

TRANSMEDIA ADVENTURES: A BILINGUAL EXPLORATION OF DISNEY CHARACTERS' DIALOGUES IN FILMS AND VIDEO GAMES

Disney and the Multi-Media-Verse: Disney's Engagement with
Multimedia, Space and Culture (25 June 2025)

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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

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 per 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
Mau	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:

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

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.

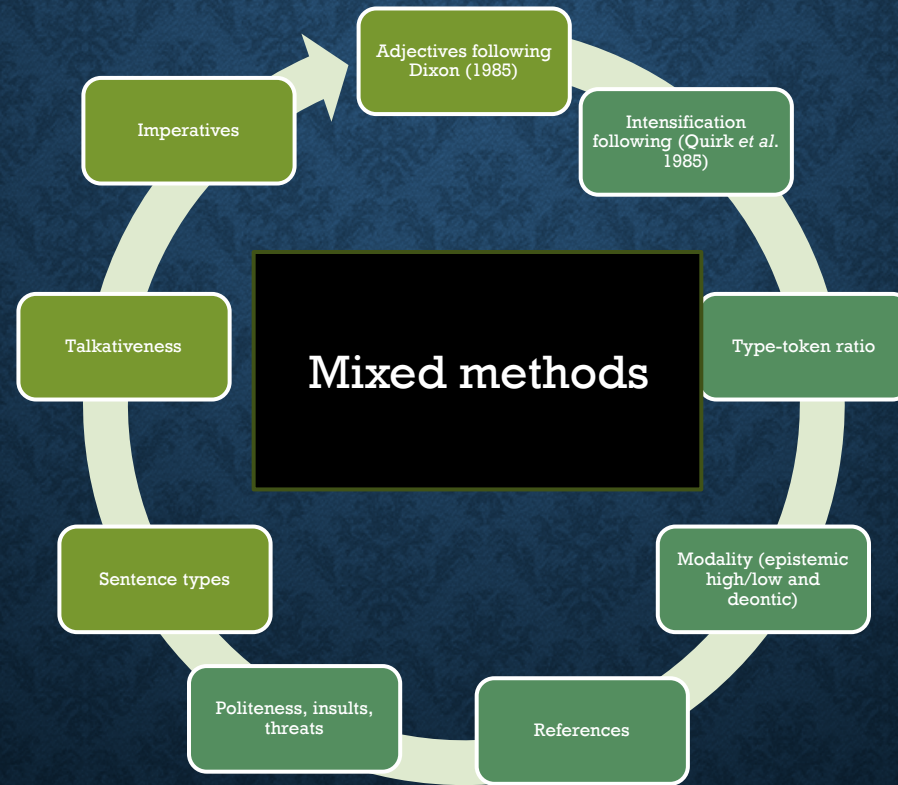
4) Examine dubbing and localization data from a translation perspective and determine whether references to the original works are present and correctly localized.



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 LFAigner (+ manual correction).
- Total: 2300 segments

CRITERIA



THREATS, POLITENESS AND INSULTS

- 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.

	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)

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: TTR

	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

- 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

Intensification: “an intensifying subjunct indicates a point on an abstractly conceived intensity scale; and the point indicated may be relatively low or relatively high.” (Quirk et al., 1985 : 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)

	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 (=translation in this context) mistakes

Misunderstanding and unidiomatic segments.

Possible explanation: *post-edite* in game localization (Copet & De Faria Pires, 2023; Copet, in press).



QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Recent years: Machine translation = quality ++ → post-editing (PE) as a professional practice (Cui et al., 2023: 1)

PE = "the activity of revising a text that has been translated automatically by a Machine Translation system" (O'Brien, 2021: 177)

Also in the field of game localization (Mangiron, 2018)

Problem: post-edited = "the unique features that set machine translated post-edited texts apart from human-translated texts" (Castilho & Resende, 2022 : 1)



SOME EXAMPLES

(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 au commun des mortels.**

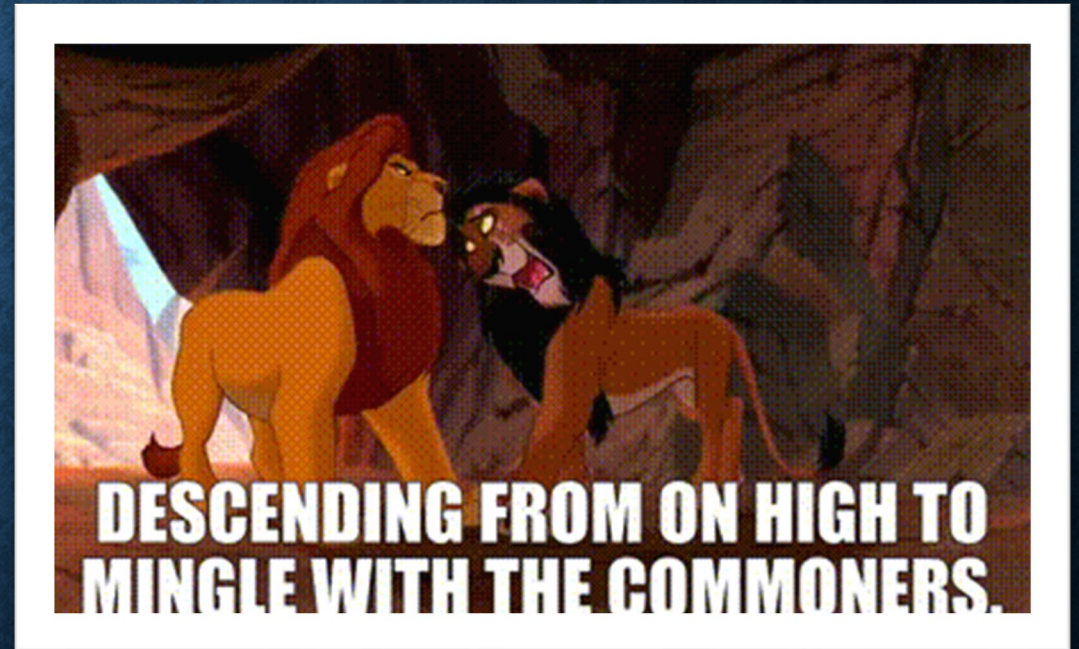
Literal translation: *left his kingdom to mingle with ordinary mortals*

(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 ?**

Literal translation: *Do you come down from your ivory tower to mingle with the commoners?*



SOME EXAMPLES

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

Slimy, yet satisfying

**Un peu gluant, mais
appétissant !**

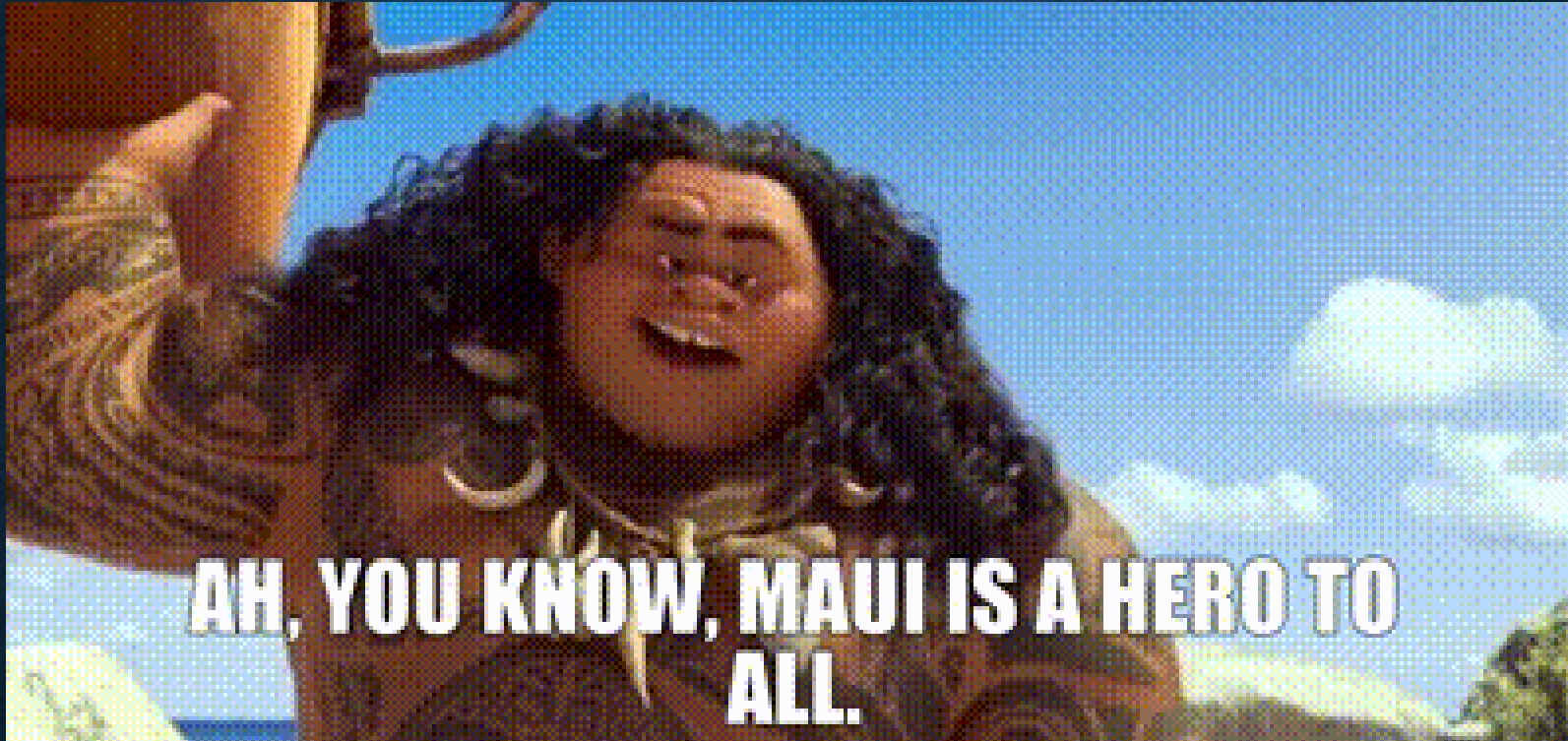
Literal translation : A bit slimy, but
appetising!

(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)

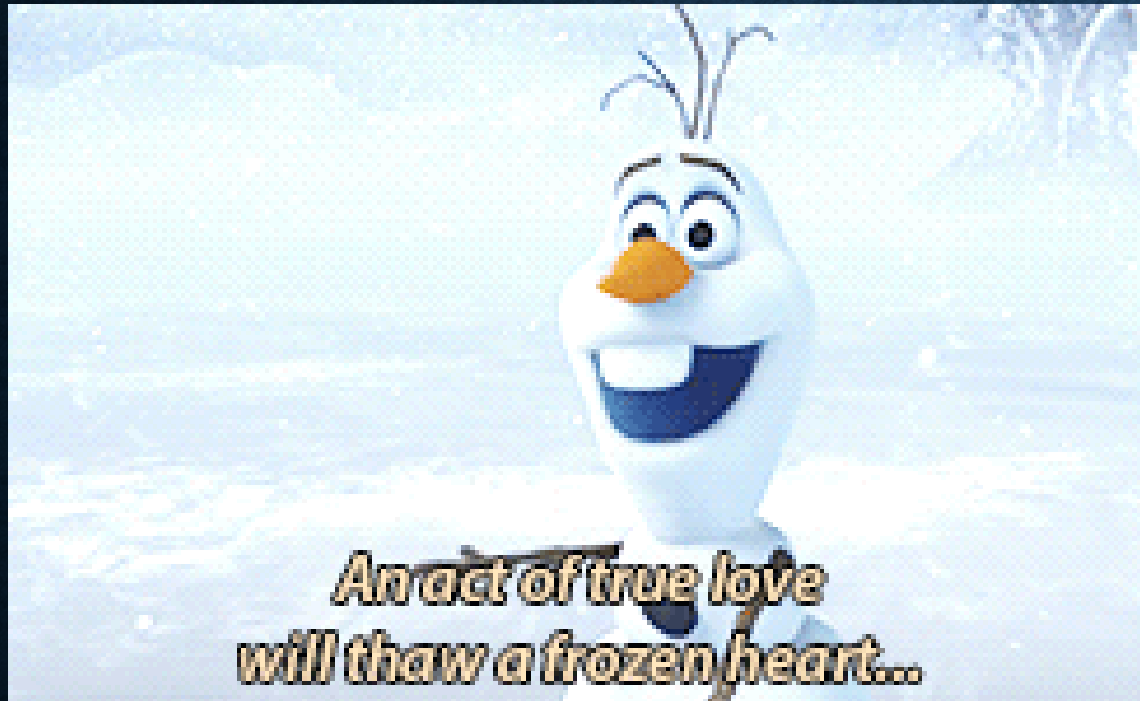
Ah, you know, Maui is **a hero to all.**

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

Literal translation: [...] a tender and sincere gesture of love

(Anna, Camelot 2022)

An **act of true love** thawed a broken heart.

Un **acte de véritable amour** a dégelé un cœur brisé

Literal translation: act of true love

LIMITATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

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

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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