



CARTOONS AS SOCIAL CONVERSATIONS: A SOCIOLINGUISTICS STUDY OF SPEECH ACTS AND FACEWORK IN *ZOOTOPIA*

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Abstract

This research examines the animated movie *Zootopia* as a vibrant locus of sociolinguistic study, examining it not just as entertainment but as social discourse. Drawing on concepts from speech act theory and facework analysis, the study investigates how characters in *Zootopia* employ language to enact actions, navigate identities, and navigate social status. By the examination of dialogue in the movie as spontaneous linguistic communication, the book foregrounds the way cartoon narration imitates real-life methods of communication, particularly in multicultural and multiracial settings. Based on the scenes, the book explores the use of speech acts i.e., directives, commissives, expressives, assertive, and declarations—and the function they play in character construction and story development. Concurrently, the research invokes Goffman's face and facework theory in analyzing how the characters enact face-saving and face-threatening acts, especially across species, gender, and authority boundaries. These linguistic maneuvers reflect broader patterns of inclusion, prejudice, power, and mobility, demonstrating how real-time dialogues can convey rich socio-pragmatic meaning. The research indicates that *Zootopia* creates a microcosm in which language is both a tool for social cohesion and a conflict zone. It ultimately concludes that animated films like *Zootopia* contribute to sociolinguistic scholarship by modeling language use in socially significant manners. This research offers new insights into how cartoons operate as windows into human interaction, thereby offering them as valuable texts for sociolinguistic analysis and inquiry and for navigating contemporary social narratives in engaging, visually oriented forms.

Keywords: *Sociolinguistics, Zootopia, Speech Act Theory, Goffman's Facework Theory, Character Interaction in Animation*

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1. Introduction

Animated films, once thought to be simple children's stories, have turned into complex, multilayered narratives that tackle mature social, political, and cultural concerns. Contemporary animation now presents itself as a reflective arena where issues such as discrimination, identity, power, and social justice are negotiated. Of these films, Disney's *Zootopia* (2016) is a significant cultural product that utilizes anthropomorphic characters and a riveting story to portray a society grappling with deep-seated stereotypes, bias, and diversity. While it has garnered significant academic attention for its thematic and visual material, there remains a fascinating and relatively unexplored territory its language. Specifically, *Zootopia* offers a compelling case study for sociolinguistic analysis from the vantage point of speech acts and face-work two critical dimensions of human interaction. This research seeks to analyze how *Zootopia* functions as a form of "social conversation," simulating human-like interaction that reflects communication patterns in the real world. Sociolinguistics, a discipline concerned with the interface between language and society, provides the foundation for analyzing how the movie's characters perform actions with words and negotiate interpersonal relationships by employing politeness strategies and face negotiation.

Speech Act Theory, as developed by Austin (1962) and later refined by Searle (1969), investigates how utterances can be employed as actions e.g., promising, commanding, or apologizing. Simultaneously, Goffman's (1967) face and facework theory account for the ways in which characters maintain social harmony or instigate its breach through linguistic strategies. The main aim of this research is to determine how the characters in *Zootopia* use language not only for communication but also for identity construction, power exertion, resistance to stereotypes, and negotiation of multi-layered social hierarchies. Through close reading of key exchanges between main characters Judy Hopps, Nick Wilde, Chief Bogo, among others this paper investigates how speech acts (directives, expressives, commissives, etc.) and face-work (positive and negative politeness strategies) are encoded in their dialogue. The film's setting a highly diverse and stratified urban environment where predator and prey species live together is a metaphor for human multicultural societies, making its linguistic analysis both relevant and revealing. Furthermore, *Zootopia* resonates with broader discourses of inclusion and power in that the language used by the characters tends to reveal underlying conflicts

between marginalized and dominant groups. Judy Hopps resolve as the first bunny police officer and Nick Wilde's fate as a stereotyped predator are for instance, demonstrations of how language use reflects and resists social norms. Their use of language provides insight into how animated media represents social realities, allowing audiences to access complex issues through subtle but effective linguistic avenues.

This study adopts a qualitative approach, using discourse analysis in the close examination of selected scenes from the film. The analysis does not merely inventory speech act types and politeness strategies but also considers contextual factors such as power relations, social distance, and cultural norms that bear on language use. In the process, this article demonstrates that *Zootopia* is not just a children's film with a moral lesson, but a linguistically rich narrative mirroring the dynamics of real-world communication. This research contributes to media and sociolinguistic scholarship by offering a novel approach to the analysis of animated films. By analyzing speech acts and face-work in *Zootopia*, this article argues that cartoons can serve as legitimate representations of social conversation, with the power to shape audience opinion, create empathy, and spur debate on major social issues. This question underscores the value of interdisciplinary research in exploring the ways that language operates in diverse communicative contexts even those of fictional, animated worlds. The purpose of this research is to explore how *Zootopia* acts as a form of "social conversation," representing human-like communication that reflects the dynamics of real-world interaction. Sociolinguistics the investigation of language and its connection to society provides the context for analyzing how film characters perform actions with words and negotiate interpersonal relationships through politeness strategies and face negotiation. Speech Act Theory, established by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969), investigates the way utterances can function as actions such as promising, commanding, or apologizing. Meanwhile, Goffman's (1967) face theory and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory explain how characters maintain social harmony or disrupt it through their use of language. The main aim of this study is to explore how *Zootopia* characters use language not only to communicate meaning but also to construct identities, exercise power, subvert stereotypes, and negotiate complex social hierarchies. By examining key exchanges between main protagonists Judy Hopps, Nick Wilde, Chief Bogo, and others this essay investigates how speech acts (e.g., directives, expressives, commissives) and face-work (positive and negative politeness strategies) are encoded in their dialogue. The film's setting a stratified and diverse urban world populated by predator and prey species functions as an allegory for human multicultural societies, making its linguistic analysis both relevant and revealing.

1.1. Research Objectives

- To examine how characters in *Zootopia* use speech acts to carry out social tasks such as joking, requesting, asserting power, and apologizing.
- To investigate the implication of Goffman's Face and Facework techniques in strengthening or challenging social ties in the movie.
- To find out animated dialogues that imitates real-life social relationships and represents broader sociolinguistic concepts.

1.2. Research Questions

1. How are different types of speech acts (e.g., directives, expressives, commissives) used by characters in *Zootopia* to construct social meaning?
2. In what ways do characters in *Zootopia* employ facework strategies to negotiate politeness, identity, and power dynamics?
3. How does *Zootopia* reflect real-world sociolinguistic interactions through its portrayal of animated character dialogues?

2. Literature Review

Language in animated movies has increasingly attracted scholarly interest, primarily due to its capacity to reveal underlying social ideologies, power dynamics, and interpersonal strategies. Once considered mere entertainment, cartoons are now recognized as influential texts that contribute to social learning and language acquisition. This literature review analyzes previous research on the sociolinguistic dimensions of cartoon content, with specific reference to speech acts and facework as illustrated in Disney's *Zootopia*. By synthesizing findings from linguistic, pedagogical, and discourse-analytic perspectives, this section lays the foundation for understanding *Zootopia* as a site of social conversation and linguistic negotiation.

The study "Linguistic Analysis of Selected TV Cartoons" (Lodhi et al., 2018) highlights the educational and cultural roles of cartoons in children's language development. The researchers argue that cartoons utilize distinctive linguistic features such as repetitive forms and culturally relevant vocabulary that aid language learning. However, the study also raises concerns about linguistic contamination, particularly the influence of Hindi in non-Hindi regions, thus acknowledging cartoon's dual role in both reflecting and reshaping linguistic norms. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) provide a theoretical basis for examining language as action. Their Speech Act Theory classifies utterances into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts all of which are frequently found in animated narratives. Maalej (2011) expands this framework to

cartoons, showing how characters employ speech acts such as requests, apologies, threats, and compliments. In *Zootopia*, speech acts are central to ethical development and character portrayal. For example, Judy Hopps frequently uses assertive and commissive acts such as her repeated promise to prove herself demonstrating language role as social action. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory further explains how interlocutors manage face needs during interaction. Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are prevalent in *Zootopia* but are often mitigated by politeness strategies. A notable instance is Judy's hesitant compliment to Nick for being "articulate," reflecting both cross-cultural communication complexities and subtle microaggressions. Locher and Watts (2005) expand on this by viewing politeness as a relational, context-dependent practice rather than a fixed strategy. This perspective is especially helpful in analyzing *Zootopia*'s dynamic character interactions. Scholars such as Fairclough and van Dijk emphasize the role of discourse in constructing social power. In *Zootopia*, language usage between predator and prey characters mirrors real-world social stratification. Judy's initial prejudice and subsequent transformation are communicated largely through dialogue, illustrating how discourse forms and reforms social identity. Rahimi and Sahragard also argue that linguistic choices in media reflect and reinforce social hierarchies.

Lippi-Green (2012) critiques Disney for using dialects and accents to encode moral alignment or social status. In *Zootopia*, this is subtly evident Nick Wilde's relaxed, streetwise tone contrasts sharply with Judy Hopps formal, regulation-bound speech, suggesting an implicit reinforcement of class distinctions. Lodhi et al. (2018) likewise warn against uncritical consumption of cartoons that normalize foreign linguistic and cultural ideologies, advocating for more discerning media use. Dynel (2011) explores the pragmatic functions of humor in cartoons, such as diffusing tension and reinforcing social bonds. *Zootopia* effectively employs humor to address sensitive issues like racial profiling and systemic injustice. These comedic elements serve both entertainment and didactic purposes, encouraging audience empathy while imparting moral insights. Rule and Auge (2005) support using cartoons in educational settings, asserting that humor enhances comprehension and retention of complex ideas. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) underscore the significance of multimodal texts, where visual elements, gestures, and sound complement verbal language. In *Zootopia*, facial expressions, background imagery, and music often amplify the pragmatic force of speech. For example, Nick's sarcastic remarks are accompanied by exaggerated facial expressions, reinforcing the perlocutionary impact of his utterances.

Gokulsing (2009) adds that globalized media, particularly animated films, construct national and cultural identities through both linguistic and symbolic means. This perspective is vital in examining how *Zootopia*'s universal messages are adapted for

culturally diverse audiences. Hassan and Daniyal (2013) explore how repeated cartoon viewing shapes children's speech patterns and sociocultural outlooks, offering insight into the long-term effects of animated language exposure. Their work highlights the influence of recurring dialogue and catchphrases on everyday communication. Edwards (1997) interprets cartoons as ideologically charged texts, arguing that they encode political messages through humor, exaggeration, and calculated speech. This aligns with the view of *Zootopia* as a sociolinguistically complex film that critiques institutional bias through layered dialogues and narrative devices.

Despite these valuable contributions, some gaps remain in the literature. While previous research has examined linguistic features and educational uses of cartoons, less attention has been paid to how speech acts and facework in animated films like *Zootopia* function as tools for negotiating identity, hierarchy, and social inclusion. Moreover, the interplay between verbal and non-verbal communication in expressing politeness and managing conflict, especially in interspecies interactions, remains underexplored. These gaps raise key research questions: How do speech acts in *Zootopia* reflect real-world social hierarchies? How does facework in interspecies dialogue mirror human sociopolitical relations? What roles do humor and multimodal elements play in shaping the reception and interpretation of politeness strategies in animated discourse?

Overall, the literature affirms that animated films are rich sites for sociolinguistic analysis. Through the integration of speech act theory, politeness strategies, discourse analysis, and multimodal communication, cartoons such as *Zootopia* emerge as valuable cultural texts. They not only reflect societal conversations but also participate in shaping them. This study positions *Zootopia* as a compelling case study in understanding how language within animated narratives functions as a social act, capable of negotiating identities, challenging norms, and fostering dialogue in meaningful and educational ways.

3.Theoretical Framework

Erving Goffman's theory of Face and Facework (1967) is crucial to explain that how people maintain their public appearances in social settings. According to Goffman "face is the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). Individuals frequently perform faceworks, that refers to the techniques needed to preserve one's personal face or encourage others maintaining their. These strategies involve defensive, avoidance, preventive, corrective, and protective that are necessary for understanding social hierarchies, establishing social harmony as well as decreasing conflicts. The following basic ideas and approaches, as described by Goffman and modified by Brown

and Levinson (1987) describe the mechanism with which face is preserved, restored, or threatened during communication.

- **Face as a social construct:** Face is referred as a public identity that people embrace while connecting with others; it is a societal construct that ought to be recognized by other individuals. It indicates the need of the speakers as appropriate, capable, and socially acceptable within specific environments.
- **Positive and Negative Face:** Brown and Levinson improved the theory by determining two fundamental features of face, based on Goffman's work. Positive face is a desire to attain acceptability in a group through favored, acknowledged, and trusted by others. Negative face is the need for self-reliance, independence, and liberty from influence or pressure. Speakers in conversations maintain these dual facets of their faces by establishing a balance among their desire to keep their personality and their desire for social acceptance. "The concept of face is connected to the "notion of being embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face'"; because face is something that can be "lost, maintained, or enhanced," it must be "constantly attended to in interaction." (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61)
- **Facework Strategies:** Facework identifies the communication methods used to defend, restore, or preserve one's personal as well as others face. These strategies may involve: politeness (using indirect communication, slangs or hedging to reduce challenges to face.), mitigation (Minimizing the effects of face-threatening verbal actions such as by increasing demands or complaints.), and redress (trying to reconcile damaged face by using words of gratitude, apology, or redressing measures.). Goffman believes that these notions of facework and face are fundamental in nature, even though there are "differences in culture, people everywhere are the same" in their desire to preserve face. (Goffman, 1967, p. 44)
- **Cultural Variations in Facework:** Goffman's theory of face and facework presents an important view of how people keep their social identities all during conversations, he believes that cultural differences influence these behaviors. Many societies have distinct customs and principles that influence the threat, recovery, and preservation of the face. Goffman argued that "Each person, subculture, and society seems to have its own characteristic repertoire of face-saving practices. It is to this repertoire that people partly refer to when they ask what a person or culture is 'really' like... It is as if face, by its very nature, can be saved in a certain number of ways,

and as if each social grouping must make its selection from this single matrix” (Goffman, 1967, p. 13). He argued that the idea of a face is a universal component of social interaction, cultural values and norms have an important effect on the specific behaviors and traditions related to facework. In collectivistic cultures that are found in East Asia, there is a great significance on acknowledging hierarchical connections and maintaining community cohesion. People in these societies frequently engage in indirect communication and avoidance techniques, to stay away from face-threatening incidents. “There is no absolute divide between East and West in politeness. Consider the concept of “collective group culture” (East) and “individualist, egalitarian culture” (West). These are not absolutes: they are positions on a scale. All polite communication implies that the speaker is taking account of both individual and group values. In the East, the group values are more powerful, whereas in the West, individual values are” (Leech, 2007, p. 170). Ting-Toomey’s Face-Negotiation theory illustrates that in collectivistic communities, people are more interested on keeping the group’s (mutual-face) and other people’s (other-face) faces instead of concentrating on their own face (self-face). This distinction with individualistic societies, where self-expression and direct interaction place a greater significance, resulting to a larger emphasis on establishing self-face. Goffman focused on the role of social norms in facework by saying that “One must look...to the fact that societies everywhere, if they are to be societies, must mobilize their members as self-regulating participants in social encounters. One way of mobilizing the individual for this purpose is through ritual; he is taught to be perceptive, to have feelings attached to self and a self-expressed through face, to have pride, honor, and dignity... These are some of the elements of behavior which must be built into the person if particular use is to be made of him as an interactant, and it is these elements that are referred to in part when one speaks of universal human nature” (Goffman, 1967, p. 44-45). These cultural rituals serve as an opportunity for people to learn and apply the suitable facework strategies that are necessary in their society.

- **Social Roles and Hierarchy:** Goffman’s theory highlights the influence of social position and power dynamics on facework. People with higher statuses may use straightforward language, while those people with lower ranks tend to employ deference and indirectness to avoid devastating the face of authority figures.

- **Politeness Theory and Speech Acts:** Goffman's framework come across with Speech Act Theory "to say something is to do something" (Austin, 1962, p. 12), especially through the Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, where speech acts like criticisms, requests, compliments, and apologies are described as attitudes that inherently develop face. According to Brown and Levinson, Politeness acts as a strategy to protect both negative and positive face "positive politeness is addressed to one's need to be valued, to have one's wants and desires appreciated and acknowledged by others, and have others want them for him or her as well. Negative politeness, on the other hand, addresses one's need to feel unimpeded, or, I would add, have their right to have their acts unimpeded recognized and respected" (Bunker, 2014, p. 37-38). "The philosopher John Searle's landmark work on speech acts has also had a profound impact on politeness research and literature" (Bunker, 2024, p. 32). That is why politeness strategies are essential for minimizing the possible humiliating nature of these actions.
- **Face-Threatening vs. Face-Saving Communication:** Communication can be described into two categories face-threatening or face-saving based on when the speaker uses methods to avoid or mitigate face threats (e.g., apologizing, hedging, or indirectness after a violation), or as face-threatening when people's behavior or remarks threaten face (e.g., refusals, harsh criticism, blunt).
- **Face Threatening Acts (FTAs):** "Acts which threaten either the positive or the negative 'face' of the addressee are called face-threatening acts" (Bouchara, 1996, p. 9). It occurs when verbal actions harm the negative or positive face of the adversary. Direct orders, feedbacks, or objections challenge the listener's or speaker's social sovereignty or reputation in society. "B&L distinguish three factors that determine the strength of the FTA, and hence the politeness strategy needed: P(power), D (social distance), and R (ranked size of the imposition)." (Leech, 2007, p. 5)

3.1. Speech Act Theory

Speech Act theory by J. L. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) presents a framework for evaluating how words perform as actions that carried out communicative purposes, which supports Goffman's theory of Face and Facework. "Actions performed via utterances are generally called speech acts and, in English, are commonly given more specific labels, such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, or request"

(Yule, 1996, p. 47). Speech acts are classified into directives, assertives, expressive, commissive, and declaratives, all of which has a specific purpose in discourse. Speech acts are naturally social, as they generally involve giving commands, expressing guilt, showing emotions, or making requests- all of which possess the ability to cause destruction or maintain face. This connection with Goffman's theory is crucial because speech acts can be evaluated for both their functional classification and pragmatic consequences in face negotiation.

By combining Goffman's theory of Face and Facework with Speech Act theory, this research offers a comprehensive strategy to examining dialogues in animated films. Speech act theory pays attention on the communicative purposes behind a statement, while Goffman's theory provides the relational and social environment where these acts take place, offers a deeper comprehension into the negotiation of power, politeness, and peaceful society.

4.Critical Analysis

Animated movies like *Zootopia* act not just as entertainment but serve as great sources for sociolinguistic research. Through intricate conversation and anthropomorphic characters, these stories portray complex power dynamics, social relationships, and linguistic patterns that exist in human societies.

4.1. Scene 1: Judy's Farewell at the Train Station

Stu Hopps: And foxes are the worst!

Bonnie Hopps: Actually, your father does have a point there. It's in their biology. Remember what happened with Gideon Grey?

Judy Hopps: When I was nine. Gideon Grey was a jerk who happened to be a fox. I know plenty of bunnies who are jerks. (*Zootopia*, 2016)

The first scene is at the Bunnyburrow railway station, where Judy Hopps is leaving her hometown to work for the *Zootopia* Police Department. Her parents (Stu Hopps and Bonnie Hops) worry about her security particularly potential predators.



They express their hatred and dread about foxes, telling her about the hazardous nature. But Judy rejects these biased claims and exhibiting her modern worldview.

By applying Goffman's theory of Face and Facework, Judy's parents contradict the positive face of foxes being a part of the society, by considering them inherently horrible ("Foxes are the worst"). This also gradually threatens her positive face because it challenges the Judy's beliefs of non-discrimination and equity. Judy changes her parents' assumptions by responding in a way that maintains the face of foxes. She utilizes preventative facework by highlighting that an individual's character can be determined by their actions not by their biology. Judy supports her own personal positive face by expressing her conviction in social fairness and equality. Bonnie and Stu behave in assertive speech acts through representing their views as facts ("It's in their biology"). These actions serve as representative forms of speech, expressing their viewpoint. In an assertive act, Judy confronts the stereotype by stating that bunnies also have the potential to be jerks. It is expressive as well that Judy is conveying her disappointment and unhappiness with her parents' restricted perspectives. The dialogues give pragmatic examples of face negotiation, polite inconsistency, and challenging biased statements with no violence, enabling students to learn how to maintain a balance between assertiveness and politeness in social situations.

4.2. Scene 2: Judy and Nick's Initial Encounter

Judy Hopps a newly hired police officer, comes to an ice cream shop where she sees a Nick Wilde, a fox, and a young elephant wanting to buy a 'jumbo pop'. Observing that the vendor is unwilling to serve the fox because of species-based discrimination, Judy comes in and asks that Nick should be dealt equally. But she does not aware that Nick is defrauding the seller and using the pop for selling back.

Nick Wilde: "You know, you'd be a great cop. You're so sweet, you probably think this world is a place where everyone gets along, and anyone can be anything."

The second scene is set on a vibrant, busy street in *Zootopia's* town. Judy stands confident and calm in her newly acquired police uniform. Sly and comfort, Nick smiles and moves forward slightly, clearly honored by her idealism. The physical contrast between Judy's idealistic belief and Nick's bitter reality emphasizes their distinct views.



Judy's positive face-her ambition to be appreciated, respected, and taken seriously as a successful police officer, is indirectly threatens by Nick's sarcastic attitude. By applying that her view of the world is idealistic and foolish, Nick disintegrates her social position and undermines her reputation. Nick applies off-record politeness techniques such as sarcasm, which enables him to confront Judy's ideas without addressing her directly. Nick has the ability to preserve social peace on the outer level by applying this indirect means of communication technique as a face threatening act (FTA), while just giving him with possible denials. Despite Judy's authority of power as a police officer, Nick uses manipulation and humor to get control of the interaction. Goffman (1967) highlights that how face is managed constantly in conversation, and here Nick's greater dialectical control permits him to shape the power dynamics and tone of the exchange, briefly undermining Judy's status of authority. As an expressive speech act, Nick's cynical statement shows his own disillusionment and skepticism with social norms. His words show a psychological condition which is an important part of expressive acts, instead of aiming to express reality, give a command, or make a request. Nick's remark is another example of indirect speech. It seems favorable at one level ("You'd be a great cop."), yet the consequence is obviously adverse. According to Searle, this sort of indirect speech act, frequently helps to maintain politeness or prevent a physical dispute, corresponding with Goffman's idea of facework. This short but effective exchange emphasized the sociolinguistic conflict between disillusionment and optimism. Judy's appearance as a trainee officer with hopes of altering the world sets direct contrast with Nick's streetwise, seasoned realism.

4.3. Scene 3: Press Conference Fallout

In this significant scene Judy Hopps, now a well-esteemed police officer, talks about the mysterious surrounding of predators going back to 'savage' nature, during the press conference. A newscaster asks her whether the reason is biological. Suddenly, Judy answers without completely analyzing the social consequences.

Judy Hopps: “It may be biology. There's a biological component to their behavior.” (Zootopia, 2016)

Nick Wilde’s expression changes from uninfluenced to one filled with grief and disappointment once the camera turns to the audience. The city rapidly turns into discrimination, anxiety, and species-based prejudice towards predators.



Judy’s remark is a Face-Threatening Act over the predators’ negative face—who as all social individuals seek to be away from stereotyping, imposition, and discrimination. By arguing that Biology provides explanation of predator’s aggressive nature, she provides an absolute perspective that hinders them of their autonomy and uniqueness. This risks their freedom and identity from discrimination determined by group membership. Judy fails to employ facework tactics such as hedging, mitigation or modifying language. The true identities of predator citizens are not protected by any disclaimer, expertise, or claim to sympathy. This lack of redressive action causes anxiety, public backlash, and societal segregation, highlighting how language use immediately affects face negotiation in formal discourse. Judy performs a figurative act by expressing an opinion about predatory nature and engaging herself to the accuracy of that claim. This places her with the disputed explanation, that affects the people believes of predators.

4.4. Scene 4: Judy’s Apology to Nick

Judy encounters Nick in this emotional encounter in a tranquil natural environment, away from the temptations and chaos of the city. She appears honest and fragile, her ears partially sagging, posture quiet, and voice calmly. When he is still assault, Nick indicates that he is ready to listen by standing alert but careful.

Judy Hopps: “I was ignorant and irresponsible and small-minded. But predators shouldn’t suffer because of my mistakes.”

The scenes lower pacing and darker color palette show the seriousness of Judy's apology. This scene is a distinct opposition to the earlier tense environment of the press conference representing emotional recovery and introspection.



Judy openly acknowledges that she was “ignorant, irresponsible, and small-minded” which is the clear recognition of the harm, she imposed on Nick and the entire community. Judy addresses the harm resulting from her previous remarks at the news conference by admitting responsibility and rebuilding Nick's positive face. This straightforward self-righteous helps to restore mutual respect. Judy's accept her guilt is greater than just a confession. The statement “predators shouldn't suffer because of my mistakes” shows her intentions to right the injustice and win again Nick's trust. This commissive act indicates a shift in Judy's beliefs and a pledge to improve, which increases Judy's sincerity of her apology. The emotionally realistic setting and physical expressions enhance the dialogue genuineness, reflecting growth, impact of true apologies, and responsibility.

4.5. Scene 5: Climactic Resolution

Judy and Nick deal with Assistant Mayor Bellwether in art gallery throughout this dramatic climax, disclosing her plan to incite fear among predators. Bellwether feels she has seized them, until Nick discloses the whole thing as a scam and employing her own techniques against her. His strong expression of “It's called a hustle, sweetheart” recovers language that was utilized against him previously in the movie.

Nick Wilde: “It's called a hustle, sweetheart.”

Visually the setting is shadowy and intense with sharp distinction of lightening. Bellwether seems overpowered and frightened, but Nick stands confident, unwavering, and erect. Judy emphasizes their equal cooperation by stepping next to Nick.



Nick's confident remarks covers his positive face that was constantly destroyed by manipulation and discrimination during the film. He regains his power and identity, transforming Bellwether's initial contempt (when she used the word 'sweetheart' casually) into an incident of poetic equity. His facework is violent but refined, restores his self-worth and dignity. When Nick states "It's called a hustle, sweetheart." He determines his supremacy and changes the power dynamic. This line not just discloses Bellwether's defeat but also announces success. The phrase serves as a performative speech act, demonstrating Judy and Nick's instant authority and brings an ending to Bellwether's power. It reconsiders Nick as an intelligent, moral person speaking up to injustice instead of a con man. In this scene Nick achieves his reputation and alters the power relationships using declarative speech act and Goffman's notion of positive face recovery.

4.6. Scene 6: Judy Tries to Arrest Duke Weaselton

Judy faces Duke Weaselton, a small-time crook and a street trader in a busy public place. Judy tries to prove her power by standing confidently with her medal in hand. Duke challenges her and avoids arrest, by using the sarcastic term "meter maid" to threaten her authority. The public setting highlights the conflict over authority and the pressure on Judy to encourage in the presence of spectators.

Judy Hopps: "I am a real cop. I am here to arrest you!"

Duke Weaselton: "Hah! You? You're just a meter maid."

Judy has a straight posture, authoritative tone, and a strong appearance. Duke tries to avoid duty by adopting an informal, sarcastic tone while using humor and irony.



Duke's line "You? You're just a meter maid" threatens Judy's professional image, through publicly challenging her credibility and status as an honest officer. Judy's positive face becomes the challenge of this threat, which tries to make herself embarrassed and raise question on her credibility in public. Judy states directly that "I am a real cop. I am here to arrest you!" with outrageous, on camera facework to establishing her power and conflict against Duke's remarks. Her assertive behavior reinforces her self-identity while also making it clear to public that she is not willing to put forward disrespect when it relates to role-based or racial stereotypes. Judy's statement is a command to start an investigation, which is clear declaration taken from her legal authority. This strengthens her authority as an officer, through language to reinforce institutional authority. Duke's line seen as disdainful and sarcastic, portraying his view that Judy is inadequate or unqualified. His expressive behavior act as a face-threatening tactic, teasing Judy's position and indirectly attempting to escape responsibilities.

5. Conclusion

Zootopia demonstrates that animated movies can acts as a complex setting for sociolinguistic study, where character conversation function as an additional component of narrative, it develops into an interpretation of real-world communication relationships. Through the lens of Goffman's Face and Facework Theory and Speech Act Theory, this study has examined that how characters engage in social activities such as manipulating, expressing, and apologizing through skillfully constructed verbal communication. The use of indirect speech acts, politeness strategies, and face-saving techniques show how power, identity, and interpersonal relationships are discussed throughout the film. Character like Nick and Judy illustrate how language can overcome prejudices, bring reconciliation among people, or reinforce innate biases depending on the setting and goal of interaction. Ultimately *Zootopia*, turns animated conversations into a mirror of social relations indicating that the basic principles of human communication, fictional, humanized contexts-constructing identity, performing speech acts and negotiating face remain extremely relevant and accessible to critical linguistic analysis.

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