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Instances of formulaic language in *Disney* movies:

A case study on idioms and conversational routines

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*Life is far too important
to be taken seriously*

-Oscar Wilde-



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Introduction

The Walt Disney Company's cultural products have had a great influence on popular culture since the 1930s and have been an inspiration for generations all over the world ever since. For many, including myself, the princes, princesses and fantastical creatures of Disney's animated fairy tales have become symbols of their youth. Seeing the films gives rise to a feeling of nostalgia and they become a *memento* of one's childhood world. But what kind of world is this? Why is it so appealing to children and adults alike? How do scriptwriters manage to achieve such an effect? These preliminary questions came to my mind after seeing *Frozen*, a movie that I found very interesting and also suitable for a grown-up audience, which thus sparked off my interest in carrying out a study based on Disney movies.

A preliminary review of the topic of Disney movies and language allowed me to reflect upon different aspects. Firstly, in line with Di Giovanni's (2003) studies on Disney movies, I was struck by the way in which Disney scriptwriters manage to create vivid descriptions of cultural otherness by fitting exotic references into ordinary situations (where the referring culture is the American one) in order to create a sort of 'illusion of reality'. Consequently, Disney movies manage to mix realism and fiction, resulting appealing to a very wide audience. Secondly, Lippi-Green's (1997) sociolinguistic study on Disney movies made me ponder about the fact that Disney movies are so successful that they have become a sort of 'pedagogical instrument' that provides children with a series of stereotypes (also by means of language manifestations, such as the usage of peculiar accents) that contribute to building their *Weltanschauung*¹. Overall, what I found really interesting and inspiring in both studies was the functional usage of language, either to perpetuate stereotypes or to depict cultural otherness.

Moreover, what also makes Disney movies an inspiring object of analysis is the duplicity of their nature. In fact, Disney stories are palatable for both adults and children. An example that immediately comes to mind is the last Disney

¹ A comprehensive world view (or worldview) is the fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual or society encompassing the entirety of the individual or society's knowledge and point of view.

release *Frozen*. On the surface level, this movie, although somehow unconventional due to the absence of a true love affair, depicts a light and humorous story that amuses and entertains children. However, at the same time, the story allegorically tackles a wide range of themes such as liberty from society constraints, feminism, racism and so on. This example reveals the multi-layered nature of Disney movies, which is likely to be reflected in language.

To summarise, I believe that what I have discussed so far shows that Disney movies provide a very thought-provoking basis for a linguistic analysis due to their unique nature. Furthermore, I would like to observe that, being movies, they have a complex and mixed nature: on the one hand, they are an instance of scripted language, i.e. one that mirrors spontaneous speech and conversational dynamics although carefully planned in advance; on the other hand, in order to be believable and amusing, they try to closely adhere to the norms of everyday interaction.

As a result, this study will be based on a self-compiled corpus of Disney animated movies. In chapter one I will provide some general information about the Walt Disney film industry and the study carried out by Lippi-Green (1997) on the language used in Disney movies. In addition, I will introduce the movies I aim to focus on by distinguishing the sources used by Disney scriptwriters to build their stories. In chapter two, instead, I will describe the rationale of my main corpus and subcorpora. Moreover, I will also discuss the issue of film language as an imitation of spontaneous speech.

Since the object of my analysis is a specific type of spoken discourse, I decided to focus on a characteristic of language that makes up for a consistent part of oral production: language formulaicity. Formulaic language quite recently (starting from the second half of 20th century) became a main topic of investigation in different branches of language studies, thanks to its pervasive use and to its relevant implications in various domains. Firstly, from a cognitive point of view, formulaic sequences are interesting, for example in the way in which they are stored and retrieved by the human brain (Cacciari & Tabossi 1993 *inter alia*). Secondly, in pedagogical studies (Wray 2000; Wood 2010 *inter alia*), they are an object of reflection in EFL teaching and learning. Finally, from a social perspective, they ease the management of conversation by covering very important social

functions (e.g. greetings) in an 'economic' and predictable way (cf. Bonsignori, Bruti, Masi 2012 *inter alia*). Chapter three will be devoted to introducing the concept of formulaic language and will bridge the two following chapters, which are devoted to different instances of formulaicity in discourse.

As the introduction to chapter three will show, the domain of formulaic language is very broad and includes a wide range of expressions of different nature. Some of them are clearly more fixed and 'frozen', e.g. idioms, rhymes and set phrases, while others, instead, despite being highly formulaic, display a higher degree of flexibility, e.g. collocations and conversational routines. Consequently, I decided to focus on idioms and some conversational routines, as examples of two different degrees of 'fixity'.

As far as idioms are concerned, what mainly caught my interest is the double nature of their meaning (literal and figurative) (cf. Zabalbeascoa 2012; Pedersen 2015) and thus the possible consequences and functions of this clash in Disney movies, whose main target audience is made up of children, who perhaps have an incomplete understanding of such expressions. Chapter four will be entirely devoted to their analysis.

Conversely, in chapter five I will focus on conversational routines because of their key role in discourse as indicators of interactional dynamics between speakers, in terms of status/role and power/solidarity (Brown & Gilman 1960) and also of polite behaviour (cf. Bruti 2013 on politeness). Moreover, their high degree of flexibility makes them very interesting phenomena in that not only do they change diachronically, but they also vary according to the context and, in the film domain, to the movie genre (cf. Bonsignori & Bruti 2014 on American TV series). However, since the field of conversational routines (Coulmas 1981) is very broad and includes many different speech acts such as greetings, thanking, apologies and phatic talk, I will limit my analysis to greeting and parting forms only.

The purpose of this study is thus mainly two-fold. On one hand, I aim to analyse, classify and study the usage and functions of two different instances of language formulaicity (i.e. idioms and salutations), in a sample of Disney animated feature movies, shot from 1937 to 2013.

On the other hand, my second purpose is more directly linked to the filmic nature of my corpus. In fact, I also want to reflect upon how the linguistic elements I have considered in my analysis contribute to making Disney movies palatable for both adults and children and, on a more specific level, I aim to expand Lippi-Green's (1997) claim that Disney scriptwriters use language as a tool to depict characters. In the light of this assumption, I will ascertain whether some formulaic and slightly marginal elements of social ritual such as salutations (but also idiomatic expressions) contribute – and if so to what extent - to the portrayal of characters. Finally, since the DNM corpus includes animation movies of different genres, I will also unveil how they impact the usage of the speech acts I intend to consider.

To conclude, as far as the methodology is concerned, I will base my investigation on empirical evidence provided by quantitative results retrieved by means of corpus linguistic tools. However, since my research involves the investigation of socio-pragmatic factors and situation-based meanings, I suppose that automatic data processing (via corpus analysis software) may not always be sufficiently accurate and results will need to be integrated by a qualitative evaluation of the data. For instance, speakers sometimes do not perform speech acts but talk about them, thus using language meta-communicatively (Aijmer & Rühlemann 2015 on corpus pragmatics), or they may also use some expressions with a different function that is not related to the current analysis (e.g. “morning” occurring in the adverbial form “in the morning” and not as a salutation). Of course, these examples are not the only cases where corpus linguistics' tools may not reveal accurate enough, but they only want to acknowledge this issue. Hence, the results of automatic corpus queries will suggest some research trends that will need to be integrated and evaluated manually. More specifically, I will adopt a mixed approach for the analyses I want to carry out: so, for example, the analysis of idioms in chapter four, will be mainly corpus-driven, i.e. I will not start my analysis with a pre-established idea of the function I want to investigate and confirm with the evidence from my corpus, but I will query my corpus and my subcorpora, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to discover to what extent idiomatic expressions are employed in Disney movies and their main function. Conversely, regarding conversational routines, I will adopt a corpus-

based approach, that is to say I will use my corpus to verify a pre-established supposition (cf. Tognini-Bonelli. 2001 on corpus linguistics). As a result, Laver's assumption (1981) on the fact that linguistic routines satisfy the need for politeness in everyday interactions and Gilman & Brown's (1960) tenets on conversation dynamics will provide the basis for my data evaluation. Finally, I would like to underline the fact that these analyses will also take into account, when relevant, the multimodal nature of the audio-visual texts that make up my corpus, by focusing not only on the film script, but also on the movie scene in its semiotic complexity (including kinesics and gestures, music, sounds, etc.).

I. Disney films: preliminary remarks

There is something special and unique about the kind of entertainment that Walt Disney created that no one ever been able to reproduce: the warmth he puts in your heart, the beauty, the humour. At some point, Walt Disney touched all our lives

John Lasseter, chief creative advisor
for Walt Disney Animation Studios

1. The world of Walt Disney: nine decades of success

The Walt Disney Company is one of the most famous film factories in the world, whose characters and products have entertained and delighted generations of people for decades. Without any doubt, much of the success of Disney productions worldwide is due to its founder, Walt Elias Disney.

Walt Disney (1901-1966) occupies a particular place in the heart of the Americans and is considered a symbol of the 'American Dream', as he himself represents the hard-working, perseverant American, and a lot can be learned from studying his life. Despite his very humble background, during his lifetime 'Uncle Walt' succeeded in building up one of the biggest companies ever in the history of the medias, one that in 2013 declared a net income of \$5,68 billion. Disney's company transformed the entertainment industry into what it has become today. However, the road to such a huge success has been very long. Even though Walt was a very creative and talented young man that studied to become a cartoonist during his free time, his first attempts in the field of short-films in Kansas City were rather unsuccessful; in fact, he decided to move to Hollywood with his older brother Roy, where they created their own small studio. It is here that he invented the character that became one of the icons of post-war America: Mickey Mouse.

This new character was the protagonist of a short animated movie, *Steamboat Willie*, released in 1928. This was not only the first Mickey Mouse-film released to an audience, but also the first cartoon ever produced with synchronised sound (Schickel 1968). Its success was enormous, and resulted in a whole series of Mickey Mouse cartoons. Anyway, Walt Disney did not want to stop at that stage, and his success continued to grow along with the urge to improve the quality and the methods of film production. In fact, in 1937, he released *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, his first full-colour animated feature film. Over the next decades, even though the Second World War caused a financial downturn, Disney released more and more successful films including *Pinocchio* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), *Bambi* (1942), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *101 Dalmatians* (1961), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1959), and more. So, when Walt Disney passed away in 1966, the company had reached the peak as one of the most successful film studios in the world. Thus, after Walt's death, the company continued to produce successful movies such as *The Jungle's Book* (1967), where for the first time actors and musicians were carefully chosen to cast the voices of different characters on the grounds of how well known they already were among the audience (Lippi-Green 1997: 92).

Although the company never knew an age of crisis and continued to produce movies at regular intervals, between the 1970s and the 1980s it reached a deadlock, as none of the films released in this period had the same popularity as the earlier films. Nevertheless, in the late 1980s and the early 1990s the firm got its renaissance, with massive successes like *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), and *The Lion King* (1994). From these films onwards, the success of Disney animated films has continued. In the mid-nineties, the company went into partnership with Pixar Animation Studios, with which it released the first computer-animated feature film, *Toy Story*, in 1995. Nowadays, the Walt Disney Company is still producing first-grade successes, such as *Frozen* (2013), a quite innovative film that won two Academy Awards, and with his worldwide total income of \$1,274 billion became the highest-grossing animated film of all the times.

2. *Disney movies and language*

So far, the most renowned linguistic study on Disney films is the one carried out by Rosina Lippi-Green (1997). Her work, centred on characters' accents, stresses the fact that animated films entertain, but, at the same time, they also intend to teach children to associate specific features and life styles with specific social groups, especially by means of language variation (Lippi-Green 1997: 85). One of the most interesting finding in this study is that the overwhelming majority of characters speaks Mainstream US English and only a few speak with a different accent. This should sound quite obvious since the Walt Disney Company is American, but what is interesting is that she notices that the usage of a specific accent very significantly contributes to a portrayal of a character. She thus highlights that positive characters most of the times speak with a standard American accent, whereas antagonists tend to have either a British English accent or a foreign one. There is ample evidence of this in the first Disney's movie, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), where the Evil Queen speaks with a perfect RP accent and the heroine, Snow White, speaks with a strong Standard American accent. Also, Lippi-Green comments on the fact that characters that logically should not speak with an American accent, such as Aladdin, adopt this variety, whereas the guards who chase him use a foreign Arabian accent, even though they share the same Arabian origins as Aladdin.

Therefore, Lippi-Green finds evidence of the presence of some patterns between the usage of certain accents and the character itself, which instil stereotypes into the audience. Although her research has a different purpose compared to mine, the sociological study carried out by Lippi-Green sparked off my investigation into the relationship between Disney movies and language.

Another study on the language of Disney animated movies that paved the way to mine is the one conducted by Elena Di Giovanni (2003). Her work focuses on the predominant role of language in Disney movies to depict cultures that are distant in time and space. She shows that Disney filmscripts are scattered with cultural-specific references (e.g. "Salam" instead of "Hello" or exclamations like "by Allah" instead of "by God" in *Aladdin*), with the aim of reinforcing the level of 'illusion of reality' and creating a balance between realism and fiction. This study is

quite revealing and inspiring because it shows how Disney filmscripts are multi-layered and planned to be entertaining and accessible to a large audience

3. Overview of the data

The present study is based on eight Disney animated feature films, from the past eight decades (amongst the 67 shot until December 2013). Table 1 below lists the movies that are the focus of this work (hereafter referred to as the DNM corpus) together with the year of release (in the USA), the film director(s) and the running time.

<i>Movies</i>	<i>Year of release</i>	<i>Director(s)</i>	<i>Running time</i>
<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	1937	David Hand	83 minutes
<i>101 Dalmatians</i>	1961	Clyde Geronimi Hamilton Luske Wolfgang Reitherman	79 minutes
<i>Robin Hood</i>	1973	Wolfgang Reitherman	89 minutes
<i>Aladdin</i>	1992	Ron Clements John Musker	90 minutes
<i>Pocahontas</i>	1994	Mike Gabriel Eric Goldberg	81 minutes
<i>Hercules</i>	1997	Ron Clements John Musker	89 minutes
<i>The Incredibles</i>	2004	Brad Bird	115 minutes
<i>Frozen</i>	2013	Chris Buck	102 minutes

Table 1 Movies in the DNM corpus

On a surface level, it may be observed that I did not select any movie from the 1980s. This choice was deliberate, since I decided to focus my study only on the movies that are included in the Disney Classics Collection. The study which I relied upon (Robb 2014) in order to establish which movies were actually part of Walt Disney Classics did not include any film from the 1980s since, in this period, the company came to a standstill and did not produce any great blockbuster that could be ascribed to this category until 1989, with the release of one of its greatest successes of all times, *The Little Mermaid*.

4. Intersemiotic translation: an overview

In most cases Disney stories are not original but they are adapted from already existing literary texts, of a different nature. Roman Jakobson (1959) defines the passage from a literary work to a film as a particular kind of translation, which he calls intersemiotic translation. Like any other kind of translation, this adaptation needs to follow a strategy that rationally selects the most distinctive components of a text and those that can instead be sacrificed. The scriptwriter has to make a series of decisions aimed at finding the main diegetic elements he wants to convey, also in relation to the cultural context onto which the original text is projected and to the movies' ideal target audience. As for Disney films, the adaptation into the receiving culture is very effective and often results in the creation of a sort of hybrid culture, where exotic and common references co-occur in order to create a sense of fictional reality. For example, in *Hercules*, the satyr Philoctetes introduces the city of Thebes as 'The Big Olive', by adapting to the culture in which the movie is set, the worldwide famous expression that refers to New York as 'The Big Apple', in that olives are associated with Greek cuisine.

In intersemiotic translations the selection of the parts to be translated and those that have to be eliminated is far more difficult, since the two media work in different ways and are not able to convey the same features. The main difference between films and literary works lies in the fact that literature is fixed in a written form, while a film is a multimodal medium, where the image is supported by the sound, in form of music and words. An audiovisual text conveys meaning along with different elements: the dialogue amongst characters, the physical setting, the

possible voice-overs, the musical score, the editing, the framing, lighting, coloration, perspective, the composition of the frame and, in the case of human voice, also timbre and intonation (Gambier 2003). In order to adapt for the screen a text, a rational subdivision of the original is inevitable to decide which salient elements of the text need to be mentioned.

The attitude towards cinematographic adaptation varies depending on the audience's relationship with the work of art. When famous novels are adapted, and the audience is already familiar with the story presented in the written work, the attitude towards the adaptation might be negative; in fact, 'traditionalists' believe that no film can reproduce the subtleties and complexities of the novel, since screenwriters are forced to simplify and to reduce the text to a manageable size. In order to avoid such a criticism, since the beginning, Walt Disney screenwriters have always tried to adapt stories with which the audience were not very familiar and the result was that Disney versions have become more appreciated and known than the original ones. *Snow White, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast* are some clear examples for which the average audience often does not know the original version of the story.

4.1 Criteria for movies selection and description of the sources

When selecting the movies to design the corpus (see table 1), I decided to take into account three different criteria of representativeness, i.e. diachronic, diaphasic and genre variation. Furthermore, all the films included in this study are adapted from different kinds of sources. In what follows, I will introduce the selected movies and give some information concerning their relation with the sources from which they were adapted.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Aladdin and *Frozen* are examples of the adaptations of fairy tales. The first one is based on a German fairy tale, *Schneewittchen*, from the collection *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, written by the Brothers Grimm in 1812. According to the principles of intersemiotic translation mentioned earlier we could observe that the original story has been adapted to be more suitable for the ideal target audience and culture of the early 20th century.

Hence, the main character, Snow White, who in the fairy tale is a naive girl, becomes the stereotype of the perfect bride-to-be, who takes care of the house, cooks, cleans and speaks in a very polite and well-mannered way. Moreover, in the film love replaces the gothic atmosphere of the original plot, in which the Evil Queen has cannibalistic inclinations. Thus, the intervention of the adapter is quite evident in the creation of characters; not only does he have to recreate their personality, especially when the original story does not provide details enough but also, he needs to mould their idiolect. As I said above, the original plot goes through some changes in order to achieve the main goal of the film producer that is to entertain a large audience, with special regard for young viewers. An example of this procedure is provided by the ending, which, in the original version, is quite macabre: the Evil Queen is forced to step into a pair of burning shoes and to dance until she drops dead, whereas in the Disney version she accidentally falls from a cliff. It is quite clear that Disney adapters remove the details that may distract the audience from the central message on which the company has built its fortune that is to create happiness.

From an overview of Disney production, we can notice that, when the source text is a fairy tale, Disney writers tend to adapt it by using a sort of standard pattern in which a high-born young woman goes on a quest to find an ideal husband, an evil character tries to sabotage her plans but a happy ending in which love overwhelms the forces of evil always follows. I have found evidence of this pattern in movies such as *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin* and *Tangled*, which are all adaptations of fairy tales.

Aladdin is the audiovisual adaptation of the Arab folktale *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp* from *One Thousand and One Nights*. This movie is part of the so-called Disney Renaissance (Robb 2014), a phase of innovation of the company during which the classical pattern I have described above is slightly updated to catch up with the necessities of a more modern society, and to promote equal opportunities for men and women. In *Aladdin* there is a present-day heroine, Jasmine, who is provided with a stronger character and a big sense of independence that is reflected also in the way she speaks: she is not afraid of interrupting, giving commands and being impolite when necessary. This movie is also very interesting

because it opens up the current of setting Disney films in a foreign culture; in fact, this story takes place in a fictional Arabian city, Agrabah, whose sense of otherness is depicted also, at a linguistic level, by scattering some character's speeches with a series of particular interjections such as "By Allah", "Praise Allah" that recall a foreign culture. The result is the creation of a hybrid culture, where American values are mixed with the so-called 'Other' (Di Giovanni 2003).

The last Disney's release, *Frozen*, somehow challenges the aforementioned features: it is an exception to the pattern of prototypical heroines I have described so far. The source text, *Snedronningen* (1844) by Hans Christian Andersen, is a rather ambiguous and dark fairy tale: it revolves around the wicked Queen of the Snow, a character who cannot be easily translated into an animated movie. Thus, screenwriters decided to distance themselves from the original story and they created a new kind of heroine, very different from Andersen's queen: Elsa. She is neither good nor evil and performs villainous deeds with the intention of defending herself and reaffirming her independence. Moreover, differently from the standard story pattern, in this film the heroine does not long to find her true love, but she seeks freedom from the constraints of society.

Apart from fairy tales, novels also provided Disney's adapters with inspiration for their feature-length movies. This is the case of great successes such as *Peter Pan*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *101 Dalmatians*, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* and many others. When a novel is turned into a screenplay, the screenwriter might have to face the challenge of meeting with the book fans' expectations: normally, readers tend to be quite 'conservative' and as already mentioned, novels' adaptations tend to be overridden. As opposed to that, in Disney movies, this trend seems to be less prominent and evidence of this is provided by the great success of these movies.

101 Dalmatians is an example of an adaptation of a children's novel, *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1956) by Dodie Smith. The result of this transposition is slightly different from that of fairy tales: it is in fact a comedy that shows an everyday situation where there is not a real hero or heroine, even though the opposition between good and evil characters still underlies the plot.

Even though Disney writers tend to adapt their stories from already extant texts of different nature, in some cases no written text lies at the heart of a movie. In this instance, since authors do not have to work with an original text, they have more scope to shape the story according to their will: this is why these movies are the most original ones, tackling a wide range of themes.

Examples of this type are widespread in Disney filmography; the first attempt to adapt a movie from a non-written text was in 1973, when the film company released *Robin Hood*, a movie inspired by the folk English legend of Robin Hood. This was the first Disney movie without Walt Disney's involvement, since he died in 1966. The story follows the adventures of Robin Hood, Little John and the inhabitants of Nottingham as they fight against the evil and stingy Prince John. What is peculiar to this adaptation is that characters are all anthropomorphic animals rather than people.

An interesting instance of adapting a movie from a non-literary text is *Pocahontas*, a slightly atypical work, far from the fairy-tale tones of other movies. Here Disney authors drew inspiration from the real story of a Native American woman from Virginia, Pocahontas (1595-1617), who met and married a young British explorer. This story is more 'committed' in comparison with the standard Disney pattern that I have illustrated. Although it still portrays the female figure as a rebel heroine, following the trend inaugurated by *Aladdin*, it tackles vital topics such as racial prejudices towards different ethnic groups.

Another movie whose story is almost originally designed by Disney authors is *Hercules*. Greek mythology inspires this movie and adapters made it more palatable for Disney viewers. Thus, a clear battle between good and evil is depicted and the final triumph of love is added to the myth. What makes this movie slightly innovative in comparison with the others is the clear web texture of humorous and sarcastic references to mass American culture that lies behind the characters and the setting.

In the same vein of *Hercules*, *The Incredibles* is another movie that does not adapt any written text: it is vaguely inspired by 1960s comical books and spy films, therefore, the film-maker had much freedom in creating the plot. This clearly permits to design a story that does not have to follow any precise pattern; in fact,

the story mixes together science fiction and the everyday life of a common American family, resulting in an unconventional comedy.

5. Conclusions

The pie chart below (Chart 1), created according to Disney Pictures filmography up to December 2013², shows that most of film scripts are adapted either from novels (32%) or fairy tales (28%) that are literary texts. This may lead to the conclusion that these kind of texts better suit Disney movie adaptation, perhaps because they already contain a great amount of information about characters, settings and the like; thus their audiovisual translation procedure may result easier. 13% of Disney movies derive from short stories, which are close to fairy tales but dealing with a wider range of topics, sometimes less suitable to satisfy adaptor's needs to create plots mainly orientated to children. A smaller part of films are totally original creations (9%). These movies are not based on any literary text, but are the result of the creativity of Disney authors. As Robb (2014) underlines, scriptwriters started to create original stories, without adapting an extant text, only after Walt Disney's demise in 1966.

The remainder of the chart illustrates some less frequent sources such as legends (6%), that are normally non-written texts and are part of folklore, or plays (6%) that are texts already designed to be performed, as a result, the adaption may be easier. Finally, one can remark that very rarely scriptwriters take inspiration from poems (2%) and musicals (2%).

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Disney_theatrical_animated_features

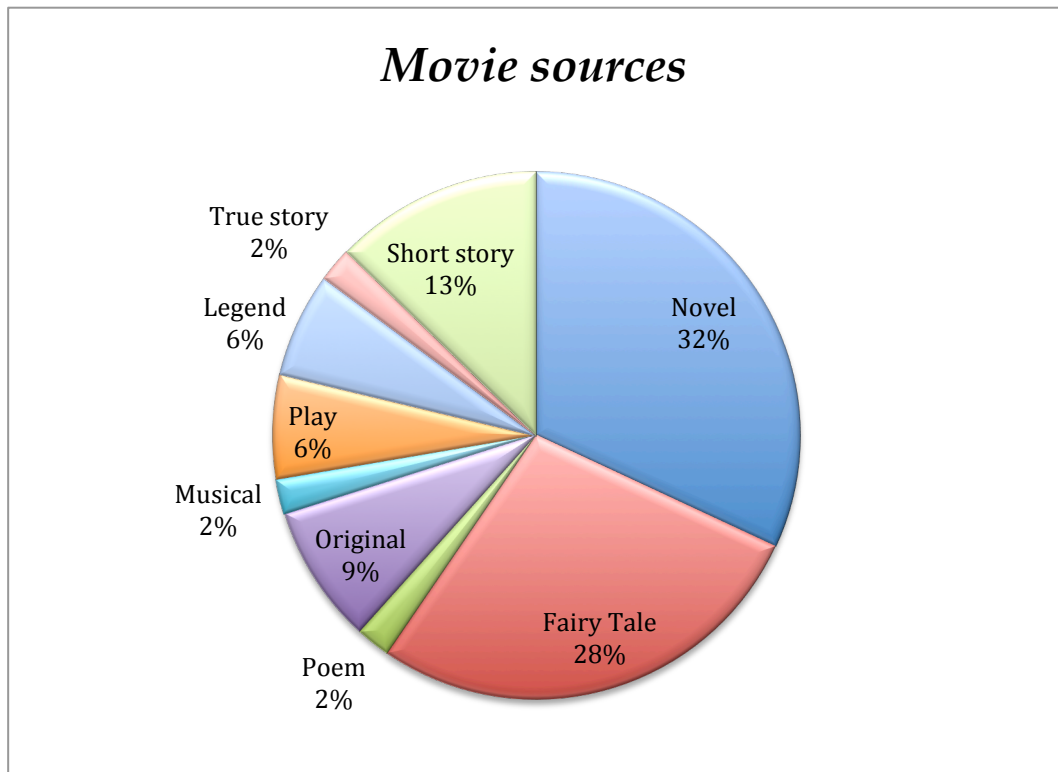
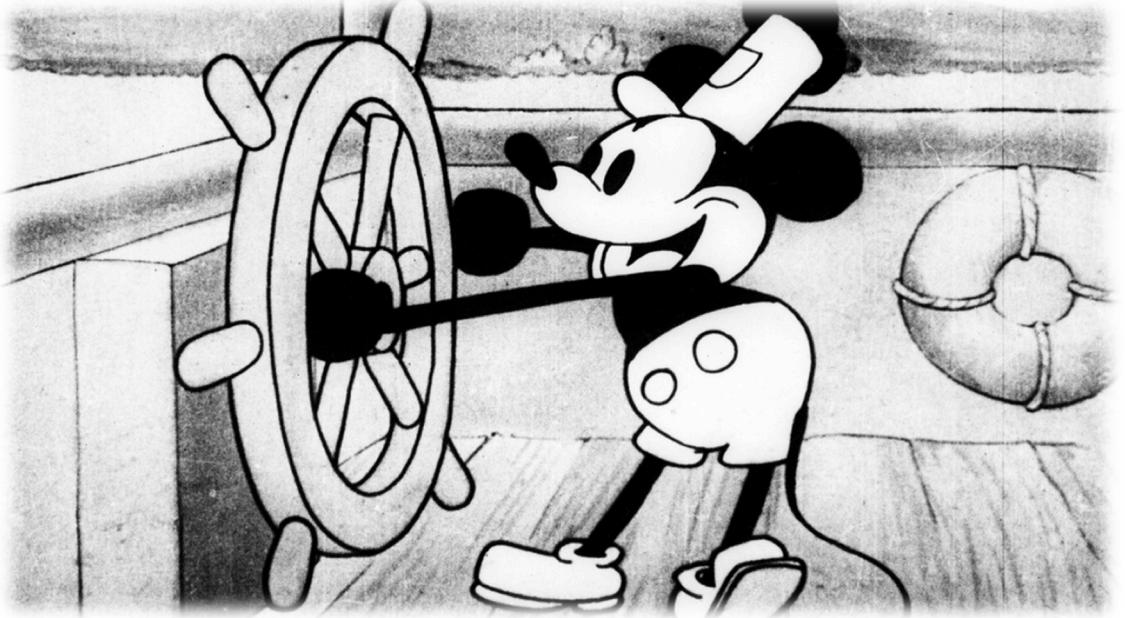


Chart.1 Sources of the movies in the DNM corpus

In conclusion, it can be noticed that no matter what the source is, Disney scriptwriters tend to rewrite the original text adapting it to the context in which they live. This is undoubtedly a way of enriching and making the source text more accessible and appealing to a large audience. Furthermore, it may be observed that the source text influences the genre of the deriving movie (e.g. fairy tales are normally adapted in movies set at court); instead, the most innovative and uncommon movies are adapted from unconventional or original sources (e.g. *The Incredibles*, *Pocahontas* and *Hercules* that are adapted either from original or outlandish stories).

³ This survey has been carried out on the basis of my own study of Disney filmography up to December 2013



I only hope that we don't lose sight of one thing - that it was all started by a mouse.

WALT DISNEY

II. Building a Corpus of spontaneous speech

There is no mode of action,
no form of emotion, that we
do not share with the lower
animals. It is only by
language that we rise above
them

Oscar Wilde

1. What is spontaneous speech?

Since my analysis is based on speech, in the following paragraphs I will briefly introduce its main features and how it is represented in filmscripts.

In dealing with the relationship between language and society, linguists have always come across the contrast between spoken and written language. However, since we live in what is called a literate society (Tannen 1987), which means that the majority of the population uses language both in a written and in a spoken form, this contrast is inevitable. Writing and speaking can be defined as two different modes of communication, as they are different ways of encoding linguistic meaning. In fact, as Tannen (1987) claims, language can be treated as a sort of tripartite model: there is a network of meanings that are encoded by means of a network of expressions. Consequently, these expressions can be uttered through different media; e.g. sound and sight, so speaking and writing can be considered two alternative outputs.

Nevertheless, we cannot exclusively say that writing and speaking are just alternative ways of doing the same thing; they are ways of doing different things in order to achieve different goals. For example, people separated by distance in space or time, who lack electronic means of communication, have no alternative but to write to each other, whereas people who interact by means of an electronic

device or face to face will use speech. Likewise, speech and writing are somehow complementary in that the former is not always able to express the same meaning that the latter is able to and vice versa. The substantial differences between the written and the spoken mode account for the fact that they cannot convey the same features.

As Biber highlights, there is no single boundary dividing all spoken texts from all written texts, but different genres, such as conversation, media broadcasts, and texts can be identified. In other words, the contrasts between spoken and written texts are not only a matter of mode, because, for example, we may have an informal letter, which is a written text with oral features, or an academic lecture, which is a spoken text with literary features. Thus, the divergence between oral and written language lies in the conception of “planned” or “unplanned” production of speech and writing (cf. Ochs 1979; Biber *et al.* 1999 *inter alia*).

Planned production includes written texts, such as novels, newspaper articles and so forth and speech based on writing, such as lectures, sermons or prepared speeches. Unplanned production, instead, includes conversation, *extempore* narration and *impromptu* discussions, but also writing activities such as composing personal emails, texts and writing on social networks. Some types of speech production can also be defined as “semi-planned”, for example, when speakers narrate events that they have described previously and for which they remember ready-made phrases and clauses. Hence, it is clear that the notions of planned and unplanned do not merely apply to written and oral production, but, more in general, we may assert that unplanned compositions (either written or oral) lack forethought and organisational preparation, whereas the planned ones are thought out and organised prior to being produced.

2. The language of filmscripts: how authentic and how spontaneous

The nature of movie scripts, between spontaneous and fictional orality, is still an open debate. Scripts can in fact be classified as texts that are carefully written to be performed and sound natural (cf. Bruti 2015 on multimodality): as the seminal study by Gregory & Carroll (1978: 42) suggests, in fact, they are “written-to-be-spoken-as-if-not-written”. Thus, they can be ascribed to planned production because of their scripted nature, but at the same time, since they try to imitate spontaneous speech to sound natural, are also close to orality. Consequently, they are in a liminal position for which it is hard to find a collocation in already existing speech categories; therefore, as some studies (cf. Chaume 2012) have proposed, they can be considered a peculiar register themselves.

The main aim of a dialogue writer is to recreate a text that seems unplanned in order to achieve linguistic realism, which is a fundamental feature contributing to creating the illusion of reality necessary to the success of any film⁴ (Bruti 2015: 295). Consequently, filmscripts are scattered with a series of spoken discourse features such as disfluencies, hesitations, false starts, reformulations, ellipses, discourse markers, interjections and the like. Thus, film speech is in some respects similar to spontaneous conversation, both on account of the abovementioned features, which allow scriptwriters to create plausible dialogues, and of the improvement of acting techniques.

Moreover, in order to create plausible dialogues not only scriptwriters have to take into consideration the features of spontaneous speech but also the dynamics of spoken discourse. In other words, they have to bear in mind that conversation varies according to the level of intimacy between participants and the type of relationship between them, which will help to recreate the typical power dynamics of speech (Tannen 1987). Another important feature they have to keep in mind is that each speaker has his/her own distinctive style, i.e. some speakers tend to speak more than others, some, instead, have a dominant position in the exchange or they show peculiar features, such as asking more questions, or

⁴ Unless the film wants to detach itself from reality.

using more question tags.

However, even though much progress has been made to make scripts as realistic as possible, there are also some differences between spontaneous dialogues and film speech that are due to different reasons. First of all, as Romero-Fresco (2009) points out, they have different purposes: spontaneous conversation aims at creating and maintaining social cohesion. Conversely, the goals of film dialogues are linked to the narrative of the film, in that dialogues are meant to develop the plot, to describe the characters and their relationships with each other and, finally, to entertain the audience. As a result, while ordinary speech is often banal and shows a high proportion of repetitions and phatic devices, film dialogue closely adheres to the facts in the story the film is showing.

In fact, in the scripts that I analysed, I have noticed that speakers do not tend to repeat what has been said previously, because they try to make conversation more fluent and more agreeable for the audience and also because in film dialogues the scriptwriter is sure that the audience is paying attention, so he does not need to repeat, as real speakers often do (cf. Romero-Fresco 2009).

Chaume (2012) also maintains that film language does not always perfectly match authentic speech for a series of limitations, i.e. the constraints of the filmic medium in matter of space and time and the stylistic rules dictated by television authorities, such as strong censorship actions towards bad language that can normally occur in speech (Bruti 2015: 296).

For other reasons, instead, scripts are truthful imitations of conversation, for example because they rely on prosodic features and on images. Images in particular contribute to the truthfulness of film dialogues, in that they portray body language, an important component of an oral exchange, since part of the meaning of an interaction is conveyed by the speaker's behaviour (Kress 2010 on multimodality *inter alia*). For instance, if we are saying something embarrassing, we are likely to blush, or if we are telling a lie, we may not look our listener directly in the eyes. Therefore, there is evidence that even though some discrepancies can occur, film language is a mimesis of spontaneous speech, and communication is achieved not only through the verbal code.

Recent studies (Tatsuki 2006; Kaiser 2011) have tackled the problem of the authenticity of film scripts and thus their possible use for teaching purposes. Their feedback was positive, since, as has already been highlighted, film dialogues usually employ a wide range of speech features that imitate natural conversation, allowing learners to observe how they are used in context in another language and culture. However, one important thing to remark is that even though film dialogues reproduce the main features of orality, their frequency of usage very often varies according to the scriptwriter's will (cf. Chaume 2012). Even the DNM corpus shows evidence of this phenomenon, in that I have noticed, for example, that the scriptwriters of *Pocahontas* (1995) almost never use interjections apart from "hey", whereas the ones of *The Incredibles* (2004) use them extensively. However, on the basis of the findings of corpus-based studies relying on the BNC (Rodríguez Martín & Moreno Jaén, 2009; Rodríguez Martín, 2010) it has been posited, that there is very little discrepancy between real-life conversations and filmic interactions. Hence, I decided to study them as examples of simulated spontaneous speech, by always bearing in mind their filmic nature.

3. The creation of DNM corpus

With the aim of focusing on the analysis of some specific formulaic elements of spontaneous speech, such as conversational routines and idioms, in a sample of Disney movies that encompasses a wide time-span and different genres, I decided to rely on the methodological tools of corpus linguistics to carry out at least a part of the analysis. Corpus linguistics is a branch of linguistics that aims to analyse language according to the empirical evidence, provided by a corpus, made out of language samples, which can either be written or spoken. Consequently, a corpus can be defined as a set of collected texts (written or oral), suitable for linguistic research and computer-assisted analysis. Furthermore, corpora are different from normal databases, in that they have to be systematically planned and organised following a prearranged rationale.

In corpus linguistics two approaches are possible, namely a corpus-driven and a corpus-based approach. This distinction was introduced by Tognini-Bonelli (2001). Corpus-based studies typically use corpus data in order to explore an

already established theory or hypothesis, aiming to validate it, refute it or refine it. Instead, a corpus-driven study approach claims that the corpus itself embodies a theory of language (Tognini-Bonelli 2001: 84). Thus, as I pointed out in the introduction, in this study I will rely on both approaches.

Hence (as far as my analysis is concerned) the first step was to assemble a corpus. Even though there are many ready-made corpora of spontaneous speech based on movie dialogue, there were no corpora of Disney animated films, therefore I decided to assemble my own. Given the vast production of Disney industry, I had to select a limited amount of movies among the 54 shot so far: table 1 (p. 17) illustrates the Disney movies I chose for this purpose.

Making this selection was not an easy task. As McEnery & Hardie (2012) explain, any corpus, no matter what its nature, must be planned and systematically structured in order to fulfil the standards of representativeness and balance. These criteria facilitate the study of a language variety: the first permits to get some language chunks for each variable we want to take into account; the second, instead, is a crucial issue in order to obtain fair results. Consequently, I had to decide what I wanted my corpus to be representative of. My first aim was to design a corpus that was as representative as possible of Disney production from a diachronic, diaphasic and genre perspective. Thus, I resolved to include in the sample films that covered the four major periods of Disney production (Robb 2014: 23). *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) represents the “dawn” of animated film industry, *101 Dalmatians* (1961) is instead representative of the second period of the company, in which great technological improvements were achieved and new interests for everyday situations were dramatised. On the other hand, *Aladdin* (1992), *Pocahontas* (1995), and *Hercules* (1997) are characteristic of the so-called ‘Disney Renaissance’, a period in which the Walt Disney Company reached its peak of fame. Finally, *The Incredibles* (2004) and *Frozen* (2013) were also included as they are two computer-animated movies that well represent the most recent trends in the genre. Secondly, I also tried to gather a sample of films that was representative of the great variety of themes, movie genres, characters and cultural aspects of Disney production because I was interested in evaluating how these variables may affect language usage. That is why I selected some movies

depicting otherness such as *Aladdin*, *Pocahontas* and some others foregrounding a more domestic context, like *101 Dalmatians* and *The Incredibles*. The other two films, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Frozen*, are instead emblematic of the fairy-tale setting, maybe the most well known feature of Disney movies. Another important factor that I bore in mind while choosing the movies was the variety of characters. Thus, I tried to collect a sample of movies that could give an overview of all the most typical personae that we may find in Disney world: there are heroines, heroes, villains, sidekicks, ordinary people and a wide range of secondary characters.

Afterwards, once I defined the paradigms of representativeness, I had to deal with the aforementioned notion of balance. When a corpus is designed, text categories have to be sampled proportionally in order to get a manageably small-scale model of the linguistic material that is to be studied (Atkins *et al.* 1992: 6). Thence, as far as my data selection is concerned, I tried to achieve balance by gathering full-length Disney movies of roughly similar length (between 60 and 90 minutes) and containing a similar amount of words (between nearly 7000 and 9000). Classifying and characterising the movies before selecting them also helped to keep my choice as balanced as possible, for the reason that it allowed me to choose the same amount of movies per typology.

Once I completed the selection, another critical part for the compilation of the DNM corpus was the collection of the selected materials (i.e. Disney movies). In order to design a machine-readable corpus, I needed all my data in a written form; hence, I fully transcribed the films I was interested in. This was not an easy task either, because a transcription does not only entails writing down what we hear, but it is actually a subjective interpretation act (Lapadat & Lindsay 1998) that requires to be carefully organised. As Poland (1995) asserts, any transcription should be functional to the goal of the project; thus, owing to the fact that the part of my study that involved the usage of corpus linguistics tools did not directly include the analysis of prosodic and extralinguistic features, I only carried out an orthographic transcription; where relevant for a qualitative evaluation, I added prosodic descriptions separately.

As a result, I got eight .TXT format files (*Appendix a* illustrates a sample of the transcription I did) that I put together to obtain a corpus of 62,764⁵ words. As my corpus contained only simulated spontaneous speech in Disney movies it could be defined as a small-size specialised corpus (Biber 1993). Specialised corpora can be large or small and are created to address very specific questions. Examples of specialised corpora may include the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE), which contains only spoken language from a university setting, or the CHILDES Corpus, which contains language used by children. The following diagram shows data about the corpus composition.

⁵ This amount does not include the names of the dramatis personae.



Diagram 1. Corpus composition

3.1 Subcorpora

In the same way, after creating my main corpus, I decided to design several subcorpora. Generally speaking, a subcorpus can be defined as a part of a larger corpus, that shares its same features but isolates some distinctive variables (McEnery 2012). Since in drama dialogues all linguistic choices are regarded as meaningful, I resolved to create some small subcorpora on the basis of the characters' roles to be able to investigate how and whether the usage of some peculiar formulae may vary amongst the different kinds of characters. As can be expected, the selection and definition of the characters' roles are based on my own subjective judgements, and are chosen on the basis of what I have judged to be the most appropriate. Hence, I ended up identifying six different characters' roles: hero, heroine, villain, helper to hero/heroine, helper to villain and character with peripheral role. Under these circumstances, I decided that the first three were the most interesting ones as far as linguistic markers were concerned; therefore I broke down their speeches into three corpora.

The films' hero/heroine is the central character in the movie, the one around which the plot revolves. Most films have one hero or heroine; only a few films have more than one character that can be assigned to this character role. The traditional hero/heroine is a positive character and has qualities such as kindness, courage, strength and a strong sense of justice. It is the character with whom we either identify or sympathise, as it embodies the good (in the dichotomy good vs. evil).

On the other hand, villains are the opposite poles of the heroes/heroines. Basically, the villain is the opposing force to the hero/heroine and the one who tries to prevent the hero/heroine from fulfilling his or her mission. In contrast to heroes, who are kind and courageous, villains tend to be morally bad, unsympathetic and cause trouble and harm. The following table shows the rationale of the three subcorpora.

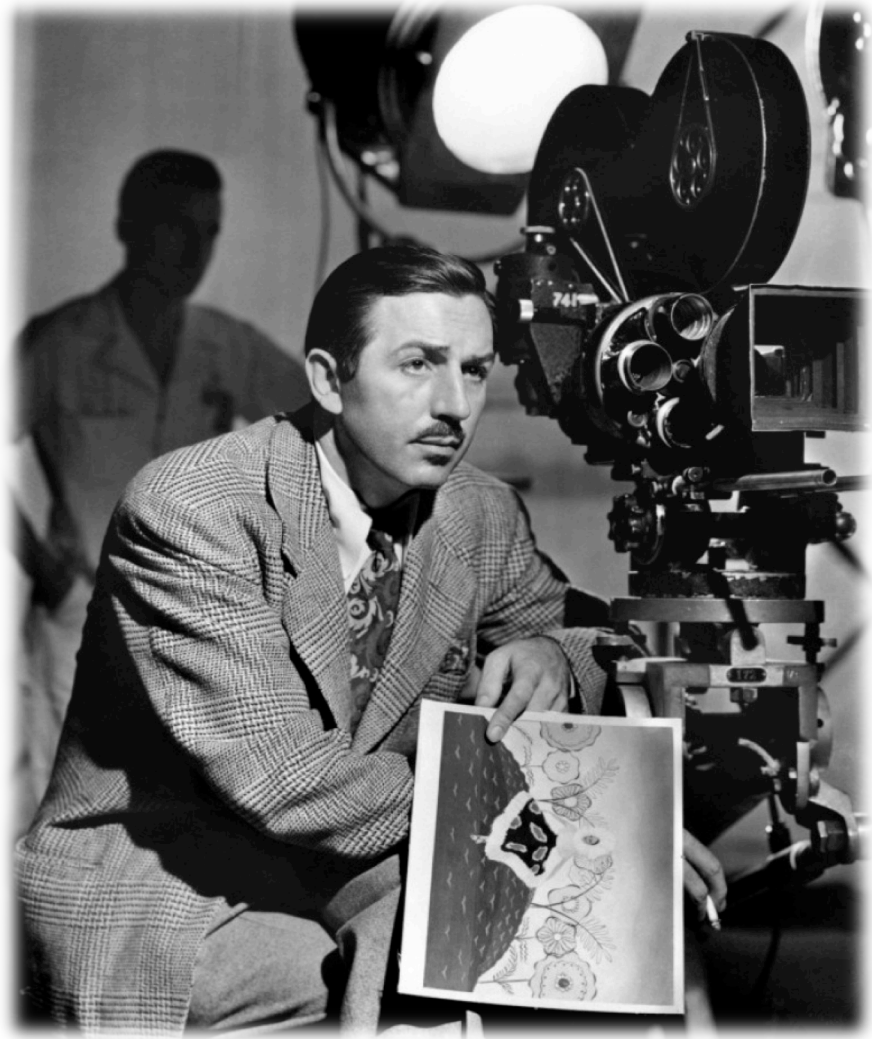
<i>Subcorpus</i>	<i>Characters</i>	<i>Number of words</i>
<i>Heroes</i>	Prince charming Pongo Robin Hood Aladdin John Smith Mr. Incredible Hercules Kristoff	5174
<i>Heroines</i>	Snow White Perdita Anita Lady Marion Jasmine Pocahontas Elastigirl Elsa Anna	4342
<i>Villains</i>	Evil Queen Cruella DeVil Prince John Jafar Ratcliffe Hades Hans Syndrome	6760

Table 2. Subcorpora rationale

The first column indicates the three characters' categories that I picked up as the most interesting and representative of Disney movies and thus I chose to isolate their speech in three subcorpora. In the second column, instead, there is a full list of the respective characters that I included in each category, and finally, in the third column, there are the total numbers of words for each subcorpus. At first glance, it can be remarked that villains are the wordiest category, whereas heroines and heroes tend to speak less. This seems to show that Disney authors grant much space to villains in the movies, perhaps to emphasise how treacherous and malicious they are.

4. Conclusions

To set the record straight the analysis that follows in the next chapters is the combination of a quantitative and a qualitative evaluation of my main corpus and subcorpora. As far as the quantitative approach is concerned, I will process my corpora by means of computer software such as AntConc[®], which permit to use corpus linguistic tools such as Concordances and Wordlist. Afterwards, the quantitative data obtained will be evaluated qualitatively through intuition that is always a necessary operation to draw conclusions. In fact, as Leech (1991: 14) posits “Neither the corpus linguist of the 1950s, who rejected intuition, nor the general linguist of the 1960s, who rejected corpus data, was able to achieve the interaction of data coverage and the insight that characterise the many successful corpus analyses of recent years”. Furthermore, I will use some big general corpora, such as the BNC, to make comparisons with my findings.



Animation offers a medium of story telling and visual entertainment which can bring pleasure and information to people of all ages everywhere in the world.

WALT DISNEY

III. Formulaic language

Any language is necessarily a finite system applied with different degrees of creativity to an infinite variety of situations, and most of the words and phrases we use are "prefabricated" in the sense that we don't coin new ones every time we speak.

David Lodge, *The State of the Language*
(1980)

1. From mental lexicon to formulaic language

In order to introduce formulaic language it may be useful to understand how language is stored in the human mind, which is still an open question. According to J. Aitchison (2003: 62), words are not just "stacked higgledy-piggledy in our minds, like leaves on an autumn bonfire"; instead, they are organised in an intricate system: the mental lexicon.

The large number of words known by human beings and the speed with which they can be retrieved suggest the existence of a highly organised mental lexicon, which is a sort of mental dictionary. This dictionary can be described as a series of bricks that we use to build sentences, for which syntax represents the glue that sticks them together in a comprehensible way. What it is still unknown is how exactly words are stored in the mind. However, all linguists assert that the mental lexicon does not work as a common dictionary: words in the mind are not stored alphabetically, but everyone has a subjective representation and tend to recall them following some systematic patterns. Aitchison (2003: 34) proposes that certain features of words are more prominent in storage than others and people rely on these when retrieving them. Above all, she points out that speakers tend to recall the beginnings and ends of words first.

Hence, some scholars (especially psycholinguists, i.e. Cacciari & Tabossi 1993; Wray 2002) started to consider that very often some words tend to be used in patterns. This, therefore, provides evidence that they are holistically stored in the human mind. These words that frequently appear together, shaping word strings, started to be considered as language formulae.

Reference to the formulaic nature of language has been a crucial issue in linguistic studies since the beginning of the twentieth century, starting with De Saussure's ideas (cf. De Saussure 1916). Despite temporary setbacks due to theoretical and methodological biases in the middle of the twentieth century (most notably those resulting from Chomskyan studies on generative grammar), the study of formulaic language has recently produced a growing interest, also due to advances in computer technology and the ensuing capacity to analyse millions of words of authentic spoken and written text (Stubbs 2001). Hence, formulae have become a research interest involving different perspectives, such as pedagogical, social and cognitive ones (Concklin and Shmitt 2012).

2. What is formulaic language?

Human language is characterised by its creative potential. New sentences, never spoken or heard before, can easily be formulated given the set of rules for combining a large set of vocabulary items (cf. Chomsky 1965 on the faculty of competence).

As scholars have explained for many years, this system permits the generation of an infinite set of novel and context-free sentences from a finite grammar. However, it soon became evident that the aforementioned assumption could not perfectly describe the generation process that lies behind every sentence, in that many utterances in everyday language are clearly conventional expressions that follow fixed patterns of occurrence and thus are not completely new creations.

Anyway, even though it is now commonly shared that a part of language production is not the result of an original creation by speakers but comes from established word strings, defining formulaic language is not easy and depends on

the approach we decide to adopt. For example, corpus linguists identify formulae as frequently occurring lexical patterns that recurrently appear in all discourse types (Moon 1998: 23). Alongside corpus linguists, psycholinguists build their definitions starting from the assumption that these word chunks are processed by the human mind as whole elements (cf. Cacciari 1993; Wray 2002 *inter alia*). Educationists, instead, highlight that mother tongue and EFL speakers perceive formulaic sequences differently (Wood 2010).

To put it simply, it can be said that language is formulaic in that certain combinations or sequences of words often tend to appear together. As Wray (2002: 54) maintains:

the term 'formulaic language' refers to two or more words which may or may not be adjacent and which have a particular mutual affinity that gives them a joint grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, or textual effect greater than the sum of the parts

Consequently, the "mutual affinity" mentioned by Wray results in sequences and pairings that are used together in such a consistent manner that it is no longer feasible to imagine that they could be spontaneously generated each time: this is what has led linguists (in particular psycholinguists) to suggest that some of these pairings are pre-fabricated, that is to say, they consist of several words joined together to generate a unique meaning, different from the word-to-word one. This co-selection occurs in a vast array of linguistic phenomena such as collocations, idioms, and set phrases associated with specific meanings, attitudes, and social functions (including routines and the like). The following figure illustrates the subcategories that are encompassed by the concept of formulae.

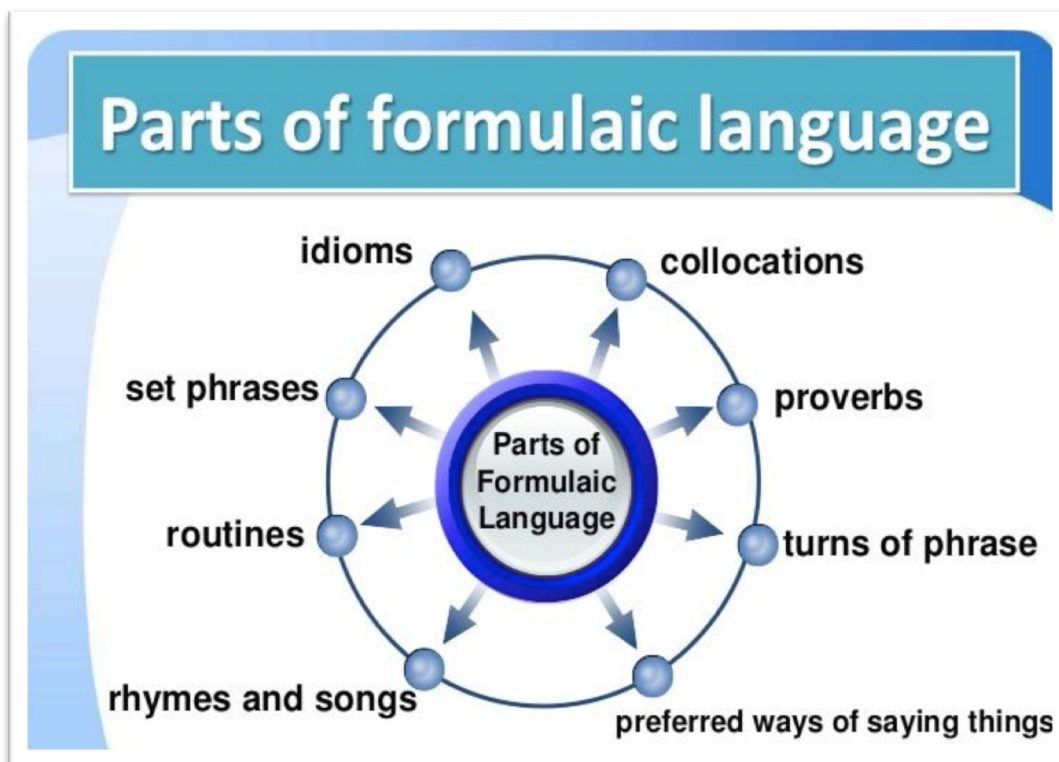


Figure 1. Parts of formulaic language

By looking at figure 1, it may be noticed that since formulaic language has recently become a prevailing research interest, there is not yet unanimous agreement on terminology. Thus, linguists tend to include different elements in this category (ranging from grammatical elements to long word combinations) on the basis of their different methodological background. The figure above gathers all the possible linguistic phenomena that can be ascribed to the category of formulaic language.

Herman & Warren (2000) report that formulaic expressions constitute 58.6% of spoken English discourse and 52.3% of written production. As a result, there is evidence that the phenomenon of lexical patterning is prevalent and language users rely heavily on these sequences as useful building blocks that favour fluent discourse (cf. Pawley & Syder 1983). These phrases have thus become conventionalised fixed expressions that are interpreted holistically, so that the receiver no longer relies on the meaning of individual words, i.e.: “make yourself at home”; “out of the blue”; “as a matter of fact”; “to lift a finger”; “guess what?” “we regret to inform you”. An important point to be made regarding these

expressions is that other equally appropriate and grammatical alternatives could be used, but speakers tend not to. For example, despite their metaphorical similarities, one would not typically replace the sequence “to lift a finger” with the phrase “to lift a hand” or “predict what?” for “guess what?” as they would sound unnatural for any native speaker. Therefore, data on formulaic language show time and time again how predictable language can serve the purpose of conveying meaning in an easy and quick way, in accordance with the principle of economy in language.

One last observation concerns the fact that predictability is perceived by native speakers, but also by high-level EFL speakers. Recent studies (Wood 2010) have shown that proficient EFL speakers exploit formulaic sequences as a result of their learning experience of memorising phrasal expressions out of context, in that they help their fluency in speaking, thanks to the reduced cognitive load they require (cf. Conklin & Schmitt 2008).

2.1 The functions of formulaic language

Formulae carry out different functions, the most prominent of which is the communicative one. Conklin & Schmitt (2008) maintain that they “ease the cognitive burden” for both speakers and listeners. In fact, formulaic sequences help the fluency of language production and comprehension (both for native or non-native speakers) because they are pre-assembled and shared between members of a same speech community. Membership in a peculiar speech community can impact on the efficiency of formulae, in that some of them may be commonly shared within a community (i.e. youths) and not at all in another.

Additionally, formulaic language also serves several social functions: the usage of some peculiar formulaic sequences such as conversational routines (Coulmas 1981: 1) contributes to marking the identity of the speaker and reinforcing his sense of group membership. For example in *Snow White* both the Magic Mirror and the Huntsman, who are two servants of the Evil Queen, end most of their utterances with the formulae “my Queen” or “your Majesty”, that highlight their subordinate social position.

Alongside with the social and communicative functions, it can also be noticed that fixed language patterns are crucial to fulfil the pragmatic functions of the interaction, such as beginning or ending a conversation, apologising, thanking, and in ritual contexts.

Moreover, it can be noticed that formulaic language is highly used also in order to manage discourse, by establishing or making logical links explicit, i.e. “on the one hand”; “on the other hand”. These constructions are called lexical bundles: their nature is mostly grammatical and they usually do not have a strong semantic value.



Animation can explain whatever the mind of man can conceive. This facility makes it the most versatile and explicit means of communication yet devised for quick mass appreciation.

WALT DISNEY

IV. *Idioms as rather rigid formulae*

Jack Cade: Brave thee! ay, by the best blood that ever was broached, and beard thee too. Look on me well: I have eat no meat these five days; yet, come thou and thy five men, and if I do not leave you all *as dead as a doornail*, I pray God I may never eat grass more

William Shakespeare, *2 King Henry VI*, Act IV

1. *Idioms are 'odd ducks'*⁶

Idioms represent a consistent part of formulaic language and perhaps they are its most distinctive example; in fact, as the study by Jackendoff (1997) points out, more than twenty-five thousand idiomatic expressions can be counted in English. In spite of the fact that their use is so firmly integrated in language production, their definition is well known as a 'can of worms' in linguistic theory. However, as both Wray (2002) and Moon (1998) highlight, we can generally assert that they account for the maximum degree of fixedness amongst formulaic expressions.

Every natural language uses idiomatic expressions; they are an essential part of everyday communication and convey colour to linguistic production, becoming somehow the symbol of a culture in that they are strictly linked to the setting where a certain language is spoken; for example, since traditional Japanese culture thrived on agriculture, many Japanese idiomatic expressions derive from agricultural customs and practices (e.g. "pulling water to my own rice paddy", which means 'doing or saying things for one's own benefit').

⁶ 'Odd duck' is an idiom normally used to indicate an unusual person, especially an individual with an idiosyncratic personality or peculiar behavioural characteristics.

However, as I mentioned above, defining idioms is no easy task; thus, I decided to start approaching a definition by collecting in the table below the information I retrieved by looking up the entry “idiom” in various dictionaries of different natures.

<i>Dictionary</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (IX 1995)</i>	Defines an idiom as a “peculiarity of phraseology approved by usage though having meaning not deducible from those of the separate words”
<i>Webster’s New World College Dictionary (IV. 2004)</i>	Gives a more detailed description: an idiom is “a phrase, construction, or expression that is recognised as a unit in the usage of a given language and either differs from the usual syntactic patterns or has a meaning that differs from the literal meaning of its parts taken together”
<i>Oxford Dictionary of English (Online version)</i>	Describes idioms as “groups of words established by usage and having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words”
<i>The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language by David Crystal (II.2003)</i>	Relates to an idiom as an expression whose meaning “cannot be deduced by examining the meanings of the constituent lexemes”, thus it is something both grammatically and lexically fixed
<i>Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (Online version)</i>	Suggests that one of the problems with idioms is that it is often impossible to guess the meaning of an idiom from the words that it contains, emphasizing the fact that idioms often have a stronger meaning than non-idiomatic phrases
<i>Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary (Online version)</i>	Describes an idiom as “a group of words, which when used together in a particular combination, have a different meaning from the one they would have if the meaning of all the individual words in the group was taken”

Table 3. Dictionary definitions of the entry “idiom”

In comparing the emerging definitions, one may notice that none of them contradicts the other; instead, they complete each other, adding crucial features that help to approach the complex concept of idiom.

1.1 From collocations to idioms

In order to outline a more thorough definition of idioms it is important to briefly describe their relationship with the neighbouring notion of collocation. An idiom is defined by Sinclair (1991) as the expression of the “constructional tendency” of some words. He maintains that words tend to co-occur frequently, that is to say they have a high “constructional tendency” (e.g. “wide” tends to occur with and “range” with the meaning of ‘including much’). In some other cases, instead, this tendency is lower (e.g. “nice” occurs with a large number of nouns, therefore it does not have a strong collocational relation with any of them in particular). The notion of collocation is crucial to be able to communicate efficiently: speakers (and most of all ESL ones) have to be aware of the “constructional tendency” of words to be able to create well-formed and natural-sounding utterances.

To sum up, in this perspective, idioms could be described as particular kinds of collocations with the shape of a “frozen” word-string in the lexicon, whose components lose their individual meanings in favour of a figurative one. Idioms thus contradict the principle of compositionality, according to which the meaning of an expression is determined by the meanings of its constituents. Therefore, these constructions have two different realisations, the literal and the idiomatic one, which could be treated as homonymous since they have identical constituents (cf. Moon 1998). Anyhow, sometimes it can be hard to distinguish between idioms and simple collocations (i.e. literal expressions), that is why Fernando & Flavell (1981) put forward a list of five criteria to identify idioms. These features are also at the core of Rosemund Moon’s study (1998), which is hitherto one of the most encompassing works on the topic.

<i>Fernando & Favell's criteria</i>	
1.	The meaning of an idiom is not the result of the compositional function of its constituents.
2.	An idiom is a unit that either has a homogenous literal counterpart or at least individual constituents that are literal, though the expression as a whole would not be interpreted literally.
3.	Idioms are transformationally deficient in one way or another.
4.	Idioms constitute set expressions in a given language.
5.	Idioms are institutionalised and lexicalised.

Table 4. Fernando & Favell's (1981) criteria for idioms description

These criteria give a more complete definition of idioms compared to dictionary entries. Fernando & Favell (1981) stress the fact that the meaning of idioms is not the sum of their literal components, but they have a literal realisation only as a surface representation, which aims at conveying an idiomatic figurative meaning. Hence, a link between the surface representation and the figurative meaning may be, more or less manifestly, present. Moreover, the literal realisation of idioms may sometimes appear semantically illogical and syntactically wrong, or 'ungrammatical'. In this last case, it is interesting to notice that idioms are often 'relics' of an older variety of a language, whose syntactic forms have disappeared in time and whose meaning has evolved (e.g. the expression "Judge not lest ye be judged", from the *Gospel according to Matthew*, shows an instance of an apparently odd syntactic form, which is, nowadays, felt as correct because it has been institutionalised as an idiomatic expression). From a syntactic point of view, these criteria emphasise the fact that the structure of idioms is more or less 'frozen' and the order of the constituents cannot be much altered. Therefore, idioms do not allow for grammatical transformations, for example no native speaker would say "tongue been eaten by a cat" instead of "cat got your tongue".

Finally, the last two features outlined by Fernando & Favell (1981) are, in my opinion, the most distinguishing ones and are strictly interconnected. Idioms

are commonly accepted expressions whose figurative meanings are generally shared within a speech community. As a consequence, they are said to be lexicalised items. Rosemund Moon (1998), starting from Fernando's premises, defines the process of lexicalisation as a procedure whereby a string of words becomes institutionalised as part of the language and develops its own specific meaning and function. She prioritises the concept that the meaning of an idiom must be institutionalised in order to be understood and used. A string of words is not properly lexicalised if its meaning or function is not commonly and widely known enough. Only when they become accepted and universally recognised in a language, has the process of lexicalisation come to an end, so the idiomatic meaning becomes institutionalised and widely used. This last criterion is the property that separates idioms from other figurative expressions (i.e. from normal conceptual metaphors such as in the expression "hey, little sunspot" in *Hercules*) that are not fixed in the lexicon (i.e. institutionalised).

1.2 Idiomaticity: the core notion

Idiomaticity is the core notion of idioms. Mainly, the issue of idiomaticity is to scale or analyse "how idiomatic idioms are", that is to say how unpredictable the meaning of an idiom is from its literal correspondent. According to this principle, theorised by Sinclair (1991), some idioms are wholly idiomatic and the words that make them up seem to have no reasonable meaning as a unit without the idiomatic meaning. Within this category, some idioms have both a literal and an idiomatic meaning (e.g. ring the bell), which are used and vary on the basis of the situation. Some other idioms, instead, are only partially idiomatic, that is to say that one of the words that composes them can be taken literally and the rest of them idiomatically. Thus, idiomaticity is a gradual phenomenon as some idioms are more idiomatic than others. The 'rule of thumb' might be that the less the idiomatic meaning corresponds to its literal counterpart, the more idiomatic the whole idiom is.

1.3 Uses of idioms

In general, idioms are widely used in spoken language and native speakers do not always even notice that they are using them. However, they do not occur only in colloquial registers, but are also extensively found in any kind of written production, ranging from literature to journalism. (e.g. “green-eyed monster” in Shakespeare’s *Othello* or “the writing on the wall” in *the Bible from the book of Daniel*). All in all, it is evident that idioms are an essential part of any kind of language production; one cannot choose either to use or to omit them, as Seidl and McMordie (1987: 1) maintain. In spite of that, ESL speakers very often omit them, consciously or not (cf. Wood 2010). This is due to the fact that I referred to above, that is to say that idioms vary among different languages and cultures; as a result, foreign language speakers have trouble understanding them and therefore they hesitate to resort to them, with the consequence that their language is less natural.

Firstly, from a cognitive point of view, idioms are part of the lexicon, they are words put together, stored holistically as a single lexicalised ‘big word’ (Wray 2000: 465-466). Wray accounts for this phenomenon in two ways (2000: 473-479). Firstly, since they are fixed expressions, they represent some sort of ‘short-cuts’, which act as speech time-buyers and bestows on communication a higher degree of fluency and rhythm.

Secondly, Wray explains that idioms are used for socio-pragmatic reasons: they often cover specific functions in social interactions, such as providing humour, helping to manipulate others’ judgment to assert separate identity, or to reinforce group solidarity. For example, with reference to the DNM corpus, there is evidence of that in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, where the dwarfs use idioms to talk amongst them (e.g. “mad as hornets”; “in a pig’s eye”) with the aim of reinforcing the bond within the group of peers. However, this topic will be tackled in greater detail in the analysis in the next sections, where, after classifying the idioms in the DNM corpus, I will investigate their socio-pragmatic function.

2. *Classifying idioms*

Since the understanding of idioms varies amongst linguists, the task of classifying them in clear-cut categories seems quite challenging. Nevertheless, several attempts have been made and idioms have been divided into classes according to different criteria. As a result, they are often classified according to their syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic properties. In the following sections, I will introduce some different possible ways of classifying idioms.

2.1 *A syntactic classification*

The easiest way of classifying idioms is to analyse their structural properties, which means taking into account their syntactic features and roles in a phrase, clause or sentence. *The Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English* (ODCIE from now on) classifies them into three major categories: phrase idioms, subjectless clause idioms and sentence idioms. As Moon (1998) points out, ODCIE offers only the major and the most common patterns, but it should be borne in mind that since new idioms can always be created, there might also be other patterns. The tables below show the classifications proposed by ODCIE.

<i>Type of phrase</i>	<i>Example⁷</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
NOUS PHRASE (NP)	<i>A red-letter day</i>	An important or significant day
ADJECTIVE PHRASE (AP)	<i>Fit as a fiddle</i>	In excellent form or health
PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (PP)	<i>In the black</i>	Not in debt
ADVERBIAL PHRASE (AP)	<i>Off the hook</i>	No longer in jeopardy; no longer obligated

Table 5. Phrasal idioms

<i>Form</i>	<i>Example¹</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Verb + Complement	<i>Go berserk</i>	To become crazily violent
Verb + Direct Object	<i>Smell the hummus</i>	To face up to reality
Verb + Direct Object + Complement	<i>Got you into the jam</i>	To be in a difficult situation
Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object	<i>Gave them the slip</i>	Escape or evade someone
Verb + Direct Object + Adjunct	<i>Bat this around</i>	To discuss something back and forth in order to come to a decision

Table 6. Subjectless clause idioms (verbal idioms)

⁷ The examples come from DNM corpus.

<i>Form</i>	<i>Example⁸</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
'Frozen' Sentences , such as proverbs	<i>Absence makes the heart grow fonder</i>	When people are apart, their love grows stronger
	<i>Faint heart never won fair lady</i>	A timid suitor never won his lady

Table 7. Sentence idioms

To summarise, in this kind of classification idioms are taken as grammatical patterns and therefore their semantic meaning is completely put aside. Hence, this subdivision can only be used after establishing the level of idiomaticity and frozenness, which permits to identify idioms. Therefore, no definition of an idiom can be drawn only by taking into account its structural or syntactic behaviour.

2.2 A semantic classification

Another possible way of classifying idioms is according to their semantic nature. As stated above, idioms are semantically unconventional since they contradict the rule of compositionality in favour of idiomaticity. As a consequence, linguists such as Fernando & Favell (1981) offer classifications on the basis of this feature. The table below illustrates the division put forward by Fernando & Favell (1981).

⁸ The examples are taken from DNM corpus.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Example⁹</i>
Pure (or Opaque) idioms	There are no relations between the constituents of an idiom and its meaning cannot be foreseen. It is therefore conventionalised and non-literal, imposed on the idiom as a whole.	<i>[Has] gone nuts</i>
Semi-literal (or Semi-opaque) idioms	There are some relationships between the constituents of an idiom and its idiomatic meaning can be often discerned and exploited. At least one word has a literal sense.	<i>[to have] cash to burn</i>
Literal (or Transparent) idioms	They meet the essential criteria for idioms (invariability or restricted variation) they are semantically less complex than pure and semi-idioms, as their constituents correspond to their idiomatic referents.	<i>As white as snow</i>

Table 8. Fernando & Favell's (1981) classification of idioms

Compared to the syntactic classification, this proposal illustrates a deeper and more specific way of accounting for idioms, which tackles the peculiar nature of these expressions, highlighting the continuum from meaning opacity to transparency.

3. From theory to analysis: idioms in the DNM corpus

After outlining the main features of idioms, I decided to investigate how and to what extent they are used in my corpus. Since in English there are plenty of different idioms and idiomatic expressions, I thought that a qualitative approach to the analysis of my data would better suit my investigation. This has been possible thanks to the reasonably small size of the DNM corpus. Thus, the first step in my analysis was to go through the eight movie scripts that make up the DNM corpus in order to single out all the idiomatic expressions. The findings of this first qualitative analysis were quite interesting and allowed me to retrace a vast array

⁹ All the examples are taken from the DNM corpus.

of different idioms, which I collected in *Appendix B*.¹⁰

3.1 Quantitative considerations

The total number of idioms that I collected in *Appendix B* was 136, for a total of 774 words out of the 62,764 that make up the corpus: this means that 1.159% words were idiomatic. At first glance, this percentage may appear quite ridiculous, but since we are dealing with movie language, where almost every linguistic choice is made to create a certain effect, it may be interesting to appraise how idiomatic expressions are used.

The following table illustrates how idiomatic expressions are distributed amongst the movies making up the corpus.

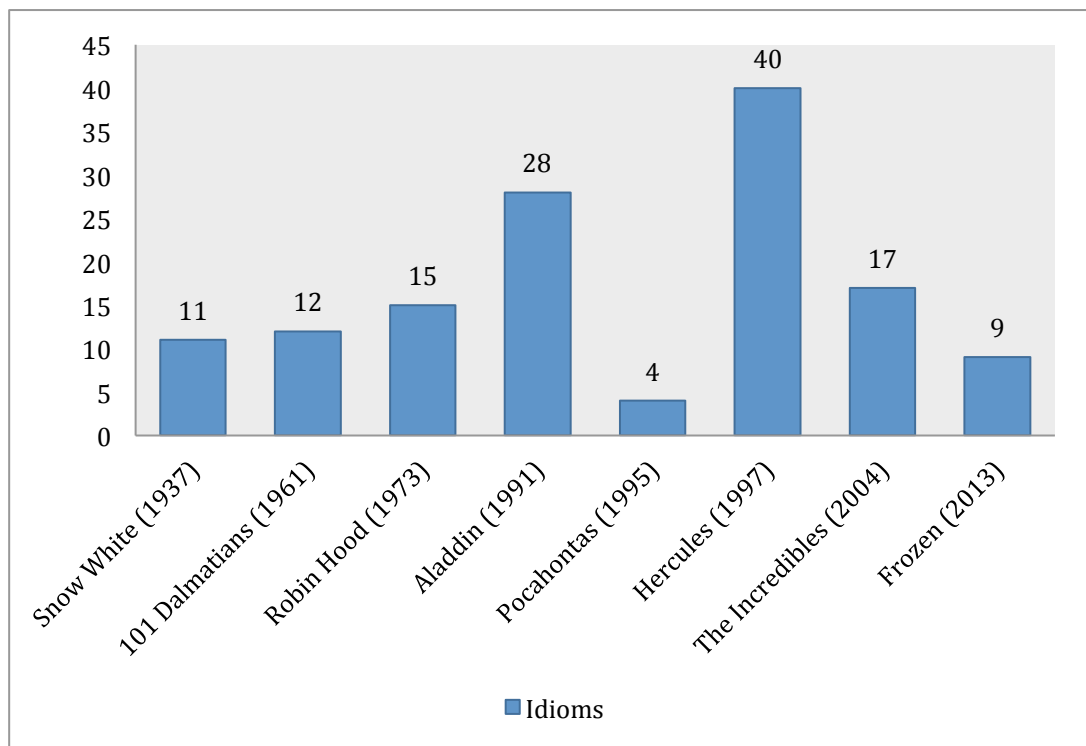


Chart 2. The distribution of idioms in the DNM corpus

¹⁰ In this appendix I transcribed all the idiomatic expressions in the DNM corpus with their corresponding meanings.

Table 8 displays the distribution of the 136 idioms that I located and then collected in *Appendix B*. On a surface level, we can notice that all the movies contain some idiomatic expressions. This finding is not particularly surprising, since idioms occur frequently in natural language and movie language imitates it quite closely (cf. Romero-Fresco 2009). Anyway, this idioms galore contradicted my prediction that children movies would contain a low amount of idiomatic expression, since, as Wood (2010) maintains, they are harder to process for children.

3.2 *Idiomaticity in the corpus*

After these quantitative results, my aim was to investigate whether, on average, Disney movies use idiomatic expressions more extensively than other kinds of movies. Thus, I compared the DNM corpus to other two ready-made movie corpora of similar size. The former was a component¹¹ of a corpus made out of American and British comedy movies¹² that counted 74,532 words. The second one, instead, was a corpus based on some episodes of different American medical dramas¹³, for a total of 60,743 words. I started to carry out my comparison by uploading these two corpora on AntConc[®], a computer software that helps to find word concordances lists. By means of this tool, I carried out queries for all the 136 idioms found in the DNM corpus, in order to check if they occurred in these other corpora too. I obtained the following results: only four of them occur in the comedy corpus (“hand in hand”; “out of shape”; “fall in love”; “over the moon”) and two of them in the medical drama corpus (“been there, done that”; “on a roll”). Thus, on a surface level, it seems that the DNM corpus contains more idiomatic expressions than the others. However, this quantitative result must be taken ‘with a pinch of salt’ in that the other corpora may contain some other idioms that are not present in the list I used (*Appendix B*) for my queries.

¹¹ The original corpus contained 114,763 words. Thus, I decided to reduce it to 74,532 words to make it comparable to mine.

¹² This corpus is property of the University of Pavia and contains the transcripts of several comedies.

¹³ This is a self-compiled corpus designed for a University module with the aim of studying some features of spontaneous speech.

It is evident that, in this case, a quantitative corpus linguistics approach cannot be completely exhaustive and a thorough qualitative analysis of data would be necessary. Thus, in order to investigate further into the frequency of the idioms in the DNM corpus in other corpora, I resorted to the data contained in a study carried out by Liu (2003)¹⁴. In the following table I collected the 40 most frequent-occurring idiomatic expressions pinpointed by Liu (2003), by relying upon a very large media corpus¹⁵ (Liu's corpus from now on).

<i>Idioms in Liu's corpus</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Idioms in Liu's corpus</i>	<i>Hits</i>
<i>fall in love</i>	17	<i>come out of the closet</i>	4
<i>ring a bell</i>	7	<i>scratching one's back</i>	4
<i>come into play</i>	14	<i>get a handle on</i>	4
<i>easy as pie</i>	11	<i>miss the boat</i>	4
<i>flip a coin</i>	10	<i>on top of the agenda</i>	4
<i>on the right track</i>	9	<i>go beserk</i>	4
<i>break a leg</i>	8	<i>split hairs</i>	4
<i>hand in hand</i>	8	<i>take (make/have) a stab at it</i>	4
<i>right (straight) off the bat</i>	7	<i>take my/someone's word for it</i>	4
<i>piece of cake</i>	7	<i>chicken-and-egg (question)</i>	3
<i>draw a/the line between</i>	7	<i>get a grasp of</i>	3
<i>lose your mind</i>	7	<i>get to the bottom of things</i>	3
<i>go wild</i>	7	<i>go off on a tangent</i>	3
<i>come to mind</i>	6	<i>hand-waving</i>	3
<i>take it easy</i>	6	<i>in a nutshell</i>	2
<i>rule(s) of thumb</i>	6	<i>ivory tower</i>	2
<i>take (something) at face value</i>	6	<i>play devil's advocate</i>	2
<i>beat to death</i>	5	<i>once in a blue moon</i>	2
<i>get a grip</i>	5	<i>thinking on my feet</i>	2
<i>thumbs up</i>	4	<i>shift gears</i>	2

Table 9. Most frequent idiomatic expressions¹⁶ in Liu's corpus

¹⁴ In his study Liu singled out the most recurring idioms in a very large corpus of audiovisual texts.

¹⁵ "Liu's corpus" includes transcripts of spontaneous talk from a large variety of TV shows for a total of almost one million words.

¹⁶ Liu's survey considers idiomatic expressions only when they occur with their figurative meanings.

On the basis of the data in the table above, I carried out a query for each of these idiomatic expressions both in the DNM and in two other corpora, with the purpose of establishing which one contains the highest number of these idioms. The chart below and the tables below illustrates the results of this query.

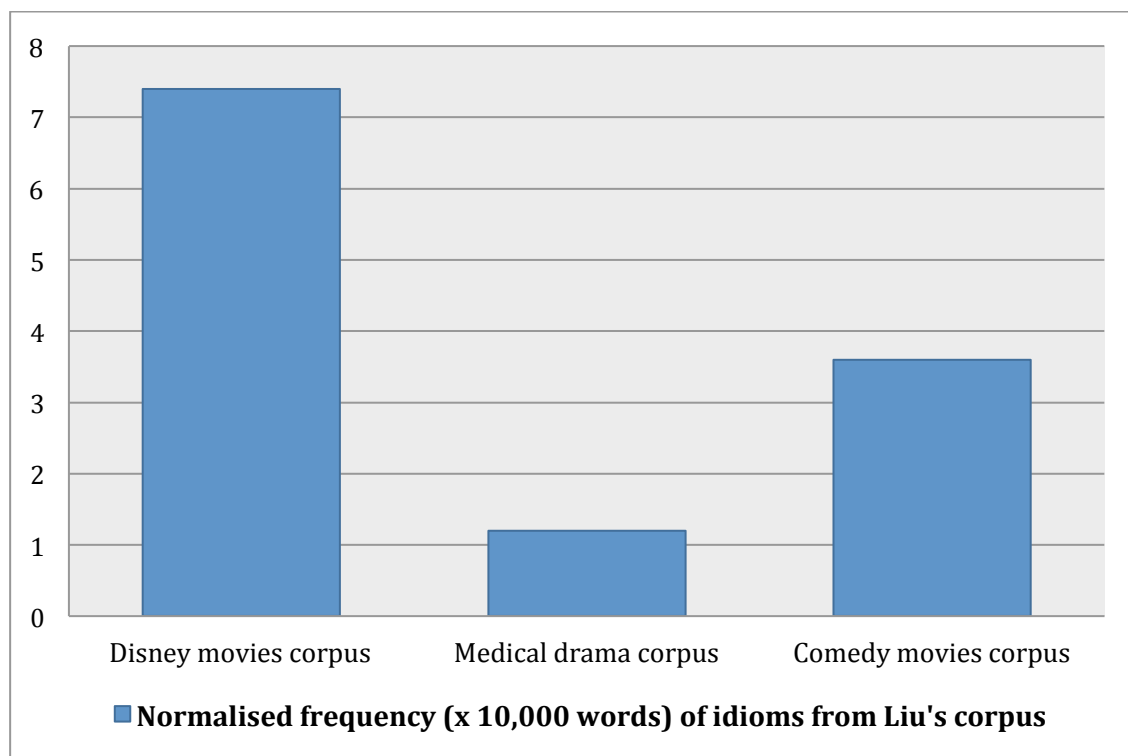


Chart 3. The distribution of the idioms in Liu's corpus idioms in three corpora

<i>Idiom</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Type of Idiom (Fernando & Favell 1981)</i>
<i>get a grip</i>	2	Pure idiom
<i>thinking on my feet</i>	1	Pure idiom
<i>ring a bell</i>	2	Pure idiom
<i>lose your mind</i>	1	Semi-literal idiom
<i>hand in hand</i>	1	Semi-literal idiom
<i>go wild</i>	2	Semi-literal idiom
<i>go bersek</i>	1	Semi-literal idiom
<i>fall in love</i>	1	Semi-literal idiom
<i>easy as pie</i>	1	Literal idiom

Table 10. Liu's idioms in the DNM corpus

<i>Idiom</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Type of Idiom (Fernando & Favell 1981)</i>
<i>break a leg</i>	1	Pure idiom
<i>come to mind</i>	1	Semi-literal idiom
<i>fall in love</i>	2	Semi-literal idiom
<i>hand in hand</i>	1	Semi-literal idiom
<i>take it easy</i>	2	Literal idiom

Table 11. Liu's idioms in the comedy movies corpus

<i>Idiom</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Type of idiom (Fernando & Favell 1981)</i>
<i>ring a bell</i>	1	Pure idiom
<i>play devil's advocate</i>	1	Pure idiom
<i>splitting hairs</i>	1	Pure idiom

Table 12. Liu's idioms in the medical dramas corpus

As a result, it can be deduced that the DNM corpus contains the highest number (9) of occurrences of the most recurring idioms singled out by Liu in his corpus. The comedy movies corpus, instead, includes five of them and finally, the medical dramas corpus, only three. Generally speaking, this survey seems to support the impression that Disney scriptwriters rely more massively than other scriptwriters on idiomatic expressions to build dialogues.

To conclude this part of the analysis, in the table below I put together the list of the movies in the DNM corpus, specifying the names of the members of the scriptwriters' teams (in bold the chief director), the source from which the movie was adapted, and finally the number of idioms occurring in each film.

<i>Movie</i>	<i>Scriptwriter(s)</i>	<i>Source of the movie</i>	<i>Number of idioms¹⁷</i>
<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)</i>	Ted Sears Earl Hurd Merrill De Maris Ken Andersen	Fairy tale	11
<i>101 Dalmatians (1961)</i>	Ken Andersen Bill Peet	Novel	12
<i>Robin Hood (1973)</i>	Ken Andersen	Legend	15
<i>Aladdin (1992)</i>	Barry Johnson Ron Clements John Musker Ted Elliott Terry Rossio	Fairy tale	28
<i>Pocahontas (1995)</i>	Karey Kirkpatrick Carl Binder Susannah Grant Philip LaZebnik	True story	4
<i>Hercules (1997)</i>	Barry Johnson Ron Clements John Musker	Mythology	40
<i>The Incredibles (2004)</i>	Brad Bird	Original story	17
<i>Frozen (2013)</i>	Chris Buck Jennifer Lee Shane Morris	Fairy tale	9

Table 13. Idioms in the DNM corpus and scripwriters' teams

These data enabled me to observe if the scriptwriter(s) had a relevant role in the wording of the dialogues, including the choice of using idioms to a lesser or greater extent.

At first glance, it can be argued that the movies that show the highest number of idioms are *Hercules* (40) and *Aladdin* (22), two animated films from the 90s that share the same scriptwriters' team, led by Barry Johnson. Instead, the movie which contains fewer instances of idiomatic expressions is *Pocahontas* (4). In my opinion, this low occurrence can be ascribed to the nature of the movie itself: since the scriptwriters had to adapt a true story, they used dialogues that presented few instances of figurative expressions such as idioms which enhance

¹⁷ Following the criteria in Fernando & Favell (1981).

the vivacity and the light atmosphere of the film. Finally, the rest of the movies appear to contain a comparable amount of idiomatic expressions (ranging from 10 to 16).

Amongst these, it can be pointed out that *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *101 Dalmatians* and *Robin Hood* share the same scriptwriter, Ken Andersen, who after the great success of *Snow White* became the team leader for the two other projects. As I will explain in more detail in the following chapter, not only do these movies contain a similar amount of idiomatic expressions, but idioms are also used with a similar function. In conclusion, it seems that the use of idiomatic expressions in the DNM corpus is a stylistic choice depending on the scriptwriter's tastes and on the genre of the movie that is directly related to the source from which it was adapted.

4. The functions of idioms in the DNM corpus

To set the record straight, by comparing the DNM corpus with two other corpora and looking for highly frequent idioms, I have tried to provide ample evidence of the fact that Disney scriptwriters make use of idiomatic expressions in such an extensive way that it is no longer feasible to think that it is accidental. Corpus linguistic instruments have made it possible to validate this assumption. Once this idioms galore was established, I decided to bring my research forward by investigating the reasons of such an abundance on a socio-pragmatic level. For this kind of analysis, it is evident that the quantitative results obtained with a corpus-based methodology must be integrated with a qualitative evaluation. Hence, I conducted this part of the research by looking at the idiomatic expressions I came across during my quantitative analysis in their context of usage. I have therefore decided to begin by going through the three subcorpora I created in order to find how idioms are scattered amongst the characters of the movies I took into account. The chart below shows the findings of this survey.

Idioms distribution in the subcorpora

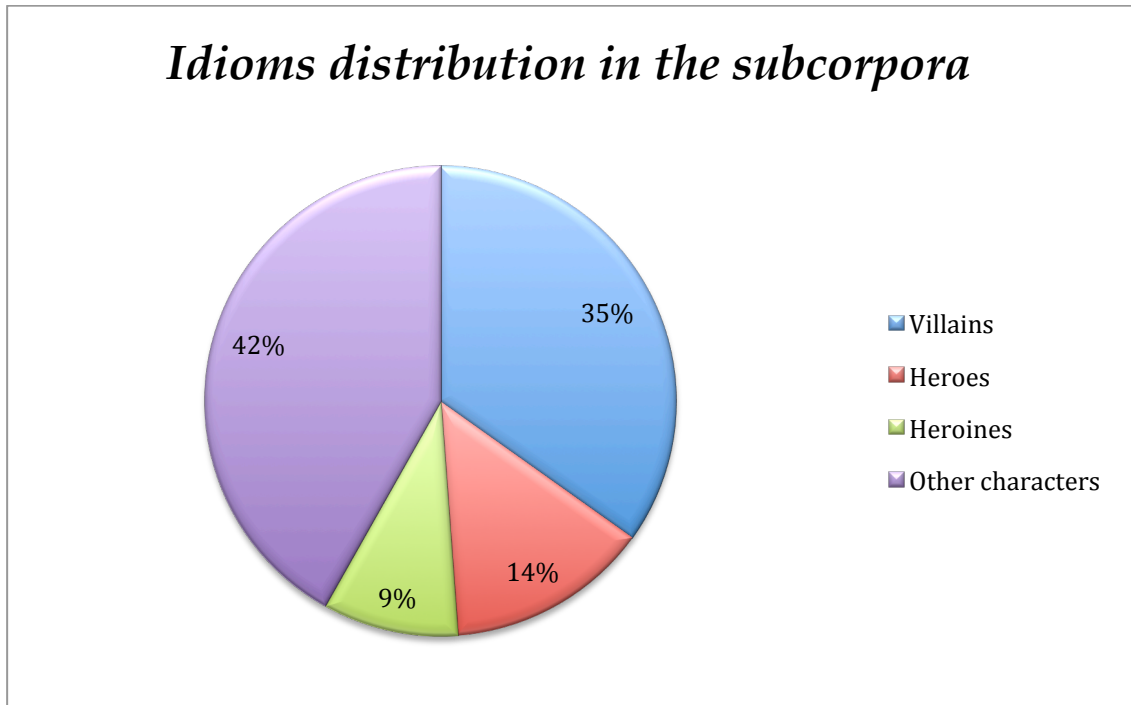


Chart.4 Idioms in the subcorpora

As it can be deduced from the chart above, the majority of idioms (42%) are used by "other characters"; this category encompasses all the idioms that are uttered by the characters who are not part of any of the three subcorpora I have created (i.e. villains; heroes; heroines), that is to say sidekicks or secondary characters in general. Amongst the three subcorpora the "villains" subcorpus contains the highest percentage (35%) of idioms; the "heroes" subcorpus 14% and the "heroines" subcorpus only 9%. Firstly, the lower occurrence of idiomatic expressions in heroines' speech seems to suggest that Disney heroines embody the stereotype of the perfect 'archetypical woman' who not only acts as a perfect housewife, but also speaks very politely, using few 'colourful' expressions such as idioms. To bear out this hypothesis it may be pointed out that most of the idiomatic expressions contained in the "heroines" corpus are used by Megara (from *Hercules*) and Anna (from *Frozen*), who in fact are unconventional women. Megara is a very enterprising woman that refuses to fit into the stereotype of the submissive woman. Anna, instead, is very self-deprecating and self-confident and is not afraid of quarrelling with men.

Secondly, the fact that “Villains” make a more extensive use of idiomatic expressions than “Heroes” and “Heroines” suggests inferring that scriptwriters tend to make their speech more colourful by using idioms, in order to emphasise the distance between them and the good characters. To sum up, it can be remarked that the use of idioms confirms the fact that speech components are crucial for characters portrayal and contributes to shaping the characters’ idiolect (Zabalbeascoa 2012).

However, as far as the study of the pragmatic functions is concerned, a simple qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the movie script as a one-dimensional written text could not be exhaustive enough; in fact, as Metz (1974) contends, in audiovisual texts, where the medium of communication is multimodal, the minimal unit of meaning is not the ‘word’ (as in written texts) but it is the ‘shot’. In this case, not only is meaning conveyed by words, but also by all the semiotic components (e.g. music and image) that make up a movie scene (shot). Under these circumstances, it is necessary to integrate the analysis of verbal exchanges with the non-verbal codes. By adopting this approach to evaluate the idioms in the DNM corpus it emerged that the majority of idioms are used with the clear aim of creating humour.

4.1 Idioms and humour in the corpus

Humour is one of the most important elements around which the plots of animation movies revolve. As posited by the *Oxford Online Dictionary*, humour is “the quality of being amusing or comical, especially as expressed in literature or speech”. In Attardo’s view (1994), humour could simply be defined as what makes people laugh, as a cognitive phenomenon (both locutionary and illocutionary) with a perlocutionary sequel, laughter. Under these circumstances, the capability of creating and understanding humour is defined by Raskin (1985) as “humour competence”, which is something peculiar to every speaker and which varies across culture, age and gender.

First and foremost, in order to carry out any analysis concerning language functions (e.g. giving rise to humour) in movies, it is necessary to bear in mind that they are audiovisual texts, which, as I stated in the previous paragraph, differently from written texts that are one-dimensional, are multidimensional. Verbal utterances are only one of their components and thus one amongst a wider range of tools to convey humour rhetoric, e.g. images and prosodic elements (Zabalbeascoa 2012). Within this category, it is very interesting to reflect upon the specific genre of animation movies, such as the ones in the DNM corpus. Since these narratives are based on illusion, they do not necessarily have to adhere to reality, hence their potentiality to create humour is bigger. Characters in animation movies, in fact, “can defy the rules of nature and physics” (Zabalbeascoa 2012: 28), consequently, they can accomplish odd and surprising feats that create humour.

Humour is pervasive in all the movies in the corpus and is conveyed by means of different strategies (i.e. irony, sarcasm, register humour¹⁸, word puns) and both by language and images, which, in audiovisual texts, work hand in hand. In this analysis I will not focus on all the strategies to create humour, but I will only concentrate on how idioms are used for this purpose.

As I have already said, looking at the idiomatic expressions in the corpus, I have noticed that their most evident and frequent function is to create humour, it is thus particularly relevant to analyse how and why idioms are instrumental to this aim. Overall, 74 idioms out of 136 are used with a clearly humorous intention, so, the next step is to identify the main strategies that lie behind this function.

The most striking feature to be observed is that a huge part of the 74 idioms used to give rise to humour (mostly pure idioms and semi-pure idioms) have a clear-cut double realisation: the opposition between their ‘surface’ reading (i.e. the unidiomatic, literal meaning) and their contextual reading, which is instead idiomatic and figurative, is strong and easily noticeable. I have thus noticed that very often scriptwriters tend to exploit this feature in order to create humorous situations, as in many scenes the metaphorical meaning of the idiom is what is logically meant by the words uttered, but the visual information illustrates instead

¹⁸ Humour produced by the clash between the register used and the register that would be appropriate or expected in the situation (Cappelli 2008).

the literary meaning. This is possible thanks to the genre of Disney movies, that do not have to adhere to reality and can show unrealistic situations.

In the table below I present some examples of this phenomenon, analysing some scenes in a multimodal perspective. By means of a multimodal approach it is possible to see how all the elements of an audiovisual text contribute to producing meaning. Hence, transcribing a scene multimodally is particularly suitable when dealing with socio-pragmatic phenomena (such as humour), where the message is not only conveyed by the utterance but also by images and sounds. The model I have adapted to describe film narrative is taken from the one used by Wildefeur (2013).

<i>Movie</i>	<i>Shot (s) description¹⁹</i>	<i>Kinesics and proxemics</i>	<i>Music</i>	<i>Spoken language</i>
<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> (25:40-25:46)	1) Long shot of the seven dwarfs 2) Medium close up of the house in front of them	The seven dwarfs show frown at seeing smoke coming out of the chimney of their house	Music suddenly stops before the scene, in order to emphasise their sense of surprise	Grumpy: Mark my words, there is trouble brewing
<i>101 Dalmatians</i> (50:15-50:16)	1) Medium shot of Sergeant (a cat) amongst eight Dalmatians	The cat talks to the dogs with a scared expression. They react by expressing fear through their stunned facial expressions	Background music	Sergeant: You'd better get out of here if you want to save your skins
<i>Robin Hood</i> (68:13-68:14 1 shot)	1) Medium close up of an anthropomorphic buzzard	The Sheriff shouts to the bird, who does not show any reaction	Background music	Sheriff of Nottingham: You bird-brain!
<i>Aladdin</i> (07:53-07:54) (Figure 1)	1) Long shot of Aladdin amongst three Arabian dancers	One of the dancers hits Aladdin with her bottom after he has barged into their room	Background Music	Arabian dancer: Aladdin hit the bottom

¹⁹ As far as the shot description is concerned I relied upon Lacey (2005).

Hercules (33:13-33:16 3 shots) (Figure 2)	1) Medium shot of Philoctetes and Pegasus	Philoctetes shouts to Hercules and puts his hands close to his mouth to amplify the sound. Hercules, very distant from Philoctetes, acknowledges through facial expression that he has understood the message and runs towards the monster and hits him with his head	Collision sounds	Philoctetes: Concentrate, use your head!
	2) Medium close up of Hercules running towards the enemy			
	3) Medium shot of Hercules hitting the enemy			
Hercules (37:10-37:12)	1) Long shot of Megara and Hades	Hades, the king of the Underworld, suddenly appears and enters the scene by touching Megara's face with his shadow arm. His expression is challenging. Megara's face instead shows malcontent and distress	Background music	Megara: Speak of the devil
Frozen (45:24-45:25)	1) Medium close up of Olaf, a snowman	Olaf's head detaches from his body	X	Kristoff: He lost his mind

Table 14. A multimodal transcription of some humorous idioms

The table above illustrates, from a multimodal point of view, examples of idiomatic expressions, which trigger a double interpretation. I have gathered one example for each of the eight movies in the DNM corpus, in order to show how this phenomenon is widespread, no matter the epoch from which the movie comes from. The figures below are two screenshots that illustrate the examples from *Aladdin* and *Hercules*.



Figure 2. Visual representation of “hit the bottom” in *Aladdin*



Figure 3. Visual representation of “use your head” in *Hercules*

As can be noticed by looking at table 14, in some cases the image (see figure 2 and 3), along with the kinesics and the proxemics, illustrates the literary meaning of the idiomatic expressions, but the context suggests that the figurative interpretation would be more plausible and appropriate in that situation, besides being more common in the real world in general.

For example, in the scene from *Hercules*, which I have described in the table above and illustrated in figure 3, it is obvious that by saying “use your head” Philoctetes does not actually want to invite Hercules to hit someone with his head. As a result, Hercules’ acknowledgement of Philoctetes’ suggestion is a misunderstanding, in that he interprets the idiom literally. This creates an odd and humorous situation, because this misinterpretation would be very unlikely and inappropriate in everyday life, where people (normally) do not use their heads to hit others.

Hence, the jocular effect of such scenes is clearly created by means of a clash between the two meanings, the literal and the figurative, and is crucially triggered by the images. This opposition between the two meanings of idioms is also functional to the double target of Disney movies: adults, who are familiar both with the literal and the figurative meaning of the expressions, will find these scene humorous because of the discrepancy between what the words actually mean and what the film shows. On the other hand, children, who may be less familiar with idiomatic expressions, will find these scenes humorous on account of the visual message, as images and proxemics, illustrate something funny and out of the ordinary.

A second way scriptwriters exploit to produce humour is by creating new idioms. In this case, the sense of humour is created because these expressions may sound odd and unusual, perhaps most of all to adults, who have a deeper understanding of figurative and metaphoric language and thus could be surprised by such unconventional expressions. By analysing the data in my corpus I have found ample evidence of this phenomenon in several movies, in particular in the ones from the 90s. *Aladdin* is the most suitable example: in this movie the Genie says to Aladdin “Wake up and smell the hummus”. This is an example of a pure idiom, which means ‘to let go fantasy and face reality’. The humorous effect linked to this expression is given by its originality: even though the register used in the dialogue between Aladdin and the Genie is very colloquial, this expression may sound bizarre and thus amusing. However, as Moon (1998) also remarks, to consider an ‘original’ expression, like the one used in *Aladdin*, an idiom, it is necessary for it to be institutionalised as such in the language. Thus, in order to

ascertain whether this expression is institutionalised in English as an idiomatic expression (i.e. recognised and used with a fixed metaphorical meaning), I used the methodology known as “Web as a Corpus”.

From a linguistic perspective, as Kilgarriff and Greffentette (2003) posit, not only the Web can be used as an useful instrument for spell checking, but also as an incredibly large and always up-to-date source of language data, useful for linguistic investigations. Hence, by using the WebCorpLive^{®20} engine, developed by the Birmingham City University, it has been possible to carry out a search on how widespread this expression is in English. The following table illustrates a selection of the findings of this search.

<i>WebCorpLive[®] results for “wake up and smell the hummus”</i>	
The Google Search API ²¹ returned 64 hits (out of an estimated 136). WebCorp successfully accessed 61 web pages and generated 57 concordances.	
U need to wake up and smell the hummus bro	2015-06-11
America, wake up and smell the hummus , Saleem warned	2015-04-10
[...] you little danny dyers need to wake up and smell the hummus you live for arsenal fc, you cant live without [...]	2012-07-30
America and Americans it is time to wake up and smell the Hummus . So mote it be [...]	2007-04-26
[...] attired in their hijab and burka. Time to wake up and smell the humus . This guy is never resigning [...]	2006-11-01
[...] sweetie, wake up and smell the humus , he’s an ass...!	1999-02-12

Table 15. Occurrences of “Wake up and smell the hummus” according to WebCorpLive[®]

²⁰ A corpus linguistic software that uses the web as a corpus.

²¹ Application Programming Interface.

The search, with the “Web as a Corpus” tool, has highlighted that the expression does not occur before 1992 (the year of *Aladdin*’s release). Instead, many occurrences with the same meaning as in the film were found after the date of its release. Thus, it seems that this expression has become institutionalised in the lexicon as a fixed expression thanks to *Aladdin*’s great success (and to the fame of Robin Williams, the actor who dubbed this character), where it occurred first with this idiomatic meaning. Moreover, *the Online Free Dictionary* seems to confirm this hypothesis, in that the entry “Wake up and smell the hummus” reports this information:

<i>Idiom</i>	<i>Wake up and smell the hummus</i>
Meaning	Let go of fantasy and face reality
First attestation	Originally said by Robin Williams, playing the Genie, in <i>Aladdin</i> - the feature film
Usage	If anyone still think they can get rich by developing the next cool website, it's time they wake up and smell the hummus!

Table 16. The definition of the idiom “wake up and smell the hummus” in *the Online Free Dictionary*

Other examples, similar to the one I described above, can be found in the same movie (i.e. “rub the lamp” with the meaning of ‘make a wish’). With regard to this phenomenon, *Hercules*, with which *Aladdin* shares the same team of scriptwriters, illustrates other interesting examples. In this movie, we can notice that some amongst the many idiomatic expressions used are variations of already existing and institutionalised ones. In the following table some examples of this phenomenon have been collected.

<i>Idiom variety in Hercules</i>	<i>Institutionalised idiom</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
I can tie my own sandals	Tie my own shoes	I can do things on my own
Honest- to-Zeus truth	Honest truth	Undeniable reality
Pain in the patella	Pain in the neck/ass	A very annoying thing or person
Get off my cloud	Get off my horse	Get off my level/ to become humble

Table 17. Variations on idioms in *Hercules*

With reference to table 17, it can be posited that some common idiomatic expressions, such as the ones in the first column on the left, appear in the movie in a customised form. Consequently, even though the original meanings of the idioms do not go through any change, they sound odd and more ‘colourful’ than the standard ones, giving rise to humour. Even in this case, this kind of humour is more likely to be perceived and appreciated by adults rather than by children, since only the former are familiar with the ‘standard’ versions of the idiomatic expressions. On a surface level, these customised variants of the institutionalised idiomatic expressions can be defined as more ‘captivating’ because they are adapted to the peculiar cultural environment in which the movie is set. For example, “sandals” substitutes “shoes” and “cloud” substitutes “horse” because they are clearly linked with the Ancient Greek world: “sandals” were the typical footwear at that time and the “cloud” is clearly an allusion to the mythological vehicle used by Zeus. Similar remarks hold for the expression “Wake up and smell the hummus” in *Aladdin*, in that “hummus” is closely connected with the imagery of the Arabian world. Overall, this phenomenon seems to contradict one of the main features of idioms, i.e. the fact that they are ‘frozen’ and unalterable expressions in a language. However, differently from the originally created idioms found in *Aladdin*, I could not find any occurrence of the idioms in table 17 out of the movie context; therefore they have a limited life span and do not become real idiomatic

expressions.

In conclusion, even though these kind of idioms clearly contribute to making dialogues more humorous and colourful, the presence of customised idiomatic expressions is also explained by Di Giovanni (2003), as a strategy that Disney scriptwriters use to scatter film scripts with cultural specific references, to create a stronger illusion of reality that makes the movies more palatable also for an adult audience.

5. Conclusions

To sum up, the analysis of the usage of idioms confirmed the vital role that these formulaic expressions play in language production. Since scriptwriters aim at reproducing authentic natural speech as accurately as possible (cf. Tatsuki 2006), the fact that the movies I analysed contained many idioms did not seem particularly noteworthy, in that they are used, on a regular basis, in any spontaneous conversation amongst native or proficient speakers (Wood 2010: 23). However, since I analysed animation movies whose main target audience are children, who very often cannot completely understand such expressions, the findings of my analysis were quite unexpected. In fact, my search provided considerable evidence that, not only idioms are extensively used in almost all Disney movies, but they are, on average, more frequent in these children's movies than in other more adult-oriented films.

This first result bore evidence to the fact that scriptwriters play a key role as far as idioms usage is concerned. On the one hand, their main purpose is to produce dialogues that sound like spontaneous, unplanned and authentic speech; on the other hand, in order to achieve this simulation of reality, they have to plan and structure each dialogue very carefully, as it is necessary to adapt them to the multidimensional nature of audiovisual texts, squeezing them into limited time slots (Gambier 2003; Romero-Fresco 2009). Consequently, fixed figurative expressions such as idioms could not be used at random.

This is why there is much scope for discussing and analysing the vast array of idiomatic expressions in Disney animation movies. The feature films I have

selected covered a wide span of time (from the 1930s up to now): this allowed me to pinpoint to what extent idioms' usage may have varied throughout this period.

What emerged from this analysis (as shown in *Appendix B*) is that, overall, the movies I took into account contain a similar amount of idiomatic expressions (ranging from 10 to 17). However, some meaningful exceptions can be mentioned: *Pocahontas* (1995) contains for example, only 4 idioms. The low number of occurrences does not seem to be the result of any diachronic variation, since the two other movies from the 90s (*Aladdin* 1992 and *Hercules* 1997) make extensive use of idiomatic expressions (*Aladdin* contains 28 idiomatic expressions and *Hercules* 40). Instead, this difference seems to depend on the genre of these three animated movies. As Robb (2014) maintains, *Pocahontas* is quite atypical in Disney's production: it is the only Disney animation film whose plot is adapted from a true autobiographical story and also the only one without a happy ending. As a consequence, the style of this movie is more realistic than that of the others, resembling in certain respects that of a documentary. Hence, figurative language (i.e. idiomatic expressions) plays a trivial role. To strengthen even more the assumption that the genre somehow impacts on the presence of idiomatic expression, it can be pointed out that the movies containing the highest amount of idioms, *Aladdin* and *Hercules*, are, in fact, very similar in that they both extensively rely upon humour (and, as opposed to *Pocahontas*, share the same team of scriptwriters).

Once I established the link between the movie genre and the usage of idioms, I looked into characters' speech, in order to pinpoint the distribution of these idioms amongst them. By means of corpus linguistics, I discovered that villains used the highest number of idiomatic expressions, showing that their speech is the most 'colourful', perhaps to linguistically emphasise their distance from the good characters. Moreover, this search revealed that heroines rarely use idiomatic expressions: their speech resulted in being the most 'neutral'. Overall, this first part of the analysis highlighted that the abundance of idiomatic expressions is connected with the movie genre and, at the same time, contributes to shaping character's idiolect and consequently the group's identity.

After focusing on the link between film genre and the contribution of idioms to shaping a character's idiolect, I concentrated on the other predominant function that idioms covered in these films, i.e. creating humour. This analysis revealed that idioms very often occur in humorous situations and contribute to the achievement of entertainment itself; thus I singled out the main strategies that are used to achieve this purpose. The most interesting result was the discovery that, in many cases, humour is created by the clear clash between the literal meaning and the figurative meaning of some idiomatic expressions. Scriptwriters exploit the multimodality of audiovisual texts, in that the visual code represent the literal meaning, whereas, the words uttered convey the figurative one. Animation movies can fulfil this aim thanks to their possibility of portraying extraordinary situations as if they were real. In fact, I did not find any example of this strategy in the comedies and medical dramas that I compared to the DNM corpus. The peculiar way in which idioms are presented confirms that Disney movies are structured to be appealing to a double target audience: both adults and children can in fact appreciate the humorous parts, where figurative language plays a key role.

From a linguistic point of view, another interesting phenomenon that I could identify was that some idioms became institutionalised in the language after being used for the first time in a Disney movie, thus showing how the success of a movie can impact on language. Moreover, this analysis also revealed another quite unexpected trend that contradicts the general features of idioms. As I brought up in the introductory part of this chapter, idioms tend to be considered the most 'frozen' instance of formulaic language; hence, they have a standardised and fixed form that cannot be altered. On the contrary, my analysis revealed that in some of the movies in the DNM corpus, idioms appear in a customised form, whose aim is clearly related to the movie itself. More specifically these idioms are used with the purpose of emphasising the 'otherness' of the cultural environment where the movie is set, in a way that children can easily understand.

In conclusion, my analysis of idiomatic usage has highlighted the fact that Disney movies are created with the intention to be aimed to not only at children, but also at adults. The linguistic choices made by scriptwriters are based on this

feature and therefore, not only situations but also dialogues are multi-layered (i.e. by means of figurative expressions, such as idioms) so that they can be interpreted differently by children and adults. This is possible and does not create any hermeneutical problem to children thanks to the multidimensional nature of audiovisual texts, where different codes such as images and sounds interact to produce meaning. As a result, when children cannot semantically process idioms, they can deduce their meaning (sometimes only the literal one) from the visuals.



You're dead if you aim only for kids. Adults are only kids grown up, anyway.

WALT DISNEY

V. Formulaic language in conversational routines: politeness, power and solidarity

Word books traditionally focus on unusual and quirky items. They tend to ignore the words that provide the skeleton of the language, without which it would fall apart, such as 'and' and 'what,' or words that provide structure to our conversation, such as 'hello'

David Crystal

1. Society and polite behaviour

As human beings, we are 'sociable creatures'. Since we live in a society based on social interactions, where knowing how to behave is also a linguistic concern, conversations are ruled by a series of implicit social norms that contribute to making them fit into a given situation. One of the most relevant principles to consider in order to make discourse appropriate to the rules of society is politeness. Deborah Tannen (1986: 30-31) suggests that the concept of politeness accounts for the way people respond to the double bind situation in which they find themselves in society. According to this view, everyone faces an interior struggle between two main needs, i.e. "to connect to others" and "to be left alone"; hence, linguistic politeness is the result of a negotiation between the two.

From a linguistic perspective, by politeness we refer to a wide range of strategies that speakers intuitively adopt in order to communicate effectively and thus to be accepted as members in a given community. In this field, the studies by Grice (1975) paved the way for further research. In *Logic and Conversation* (1975) he posits that conversation is a principle-controlled event, where linguistic choices made by speakers are not only grammatically-oriented, but also the result of some

socio-pragmatic norms of co-operation.

Scholars such as Lakoff (1973) and Leech (1983) list a series of conversational rules and maxims that all share the main trait of attributing key role to politeness, as a means by which speakers signal their interpersonal supportiveness, i.e. their intention to support each other and satisfy shared expectations about cultural and situational assumptions. These rules aim to avoid or at least soften face-threatening acts²², thus creating “happy” conditions for interaction and to avoid losing face (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987).

1.1 The routinised nature of polite behaviour

As discussed in chapter three, many linguists such as Hymes (1962), Chafe (1970), Coulmas (1981), and Wray (2002) have repeatedly stressed that a great deal of communicative activity often consists in enacting a series of routines. Thus, discourse is not an arbitrary sequence of utterances, but is carefully structured, in that speakers make extensive use of prefabricated linguistic units in a well-known and generally accepted manner (Coulmas 1981: 1). In the same vein, linguistic politeness, which plays a vital role in successful everyday conversations, shows a highly routinised and therefore predictable nature. Hence, its formulaic repertoire may be regarded as a functionally appropriate reaction to some standardised communicative situations (i.e. greeting, leave-taking, apologising, complimenting and the like). Therefore, the corresponding speech acts tend to employ preferentially some lexical and grammatical recurring patterns, resulting in being formulaic language manifestations (but, as my analysis will show, they also keep a certain degree of creativity) that facilitate social interactions. As far as this study is concerned, I will concentrate on formulae that are used to open and close conversations in a ritual manner.

²² Cf. Goffmann 1967.

2. *Conversational routines: a theoretical overview*

Conversational routines (Coulmas 1981; Aijmer 1996) are regarded by Coulmas (1981: 1-2) as conventionalised and pre-patterned phrases closely bound to a specific function or conversational situation. In other words, he describes them as formulae that are semantically poor in isolation, but that acquire significance when contextualised; their meaning is thus mostly function-based (e.g. expressing attitudes and feelings, phatic function and indicating participants' social positions). Studies on linguistic routines (cf. Laver 1981; Bertuccelli Papi 2010) also add that they may facilitate social relationships since they work as "tools of polite behaviour" reducing the risk of face-threatening acts (from now on abbreviated as FTA) and reinforcing solidarity or distance.

The table below introduces the seven main categories of conversational routines singled out by Coulmas (1981).

<i>Conversational Routines</i>	
Greeting	Hello; hi; hey; good morning
Leave-taking	Bye; good bye; bye bye; cheers
Apologies	I'm sorry; pardon; beg your pardon?
Thanks	Thanks; thank you; many thanks
Compliments	You look terrific; you did good job
Phatic expressions	How's the weather?; how are things?
Vocatives	Hi, Mr Bloom; good morning, your highness

Table 18. Examples of conversational routines

A typical feature of these routines, as might be expected, is the high frequency of occurrence of a limited number of structural patterns and a restricted array of lexical representations (cf. Manes & Wolfson 1981: 121 on compliments). However, a certain amount of creativity is still present and non-standard or less conventional forms occur as well. In movies, for example, creative forms of conversational routines are often used for the depiction of characters. An instance of this phenomenon is present in the film *The Devil wears Prada* (2006), where the

main character, Miranda Priestley, uses the peremptory exclamation “That’s all” as a parting formula. This is a non-standard form of taking leave, one that violates politeness norms and threatens the addressee’s face, thus depicting the character as impolite, cold and vicious.

Furthermore, it is interesting to underline with Coulmas that conversational routines also work as “tacit agreements, which the members of a community presume to be shared by every reasonable co-member” (1981: 4). Hence, in spite of the fact that they are to some extent universally shared, conversational formulae have a community-restricted and culture-specific character. Consequently, cross cultural exchanges may lead to misunderstandings, on the grounds that members of different cultures and communities may not share the same kinds of conventionalised behaviour. This is also evident in the movies I have taken into account. In *Pocahontas*, for example, native Indian characters never verbally greet or say good-bye. Instead, they just draw a circle with their hand when they meet or part from each other; thus the villain of the movie, who takes for granted that Western conversational routines are universally shared, does not acknowledge that Indians greet in a different way and resolves to say, “I will teach them how to greet properly”.

As a final remark, I would like to draw attention to the relationship between conversational routines and idioms. As Makkai (1972: 13) posits, not all routines are idiomatic, however, a clear link between conversational formulae and idiomatic expressions can be pinpointed. Some studies (Makkai 1972 *inter alia*) have demonstrated that the high frequency of usage of routines has somehow eroded their literal meaning in favour of a more functional-based interpretation. Hence, just as for idioms, “their meanings often are quite different from the sums of their parts, and cannot be properly explained without reference to the conditions of their use” (Coulmas 1981: 5). This is evident in the case of formulaic expressions such as “help yourself!” where knowing the context of usage is vital to understand what it actually refers to; contextual dependence is not necessary to understand single lexemes used referentially such as “horse” or “vase”.

3. *Greetings and leave-takings*

As I said above, I will especially focus on verbal greetings and leave-takings, i.e. conversational routines used in the opening or closing parts of conversations. Greetings and leave-takings are perhaps the most common example of conversational routines. They are said to be “the basic oil of communicative activity” (Spolsky 1998: 20), since they work as the foundations of social relations and allow speakers to relate to others conveniently (Bonsignori, Bruti, Masi 2012: 24).

On the basis of the relevant literature on the topic, Masi (2008) points out three main distinctive features of these expressions, which distinguish them from other linguistic routines. Firstly, they are characterised by their position in discourse as they typically occur at the beginning (greetings) or at the end (leave-taking) of an interaction. Secondly, they display a high level of interactional reciprocity (which may occasionally be subverted via deviation). Thirdly, they are defined by the fixedness of their form, in other words, by their more or less strong adherence to standard routinised patterns, which help participants to recognise the phatic function of such expressions.

According to Bonsignori, Bruti and Masi (2012), these formulaic expressions cover different functions in conversation, which contribute to specify their meaning. First of all, their most distinctive functions are the phatic one, that is to say to open and close conversations and the expressive one, through which speakers express feelings and attitudes such as politeness. On a more specific level, they notice that routines serve the purpose of indicating the social identity of the speakers, in terms of power (superiority/inferiority) and solidarity (vicinity/remoteness) (cf. Brown & Gilman 1960).

Hence, as expressions of strategic illocutionary points in a given situation, their correct use has a vital role in polite behaviour, in that they contribute to minimising the risks of face threats. Laver (1981) specifies that, as phatic tools, the functions of greeting formulae also depend on their position within the discourse. If they appear in initial position, they serve the purpose of breaking the potential hostility of silence; for example when greetings are used in combination with utterances of phatic communication, such as “Good morning, what a lovely

weather today!” Conversely, when occurring in the closing of a conversation they help to mitigate or reinforce social relations between participants, e.g. “I gotta leave now, bye” (mitigation) or “I’ll see you next Tuesday, cheers” (consolidation).

In the following table, I have collected a series of greetings and parting formulae in English, by relying upon and integrating the model proposed by Masi (2008).

<i>Greetings</i>	<i>Leave-takings</i>
Hi (often used with “there”)	Good bye
Hello	Bye bye
‘Good forms’ (and also its informal abbreviated forms, where “good” is omitted.	Bye
Good day (rare in BrE and AmE, usually associated with Australian E)	Excuse me
Hiya and wotcha (BrE)	See you [later, tomorrow etc.]
Hey (more AmE)	Good night (night time)
Howdy	Catch you later
How do you do?	cheery-bye
Ey up	Farewell
What’s up	Hasta la vista/ Adios (loanword from Spanish)
	Adieu (load word from French)
	Talk to you [later/soon etc.]
	Cheerio (BrE ext.)
	Ta ta, cheers (BrE)
	Ciao (loanword from Italian)

Table 19. Verbal greetings and leave-takings in English

The aforementioned table lists the most common fixed expressions of greetings found in British English and in other varieties. Some of them use short forms (e.g. “morning” instead of “good morning” or “good eve” instead of “good evening”) that are more likely to occur in informal contexts, when social differences are neutralised and thus there are fewer risks of FTA. As Biber *et al.* (1999: 1085-86) point out, what it is common to all these greetings is that they often occur in combination with vocatives, either in informal (e.g. “Hey, mac”) or in formal (e.g. “Good morning, sir”) situations (vocatives will be dealt with in more detail in paragraph 5.1).

4. Greetings and movies: how do Disney characters greet each other?

In chapter two I have dwelt upon the issue of movie language as a mimesis of naturally occurring speech. As I pointed out, scriptwriters closely pick up some of the main features of conversation, but they do not exactly respect their frequency of occurrence. This is a peculiar feature of film scripts, which are written by prioritising the necessity to take the narrative forward and to keep the audience in the loop. For these reasons, they must be maximally efficient, and not waste precious showing time with irrelevant information; consequently, they have little space for phatic chit-chat or routinised exchanges like greetings. When greetings or other phatic elements are used, is thus mostly for peculiar purposes, such as introducing new characters, specifying one's social position, especially for the audience on the external axis, or maybe because of the nature of the movie itself (e.g. a movie set in a hotel, where greeting is something peculiar to the setting, or movies set at court, where social behaviour is extremely routinised) (cf. Bednarek 2010).

As far as my analysis of the use of formulaic expressions in movies is concerned, after establishing that Disney scriptwriters extensively rely upon idiomatic language, I have decided to investigate greeting expressions *proper*²³, when they are used as tools to open or close a conversation. I will especially focus on their functions as politeness tools, social power indicators and solidarity enhancers.

²³ By saying “proper” I mean that I will not analyse the whole introductory or closing part of the conversation, but I will only tackle greeting and parting salutations ‘proper’ (*i.e.* the salient position of speech acts serving politeness-related expressive function, usually conventional and fixed in form), and also, although to a lesser extent, I will make reference to vocatives and phatic expressions that co-occur with them.

4.1 Some quantitative considerations

Firstly, I have decided to carry out a quantitative analysis of the greetings and leave-takings expressions in the corpus, in order to establish their frequency. For this purpose, I queried all the formulae collected in table 19 by means of AntConc®²⁴ software.

Chart 5 and 6 below summarise the findings of this search. In addition, a full list of greetings and leave-takings occurring in each movie is present in *Appendix C*.

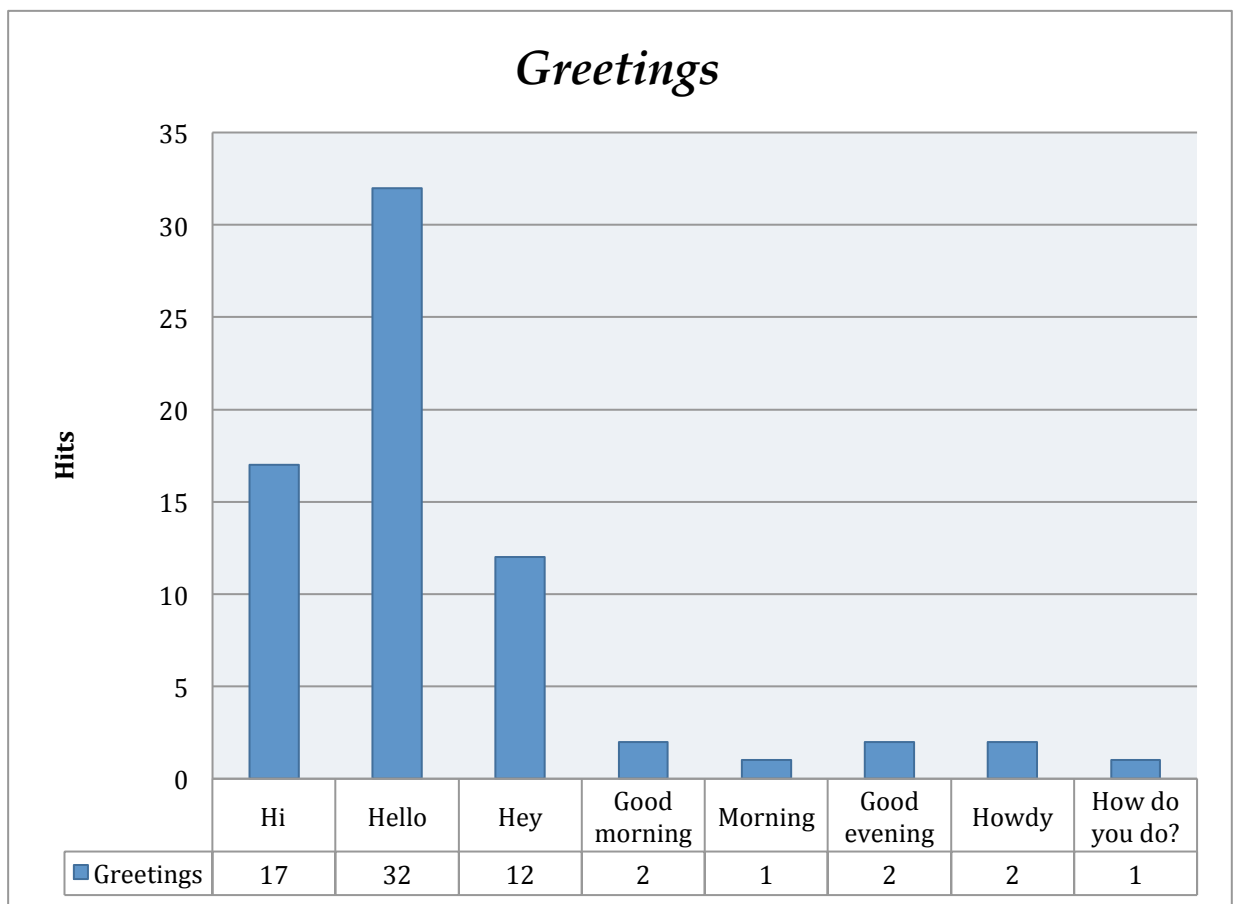


Chart 5. Greeting formulae in the DNM corpus

²⁴ Cf. chapter two for some information about Antcon.

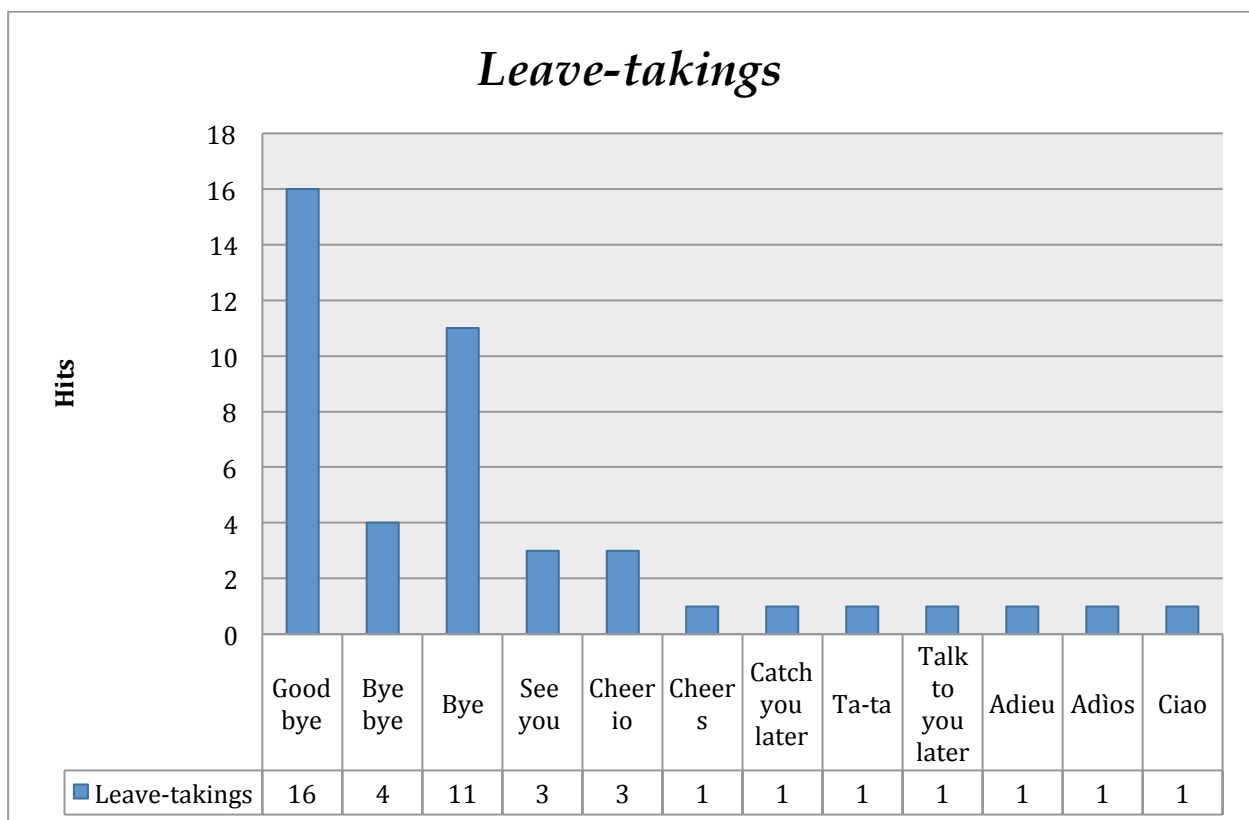


Chart 6. Leave-taking formulae in the DNM corpus

At first glance, it can be noticed that a large array of the expressions gathered in table 19 are used in the DNM corpus. As far as greetings are concerned, what is patent is that there is a clear discrepancy between the usage of informal greetings such as “Hello” (32 hits), “Hi” (17 hits), “Hey” (12 hits) and formal ones such as “Good morning” (2 hits), “Good evening” (2 hits), “How do you do” (1 hit). Some other forms also appear, for example the informal greeting “Howdy” (2 hits), which is the reduction of “How do you do?” or “Morning” (1 hit), the informal reduction of the form with “good”.

As for leave-takings, “Good bye” and “Bye” are the most frequently used forms (16 and 11 hits), then “Bye bye” and “See you” occur respectively 4 and 3 times. Alongside with these common formulae, some other more “colourful” expressions are used, e.g. “Cheerio” (3 hits), “Cheers” (1 hit), “Ta-ta” (1 hit). Finally, we can remark two idiomatic expressions used as leave-takings i.e. “Catch you later” (1 hit) and “Talk to you later” (1 hit).

Before proceeding with my analysis, I would like to make some methodological considerations. For the purposes of this investigation, AntConc®

allowed me to identify the occurrences and the list of concordances of the expressions I was interested in, which represent the basis for further research. However, I have noticed that corpus linguistic tools alone could not completely fulfil this task, because they do not allow the analyst to clearly distinguish between the differed usages of the same expression: for example “hello” can be used with the pragmatic purpose of opening a conversation, or simply to make reference to the act of greeting itself, e.g. “He’s so rude, he never says hello!”, where “hello” is used metareferentially. Consequently, a qualitative evaluation, on the basis of the context of usage, is necessary to obtain fair quantitative results. As expected, by analysing data qualitatively, I found out that most of these expressions were actually used in the opening or in the closing of discourse, the only interesting exception being “hey”, which I decided to isolate in a brief case study.

4.2 “Hey” from interjection to opening greeting: a close-up

Aijmer & Andersen (2011: 262) define “hey” as an interjection that works as an attention-getting device, homophonic to “hay” (also used as an exclamation addressed to horses). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “hey” started to be used as an interjection in Old English, with the form “*hē; ēa”, then it became “hey; hei,” in Middle English and kept the form “hey” in Modern English.

The Free Dictionary proposes an interesting description of its usage in American English:

Traditionally, “hey” was just an **exclamation**. Sometimes it expressed delight, sometimes a warning. Nowadays, we find it used for emphasis as well, especially in the expression “but hey!” **It is also a greeting**. It is a short, colloquial version of “How are you?” and thus akin to the informal salutation “hi”, which it seems to be replacing in many situations. Until recently, this greeting had a distinctly Southern American flavour. The national survey conducted in the 1960s by the Dictionary of American Regional English found “hey” as a greeting restricted chiefly to Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas. The friendly “hey” has since spread throughout the United States

This short account seems to suggest that the interjection “hey” started to be used as a vernacular greeting to open an exchange in the mid-nineties, in the South of the USA, becoming later widespread in the country. Nowadays, American speakers perceive it as a more informal way of greeting that has lost its vernacular connotation amongst the new generations, which use it extensively (Aijmer & Andersen 2011). As far as BrE speakers are concerned, I could not find any relevant study dealing specially with the use of this expression. Thus, I carried out a search on some web forums²⁵, where native BrE and AmE speakers discuss the use of “hey” as a greeting. This investigation confirmed that middle-aged American speakers used to perceive it as a vernacular expression but they now commonly use it without this feeling; conversely, American younger speakers never felt it as a vernacular form, but just as an informal variant of “hi/hello”

I'm 28 and I'm from D.C and I say 'hey' all the time. It's a more casual, familiar form of 'hi'. I've heard "hey is for horses" but have never had anyone apply it to me when greeting them informally! (Amy, 28 years old)

On the other hand, remarks by British English speakers suggest that “hey” as an opening greeting was highly stigmatised in the past

I'm 47 and this discussion reminds me of my mother's admonishment "'Hey" is for horses!²⁶' every time I used to greet her by saying “hey” (David, 47 years old)

However, thanks to the power and huge spread of American English all over the world, this derogatory connotation is no longer perceived and “hey” has entered British English as well.

²⁵ <http://english.stackexchange.com/questions/75201/the-use-of-hey-in-north-america>.

²⁶ "Hey is for horses" means the utterance someone made "hey" is a barbarism, because the hearer feels to be metaphorically compared to a plant that horses eat.

The movies I have analysed confirm that “hey” started quite recently to be used as a greeting in AmE. In fact, this expression occurs 61 times in the DNM corpus, of which 11 as a greeting and 50 as an interjection. Its occurrences as an interjection are present in every movie; conversely, as a greeting, it does not appear at all in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *101 Dalmatians* and *Robin Hood* (1973), but it occurs for the first time in *Aladdin* (1992). The table below summarises the occurrences of “hey” as a greeting in the DNM corpus.

Greeting	<i>Snow White</i> (1937)	<i>101 Dalmatians</i> (1961)	<i>Robin Hood</i> (1973)	<i>Aladdin</i> (1992)	<i>Pocahontas</i> (1994)	<i>Hercules</i> (1997)	<i>The Incredibles</i> (2004)	<i>Frozen</i> (2013)
Hey	-	-	-	3	-	2	5	2

Table 20. “Hey” as a greeting in the movies in the DNM corpus

Table 20 shows how “hey” is used as a greeting only in more recent movies (starting from the 90s), perhaps as a choice of the scriptwriter in order to adapt the movie script to the linguistic habits of the main target audience of Disney movies, i.e. young people.

Investigating qualitatively the context of usage of “hey” as a salutation form, one may notice that it is mostly used in conversations where speakers are social peers, i.e. there are no big differences in age and social position (symmetrical relation). In *The Incredibles*, for example, Mr Incredible (a middle aged super-hero) says to Frozone (his super-hero friend): “Hey, Frozone!” receiving as a response “Hey, Mr Incredible!”. This clearly indicates how this informal greeting is commonly used between peers, without resulting inappropriate or impolite. It also occurs between young speakers, even in upper-class contexts, e.g. in *Frozen*, Anna (the Queen’s younger sister) greets her sister, Queen Elsa (who is very young as well), by saying “Hey, Elsa, it’s me Anna!” It is worth noting that no occurrences of “hey” as a greeting in situations of clear social power differences are present (e.g. between a servant and a king, where the relation is clearly asymmetrical).

To conclude this investigation, I decided to query a BrE corpus²⁷ in order to check the usage of “hey” in a sample of British English movies. The results of this query confirmed that nowadays “hey” has become commonly used as a greeting also in BrE; in fact, I found 49 occurrences, of which 5 as an opening greeting.

Thus, this expression, which was born as an interjection and has quite recently started to be commonly used as a salutation, seems no longer perceived to be felt as an American Southern vernacular form in the USA. Furthermore, thanks to the spread of American English in the world, it also became common in BrE, without sounding particularly marked. Consequently, one may note that the usage of “hey” in movies instead of “hi” or “hello” does not really contribute to shaping the character’s idiolect, but it is a clear indicator that a speaker feels at ease by addressing his/her hearer in a very colloquial and informal way, without any risk of being impolite.

As a final remark, I would like to pinpoint that this search bore evidence to the fact that as far as the study of socio-pragmatic phenomena (e.g. opening and closing a conversation) is concerned, querying small-size corpora is undoubtedly easier and more fruitful. When dealing with extremely large corpora, such as the COCA or the BNC, qualitatively evaluating the results in order to isolate only the relevant ones to the analysis might be a very hard task. In the case of “hey” for example, I first carried out a search both in the spoken BNC and in the COCA with the aim of exploring to what extent this expression was used as a salutation in BrE and AmE. However, the findings of such query were very unreliable, because I noticed that sometimes “hey” occurred as an interjection and some others as a greeting. This also happened while dealing with the two smaller-size movies corpora I actually used, but thanks to their reasonable size, qualitatively selecting the results was a possible and easily performable option.

²⁷ I queried the same corpus I used in chapter four (the comedies corpus), but for the purpose of this analysis I omitted from it US movies.

5. *The functions of greeting and parting sequences*

After identifying the occurrences of the most common standard greeting and leave-taking expressions in English and describing them from a quantitative perspective (cf. chart 5 and 6), my intent is to carry out a qualitative analysis by taking into account, as the main variable, the level of formality (diaphasic variation) of the given situation of utterance and how it may impact on politeness issues. Starting from Laver's assumption (1981), according to which linguistic routines play a key role in negotiating and defining social relationships, my main aim is to investigate whether and to what extent this function is kept in the movies in my corpus. For this purpose, I will tackle first the opening sequences, then the closing ones.

5.1 *Opening sequences*

Overall, it can be noticed that as far as greetings are concerned, the highest degree of formulaicity is present in formal and asymmetrical contexts. To be more precise, I have remarked that very often, in formal situations, Disney characters tend to use rather standardised patterns to greet. However, differently from what I expected, they frequently employ informal or neutral greeting forms (e.g. Hello; Hey; Hi) instead of formal ones (e.g. How do you do?). This also happens in the older movies (H. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*), where I assumed I would find the highest level of formality. When evaluating qualitatively the context of occurrence of the greeting expressions, I realised they are often accompanied by vocatives, that clearly help establish an adequate level of formality complying with the power dynamics of discourse. Previous studies on filmic language (cf. Bruti & Perego 2008 on subtitling) provided ample evidence for the key role of vocatives in film dialogues. According to Levinson (1983), vocatives are noun phrases that refer to the addressee, but are not syntactically or semantically incorporated as the arguments of a predicate; they are rather set apart prosodically from the body of a sentence that normally accompanies them. In fact, Gramley & Pätzold (1992) refer to them as unbound forms of address. Many studies on conversation (cf. Zwicky 1974; Biber *et al.* 1999; Huddleston and Pullum 2000, *inter alia*) bore evidence to the fact that, despite their simple syntactic nature, they perform important socio-

pragmatic functions in discourse such as attracting the addressee’s attention, maintaining and reinforcing the interlocutors’ relationship, and finally identifying the addressee’s social role and the emotive attitudes towards him. In account of the study carried out by Gramley & Pätzold (1992: 196), vocatives have been divided up into five different classes by namely: pronouns (e.g. Hey **you**, watch out!), names (e.g. Night, **bunny**), kinship terms (e.g. Morning, **uncle** Jamie), titles (e.g. Good evening, **Miss**) and descriptors²⁸ (e.g. Hello, **folks**). However, As far as my study is concerned, I will only take into account vocatives occurring in opening and then closing sequences.

In the table below, it may be noticed that, in the DNM corpus, vocatives cover the function of expressing someone’s polite behaviour and thus contribute to the proper realisation of this ritualised linguistic act. Therefore, I have collected some examples of greeting sequences in contexts of asymmetrical relationships that illustrate this phenomenon.

<i>Movie</i>	<i>Greeting sequence</i>	
<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	Snow White: Good morning, Doc	Doc: Morning, Princess!
<i>Robin Hood</i>	Captain: Hello Your Highness, with your royal permission, we are ready to begin	Prince John: Proceed, captain!
<i>Aladdin</i>	Jasmine: Hey, we need to talk	Jafar: Hello, Princess, how may I serve you?
<i>Pocahontas</i>	John Smith: Hey, Sir	General Ratcliffe: Where have you been?
<i>Frozen</i>	Olaf: Hi, Princess Anna!	Anna: Hey Olaf, how good to see ya!

Table 21. Examples of greeting sequences in asymmetrical relationships

The table shows that, although the greeting forms employed are rather informal or neutral, in contexts of clear power disparity, vocatives contribute to maintaining a high level of politeness.

²⁸ Descriptor is an umbrella term that refers to all the vocatives which contain a form of description of the addressee. Insults and terms of endearment, for example, are part of this subdivision.

In the first example, Doc, one of the dwarfs, reciprocates Princess Snow White's standard greeting "good morning" in its shortened form "morning", which is more informal and normally would not be appropriate to greet a Princess. That is why he adds the vocative "Princess" to his greeting. This last element clearly specifies the hierarchical nature of their relationship and contributes to maintaining an adequate level of politeness and distance. Also, it is interesting to highlight that further on in the movie this distance, brought about by the formal vocative "Princess" that accompanies the greeting, disappears, in order to indicate the tender relationship between Snow White and the dwarfs that becomes closer and closer and thus more symmetrical.

In the example taken from *Robin Hood* a similar situation takes place. In this case, the different power positions between the interactants are even more marked: the captain greets the Prince by using an informal/neutral greeting "hello", followed by a vocative sequence "Your Highness; with your Royal Permission". Prince John, taking advantage of his higher social position and confirming his domineering personality, answers by giving him an order, without reciprocating the greeting; anyhow, he adds the vocative "captain" that somehow mitigates the non-reciprocation of the greeting by acknowledging the status of his addressee. As a further consideration, it may be relevant to reflect upon how these formal and solemn vocatives are perceived by children. In my opinion, very formal vocatives such as "Your Majesty; Your Highness" are not only used to recreate the fairy tale setting that frames the story, but also because they may be considered funny by children, since they normally do not hear them in their everyday lives. In the light of that, we may deduce that scriptwriter's choice to employ 'modern and informal' greetings adds spontaneity to the exchange, whereas the choice of vocatives provides information about the context of the story and the relationship between the speakers in a way that also children can understand.

In the exchange taken from *Aladdin*, instead, Princess Jasmine, who holds the floor since she is talking to her father's counsellor, uses an informal greeting "hey" to address, Jafar, the villain of the story, who pretends to be polite and flattering resorting to an informal greeting in combination with a vocative "Princess" and the modal request "May I", which shows extreme deference. All

these precautions are clearly observed by the villain as politeness enhancers that prevent him from revealing his actual malicious nature.

Finally, the last two sequences, respectively from *Pocahontas* and *Frozen*, describe similar situations, in which formal vocatives accompany greetings in order to sound more polite and respectful. Generally speaking, in these two examples (but also in the others) it is evident that not only do greetings formulae cover the function of defining speakers' power positions, but they also contribute to the portrayal of the characters. For instance, we may point out that villains such as Ratcliffe and Prince John do not reciprocate greetings because they want to emphasise their social distance from the hearer and their higher hierarchical position. In the economy of film narration, these discursive strategies of non-reciprocation clearly work as tools to give useful information about the character (i.e. they depict them as impolite and unsympathetic).

In the same vein, the polite way in which heroines such as Snow White and Anna in the examples from table 21 address their hearers characterises them as sympathetic and supportive, despite their being in power positions. As opposed to Jafar in *Aladdin*, they add a vocative to the greeting with the result of sounding more refined and respectful. On the other hand, more informal greeting formulae are used in other contexts. This mostly happens in situations of symmetrical relationships, where the urge for deference is less strong. The table below describes some instances of this kind.

<i>Movie</i>	<i>Greeting sequence</i>	
<i>101 Dalmatians</i>	Pongo: Hi there!	Sargent: Hi, how're things?
<i>Robin Hood</i>	Robin hood: Howdy	Friar tuck: Hello, old rascal!
<i>Hercules</i>	Hercules: Hey Meg	Megara: Wonderboy!
<i>The Incredibles</i>	Violet: Mom! Dad!	Elastigirl: Kids!
<i>The Incredibles</i>	Elastigirl: Mr Incredible!	Mr Incredible: Elastigir ?!

Table 22. Examples of greeting sequences in informal contexts

The aforementioned examples illustrate some opening sequences in informal situations between speakers who have a rather close or symmetrical relationship. Generally speaking, it can be noticed that informal situations almost share the same array of greeting forms as formal ones. Thus, what differentiates formal and informal greeting formulae is the choice of vocatives (or their absence) that accompany the greeting expression. In symmetrical exchanges the management of interaction is easier as there are fewer constraints and the characters can be more spontaneous and direct. Hence, speakers, being social equals, are less burdened and imposed upon. As a result, there is no need of using standardised formal vocatives showing deference and respect (e.g. Your Majesty; Princess; Your Highness).

The first example, taken from *101 Dalmatians*, illustrates a standard informal greeting exchange between peers, where no vocative is used. As for filmic language, the informality of such greetings may be functional to reveal to the audience that the two characters already know each other, without the necessity to give any further background information that would slow down the plot.

In some other examples, such as in the one taken from *Robin Hood*, we can notice that a derogatory vocative expression “old rascal” accompanies the introductory greeting. Differently from the vocatives used in formal greeting exchanges that usually enhance the distance between the speakers from the beginning of the conversation, the ones occurring in symmetrical exchanges, like this one, play a vital role in reinforcing the idea of group membership and bear witness of solidarity between the speakers.

Further considerations can be drawn from the examples in *Hercules* and in *The Incredibles*. In these exchanges we may comment on how the vocatives directly replace the greeting ‘proper’, displaying a maximum level of intimacy between the speakers.

As a final remark, I would like to pinpoint that in accordance with the light nature of animation movies, some greeting sequences are used with the clear aim to create humour. Table 23 gathers some of them.

<i>Movie</i>	<i>Greeting sequence</i>	
<i>Aladdin</i>	Genie: Hey, rugman! Haven't seen you in a few millennia!	
<i>Hercules</i>	Hades: Hey Meg, my little flower, my little bird, my little nut meg	Megara: Speak of the devil
<i>Pocahontas</i>	John Smith: How do you do, Meeko?	

Table 23. Humorous greeting sequences

In the first example, taken from *Aladdin*, the greeting sequence displays the Genie's typical wit. The salutation form "hey" is followed by a creative vocative "rugman" that not only reinforces the level of solidarity between the speakers, but also creates humour. In this situation, the sense of humour arises from the peculiar nature of the vocative "rugman", in that it is a creative expression, sounding uncommon and odd and thus meant to amuse both adults and children. Furthermore, the irony of such an expression also lies in the fact that, in the real world, this would be a metaphorical expression, but in the animation movie it actually addresses a real rug which acts as a human being.

Instead, the greeting sequences from *Hercules*, uttered by Hades (the villain of the movie), is an example of a greeting that creates humour by means of a series of sarcastic and flattering vocatives "my little flower, my little bird, my little nut meg" (it is worth noting that, in this case, the sense of humour is also conveyed by the pun on "nut meg", relying on the homophony between nutmeg and "nut" + the elided form of Megara's name).

Finally, the last example from *Pocahontas* provides an instance of register humour (see chapter four), since John Smith uses a very formal greeting formula (how do you do?) towards an animal, sounding rather inappropriate and snobbish, with the aim of amusing Pocahontas, the girl he likes.

All things considered, it can be maintained that, in accordance with the power dynamics of spontaneous conversation, phrases of greeting in the DNM corpus tend to respond to some rather formulaic patterns, on the basis of the formality of the situation. In formal situation (e.g. in scenes at court) in most cases

there are standard/neutral greeting expressions whose formality and politeness is conveyed by a solemn and formal vocative that specifies the social distance between the speakers. On the other hand, in informal and relaxed situations, although the greeting forms are often the same of formal contexts, the level of informality is conveyed by more spontaneous and creative vocatives. Thus, informal greeting formulae may work to enhance solidarity and, in cases like the ones shown in table 23, to create jocular situations.

5.2 Closing sequences

As far as closing-conversation sequences are concerned, chart 6 shows the array of expressions used for this purpose. At first glance, it can be noted that leave-taking sequences tend to be less numerous than the greeting ones. This first datum could be explained through the fact that in films greeting sequences generally serve the purpose of introducing new characters into the story; hence, they tend to occur quite frequently. Farewells, instead, are less functional to the development of the plot and thus they are more likely to be omitted. This trend seems to confirm the general results of the survey on greetings, in a sample of American TV series, carried out by Bonsignori and Bruti (2014).

On the whole, we can assert that although quantitatively fewer, farewell sequences in the DNM corpus display a wider range of expressions compared to openings, which appear to be more 'crystallised'.

Similarly to greetings, I have noticed that leave-taking expressions often occur in combination with vocatives in more formal situations, where perhaps asymmetrical relations are displayed or the solemnity of the moment needs to be emphasised. The following table describes some of these sequences.

<i>Movie</i>	<i>Farewell sequence</i>	
<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	Snow White: Good night	Dwarfs: Good night, Princess
<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	Huntsman: Adieu, Princess	Snow White: Oh
<i>Aladdin</i>	Jafar: Good bye, Princess	Jasmine: Bye
<i>Aladdin</i>	Jasmine: Good night my handsome Prince	Aladdin: Sleep well, Princess
<i>Aladdin</i>	Genie: Now, if you'll excuse me, master. I take my leave, good bye	

Table 24. Examples of farewell sequences in formal exchanges

Overall, these formulae are slightly specular to openings and no relevant differences can be drawn. We can highlight that, as for greetings, parting forms often occur in combination with vocatives, which abide by conversational hierarchies, i.e. the higher necessity to display respect and deference is, the more formal and formulaic the sequence will be. An example of this kind is the one taken from *Aladdin*, where Princess Jasmine, who is in a power position in the conversation, customises her salutation by adding a compliment in her farewell “my handsome Prince”; conversely, Aladdin employs the standard vocative “Princess” in order to show deference and not to sound intrusive.

What’s more, the second example from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is also quite interesting, in that it illustrates a very formal and solemn form of leave-taking, “adieu”, which is a French loanword. The high level of formality of this expression is strictly linked with its context of occurrence; in fact, it is uttered by the huntsman, who after giving up the idea of killing Snow White, resolves to let her go away. Hence, the salutation directly reflects the solemnity of the moment.

Concurrently, I was quite surprised not to find any example of formal farewell in *Frozen*, which is equally set at court, like the movies where I have found galore of such formulae. This may be due to the fact that the characters in this movie are far from the well-mannered stereotype of Princes and Princesses and

thus the politeness norms usually at work in hierarchical environments tend to be flouted.

Next, in informal situations, closing sequences revealed to be more varied and creative than opening ones.

<i>Movie</i>	<i>Farewell sequence</i>	
<i>101 Dalmatians</i>	Cruella De Vil: See you in three weeks. Cheerio, Cheerio, darling	Anita: Good bye!
<i>101 Dalmatians</i>	Nanny: Let me out! Help! I'll call the police. Help!	Jasper: Ta-ta, ducky!
<i>Hercules</i>	Boy1: Nice catch, bye Jerkules!	
<i>Hercules</i>	Megara: Well, thanks for everything, Herc. It's been a real slice, catch you later.	Hercules: wait!
<i>The Incredibles</i>	The Incredibles: Ma'am. Gotta rash.	Old woman: See you
<i>Frozen</i>	Anna: The bells. The coronation. I... I... I better go. I have to...I better go. Bye!	Nanny: the gloves!..... bye!

Table 25. Examples of farewell sequences in informal contexts

First of all, we may note that all the examples collected above occur in informal contexts, where speakers do not fear to offend each other. On a surface level, it can be pointed out that, just as in informal greeting sequences, vocatives often appear in informal parting phrases.

In the two examples from *101 Dalmatians* the vocatives “darling” and “ducky” occur with two colloquial leave-taking formulae, namely “cheerio”, which is a typical salutation associated with Estuary English, and “ta-ta”, which is an informal British English farewell derived from baby talk. It is interesting to highlight how, in both cases, vocatives play a key role in specifying the function of the preceding greeting. In the first example, Cruella De Vil, although she is

naturally rude and ill-mannered, is faking a high level of politeness and pretends to be friendly. Thus, she clearly adds the vocative expression in order to fake a symmetrical and sympathetic relationship with Anita, because she wants to take advantage of her. It is also interesting to remark that, apart from this example, Cruella De Vil always takes leave by swearing and insulting her addressees and never says goodbye in a polite way. As a result, her impolite attitude in salutations certainly contributes to shaping her character as being rude and spiteful. In the second example, Jasper, one of the villains of the movies, uses the vocative “ducky”, which normally has affectionate and tender connotations, in a scornful and vicious way. The occurrence of this vocative makes the informal and light parting form “ta-ta”, which according to the *Longman English Dictionary* is commonly used in familiar contexts, sarcastic and antiphrastic, depicting Jasper as an overbearing gangland.

Furthermore, the examples from *Hercules*, introduce another two colloquial parting sequences. In the first instance it might be interesting to notice how the farewell is customised and how the speaker uses it not only to take leave from Hercules, but also to insult him, by combining the farewell with a pun “Jerkules” (jerk + Hercules), used as a derogatory vocative that betrays hostility and antagonism. Anyhow, despite being creative, this farewell displays the same formulaic pattern (salutation+ vocative) as the other examples. In the second sequence, instead, Megara takes leave by saying “catch you later”, which clearly shows the idiomatic nature of certain linguistic routines (cf. Gramley & Pätzold 1992). In fact, “catch you later” is a clear example of semi-pure idiom, used a colloquial farewell that means ‘I will talk to you later/when I next see you’. Also, this parting formula perfectly matches and emphasises Megara’s light and ironic demeanour.

Finally, one further consideration is in order on the example from *Frozen*. This last example confirms that although the movie is set at court, the hierarchical positions of the speakers are not emphasised; in fact, Princess Anna’s servant addresses her with a simple informal farewell such as “bye”, without using any vocative to sound more polite and refined.

In conclusion, farewells show a similar behaviour to greetings. They tend to be formulaic both in formal and informal situations, but a maximum level of formulaicity occurs in formal and solemn situations, that in the DNM corpus are associated mostly to court. What is more, vocatives are very often used in combination with parting expressions and have an important role in establishing the function of the farewell (i.e. to emphasise the social distance or to enhance solidarity).

6. *Conclusions*

To summarise, the analysis I have carried out in this chapter was focused on the usage and the functions of greeting and leave-taking sequences in discourse, with a peculiar emphasis on their roles as solidarity enhancers and polite behaviour indicators.

Firstly, I queried the DNM corpus starting from a pre-established list of salutations (Masi 2008) in order to single out the array of salutations that occurred in my movies selection. For this purpose, I relied upon the tools of corpus linguistics with the aim of retrieving quantitative results that could suggest further investigating paths starting from an empirical evidence. The quantitative approach allowed me to notice that greeting sequences were used more extensively than farewell ones. These results suggest that this discrepancy can be ascribed to the nature of the DNM corpus. In fact, as Bonsignori and Bruti (2014) assert for TV talk, opening conversation sequences (i.e. greetings) tend to be more abundant in movies because they are used to bring forward the plot, for example by introducing new characters into the story.

After querying my corpus quantitatively, I focused more closely on the case of “hey”, which showed the highest divergence between its usage as an opening salutation and as an attention-getting interjection. This close-up allowed me to discover that “hey” was actually used only as interjection until 1950s, when it started to be employed as a vernacular greeting in Southern US. The DNM corpus provided evidence of this shift, in that “hey” is extensively used as a greeting in more recent movies (*Aladdin; Hercules; The Incredibles; Frozen*) whereas in

previous movies (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*; *101 Dalmatians*; *Robin Hood*) it only occurs as an interjection. From a methodological point of view, my investigation made me reflect upon the advantages of querying small size corpora when analysing the pragmatic functions of words (i.e. the act greeting and leave-taking). In big size corpora, such as the BNC or the COCA, it might be very hard and time-consuming to establish whether frequently occurring words such as “morning” are used as opening greetings or with their neutral meaning (e.g. “morning” occurring in the adverbial phrase “in the morning”).

After these considerations, I decided to continue my analysis by dwelling upon the role of greetings and parting formulae as politeness and solidarity indicators in the DNM corpus. In order to carry out such an analysis, I distinguished different diaphasic expressions: thus, I took into account salutations occurring in formal and informal situations, at the beginning in opening greeting sequences, then in leave-takings.

As far as greetings and leave-takings are concerned, I have noticed that formal and informal situations very often share the same range of forms; hence, the required degree of formality of a given situation is not conveyed by the conversational routine itself but by vocative expressions. In formal situations and solemn contexts (e.g. at court) or, more in general, where asymmetrical relationships come to the fore, the level of formality required and the attention paid to face needs are generally much higher. Thus, the kinds of vocatives used towards the main speaker tend to be highly standardised and no creative forms are used. To sum up, formal greeting and parting formulae (standard/ neutral salutation+ formal vocative) function as politeness tools that show the due deference and respect when uttered by the speaker who is hierarchically inferior. Instead, when the speaker is in a dominant position, he/she may use polite formulae of salutation towards someone in a lower social position that enhance solidarity and downgrade the distance.

On the other hand, in informal situations, when symmetrical relationships are displayed and speakers do not run the risk of being intrusive and threatening the addressee’s face; although the range of expressions employed in these contexts is almost the same (farewells, perhaps, show a slightly higher range of informal

parting expressions), the level of informality is mainly conveyed by vocatives. In this particular case, they tend to be more creative and less predictable: proper names, creative epithets countering puns and compliments are thus used (in most cases) in combination with informal salutations with the purpose of strengthening the level of intimacy and complicity.

In addition, I have noticed that salutations also occur in exchanges where politeness norms are deliberately flouted by the speakers. In these cases, they actually do not reinforce solidarity, but they act as derogatory and sarcastic expressions that emphasise the hostility between the interactants.

As a result, my findings seem to confirm Laver's tenet (1981) on the key role of linguistic routines in conveying politeness and thus moderating the dynamics of conversation. Therefore, they confirm Laver's assumption that a higher level of formality corresponds to a higher level of formulaicity.

Furthermore, since the DNM corpus is composed of movies, this analysis allowed me to reflect, on the one hand upon the influence of the genre on the usage of salutation formulae and, on the other, on their role in conveying salient information about characters. The qualitative analysis of salutations in the corpus evidenced that the majority of formal greetings and partings occur in films set at court, where hierarchical roles and status are clearly marked. Moreover, it is quite surprising not to find any relevant diachronic variation in the usage of salutation forms (apart from the case of "hey", which I discussed previously): *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) shows almost the same range of greeting formulae as *Frozen* (2013). Diaphasic and diastratic variation, instead, trigger more interesting reflections. In fact, they play a vital role in negotiating relationships, but in the filmic domain, they also contribute to moulding characters. For example, I found out that villains tend not to greet or to bid farewell and when they do so, either they are pretending to be polite to someone, or they do it in a sly and impolite way. This feature undoubtedly helps to depict them as vicious and thus serves the purpose of reinforcing the dichotomy good/evil at the heart of Disney stories. Conversely, heroines and heroes are used to greeting in a respectful and polite way (for example by using solidarity-enhancing vocatives and by always reciprocating greetings). As a result, they come out as being good, in clear contrast with villains.

On the whole, my analysis helped me to reach the conclusion that, even apparently marginal conversational routines, in the economy of filmic language where almost every word needs to “keep the pace with the plot”, are useful tools for scriptwriters to convey meaning.

General conclusions

Before discussing the main findings that emerged from my analysis, I will comment on the use of movies as an object of investigation, on the basis of my experience in this thesis.

Through the analysis of audiovisual texts, I have noticed that they are useful and fruitful for various reasons. Firstly, films are easily accessible sources of simulated spontaneous conversations (cf. chapter two), which provide samples of speech in their communicative contexts, thus they are suitable for studying and analysing socio-pragmatic implications in language (cf. Bruti 2015 on multimodality). Secondly, in dealing with filmic speech, verbal elements are always supported by visual elements, such as the setting (i.e. the situational context), prosodic and paralinguistic devices which all provide additional insights into the study of language functions. Furthermore, using films in order to have written data to process and evaluate by means of computer software actually does not require any particular legal authorisation, differently from the recording of naturally-occurring speech. However, as we all know, movies are not naturally found in the form of written data; thus, transcribing them orthographically is necessary in order to use them and also because official filmscripts are very often hard to find on the Internet.

By fully transcribing the eight movies I selected I was able to experience how challenging and time-consuming this operation can be: in fact, on average, 10 minutes of movie equals 60 minutes of transcription work (Bailey 2008). Even though I only made an orthographic transcription (i.e. I only translated speaking into text), sometimes it was very difficult to interpret speakers' utterances. In fact, just as in spontaneous speech they, for example, may not articulate some words accurately or they overlap with each other. In these cases, oral data necessarily undergo interpretation by the transcriber, who has to choose which aspects deserve attention and how detailed the transcript needs to be, with the main aim of maintaining a balance between readability and accuracy (Tilley 2003). All in all, it is evident that using movies for linguistic analysis is advantageous and

profitable, but through my experience I can add that it is something that needs to be carefully planned and requires a certain level of awareness from the transcriber.

The first part of my work was centred on the collection and the orthographic transcription of a sample of eight Disney animated movies, which were selected following the rationale to be as representative as possible of diachronic, diaphasic and genre variation in the entirety of Disney's production. Along with the main corpus, that I compiled with the transcriptions of the movies I selected, I also created three subcorpora on the basis of the three main characters' categories (heroes, heroines and villains) present in the films. Once my data were ready (*Appendix A* illustrates a sample of my transcriptions), I carried out the analyses described in chapters four and five and summarised in the respective concluding paragraphs.

On the whole, the analysis I carried out allowed me to reflect upon different aspects. First of all, from a methodological point of view I experienced the pros and cons of operating with corpus linguistics tools. As far as my analysis is concerned, computer data processing undoubtedly proved to be a quick and useful tool for retrieving empirical quantitative data to evaluate. For example, when analysing idioms, starting from a pre-established list, corpus queries allowed me to observe that the DNM corpus was more idiomatic in nature than the two other corpora that I used to make comparisons. Moreover, corpus linguistics allowed me to verify (by consulting the BNC) whether some of the creative idioms I found in the DNM corpus did or did not become institutionalised in English after being used in Disney movies for the first time.

For the analysis of conversational routines, instead, computer assisted analysis helped me to observe to what extent a list of frequently occurring expressions (Masi 2008) actually appeared in the DNM corpus. As a result, this corpus query evidenced that greetings were more frequent than leave-takings. Furthermore, thanks to the list of concordances, which shows all the occurrences of the searched words in their contexts, I could delve into the analysis of "hey" from a diachronic perspective and gather evidence of its shift from an interjection to a form of greeting. However, since I aimed to investigate some socio-pragmatic

functions of language, for which very often there is no one-to-one relationship between form and function, these methodologies also proved to have some drawbacks. In fact, some speech act words I queried in the corpus were not always relevant for the analysis, thus requiring me to skim the results in order to obtain accurate and reliable data to work on.

All things considered, my analyses also helped me to reflect on the fact that querying a corpus offers linguistic evidence but not always accurate linguistic information. The corpus only lists several examples of language in use, or frequency counts, but making sense of them is left to the researcher. Indeed, a corpus does not automatically provide answers to linguistic questions; therefore analyses and intuitions are always necessary to get fair data and to make sense of them. This awareness may also be seen as one of the reasons why using small size specialised corpora is perhaps more fruitful for carrying out a linguistic analysis where the socio-pragmatic functions of language are concerned, and in this vein big corpora can instead be used as terms of comparison.

After these methodological considerations, I would like to recap on the most outstanding findings of my analysis. As far as the study of the functions of idioms in the DNM corpus is concerned, what emerges is that although the main target audience of Disney movies are children and idioms are probably harder for them to understand (cf. Cacciari & Tabossi 1993; Wood 2010 *inter alia*), they are frequently used. This idioms galore appears to be motivated by their peculiar function. In fact, they are very frequently employed in funny situations in which they generate humour. In this matter, my search bore evidence of the fact that scriptwriters often exploit the clash between the literal and the figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions. The result is the display of odd and extraordinary situations that are actually peculiar to the nature (i.e. fiction movies) of my corpus. All things considered, this strategy perfectly matches the needs of Disney scriptwriters to entertain a large audience: children that may not yet be familiar with figurative meanings can enjoy the oddity and unconventionality of the scenes where idioms are used thanks to the visual information; conversely, the audience that is aware of idioms' figurative meaning is entertained by the collision between the literal and the extended reading.

In the study of greetings the first thing that can be noticed is that the range of forms used to cover this function does not seem to show relevant diachronic and diaphasic variations. Consequently, it emerges that the required degree of formality or informality in a given situation is specified by means of vocatives, which very often occur in combination with greeting formulae. In light of this trend, I have observed that the vocatives accompanying greetings tend to be highly standardised in formal and solemn contexts and creative in relaxed and informal situations. All in all, my analysis confirmed Laver's (1981) assumption that, despite being poor in meaning when used in isolation and out of context, in conversation greetings are important indicators of conversational dynamics, in terms of politeness, deference, solidarity and power.

My second aim was to examine how these formulaic and rather marginal linguistic elements can be meaningful in film speech. First of all, I ascertained that both idioms and greetings contribute to describing characters' personalities in an important way. Thus, heroines in particular, but also heroes, mirroring their demure personality, rarely resort to using idiomatic expressions. Conversely, villains tend to use more idioms and thus their speech style is more colourful and original than that of good characters. Secondly, the other trend that emerged is that idiomatic expressions are more likely to occur in comedy-like animated movies (i.e. *Aladdin* and *Hercules*) because the atmosphere is lighter and humour is extensively resorted to.

Finally, regarding salutations, I noticed that, although phatic talk tends to be omitted in movies, it occurs quite frequently in the DNM corpus, especially in open conversation sequences, where it serves the purpose of introducing new characters into the story by also giving some information about their personality. For example, villains usually do not to greet or bid farewell, whereas good characters always greet and do so in a polite and supportive way. As a result, it is evident that in the economy of film speech, where everything is meaningful (Bednarek 2010), these features are used to single out information about characters' personalities that can be easily understood by children.



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Filmography

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, David Hand, USA, 1937.

101 Dalmatians, Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske, Wolfgang Reitherman, USA, 1961.

Robin Hood, Wolfgang Reitherman, USA, 1973.

Aladdin, Ron Clement, John Musker, 1992.

Pocahontas, Mike Gabriel, Eric Goldberg, USA, 1995.

Hercules, Ron Clement, John Musker, USA, 1997.

The Incredibles, Brad Bird, USA, 1997.

Frozen, Chris Buck, Jennifer Lee, USA, 2013.

Appendix A

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

EVIL QUEEN	Slave in the magic mirror, come from the farthest space...through wind and darkness I summon thee. Speak! Let me see thy face
MAGIC MIRROR	What wouldst thou know, my Queen?
EVIL QUEEN	Magic mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all?
MAGIC MIRROR	Famed is thy beauty, Majesty. But hold, a lovely maid I see. Rags cannot hide her gentle grace. Alas, she is more fair than thee
EVIL QUEEN	Alas for her! Reveal her name
MAGIC MIRROR	Lips red as the rose. Hair black as ebony. Skin white as snow
EVIL QUEEN	Snow White!
SNOW WHITE [song]	<p>Want to know a secret? Promise not to tell? We are standing by a wishing well Make a wish into the well That's all you have yo do And if you hear it echoing Your wish will soon come true I'm wishing I'm wishing For the one I love to find me To find me Today Today I'm hoping I'm hoping And I'm dreaming of the nice things The nice things He'll say He'll say Ah-ah-ah-ah-ahh Ah-ah-ah-ah-ahh I'm wishing I'm wishing For the one I love To find me To find me Today</p>

101 Dalmatians

PONGO	<p>My story begins in London... not so very long ago. Yet so much has happened since then, that it seems like an eternity. At that time, I lived with my pet... in a bachelor flat just off Regents Park. It was a beautiful spring day, a tedious time of the year for bachelors. Oh... that's my pet, Roger Radcliff, a musician of sorts. I'm the one with the spots. My name's Pongo. And you know, As far as I could see, the old notion that a bachelor's life was so... glamorous and carefree was all nonsense. It was downright dull. It was plain to see that my old pet needed someone. But if it were left up to Roger, we'd be bachelors forever. He was married to his work, writing songs. Songs about romance.. of all things, something he knew absolutely nothing about. Oh, he's intelligent enough, as humans go. And I think you could say, Roger is a rather handsome animal in his way. I could see no reason why my pet... didn't deserve an attractive mate. At least I was determined to do my best. Of course, dogs are a pretty poor judge of human beauty. But I had a rough idea...of what to look for. Hmm! Unusual breed. Very unusual. Hmm! Oh, surely not. Well now, what have we here? Hmm. Well, a little... too short coupled. Nope! I say! Well, I do say! Now there's a fancy breed. Hmm. Perhaps a little too fancy. Yes, much too fancy. Too old. Too young. It was a problem, a real problem. Well, now that's a bit more like it! The most beautiful creature on four legs! Now if only the girl...Well! She's very lovely too. It was almost too good to be true. I'd never find another pair like that, not if I looked for years. Ah, they're heading for the park. A perfect meeting place... if I can only arrange it. Oh but Roger never stopped work 'til after 17 00. That would be too late</p>
ROGER	<p>After 17:00 already. Fancy that. All right, Pongo. All right, boy. Pongo, boy, take it easy! What's all the hurry? Pongo, boy, slow down</p>
PONGO	<p>At first I was afraid we'd missed them. Perhaps they passed on by the park. Then suddenly... I spotted them. It was a perfect situation if I planned it right. I couldn't depend on Roger. I knew what he'd do. He'd settle on the grass, puff his pipe and that would be it. No, it was all up to me. Well. At first I had no particular plan, just anything to attract attention. you know, stir things up a bit</p>

Robin Hood

ALAN-A-DALE (song)	Robin Hood and Little John walkin' through the forest Laughin' back and forth at what the other one has to say Reminisclin' this 'n' that and havin' such a good time Oo-de-lally, oo-de-lally Golly, what a day Never ever thinkin' there was danger in the water They were drinkin' They just guzzled it down Never dreamin' that a schemin' sheriff and his posse Was a-watchin' them and gatherin' around Robin Hood and Little John runnin' through the forest Jumpin' fences, dodgin' trees and tryin' to get away Contemplatin' nothin' but escapin' and finally makin' it Oo-de-lally, oo-de-lally Golly, what a day Oo-de-lally, oo-de-lally Golly, what a day
LITTLE JOHN	You know something, Robin? You're taking too many chances
ROBIN HOOD	Chances? You must be joking. That was just a bit of a lark
LITTLE JOHN	Yeah? Take a look at your hat. That's not a candle on a cake
ROBIN HOOD	Hello. This one almost had my name on it, didn't it? They're getting better, you know. You've got to admit it. They are getting better
LITTLE JOHN	Huh, yeah. The next time that sheriff'll probably have a rope around

Aladdin

PEDDLER (song)	<p>Oh I come from a land From a faraway place Where the caravan camels roam Where they cut off your ear Where it's flat and immense If they don't like your face And the heat is intense It's barbaric, but hey--it's home! When the wind's at your back And the sun's from the west And the sand in the glass is right Come on down, Stop on by Hop a carpet and fly To another Arabian night! Arabian nights Like Arabian days More often than not Are hotter than hot In a lot of good ways Arabian nights 'Neath Arabian moons A fool off his guard Could fall and fall hard Out there on the dunes. Ah, Salaam and good evening to you worthy friend. Please, please, come closer Too close, a little too close. There. Welcome to Agrabah. City of mystery, of enchantment, and the finest merchandise this side of the river Jordan, on sale today, come on down! Heh, heh. Look at this! Yes! Combination hookah and coffee maker--also makes Julienne fries. Will not break , will not—it broke. Ooohhh! Look at this! Pulls out Tupperware I have never seen one of these intact before. This is the famous Dead Sea Tupperware. Listen. Ah, still good. I can see that you're only interested in the exceptionally rare. I think then, you would be most rewarded to consider...this. Do not be fooled by its commonplace appearance. Like so many things, it is not what is outside, but what is inside that counts. This is no ordinary lamp! It once changed the course of a young man's life. A young man who liked this lamp was more than what he seemed. A diamond in the rough. Perhaps you would like to hear the tale? It begins on a dark night, where a dark man waits, with a dark purpose.</p>
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Pocahontas

ENGLISH CHORUS (song)	In sixteen hundred seven We sail the open sea For glory, God and gold And the Virginia Company For the New World is like heaven And we'll all be rich and free Or so we have been told By the Virginia Company So we have been told By the Virginia Company For glory, God and gold And the Virginia Company
ENGLISH MAN	Ready to hoist the cannon?
ENGLISH MAN	Aye!
LON	Hey, look! Is that Smith?
BEN	That's him, all right, the old sea dog.
THOMAS	Captain John Smith! I've heard some amazing stories about him.
LON	Are you coming on this voyage, too?
BEN	'Course he is, you half-wit. You can't fight Indians without John Smith
JOHN SMITH	That's right. I'm not about to let you boys have all the fun
CHORUS (song)	On the beaches of Virginy There's diamonds like debris There's silver rivers flow And gold you pick right off a tree With a nugget for my Winnie And another one for me And all the rest'll go To the Virginia Company It's glory, God and gold And the Virginia Company

Hercules

NARRATOR	Long ago, in the faraway land of ancient Greece, there was a golden age of powerful gods and extraordinary heroes. And the greatest and strongest of all these heroes was the mighty Hercules. But what is the measure of a true hero? Ah, that is what our story is...
MUSE 1	Will you listen to him? He's makin' the story sound like some greek tragedy
MUSE 2	Lighten up, dude
MUSE 3	We'll take it from here, darling
NARRATOR	You go, girls
MUSE 3	We are the Muses. Goddesses of the arts and proclaimers of the heroes
MUSE 2	Heroes like Hercules
MUSE 1	Honey, you mean "hunk-ules". Ooh, I'd like to make some sweet music with him..
MUSE 3	Our story actually begins long before Hercules, many eons ago..
MUSES (song)	<p>Back when the world was new The planet Earth was down on its luck And everywhere gigantic brutes called Titans ran amok It was a nasty place There was a mess wherever you stepped where chaos reigned and the earthquakes and volcanos never slept And then along came Zeus he hurled his thunderbolt -- he zapped locked those suckers in a vault - They're trapped. And on his own, stopped chaos on its tracks and that's the gospel truth. The guy was too "type A" to just relax And that's the world's first dish. Zeus tamed the globe while still in his youth Tough, honey, it may seem impossible That's the gospel truth On Mount Olympus life was neat And smooth as sweet vermouth Although honey, it may seem impossible That's the gospel truth</p>

The Incredibles

MR. INCREDIBLE	Is this on?
INTERVIEWER	That's fine
MR. INCREDIBLE	I can break through walls, I just can't...
INTERVIEWER	That's fine
MR. INCREDIBLE	I can't get this on
INTERVIEWER	So, Mr. Incredible...do you have a secret identity?
MR. INCREDIBLE	Every superhero has a secret identity. I don't know a single one who doesn't. Who wants the pressure of being super all the time?
ELASTIGIRL	Of course I have a secret identity. Can you see me in this at the supermarket? Come on. Who'd want to go shopping as Elastigirl, y'know what I mean?
FROZONE	Superladies, they're always trying to tell you their secret identity. Think it'll strengthen the relationship or something like that. I said, "Girl, I don't want to know about your mild-mannered alter ego." Or anything like that. I mean, you tell me you're a super-mega-ultra-lightning-babe, that's all right with me. I'm good. I'm good
MR. INCREDIBLE	No matter how many times you save the world, it always manages to get back in jeopardy again. Sometimes I just want it to stay saved, you know? For a little bit. I feel like the maid. "I just cleaned up this mess. Can we keep it clean for ten minutes?"
INTERVIEWER	I could get to that point
MR. INCREDIBLE	Please?
INTERVIEWER	Wait, no, don't get up. We're not finished
MR. INCREDIBLE	Sometimes I think I'd just like the simple life, you know? Relax a little and raise a family
ELASTIGIRL	Settle down? Are you kidding? I'm at the top of my game! I'm right up there with the big dogs! Girls, come on. Leave the saving of the world to the men? I don't think so. I don't think so

Frozen

ICE HARVESTERS (song)	Born of cold and Winter air And mountain rain combining, This icy force both foul and fair. Has a frozen heart worth mining. Cut through the heart, Cold and Clear. Strike for love And Strike for fear. See the beauty Sharp and Sheer. Split the ice apart. And break the frozen heart. Hup! Ho! Watch your step! Let it go! Hup! Ho! Watch your step! Let it go! Beautiful! Powerful! Dangerous! Cold! Ice has a magic Can't be controlled. Stronger than one, Stronger than ten. Stronger than a hundred men! Born of cold and winter air And mountain rain combining. This icy force both Foul and Fair. Has a frozen heart worth mining. Cut through the heart, Cold and Clear. Strike for love and strike for fear. There's beauty and there's Danger here. Split the ice apart! Beware the frozen heart
KRISTOFF	Come on, Sven!
ANNA	Elsa. Psst Elsa! Wake up. Wake up. Wake up
ELSA	Anna, go back to sleep
ANNA	I just can't. The sky's awake, so I'm awake, so we have to play
ELSA	Go play by yourself
ANNA	Do you want to build a snowman? Come on, come on, come on, come on. Do the magic! Do the magic!

Appendix B

<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)</i>	
<i>Idiom</i>	<i>Meaning</i> ²⁹
Fell in love	To begin to experience feelings of love towards someone
A [fine] kettle of fish	A situation which is recognized as different from or as an alternative to some other situation, and which is not necessarily unfavorable
As white as snow	Someone extremely pale
Cat got your tongue	When someone is not speaking and he should
In a pig's eye	Under very unlikely circumstances; probably never.
Mad as hornets	To be very angry
Search in every cook and nanny	To search everywhere
Share and share alike	To encourage everyone to have an equal amount of something
Sweep under the rug	To hide something
There is dirty work afoot	A dishonest action is going on
There is trouble brewing	Some trouble is developing

²⁹ The meanings were looked up on the *Oxford Online Dictionary*, the online *Urban Dictionary* and on the *Online Free Dictionary*.

<i>101 Dalmatians (1961)</i>	
<i>Idiom</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
On the house	At the expense of the establishment
Flew the coop	To escape from somewhere
Gave them the slip	Escape or evade someone
As good as new	In very good condition
Cut me to the quick	To injure someone emotionally
Knock the spots off [you]	To outdo with ease/ to be better than someone
Knock your [blinking] block off	To punch someone in the face
Made off with [the good silver]	To escape with something, especially something stolen
Right as rain	Perfectly fine
Save your skins	To avoid getting into serious trouble
Shake a leg	To hurry
Sharp's the word and quick's the action	Do not waste time. Do whatever it is quickly

<i>Robin Hood (1973)</i>	
<i>Idiom</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
A [mere] slip of the [forked] tongue	Something accidentally said
A heart of stone	Someone cruel, who have no sympathy for people
A red-letter day	An important or significant day.
Absence makes the heart grow fonder	When people are apart, their love grows stronger
Button your beak	Shut up

Coin a phrase	Something that you say before you use a phrase which sounds slightly silly
Faint heart never won fair lady	A timid suitor never won his lady
Fell it in my bones	Something that you say when you are certain something is true or will happen
Keep your chin up	Expression of encouragement to someone who has to bear some emotional burdens.
Saving it for a rainy day	To reserve something for some future need
thinking on my feet	To be able to do something very easy
Sweep [her] off her feet	To cause someone to fall suddenly and completely in love with you
That's me to a "T"	Exactly me
You bird-brain	Someone stupid
Golden rule	Behave towards others as you would like to have them behave towards you

<i>Aladdin</i> (1992)	
Idiom	Meaning
Diamond in the rough	Someone or something whose good qualities are hidden
At [my] wit's-end	At the limits of one's mental resources
Be a straight shooter	Someone who you can trust because they are very honest
Button [your] mouth	To shut up
Come to call	To respond to an order
Dig this [boozo] up	To go to great effort to find someone or something

Feeling [just] sheepish	To feel dumb
Get a grip	To make an effort to control your emotions and behave more calmly
[Has] gone nuts	To become crazy
Hit the bottom	To reach the lowest or worst point
Hitting the road	To depart; to begin one's journey
Kissing up to [that chump]	To flatter someone
Knock it off	To stop doing something that annoys someone
Not in a million years	Absolutely never
Pain in the neck	A bother; an annoyance
Rub the lamp	To make a wish
Wake up and smell the hummus	To let go of fantasy and face reality
Snake in the grass	Someone sneaky and despised
Stormed out	To exit very angrily
Time is up	The allotted time has run out
Pick out curtains	To move in with someone
Fell over the moon	To be excited

<i>Pocahontas</i> (1995)	
Idiom	Meaning
A proper English greeting	A well-mannered greeting
A bottomless pit	Someone or something that always needs or wants more of whatever they are given
Don't lose heart	Do not become discouraged
Shake a leg	To hurry

<i>Hercules</i> (1997)	
Idiom	Meaning
Been there, done that	Something that has already been experienced
Burste [your] bubble	To destroy someone's illusion or delusion
Butt out	To stop interfering or meddling in someone's affairs
Cash to burn	To have a lot of money that you can spend any way you want
Dead as a doornail	Obviously dead
Fit as a fiddle	In excellent form or health
Free as a bird	Completely free to do what you want and without any worries
Game. Set. Match.	Someone who has definitively beaten the opposition in a given situation
Get a grip	To make an effort to control your emotions and behave more calmly
Gets [my] goat	To annoy and arouse someone to anger
Go berserk	To become crazily violent
Goes up in smoke	Something being wasted
Gospel truth	Undeniable reality
Got you into the jam	To be in a difficult situation
Have been around the block	To have had a lot of experience of a particular situation
Hold [your] horses	To calm down
Honest-to-Zeus truth	Undeniable reality
Hot stuff	A person, object, etc, considered important, attractive

Louse it up	To ruin something
Off the hook	No longer in jeopardy; no longer obligated
On a roll	In the midst of a series of successes
Pain in the patella	A very annoying thing or person
Played hooky	To not keep an appointment
Pulling out all the stops	To do everything you can to make something successful
Ring the bell	To be just what is needed
Run amok	To go awry
Smelled a rat	To sense that someone has caused something wrong
Speak of the devil	Talk about a certain person, and that person appears
Sold [your] soul	To do something bad in order to succeed or get money or power
Throwing [the right] curves	To confuse someone by doing something tricky or unexpected.
Tie my own sandals	To be able to do something on your own
Time to bat [this] around	To discuss something back and forth in order to come to a decision
Tripped the finish line	A situation where one does great at a subject, until near the end.
Use your head	To think more carefully about what they are doing
[Way] off base	To be wrong, relying on a mistaken premise
Went wild	To get very excited
Won by a landslide	A victory with a very large margin

Work yourself to death	To become very tired
Get off my cloud	Get off my level/ to become humble

<i>The Incredibles</i> (2004)	
Idiom	Meaning
At the top of my game	Good and as good as one is likely to get.
Opened the flood gates	To make it possible for something to happen
Go save the day	To prevent a misfortune
In the black	Not in debt
Gonna be toast	You are gonna be in trouble
And all that jazz	And all that stuff
Not the brightest bulb...	Not very intelligent
That ship has sailed	A particular opportunity has passed
Pay through the nose	Pay an excessive amount for something
Done behind my back	Something done without someone's knowledge
In a solid	For a favour
Get a grip	To make an effort to control your emotions and behave more calmly
Not doing [so] hot	Not doing well
Called [his] bluff	to make someone prove that what they are saying is true
Hit the jackpot	To be exactly right; to find exactly what was sought
Buy [some] time	To do something in order to be allowed more time

Frozen (2013)

Idiom	Meaning
Put on a show	To do something by hiding the reality
Slammed doors in my face	To withdraw an opportunity from someone.
Lost his mind	To become crazy
Life got upside down	To (cause something to) change completely and in a bad way
Hand in hand	In cooperation, jointly
Out of shape	Not in good physical condition
Roll with it	To adapt oneself to adverse circumstances
Froze my heart	To shut someone out
Freeze to death	To make someone or something very cold