Language in Ronja, the robber's daughter:

Adapting the characters for anime

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Abstract

This is a qualitative study on the characters of *Ronja, the robber's daughter* and how they have been interpreted in Studio Ghibli's anime version. It focuses on characterization from the perspective of role language and character language and how they reinforce the themes and characters of *Ronja*. Example sentences have been analyzed and discussed from various major characters. In summary, role language has been applied to gender the main characters, make them more distinct from each other and index certain characters' role in the story.

Keywords: role language, character language, japanese linguistics, ronja, lindgren

Conventions

Any Japanese text in this thesis will be Romanized according to the modified Hepburn standard. Furthermore, example sentences will be glossed according to the Leipzig Glossing Rules, with points of interest featuring interlinear glossing. Original Japanese sentences will alternate with my English translations. The translated sentences will be marked with "(Eng)".

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1. Introduction

The works of Astrid Lindgren are known globally thanks to the numerous translations available for her books. She is known to use very colorful language with a wide vocabulary and sometimes even her own made up words. Sometimes those can be traced etymologically to understand their meaning, however other times they seem to come from Lindgren's own imagination, as is discussed in Engdahl (2014). A major challenge of translation is of course how you choose to represent the original words accurately for readers of a different native tongue. Several theses have been published both on the subject of translation of Lindgren's books and translations into Japanese.

Relatively recently a new field of study has emerged in Japanese linguistic research called *yakuwarigo*, 'role language'. It is basically language features that are built on cultural and social stereotypes that serve to index an archetypal role in a narrative. In addition to this, Sadanobu (2015) and Yamakido & Kinsui (2015) have defined 'character language', distinct from role language, which will also inform this thesis.

Role language has been observed as a tool in translation when one wants to index a certain stereotype with a cultural equivalent. For example, Hiramoto (2009) argues that the Japanese translation of *Gone with the Wind* uses a modified *Toohoku* dialect to represent the speech of African American slaves and poor whites. Hiramoto (2009) is a major inspiration for this thesis, as I aim to analyze the adaptation of Lindgren's novel *Ronja Rövardotter* (Ronja, the robber's daughter) into an animated TV-series by the Japanese animation studio, Studio Ghibli.

1.1 Role Language and Character Language

The study of 'role language' is a relatively young field in linguistics, primarily in Japanese sociolinguistics. It was first introduced in Kinsui (2000) by the field's pioneer, Satoshi Kinsui. Kinsui has since written several publications on the study of 'role language' and has also conducted research on Japanese language history. The concept of role language has been further clarified in Kinsui (2003) and collected papers by various authors (Kinsui 2007, 2011).

So, what is role language? Role language, as Teshigawara & Kinsui (2011) define it, examines the connection between spoken language features and character types in fiction, pop culture, the Internet and media. If one can read dialogue and imagine a certain type of character through only the speech style used, the character is most likely using role language. This means that a character's vocabulary and grammar can vary according to their personality, gender, age, social status, birthplace or current residence. A classic example of a typical role language is the 'elderly male' in Japanese. We can compare a sentence from Teshigawara & Kinsui (2011, pp.

38) meaning 'Yes, I know that' in standard Japanese with how an elderly male character would typically say it in a work of fiction. Let us also add in the character of a typical female.

(1) a. *Soo **da**,*   ***watashi*** *ga*   *shitteiru*
       yes-COPULA   I   NOM   know-ASPECT-PARTICLE

    b. *Soo **ja**,*   ***washi*** *ga*   *shitteoru **zo***
       yes-COPULA   I   NOM   know-ASPECT-PARTICLE

    c. *Soo*   ***yo**,*   ***atashi*** *ga*   *shitteiru **wa***
       yes-[ZERO-COPULA]   PARTICLE   I   NOM   know-ASPECT-PARTICLE

Notice how the characters all use different copulas (***da***, ***ja***, zero-copula with particle ***yo***), different first-person pronouns (***watashi***, ***washi***, ***atashi***) and different sentence-final particles (***zo***, ***wa***). These are speech styles that are characteristic of these character types. One could also call role language 'stereotyped language', as it associates language features with a certain subgroup of people.

Whether translating to or from Japanese, knowledge of role language is arguably necessary for understanding the nuances of fictional literature. There has been research arguing that education of role language should be a part of Japanese language education, which is both beneficial for those who consume Japanese media which features role language and for those who aspire to work as translators, which according to a survey by Kitano (2018) is the majority of Japanese language learners at Stockholm University.

Over time the definition of role language has been further narrowed down. Yamakido (2015) distinguishes role language from character language. As role language draws from language features that are well known and consistently used in the Japanese language community, there are certain special speech styles that cannot be accurately described as role language. For example, in Haruki Murakami's novels *Kafka on the Shore* and *1Q84* there are two characters that are mentally challenged and speak in a peculiar fashion. One of them speaks very politely to everyone, including cats, often ending his sentences with the extremely formal copula *dearimasu*. The other speaks with no polite forms at all to anyone, even omitting sentence final particles and questioning rising intonations. These are definitely consistent speech styles that inform the reader of the character's personality, however they do not draw from any pre-existing cultural or social stereotype and thus cannot be called role language. Character language can be described as a set of spoken language features that serve to inform the character's personality, rather than their stereotype or role.

1.2 Ronja, the robber's daughter

Ronja, the robber's daughter (originally titled *Ronja Rövardotter*) is a novel published in 1981 by Swedish author Astrid Lindgren. It has since been translated into 37 different languages, adapted into a Swedish feature length film, and adapted into a Japanese 26 episode long animated series. The material for the present survey will be the Swedish novel and Japanese animation (henceforth referred to as anime).

The story can be described as Lindgren's take on the *Romeo and Juliet* formula. And takes place in an early medieval world where we follow the titular young girl Ronja, as she grows up in a band of robbers led by her father, Mattis. They live in one half of a castle in the forest, the other half split off by a lightning bolt and inhabited by a rival band of robbers led by Borka. The Mattis castle is also inhabited by her loving and assertive mother, Lovis, and the easy-going old man Skalle-Per. After the Borka band move into the other half of the castle she meets Borka and Undis' son, Birk. At first, they do not get along as she has always been taught to hate the Borka band, but they eventually develop a deep friendship. The world is also inhabited by fantastical creatures such as harpies and trolls, who are capable of speech. This gallery of speaking characters lends itself well to role language study as it is not only a period piece which suggests a particular type of speech and roles that may not appear in contemporary works (e.g. samurai language) but also roles that have no basis in reality such as the trolls and harpies. Trolls and harpies may be common creatures in fiction, however Lindgren was known to employ a strikingly original vocabulary, even creating new words that have since been used in colloquial Swedish.

An issue arises when trying to translate her works into other languages where the words may not have the same connotations. Despite this her works have received a remarkable amount of translations, including Japanese. The question, then, is how one creates an accurate representation of the original language in a completely different one, particularly if that language is so fundamentally different that translation becomes a mere approximate recreation. One language may contain a variety of particles or conjunctions that come with various connotations that simply do not exist in the translation's target language. My conclusion is that role language is something that is often employed in translation to attempt to convey the intent and characteristics of characters, sometimes in place of an accurate direct translation.

2. Background

This thesis will largely be on the topic of translation with a major focus on role language and character language. A prime example of role language in translation, and a major influence on this thesis is Hiramoto (2009) which analyzes the Japanese novel translation of *Gone with the Wind*. The novel is set during the American Civil War and the main speaking cast is made up of rich white aristocrats, black slaves and poor whites. The aristocrats all speak seemingly standard English with standardized spelling, while the black slaves and poor whites use more broken English, which is represented orthographically with non-standard spelling to represent their rough pronunciation. As Japan does not have a similar history of slaves as America has, it would be hard to find a linguistic equivalent to the pidgin English of the original. The translator has instead opted to use an eastern Japanese dialect to instead index the rough and uneducated language of the black slaves. Because the translation cannot use a historical or contextual equivalent, it instead uses a pseudo-dialect which serves to evoke the stereotypical image of rough, uneducated people (Hiramoto 2009, pp. 260).

Lindgren, then, known for her unique and quirky language should serve as a challenge for translators. I will give an example of role language in translation in another one of Lindgren's works. Nilsson (2012) argues that the Japanese translation of "*Madicken och Junibackens Pims*" uses role language to make Madicken appear more feminine and of higher social status, using polite women's language that did not exist in the Swedish original. This is in contrast to her friend Mia who mostly uses standard language, which by comparison paints Madicken as of higher class. It is not irrelevant to the story, which is about poverty and Madicken's life as an upper-class girl. But the point is that the Japanese translation uses words that weren't there previously, not to change the story, but to reinforce its themes. Whether or not it is an accurate portrayal is up for debate, and not the goal of this thesis.

A study has also been performed on the English translation of *Ronja, the robber's daughter* which aimed to find out how well-preserved Lindgren's colorful writing was (Nordlund 1999). When it comes to names it seems that the translator has attempted to anglicize the names or otherwise try to come up with something semantically similar. For example, Tjegge and Skalle-Per have been anglicized and translated into Shaggy and Noddle-Pete. Labbas on the other hand was translated into Knuckles, a more semantic equivalent. 'Labb' in Swedish slang can mean 'punch' so it serves to signify his brute strength. According to Engdahl (2014, p. 21) the name Labbas, in addition to all the other names, was taken from geographical locations, a lake in the case of Labbas.

Names of locations have also been directly translated and attempt to stay as true as possible to the original. When it comes to the mythical creatures it becomes a bit more complicated. Creatures such as *grådvärgar* and *underjordiska* have been more or less directly translated into gray dwarves and Unearthly ones (with an added capitalization), respectively. However, *Rumpnissar* and *vildvittror* have more cultural influence and are harder to translate. In these cases, the translator has tried to use an approximate representation with 'rumphobs', and a more accurately descriptive albeit more plain choice with 'wild harpies', respectively.

The original text in general seems to include some dialectal elements, probably from Lindgren's Småland dialect. Rumphobs in particular are well known in Sweden for their peculiar way of speaking, an extreme form of Småland dialect represented ortographically in the text with phonological spelling. This should be a major point of interest for any translation of the book, and the English translator has opted to draw inspiration from her own local dialect of Wiltshire, complete with non-standard spelling. Although Lindgren's unique and long-winded sentences have been somewhat normalized, it seems the translation still manages to maintain a lot of the character and atmosphere of the original.

Role language and character language research is important for the present study, as this thesis will mainly focus on Studio Ghibli's characterization of the cast and how the language informs that.

3. Aim and methodology

3.1 Aim of study

The purpose of this study is to examine the differences between Lindgren's novel; *Ronja, the robber's daughter* and the 2014-2015 Japanese anime by Studio Ghibli. I will also be looking at the extended cut of the 1984 film adaptation. The reason for using these versions is that they are different art mediums, however the film and anime both contain voiced dialogue which is potentially relevant for this study as dialect will also be considered potential role language. Another major point of interest is that the anime is not a direct translation within the same medium.

Similar to Nordlund (1999) I want to examine how Studio Ghibli has chosen to translate Lindgren's work, given their freedom of reinterpretation in this case. Japan is a country far away from Sweden and they may opt to change some aspects to fit their cultural standards. On the other hand, they may also want to respect the original work and present it as-is to a new audience.

I hope to contribute to role language and character language research with a study that looks into a complete reimagining that takes spoken dialect into account, as opposed to written direct translations. The main purpose is to analyze the language used in the Japanese version contrasted with the Swedish original, however I hope this also invites further research into role language in Swedish.

3.2 Methodology

There has been a considerable amount of role language research on translations of novels (Hiramoto 2009, Nilsson 2012) or films (Nilsson 2015) and this thesis will contribute by pitting different adaptations against each other. The anime is a reimagining of a novel in an animated serial format made for TV in a different country on the other side of the world. What this means is that accurate translation is not a major concern as the studio has wide creative freedom with reimagining the characters and the world, possibly with their own cultural sensibilities. This also means that line-by-line comparison will prove difficult as the stories do not mirror each other 1:1. What I will do is select major characters and creatures and create language profiles, wherein their language and personality are analyzed and their eventual use of role language or character language is determined. This will be a qualitative analysis looking at how characterization may differ from or resemble the Swedish novel in the Japanese anime. This is strictly a linguistic study from a role language perspective and aspects such as cinematography, dramaturgy, sound design etc. will not be regarded unless

linguistically relevant. For instance, a character may be designed to appear sexy and they can then use a "femme fatale" kind of role language to support this.

I will use the original Swedish names for human characters and English translated names for creatures and locations. Japanese text will be written in Roman letters.

4. Analysis

For reference, below is a table of the personal pronouns and sentence final particles that appear in the anime and the gender or role they are typically associated with. Generally, male pronouns and particles are also used by elderly males, in addition to the elderly male pronouns and particles.

Role	Male	Female	Elderly male
1st person pronouns	*watashi, ore, boku*	*watashi, atashi*	*washi*
2nd person pronouns	*omae, kimi*	*anata, anta*	
Sentence final particles	*ze, zo, da*	*wa, yo*	*ja*

Table 1. Personal pronouns and sentence final particles which appear in the anime.

Just from reading the novel one can expect certain role language to appear in an eventual translation. The female characters will likely use feminine sentence final particles, male characters will probably use masculine pronouns etc. Gendered language is not a commonly observed thing in the Swedish language, however it seems that Japanese translations will add gendered language habitually. Speaking of role language, both in the novel and film all characters seem to use the same vocabulary and speech patterns. It is common in Swedish films for characters to all use the same dialect (usually standard Swedish) and similar speech style regardless of actual geographical location, this seems to be the case for *Ronja* as well. As is discussed in Nilsson (2012), the Japanese translation of *Madicken* still added gendered language and sometimes levels of polite language to reinforce the themes of the story and the characters' relationships. One can expect that *Ronja* will not be an exception.

In the original novel speech styles do not vary too much between characters. Lindgren opts to use a more universal language for the whole story, possibly for the sake of a consistent atmosphere and in-universe logic. The novel does not make it explicitly clear if the characters are speaking any dialect. The film is performed by a majority Stockholm actors and standard Swedish is spoken. However, there are some dialectal elements in some dialogue. There is also an apparent conviction to avoid loanwords and stick to a thoroughly Swedish vocabulary, with an abundance of older Swedish words that serve to inform the early medieval setting.

A dialectal phrase that often appears throughout the novel is "*Ronja mi*" (Lindgren 2014, first published 1981, pp. 11) which roughly translates to "my Ronja". Although the non-standard spelling indicates Lindgren's local dialect, the expression seems to be made up for the world of *Ronja* rather than a common Swedish expression. This is not always directly

translated in Japanese. Mattis is known to often address his daughter as "*Ronja mi*". Early in the anime Mattis occasionally refers to Ronja as "*ore no kohato*", which literally translates to "my baby dove". It is certainly not a translation of the original phrase nor does it draw on any dialectal features, rather Studio Ghibli has made Mattis liken her to a baby animal as an object of affection which is not out of character for him. Both in the novel and anime he and other characters at times profess that Ronja is "beautiful like a harpy".

At one point Birk and Ronja declare themselves siblings and Birk says "*söstra mi*", with non-standard spelling of a possible dialectal form of "*syster*", "sister". At one point in the anime he simply says "*boku no kyoodai*", "my sibling". In another scene he adds a particle; "*boku no kyoodai yo*". *Yo* in this case is a vocative particle, loosely equivalent to "*o sibling*", said by Birk with a feeling of love and affection. This is also an example of using an older word to enhance the setting.

4.1 Females

One thing that can be made clear about *Ronja* is that the few female characters that appear certainly cannot be described as particularly 'feminine'. Lovis, much like the men around her, is rough and strong. The main cast is made up of outlaws that live off robbing people who happen to pass through their woods. This is certainly represented in the dialog which is fairly foul-mouthed and rustic, and the little girl Ronja seems to take after the people around her.

4.1.1   Ronja

Ronja is not girly girl by any means. Much like her parents she is loud, assertive and strong-willed. In the novel she does not use any gendered language, however in the anime she uses somewhat more feminine language. First of all, she usually uses neutral pronouns. She refers to herself with *watashi* (1e), and the second person as *anata*, both neutral in gender and politeness. In one case, when angered by Birk, she uses the casual form *anta* (2f). Her feminine language shows in her sentence final particles. She often uses the particles *wa* (2a, 2b, 2d) and *yo* (2c) without copula which is mainly used by females for emphasizing emotion.

(2)   a.   *'Tōsan wa sō   itteta-**wa**!'*

                    was saying-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'You said so, dad!'

     b.   "*Ē,   wakatta-**wa**!*"

                    understood-PARTICLE

(Eng)   "Alright, I got it!"

c.   *'Sō-yo!'*
    yes-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'That's right!'

d.   *'Demo ima wa mō fuyu to haru no aida   ja nai-wa!'*
                                              is not-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'But we're not inbetween winter and spring anymore!'

e.   *'Ē,   watashi,   sō shitai no!'*
          1ST PERSON STANDARD

(Eng)   'Yes, that's what I want to do!'

f.   *'Anta   mo,   anta   no Boruka toride mo naraku ni*
     2ND PERSON CASUAL   2ND PERSON CASUAL

    tonde iku ga ii!'

(Eng)   'I hope you and your Borka fortress fall into the abyss!'

Speaking in role language terms, although her use of sentence final particles is indeed feminine, she does not exactly fit into traditional female roles such as polite girls or noble ladies (Kinsui 2003, pp. 105). Not only that, but she is the main character and as such her language is more standardized. The only special features of her speech are her standard use of sentence final particles (*wa, yo, ne, no*) and her habit of using comma-like pauses in place of mid-sentence particles (see 2e, instead of the standard *watashi wa sō shitai*). If anything, she exhibits signs of character language with her childish way of simplifying and omitting particles from her sentences.

(2) g.   *'Motte kuru   tte,   dokokara? Borukatoride kara?'*
          bring   QUOTE-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'Bring back, from where? From the Borka fortress?'

This speech style does not exist in the original novel where she is fully capable of forming full sentences. The anime version gives the impression that Ronja is wide-eyed and curious about the world but still quite childish and temperamental like her father. Most of all she sounds wild and uneducated, though not with the use of role language. As she speaks mostly standard Japanese with feminine sentence final particles and child-like vocabulary and omissions, it can be said that she uses the role language of a main character. Of course, it is expected of a main character to have a relatively plain speech style in role language theory. The anime retains her energetic personality, albeit with changes to her way of speaking. It can

be said that Ronja uses the character language of a wild child. It is also worth noting that while Ronja takes from her mother's use of feminine particles, her father's manly influence is just as audible in the way that she typically uses as few words as possible to express herself.

4.1.2   Lovis

Lovis in the novel does not use any form of feminine language nor does she give the impression of a lady. She is a housewife who takes care of a group of robbers and becomes a mother. She is a mother figure both literally and figuratively for Ronja and everyone else. In many ways she is the strongest observable character of the cast as she holds command over the entire group, even Mattis. This is carried over into the anime with a Lovis who always keeps her chest high and disposition assertive. She is rarely seen smiling unless talking to Ronja and always assumes a 'boss' role, commanding the robbers to do chores. Her language in Japanese certainly resembles Ronja's with an identical usage of personal pronouns and sentence final particles. However, unlike Ronja she rarely omits unnecessary particles or words and speaks with fully formed sentences carrying a clear message, much like one would expect from a parent.

(3)   a.   *'Wakattara sassato   **iku***!'

                            ROOT FORM

(Eng)   'If you got that get going already!'

   b.   *'Ato, katazuke wa jibun de   yaru-**no**   **yo**.   Oboete-**oite**!'*

                            do-PARTICLE   PARTICLE   *remember*-GER

(Eng)   'You clean it up yourself. Remember that!'

   c.   *'**Watashi**   ni wa kodomo ga   iru-**wa**!'*

        1ST PERSON   *exist*-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'I have a child!'

Lovis consistently uses feminine sentence final particles *wa* (3c, 3g)*, yo* (3b, 3e) and *no* (3b) but her personality and the way she expresses herself is closer to that of a matriarch. Her dialog is made up of strong declarations and assertive commands (3a, 3b, 3d, 3e), a complete lack of pretense. Unlike typical female expressions, which tend to be polite and avoid imperative or conclusive utterances (Kinsui 2003, pp. 81), Lovis is very direct. One more difference from Ronja is that Lovis will often use the second person pronoun *anta*, a less formal form of *anata*.

(3) d. *'Anta tachi mo atama ni kabutte ru mono wo   tori-**na**!'*
        zenbu

                                                                *take-*IMP

(Eng)   'All of you as well, remove your headdresses!'

    e. *'Kurippen, ashita no mizu kumi wa **anta**   da-**yo**'*
                                          2ND PERSON   COPULA-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'Klippen, you are going to get water tomorrow.'

This is usually only said to Mattis and the other robber's when giving out commands or scolding them. Her language noticeably changes when speaking to Skalle-Per or Ronja. While her requests tend to come out in the form of assertive commands, her disposition changes towards Skalle-Per. It seems she has some respect for him as an older resident of the castle. Her requests for him rather come out in the form of suggestive questions.

(3) f. *'**Anata**,   sono doro yogore o otosanai mama haru o mukaeru tsumori?'*
        1ST PERSON

(Eng)   'Are you going to keep that dirt and mud until springs?'

This is not said with any aggression, and she even accepts his refusal to wash himself. Note also her lack of questioning particle *ka* (feminine language). Her language towards Ronja is similarly friendly, with a slightly different disposition. Ronja is the only character that Lovis faces with a smile. She also uses the second person pronoun *anta* towards Ronja, however this seems to be a sign of familiarity rather than assertiveness.

(3) g. *'**Anta**   wa kaminari no yoru no ko   da-**wa**.'*
        2ND PERSON   COPULA-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'You are a thunder night child.'

Note also the feminine sentence final particle *wa*.

One may be able to call this the role language of a strong woman or assertive matriarch, one who can display masculine power and leadership but still retain the expected gendered language and attributes of a mother figure.

4.1.3 Undis

As for Undis, her language is largely the same as Lovis, albeit with a different personality. She has considerably less spoken dialog as a minor characters and as such, by Kinsui's role language theory, should be a prime example of role language.

(4) a. *'Atashi   datte, anna kedamono wo chichioya ni mottara, kitto naku darou*

1ST PERSON

sa.'

(Eng)   'If I had such a brute for a father, I'd likely cry too.'

b. *'Koko ni kao wo dasenai no mo yoku   wakaru-**wa**.'*

understand-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'To not want to show his face here, I understand it well.'

c. *'Otoko domo no koe kara mimi wo yasumerareru tte no wa suteki   da-**wa***

COPULA-PARTICLE

ne.'

(Eng)   'To be able to let one's ears rest from the men's voices is wonderful, isn't it?'

Undis gets very few chances to display any role language, but it is clear that she speaks like a woman. She does not have the same masculine poise as Lovis and it is somewhat visible in her language. She is the only human character to use the feminine first person pronoun *atashi* (4a). She also uses the same group of feminine sentence final particles as Lovis and Ronja (4b, 4c). Her personality can be described as spiteful and aggressive, however she and the other Borka robbers often express themselves proudly and smugly.

It is unclear if Undis is using role language. She is definitely using women's language, however, whether it is drawing from cultural stereotypes is not definite. She is a complacent and somewhat annoying woman, but those personality traits are not clearly expressed with a particular speech style.

4.2 Males

All of the male robbers apart from Birk and Skalle-Per consistently use the same speech style. As expected from a band of strong, rough outlaws they have a similarly masculine language. Regardless of who they are speaking to they consistently use the same pronouns and often employ the same set of sentence final particles.

4.2.1   Birk

Birk in the novel is portrayed as smart and independent but also complacent and smug like his parents. He has experience with living in a cave and being chased through woods by soldiers. This is in contrast to Ronja who grew up safely within castle walls away from the outside world until being let out to play in the woods. Ronja is also brimming with energy and positivity until met with conflict such as gray dwarves or Birk, where she will either cower in fear before the gray dwarves or act actively hostile towards Birk. Ronja also gives the

impression that she depends on the people around her because that is the world as she knows it. In contrast, Birk gives the impression that he would attempt to handle any situation he is met with. The anime further underlines their juxtaposition by dressing Ronja and Birk in pink and blue, respectively. While not contrast colors, they inform the audience of their connection by using traditionally gendered colors drawn from modern stereotypes rather than the suggested time period of the setting.

Birk does not have the same tendency as Ronja to omit unnecessary words and particles. Rather, he sounds confident juxtaposed with Ronja. He also consistently uses the boyish first person pronoun *boku* (5a, 5c) and familiar second person pronoun *kimi* (5b) towards Ronja.

(5) a. *'**Boku**   wa **kimi**   ni tsunagareteru kamo shirenai na.'*
        1ST PERSON   2ND PERSON

(Eng)   'I may be connected to you.'

     b. *'**Kimi**,   kitto tasuke ga iru n daro?'*
        2ND PERSON

(Eng)   'You probably need help, right?'

     c. *'Ittai **anta**,   **boku**   o dou shitai no sa?'*
             2ND PERSON   1ST PERSON

(Eng)   'What do you want to do with me?'

(5a) and (5b) are both said towards Ronja, while (5c) is said to Mattis. Something that is not present in the original novel is how Birk switches pronouns to clearly state his relationship to another character. He uses *kimi* towards Ronja, meaning some form of familiarity and possibly even affection from their first meeting, which is more ambiguous in the original. When he speaks to Mattis he refers to him with the casual *anta* (5c), which in this show has often been used with vitriol or asserting dominance.

(5) d. *'Naze sonna koto o iu n **dai**?'*
                                    PARTICLE

(Eng)   'What are you saying?'

     e. *'Ano atari ni nimotsu wo kakushite aru n **da**.'*
                                       COPULA

(Eng)   'I've hidden my things around there.'

     f. *'Mata ashita, kite   kureru-**kai**?'*
                           give-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'Will you come tomorrow as well?'

Beyond personal pronouns Birk also often ends his sentences with copula *da* (5e) which sounds more masculine juxtaposed with the female characters' habitual omission. He also often asks questions with the casual forms *dai* (5d) and *kai* (5f), which are mainly used by men.

While Birk and Ronja in the original had noticeably contrasting personalities, the anime further pushes the point with both visual language and their vocabulary. Only by hearing the dialog between the two one can guess their gender, age and relationship. This is unique to the anime and a mark of role language.

4.2.2   Mattis

Mattis in the novel can be called a paragon of masculine characters. He is loud and boisterous, the physically strongest in the cast and easily provoked. Easily angered but softens up around his daughter. His personality is translated directly into the anime with added masculine role language.

(6)   a.   *'Da deko*   **omae,**   *meshidoki no pan mitai ni kono ko o okkotosu n ja*
                        2ND PERSON

           nai   **zo.**'
                        PARTICLE

(Eng)   'However, don't drop this child like you did the mealtime bread.'

      b.   **'Ore**   *ga nani ni ki o tsukeru to itta no ka oboeteru darou na?'*
           1ST PERSON

(Eng)   'You remember what I told you to watch out for, don't you?'

      c.   **'Omae**   *tachi! Asobi ni iku n*   **ja-nee**   *n da kara na.'*
           2ND PERSON   COPULA-VB

(Eng)   'Guys! We're not going out to play.'

      d.   **'Omae**   *no kangae nanka dou de mo ii.'*
           2ND PERSON

(Eng)   'I don't care what you think.'

(6a) and (6b) are said to Ronja, (6c) is said to his band of robbers, (6d) is said to his rival Borka. Regardless of his mood or addressee he never refrains from using the typically male first person pronoun *ore* (6b) and second person pronoun *omae* (6a, 6c, 6d). The same can be said for Borka and all the other robbers. This is probably to underline their

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masculinity and power. It also serves to index their status as outlaws, refusing to look up to anyone as of a higher status.

Mattis consistently uses very masculine personal pronouns and sentence final particles (*ze*, *zo* (6a)). In (6c) he also uses the casual abbreviated form *janee* (of standard *janai*) (6c), drawn from the Tokyo dialect and typically associated with men. His language does not contain any other special features and can be classified as the role language of a typical masculine male. The same can be said for all the other male characters apart from Birk and Skalle-Per.

4.2.3   Skalle-Per

Skalle-Per is the prime example of a character using role language in the anime. His personality remains the same and it seems an attempt has been made to retain some of his vocabulary. Skalle-Per is the only character of old age and it shows in his dialog. He uses what Kinsui (2003, pp. 1) calls elderly male language. Not only that, Skalle-Per assumes the role of a mentor for Ronja to guide her on her journey of growing up to not be a robber. The wise old mentor is an archetype to which elderly male language is typically associated (Kinsui 2003 p. 28-29).

(7)   a.   *'Otoko no ko dattara dou suru tsumori*   ***datta***   *ka ne?'*
                                                             COPULA

(Eng)   'What would you have done if it were a boy?'

      b.   ***'Anta***   *wa hitokoto mo shabette nai yo. Sore ni*   ***washi***-*ra*   *datte nani*
           2ND PERSON   1ST PERSON

           *mo shaberasete   moraenakatta-**ze**.'*
                                did not receive-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'You haven't said a thing about it. And you haven't let us mention it either.'

      c.   *'Hore,*   ***omae*** *san   no ban*   ***da***.   *[…] Mata*   ***washi***   *no make ka.*
                      2ND PERSON   COPULA   1ST PERSON

           Anta   *ni wa kake goto ga sainou ga aru kamo*   *shire-**n***   *na.'*
           2ND PERSON   *cannot know*-AUX

(Eng)   'Hey,it's your turn. […] I lose again. You may have a knack for gambling.'

      d.   *'Rōnya, ittai*   ***anta***   *koko de nani wo*   ***shi-toru***   *no ka na?'*
                            2ND PERSON   *do*-ASPECT

(Eng)   'Ronja, what are you doing down here?'

    e.   *'**Omae**   san gata wa arittake no buki wo atsumete oku n   **ja**!'*

        2ND PERSON   COPULA

(Eng)   'You, gather all the weapons we have!'

Skalle-Per in his dialog manages to tick all boxes of the elderly male language checklist. As the oldest member of the castle his preferred second person pronoun is the informal *anta* (7b, 7c, 7d). Just as frequently, he refers to himself with the personal pronoun *washi* (7b, 7c), traditionally only used by fictional elderly males. He scarcely uses the masculine second person pronoun *omae* (7c, 7e), in these cases he is either being competitive (7c) or motivational and heated (7e). His sentence final particles include a mix of the neutral copula *da* (7a, 7c) and elderly male-associated copula *ja* (7e). He frequently uses the negative verb ending of *n* (7c). At times he will use the imperfective form *toru* rather than the standard *teiru* (7d) which in real life is associated with the Kansai dialect, however in role language it is rather associated with elderly male language (Kinsui 2003, p. 18-19).

There is no doubt that Skalle-Per consistently uses elderly male language. It is appropriate because of his age and role as a mentor. However, this is also new for the anime as the original novel contains no such role language. It can be said that the anime effectively signals Skalle-Per's purpose in the story through his vocabulary which the original is not as clear about. That is not to say that his character or personality has changed.

4.3 Creatures

Ronja is famous for its talking creatures. Somehow, they do not sound entirely human. In the novel they have unique speech patterns and have come to be known across all of Sweden, particularly that of the rumphobs. It is worth noting that the speaking creatures rarely show signs of actual communication. They retain animalistic tendencies when the lines they speak can scarcely be regarded as dialog, rather they sound like cries or exclamations not directed at any listener.

(8)   a.   *'Voffor för ho på detta viset? Ha sunder taket, voffor då då?'*

(Eng)   'Why is she doing this? Ruining the roof, why?'

    b.   *'Hoho, han ska ha barn nu i natt, ett åskvädersbarn, litet och fult får man tro, hoho!'*

(Eng)   'Hoho, he's having a child tonight, small and ugly one might think, hoho!

    c.   *'Små vackra människorna där i vattnet, nu ska här klösas, nu ska blodet rinna, hoho!'*

(Eng)   'Little beautiful humans in the water, we shall claw, the blood shall flow, hoho!'

These may sound addressed to a listening party, however in the context that these lines are said there is no indication that the creatures expect any form of response, nor do they use language to transfer information or coordinate. Lindgren manages to give her creatures the ability to speak without giving them a sense of humanity, instead having them utter sentences in place of animal noises. This does not entirely carry over into the anime.

4.3.1   Wild Harpies (Vildvittror)

The harpies of the novel often cry out murderous threats at the sight of humans. What makes them sound like animals is that they often repeat the same lines over and over with no indication of an intent to communicate. There are established role languages for non-human characters which are developed from language projection rather than social stereotypes (Kinsui 2003, p. 113). However, the harpies in the anime do not seem to draw from non-human role language but are instead more humanized.

(9)   a.   *'Konya, kodomo ga umareru n   da-**tte**?*   *Kaminari no toki*
                                  COPULA-QUOTE PARTICLE

      *no kodomo tte kitto chippoke de, mittomonai   darou **ne**.'*
                                              I guess-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'You said you're having a baby tonight? Children born under thunder are sure to be tiny and pathetic, wouldn't you say?'

      b.   *'**Omae**   ni shigoto o sasete yarou.'*
            2ND PERSON

(Eng)   'I'll make you work.'

      c.   *'Yama no naka no   **atashi** tachi   no   sumika-de-**ne**.'*
                        1ST PERSON   *dwelling*-PARTICLE-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'In our dwelling in the mountains.'

They often end their sentences with a particle for emotional emphasis (*yo*, *ne*) indicating that they aim to convey information and expect a response. Nobody ever responds to a harpy, even between the harpies themselves, however it seems that they are capable of conversation. In (9a) a harpy responds directly to something that Mattis said. This serves to considerably change the nature of the harpies from the novel, where their lines are simply exclamations and do not indicate any will to relay information or communicate.

Interestingly, the harpies do use some gendered language, although not in the way that is expected. For first person pronouns they use the informal feminine *atashi* (9c). On the other hand, they the informal masculine second person pronoun *omae* (9b). As for sentence final particles, it is mostly neutral and plain, often ending with the somewhat feminine *ne* (9a, 9c), but not feminine to any considerable degree. Harpies are lethally dangerous but beautiful and feminine, and it seems their language reflects their femininity with some masculine elements to signify their danger. The harpies of *Ronja* are indeed reminiscent of a character from a different franchise in personality, speech style, and even voice inflection. Juri Han, a character from the video game franchise *Street Fighter* is a murderous villain who, similar to the harpies, has a mocking tone and often threatens with violence. The following are quotes from the video game *Street Fighter V* (Capcom, 2016), spoken by Juri Han.

(10) a. **'Omae**   *to wa itsuka yaru tte omotteta yo! Souzou ijou ni yowakatta kedo*
          2ND PERSON

          nā!'
(Eng)   'I thought about killing you someday! But you're weaker than I thought!'

     b. *'Yappa ii na,*   **omae**.   *Motto yogashi taku   naru-**ze**.'*
                           2ND PERSON   *become*-PARTICLE

     c. *'Nan da yo mou itta no?*   **Atashi**   *no kopii nara motto ike n daro.'*
                                     1ST PERSON
(Eng)   'What, over already? If you're a copy of me, you should be able to handle more.'

     d. *'Oo toka kami toka suki nan da,*   **atashi**.'*
                                             1ST PERSON
(Eng)   'I like kings and gods and such.'

Although harpies and Juri differ in that Juri displays more personality and individuality in her speech while harpies use more plain statements, their speech styles are remarkably similar. Juri also uses pronouns *omae* (8a, 8b) and *atashi* (8c, 8d), in addition to the masculine sentence final particle *ze* (8b). It is worth mentioning that their visual designs are similarly feminine and even somewhat sexy. It is unclear whether this can be called role language at this point, or simply similar character language. In any case, I would like this *dangerous women's language* to be considered distinct from the *femme fatale* character trope because a femme fatale is seductive and would likely use extremely feminine language. Harpies and Juri are openly hostile rather than seductive.

4.3.2 Rumphobs (Rumpnissar)

The rumphobs are linguistically speaking the most interesting characters of the original novel. 6a is a line spoken by a rumphob and is probably the most famous line from the original novel. It is the only example of non-standard spelling in the book and it seems to represent an extremely heavy variant of Lindgren's own local dialect of Småland. In the English translation of the novel it has been somewhat faithfully recreated by drawing inspiration from the Wiltshire dialect of England, also with non-standard spelling (Nordlund 1999, p. 23-24). Dialectal features have been known to be translated with stereotypically equivalent dialectal features such as the pseudo-*Toohoku* dialect in *Gone with the Wind* (Hiramoto 2009). That does not seem to be the case in *Ronja*.

(11)   a.   *'Doshite   kono hito konna koto suru.'*
            Why

(Eng)   'Why does this person do this.'

       b.   *'Hora-sa,   yurikago ni naru.'*
            look-PARTICLE

(Eng)   'Look, it becomes a cradle.'

       c.   *'Nda-nda.'*
            AFF-AFF

       d.   *'Yurikago, chanto, yureteru.'*

(Eng)   'The cradle, swings, properly.'

Rather than going for any dialectal features, the language of the rumphobs seems to be stripped of any personality at all. The affirmative *nda* (11c) and expression *hora sa* (11b) may be inspired by *rural language* (Kinsui 2003, pp. 33), as *nda* is used instead of standard *sou da*. The rumphobs seem to lead simple lives in their underground caves so rural language is perhaps not ill-fitting. However, there are no other dialectal features and as such it cannot be said the rumphobs speak with a dialect. The use of an affirmative does indicate that the rumphobs are capable of conversation (again, unlike the novel), but they show no will to address anyone in second person. Instead they opt to comment on what they see in the third person (11a). Their language is somewhat reminiscent of a young child in that almost all particles (except for *sa*) and personal pronouns are omitted. The often said *doshite* has also been contracted from the standard *doushite*. In conclusion, the rumphobs of the original novel are the most dialectal speakers of the cast. On the other hand, in the anime they instead have the least linguistic features whatsoever. Their inquisitive nature and role have been preserved,

however much of their personality has changed. The rumphobs are using an original character language, stripped down to bare necessities not unlike a baby child, which is juxtaposed with their adult-sounding voices.

5. Discussion

Ronja as a protagonist makes use of minimal role language to denote her gender and some character language to express her personality. She is contrasted with Birk to an even higher degree than in the original novel. They mutually use role language to inform each other's characters through their speech styles that are related to their environment, relationship and gender. The novel does not explicitly use gender to develop any of the characters which is probably Lindgren's intention; my assumption is that she wants to tell a story that can be universally enjoyed by readers of all ages and genders. It may be by cultural difference that a Japanese studio opts to gender their cast. That is not to say that Japanese culture has an archaic view of gender roles, rather that using gender neutral language might be considered unnatural and would cause a greater distraction than simply adding gendered language to characters that already have established gender identities. While Ronja of the novel may not use girly language, it is not out of character for her to use expected women's language as it only reinforces what is already there, similar to how gendered language reinforces the themes of *Madicken* (Nilsson 2012).

As for Mattis and the robbers, in both the novel and anime they sound like boisterous outlaws. The novel usually expresses this with "dirty language" such as frequent mentions of farts and hell. The anime does not do this to the same degree, it rather uses informal and masculine language in contrast to other characters to index their rustic qualities. The cast is quite small and the anime takes advantage of the female and civilian characters to juxtapose their feminine or formal language with the rustic speech style of the robbers. As a result, Lovis' and Ronja's rustic qualities are undermined in order to underscore the robbers' qualities. However, as the robbers make up the majority of on-screen characters this does not take away from the rugged atmosphere of Mattis Castle. It also serves to highlight Ronja as the main character and makes her easier to relate to for the audience.

Skalle-Per is a prime example of typical role language. His character has not had any major changes from the novel other than his apparent use of elderly male language. His character is not only for comedic purpose, he has a special relationship with Ronja as the two of them likely have the most free time. With Lovis doing chores and Mattis and the gang is out robbing, Lindgren likely placed Skalle-Per to be a guide for Ronja. He shows encouragement when Ronja criticizes Mattis' methods and way of life, and in the end leaves her a gift to help her grow up without the need to rob. The anime reinforces his role as the wise old mentor by giving him the appropriate role language. One can assume that Lindgren

probably made Skalle-Per an elderly male to represent experience and wisdom, while Studio Ghibli drives the point even further with the use of stereotypical language.

The biggest changes seem to be in the creatures of *Ronja*. Their roles are still the same as in the novel, harpies and gray dwarves are a threat and rumphobs are harmless but also unhelpful. What is different is their nature, which can be deciphered from their use of language. In the novel, both harpies and rumphobs speak, but not quite like humans. They utter complete sentences without any indication of a will to communicate. Harpies state their immediate desire and yell out threats, not unlike a predator would growl and bark at their prey. Rumphobs are bewildered and inquisitive towards anything they might see with no intention of actually learning, despite relaying what they see as information. It is unclear if Studio Ghibli oversaw this quirk of Lindgren's novel, or if they simply wanted to interpret the creatures in their own way. As such, it is difficult to say whether cultural difference is to blame or simply the writers' own will.

In the case of the harpies, the writers may have intended to make them more terrifying by humanizing them more. By implying that harpies have some sort of organization or even a society makes the viewer scared of what their motivation could possibly be. By simply having harpies use inquisitive sentence final particles such as *ne*, it implies that they might not simply act on animal instinct and the viewer becomes scared of what their motivation could possibly be. The speech style of the harpies bears similarities to at least one other character in a different story as I have observed in 4.3.1. It is unclear whether this is a potential role language, however I have chosen to tentatively label it as dangerous women's language.

As for the rumphobs, whether they are capable of communication is unclear. The only example of a response from them is a simple affirmative utterance. Beyond that, they make plain statements and question certain situations. It is worth noting that their voices are monotone, and their questions are only understood as such because of question words such as *doshite* [why]. Studio Ghibli has opted to replace the extreme dialectal speech of the original rumphobs with an extremely plain language, stripped down to its bare necessities. They hade the opportunity to give them a Japanese dialect, similar to the English translation (Nordlund 1999) or *Gone with the Wind* (Hiramoto 2009). Instead, it seems the rumphobs have been given a unique character language.

This character language serves to index the rumphobs as simple-minded, which may not be entirely unlike the original. While the original uses their trepidatious nature to index their simple-mindedness, the anime accomplishes this by reducing their vocabulary physicality (they are considerably less fidgety in the anime). The dialect in the novel seems to be for

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comedic purpose rather than to express their nature. Arguably, the anime is more successful at using language to convey their character to the audience, however that is not to say that one is superior over the other.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that Studio Ghibli's *Ronja, the robber's daughter* does employ role language. Role language informs much of the cast without compromising their personalities. Although Studio Ghibli had the freedom to reinterpret Lindgren's work, it seems they have treated it with some respect and attempted to accurately portray its characters to a different audience. Much like other translations of Lindgren's works, role language has been used to gender the main characters and signal the role of Skalle-Per. Additionally, some character language has been used to make Ronja's speech style more distinct and redefine the rumphobs. While some changes have been made to the creatures, their roles and relationship to the human characters have not been compromised.

7. Further Research

There is still a lot to be said about Studio Ghibli's version of *Ronja*. This study has exclusively focused on the speech styles of the characters and how it influences their characterization. Still, more could be said about the language used by the characters, such as how the language is informed by the presumably medieval setting. One can study how words, names and expressions from the original novel have been translated, similar to Nordlund (1999).

Furthermore, I would like to invite further research into *dangerous women's language*, as any deeper analysis would have been inappropriate for this thesis.

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