhani, 2011: 157).

➡️ This concept is very broad and requires some reframing

➡️ Categorization into two sets, as in Biber *et al.* (2021).

➡️ Here, this concept covers various syntactic categories (adjectives, verbs, modals, etc.) (Van Linden, 2019)

Deontic modality: obligation & necessity

Epistemic modality: certainty & uncertainty

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: MODALITY

	Nala	Scar	Moana	Maui	Anna	Kristoff
Epistemic modality						
Certainty (film)	7(7)	10(9)	16(12)	16(15)	20(18)	8(8)
Certainty (game)	**21(21)**	**27(26)**	**24(22)**	**25(23)**	**17(17)**	**21(20)**
Uncertainty (film)	1(1)	2(2)	6(6)	5(5)	9(9)	4(3)
Uncertainty (game)	**22(18)**	**18(18)**	**15(15)**	**13(13)**	**11(11)**	**19(17)**
Relative frequency (film)	16,7‰ (16,1‰)	11,1‰ (9,4‰)	13,5‰ (10,3‰)	12,9‰ (10,5‰)	15,6‰ (13,5‰)	10,6‰ (9,1‰)
Relative frequency (game)	22,4‰ (18,5‰)	25,7‰ (19‰)	24‰ (18,7‰)	21,1‰ (16‰)	22,2‰ (18,9‰)	23,8‰ (19,5‰)
Deontic modality						
Necessity (film)	0(0)	1(1)	6(4)	3(5)	2(1)	3(2)
Necessity (game)	5(5)	5(5)	9(9)	5(5)	9(9)	6(6)
Obligation (film)	0(0)	2(2)	4(4)	2(2)	2(0)	3(2)
Obligation (game)	2(2)	4(3)	3(3)	4(3)	2(2)	4(4)
Relative frequency (film)	0‰ (0‰)	2,7‰ (2,5‰)	6,1‰ (4,6‰)	4,3‰ (3,7‰)	3,7‰ (2,8‰)	5,3‰ (3‰)
Relative frequency (game)	4,2‰ (3,3‰)	5,1‰ (3,4‰)	7,3‰ (6,1‰)	4,8‰ (3,1‰)	6,8‰ (5,7‰)	6‰ (5,4‰)

As with intensification, there are variations between the two media:

- More epistemic modality in games than in films, almost twice as much.

- A lot of omissions in the game, more than in the films, despite the constraints

- Difficult to draw any conclusions concerning gender differences

- A little more deontic modality in the game (linked to quests?).

➡ Raise the question of the perception of the characters (more or less assertive).

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The aim of this analysis was to analyze the potential retransmission of references (and their translation).

➡️ Some attempts

➡️ But, major localization mistakes

    ➡️ Misunderstanding and unidiomatic segments.

Possible explanation: *post-editese* in game localization (Copet & De Faria Pires, 2023).
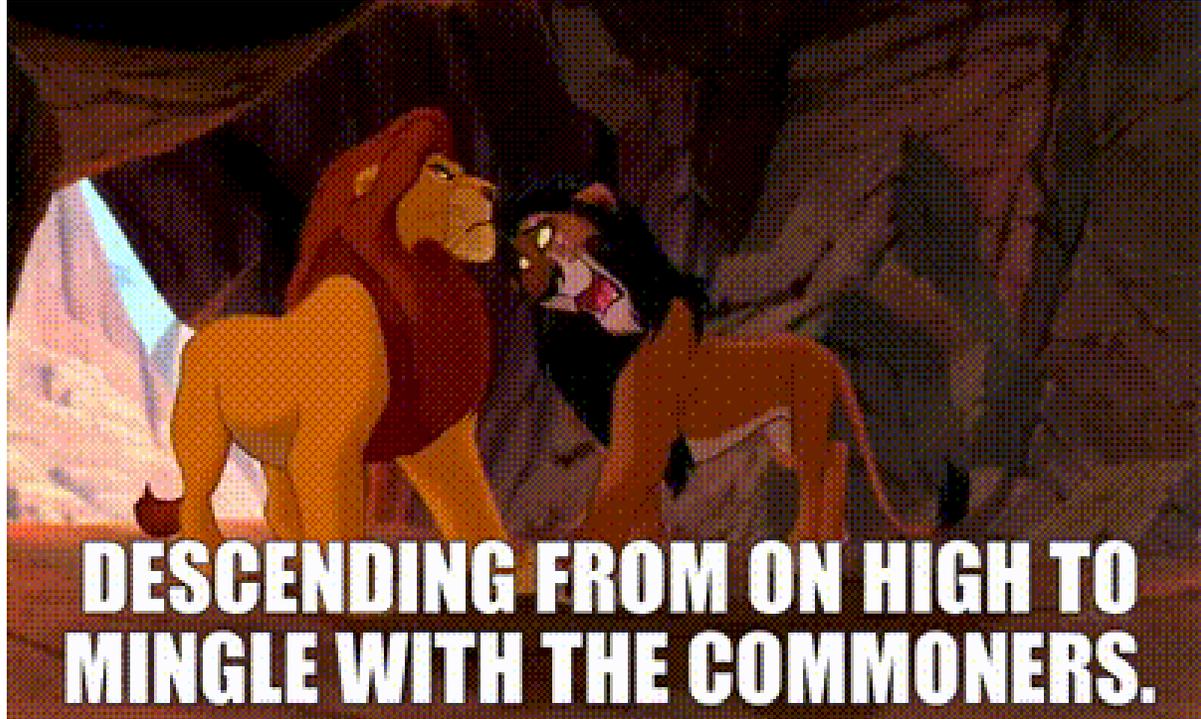
(Scar, The Lion King 1994 : 00:05:49)

Source : Why! If it isn't my big brother **descending from on high to mingle with the commoners.**

Target : Tiens ! Mon grand-frère bien aimé **a quitté son royaume pour se mêler aux communs des mortels**.

(Scar, Disney Dreamlight Valley 2023)

Source: **Descending from on high to mingle with the commoners**?

Target: On descend de sa tour d'ivoire pour se mêler aux roturiers ?

SOME EXAMPLES

(Simba, The Lion King 1994, 00:47:13)

Slimy, yet satisfying

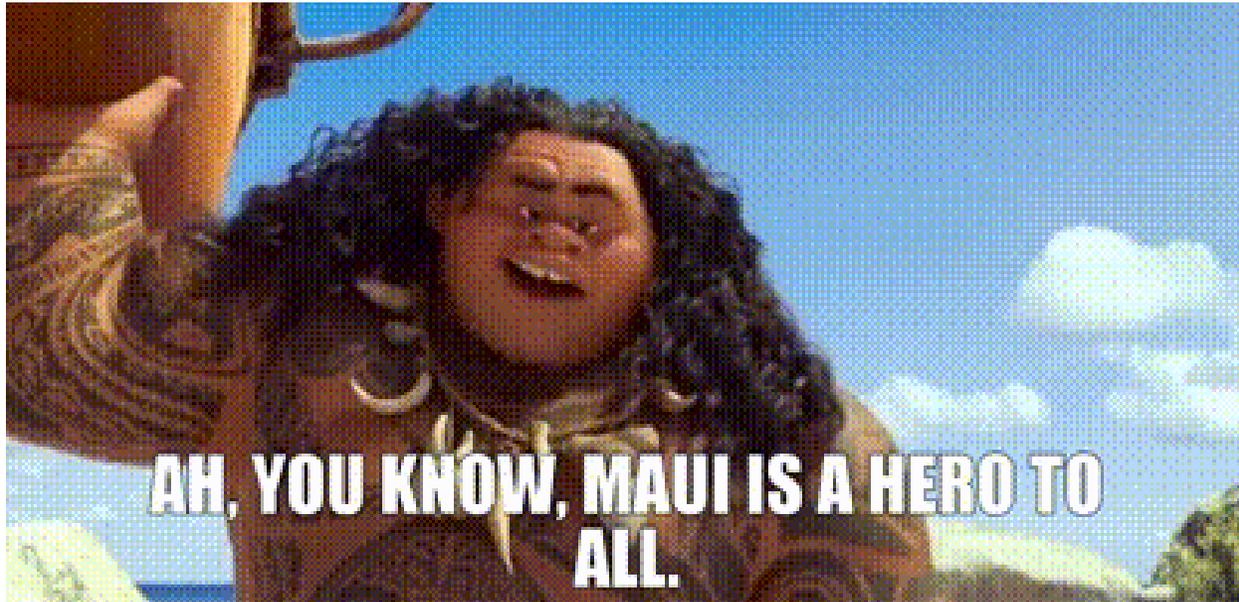**Un peu gluant, mais appétissant** !

(Nala, Gameloft 2023)

I promise you'll find them **slimy yet satisfying**.

Je te promets que tu trouveras ça gluant, mais satisfaisant.

SOME EXAMPLES

(Maui, Moana 2016 : 00:37:27)

Ah, you know, Maui is **a hero to all**.

Non, Maui est **l'idole de tous**.

(Maui, Gameloft 2023)

Maui, shapeshifter, demigod of the wind and sea, **hero to all**.

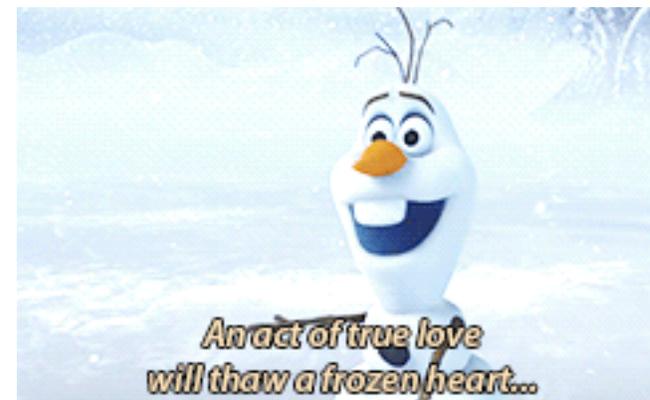Maui, métamorphe, demi-dieu du vent et de la mer, héros pour tous.

SOME EXAMPLES

(Grand Pabbie, Frozen 2013 : 01:09:04)

[…] only **an act of true love** can thaw a frozen heart.

[…] seul **un geste d'amour tendre et sincère** peut dégeler un cœur de glace

(Anna, Gameloft 2022)

An **act of true love** thawed a broken heart.
Un acte de véritable amour a dégelé un cœur brisé

SOME EXAMPLES

Limits:

❖ This research does not take the multimodality into account

❖ Different media → is it really comparable?

❖ Lack of coherence (in the game) due to textual non-linearity.

❖ Very few characters analyzed

Further research:

❖ Extend the research to other languages

❖ Broaden the parameters of analysis, in particular by analyzing speech acts (Searle, 1969) or verbs in accordance with Halliday and Mathiessen's typology (2004).

❖ Report on the various corrections through patches → study the process

❖ Reception

LIMITATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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