Simplified Speech #065 – Little Mermaid controversy   `AD-FREE`

Episode description

Recently, there have been quite a few posts popping up on social media about the new live-action Little Mermaid movie set to release sometime in the next few years. This movie is getting a lot of media coverage due to Disney's decision to cast 19-year-old Halle Bailey as the main character, Ariel. Listen to Andrew and Kassy discuss the issue in this week's episode of Simplified Speech.

Fun fact

The Little Mermaid movie made by Disney is roughly based on the Danish fairy tale written by Hans Christian Andersen. The Little Mermaid was an amazing success and kicked off the renaissance of Disney's children's films, with successful movies such as Aladdin, Mulan, and Beauty and the Beast quickly following.

Expressions included in the study guide

- ➢ On the right page/same page

- ➢ Bubbly

- ➢ Zero problem

- ➢ To get one's nose bent out of shape

- ➢ Hater

- ➢ To cross one's fingers

Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: Hey, everyone, it is Andrew here, and I have two quick announcements for you before we get started with today's episode.

The first is that I want to give a shout-out to Vanessa Chaves from Brazil. She left a nice comment on our Instagram page and asked me to say hi to her in the next episode. So this is the next episode now, Vanessa. Hi, how's it going? Hope you're doing well.

The second announcement is actually a little favour. We here at Culips would love it if you could visit Apple Podcasts or, really, wherever you download your podcasts and leave us a 5-star ranking and a short review. This will really help us out and help spread the news about Culips so that other English language learners can find us. So, if you enjoy studying with us, if you like us, then please do us this little favour. It would go a long way to help us out. All right, that's really all I wanted to say, so let's get started with today's episode.

Hey, guys, my name is Andrew.

Kassy: And I'm Kassy.

Andrew: And you're tuned into Culips.

Hey, Kassy, how's it going?

Kassy: I'm great. How about you?

Andrew: I'm good, Kassy. And we quickly just jumped behind the microphones here and hit record, because you just told me something pretty interesting and I thought, oh, that would make for a great Culips episode. So let's record our conversation instead of just having it offline.

Kassy: Great idea.

Andrew: So here we are. So, Kassy, could we pick up where we just left off one second ago? What was the question you just asked me?

Kassy: I asked you if you'd heard of the kind of contentious topic that's going around social media these days about Disney's remake of The Little Mermaid?

Andrew:	Right, and I actually haven't seen this on social media, but I've heard about it from some of my students. So could you maybe tell me a little bit more about it, just so I'm **on the right page**?
Kassy:	Yeah, so I'm sure you know the Little Mermaid. If you don't, she's a young girl with flaming red hair and porcelain skin.
Andrew:	Right, and so The Little Mermaid was originally kind of a fairy tale, right? I think it's written by Hans Christian Andersen, maybe, in Denmark and then it was made into a Disney animation in the 90s. And now, like you said, they're making, Disney's making a real-life version, I guess on the success of Aladdin recently. This is the new trend, oh, let's just make all of our animated movies into real-life movies.
Kassy:	And the contentious part of this is that the girl that they cast to play Ariel in the live remake is African American.
Andrew:	OK, so in the animation you said Ariel is, like, a white mermaid with red hair, and now in the remake the mermaid will be African American?
Kassy:	Yeah, maybe with dreadlocks, that'd be interesting.
Andrew:	With dreadlocks, OK. So, bringing in a new character to the role, but what's the controversy about this? How is this contentious?
Kassy:	I don't think it's necessarily a race issue, it might be for some people, but I think it's an issue between the original character—what people imagine when they think of Ariel—and the character they cast, who's totally different.
Andrew:	Right, I see. Yeah, are people for this or against this? What's happening online on social media?
Kassy:	Some people are very strongly against it.
Andrew:	Really?
Kassy:	"Do not mess with my Ariel." #ruiningmychildhood.
Andrew:	Is that an actual hashtag going around?
Kassy:	I'm pretty sure it is.
Andrew:	Oh my gosh.
Kassy:	But then others are saying, wow, this is really great for diversity and for making a fresh take on this classic tale.
Andrew:	Right.

Kassy: And they say that the girl who will be playing this, her personality and her **bubbliness** are perfect for the role as Ariel, and that's why they cast her. And they've actually said that the original actress for Ariel, the voice actress, has brought her support for this new Ariel, as well.

Andrew: So she's getting some support from the voice actress from the original animated movie?

Kassy: That's correct.

Andrew: I see. Personally, I never grew up watching The Little Mermaid. Weirdly enough, I watched almost all the other Disney movies, but for some reason I just never watched The Little Mermaid, never really got into it. How about you? Were you a fan growing up as a kid?

Kassy: I was the biggest Ariel fan growing up, yes.

Andrew: The biggest Ariel fan. OK, so you've got some skin in the game, maybe?

Kassy: Yeah, that's true. However, from watching YouTube videos about Halle and how she reacts with the audience and her personality, I think she'll make a great Ariel.

Andrew: From my perspective, it's really funny to see people get upset about something like this, because, I mean, a mermaid is a fictional character in the first place. So, I mean, it's not real, so why does it matter what skin colour the mermaid has, right?

Kassy: I guess a little bit with a race issue, if you made a character that was originally Asian or African American white, a lot of people these days get really angry. So, on the flip side, making an originally white character African American or Asian, some people feel the same tension, but, again, like you said, this character is fictional.

Andrew: Yeah, it's just a way to update the story that matches more of the reality of what America looks like, right? I actually don't know this for a fact but, since The Little Mermaid story is from Denmark, I'd imagine they were speaking Danish. But nobody's complaining that they're speaking English in The Little Mermaid.
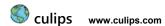
Kassy: That's true.

Andrew: So we've updated that way with no controversy, why can't we update the characters and make it more modern? Personally, I have **zero problem** with this.

Kassy: Yeah, also in the original Little Mermaid, I heard, I'm not completely sure, but I heard she ate the heart of her lover. And, anyways, Hans Christian Andersen, his stories are filled with all sorts of scary and morbid content that you never see in Disney movies.

Andrew: So they've been adjusted a lot?

Kassy: Yes.

Andrew: Right. So I find it funny that some people would **get their nose bent out of shape** over this. To me, it's a non-issue but, like I said, I wasn't a fan or didn't grow up with the movie, so it's not really close to me.

Kassy: I think with every remake, there's always gonna be, you know, people that love it and then **haters**. So we all just have to, you know, wait for the film, go see it, and then make our opinions after.

Andrew: Yeah, that sounds like a good way to approach it. They're doing a remake of The Lion King, too, right?

Kassy: Yes.

Andrew: Is that true?

Kassy: And I think this movie is just as contentious as The Little Mermaid.

Andrew: The Lion King?

Kassy: Yeah, because The Lion King is for a lot of people considered their number one Disney film from their childhood.

Andrew: Yeah, I did love The Lion King.

Kassy: Yeah, so if this movie is bad or in any way doesn't live up to the expectations of these, you know, 90s kids, there's gonna be riots.

Andrew: Yeah, I don't know if I totally agree with that, because one of my favourite books growing up as a child was called Where the Wild Things Are. And this was a picture book that I just loved, and it got remade into a movie in 2009. And it was done by a really cool director, too, Spike Jonze, and an indie band called Arcade Fire, they were part of the soundtrack, too. So these were, like, a lot of things that I loved, like, a book that I loved, a director that I loved, and a band that I loved all coming together to make this movie. So I had really high expectations, and then I thought the movie was so just average and not exciting and just not that good.

Kassy: It was a letdown for you?

Andrew: Yeah, it was totally a letdown, but that didn't spoil the book. I can still go back and, actually, I read the book recently in Korean and I thought it was just a cool story still, going back and looking at the pictures and remembering it and stuff. And so this remake didn't spoil the experience of that book at all for me. So I think if The Lion King, the new one, is garbage, you still have the old one.

Kassy: You forget about that one, you erase it from your memory and focus on the old one.

Andrew: Yeah, Disney is really tapped into a great source of revenue here, remaking their movies.

Kassy: That's right. I mean I guess they're thinking, you know, the originals are so popular, why start from scratch with something risky when you can just, you know, try again with the original content.

Andrew: But it's kind of cool, so let's **cross our fingers** and hope that these new remakes turn out to be future classics and that there's no controversy, nobody posts too many racist posts on Facebook over a silly non-issue like this.

Kassy: And even if they do, let's hope that the majority move pass that.

Andrew: All right, guys, well, we'll wrap it up here. Like we said, we just wanted to hop behind the mic quickly and share this conversation with you. So I hope you enjoyed it. Thank you, Kassy, for sharing this issue with us.

Kassy: Oh yeah, anytime.

Andrew: So, guys, if you'd like to study along with the study guide for this episode, which includes a transcript, some detailed explanations for all the cool vocabulary that you just heard Kassy and I use, and some other great content, just visit our website, Culips.com, and you can download it.

            We will be back soon with a new episode, so stay tuned and we'll talk to you then. Bye.

Kassy: See ya.

Detailed Explanations

On the right page/same page
Phrase

To be on the same page means that two or more people are in agreement or think alike about a certain topic. For example, if two people think that baseball is the best sport in the universe, then they are **on the same page**. **On the right page** is used to clarify if one person understands another person correctly, or if they are thinking along the same lines.

In this episode, Andrew asks Kassy to clarify the Ariel issue going around social media to make sure he is **on the right page**. In other words, he thinks he knows what the issue is, but he wants to make sure that his knowledge on the topic is the same or similar to hers.

Here are a couple more examples with **on the right page/same page**:

Kyle:	Just to clarify that I'm **on the right page** here. You're suggesting that we sell the business and split the profit from the sales so that you can by an RV?
George:	Yup, that's right. It's my dream to travel in an RV before I die.
Kyle:	Are you crazy? We said we're going to save this business for our children.
George:	We're not getting any younger. I don't have any kids and yours don't want anything to do with this place. Let's just sell it and enjoy our retirement.
Kyle:	I gave my life to this business. I can't just sell it on a whim to help you buy an RV. No, I won't do it.

Rihanna:	I think we should go with blue for the napkins. It looks so elegant next to the cream of the tablecloth. What do you think, honey?
Victor:	I couldn't agree more. We're **on exactly the same page**.
Rihanna:	Are you just saying that because you're bored and want to go home, or because you actually agree?
Victor:	Honestly? I really, really, really wanna go home. But I do think the colours would look beautiful together, darling.

Bubbly
Adjective

Bubbly is used to describe a person or thing that has a bright and cheerful personality. **Bubbly** people are very animated, full of energy, and optimistic. **Bubbly** people can sometimes come off as naïve or annoying due to their overly energetic and friendly attitudes.

Here are a couple more examples with **bubbly**:

Kelsey:	Oh my goodness! This is the best day ever! I'm so happy I just can't contain it! You look amazing in that dress, by the way.
Franny:	Wow, calm down. What's with all of the excitement? I've never seen you this **bubbly** before.
Kelsey:	Andrew proposed!
Franny:	What? When?
Kelsey:	Last night! I wanted to tell you right away, but I wanted to see your reaction in person.
Franny:	This is amazing! I'm so happy for you two. I'm the maid of honor, right? I better be the maid of honor.
Kelsey:	Of course you are!

Jack:	What do you think of Tim's new girlfriend?
JaeSeung:	She's cute, **bubbly**. Not his usual type, but I like her.
Jack:	Yeah, he usually goes for the hard-as-nails bad-girl type. This girl, however, is like sunshine and rainbows.
JaeSeung:	This is good for him, I think. I mean, after the train wreck of a breakup he had with his last girlfriend, Lacy is a breath of fresh air.

Zero problem
Phrase

Zero problem literally means no problem. People often use **zero problem** instead of no problem to add emphasis. This can be used in a variety of cases, like no time versus **zero time**. In this episode, Andrew says he has **zero problem** with Halle being cast as Ariel in the live-action Little Mermaid. He uses **zero problem** instead of no problem to emphasize that he really has no problem whatsoever with how Ariel was cast.

Here are a couple more examples with **zero problem**:

Maiko:	Dude! I'm sorry! I just bumped into you like that and spilled your coffee. Are you all right?
Reggie:	Yeah, it's no problem. I'm fine.
Maiko:	Are you sure? I could buy you another coffee or something.
Reggie:	Seriously. **Zero problem**, man. This is my second cup of the day, anyway.

Bebe:	You wanna go swimming after school?
Gina:	No, sorry. I've got no time.
Bebe:	Not even for like an hour?
Gina:	No, girl. I literally have **zero time**. I have 3 hours of homework to do and I have to practice for my piano recital this weekend.
Bebe:	Ah, OK. I get it. Well, I'll see you tomorrow in class.
Gina:	Yup. Catch you later.

To get one's nose bent out of shape
Idiom

The idiom **to get one's nose bent out of shape** means that someone has become upset, irritated, or angry. This idiom is often written as **to get bent out of shape**. If someone is in a bad mood because he has been offended or snubbed in some way, then you could say his **nose is bent out of shape**.

In this episode, Andrew says that he finds it odd that people are getting their **noses bent out of shape** over the casting decision for Ariel. In other words, Andrew finds it odd that people are so angry and offended over the choice to make Halle Bailey the new live-action Ariel.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get one's nose bent out of shape**:

Amos:	Coach! I can't believe you chose Dathan instead of me to be the captain of the team. What gives?
Coach:	Amos, calm down. Don't **get your nose bent out of shape** over this. I stand by my decision.
Amos:	But why? I'm a better player.
Coach:	You might have better stats than Dathan, but this is a TEAM sport. Dathan is a better team player than you, so he will make a better captain.

Tanya:	Did you get the job?
Anais:	No, they decided to go with the person with more experience.
Tanya:	Oh no! I'm sorry to hear that. I know how hard you prepared for the interviews.
Anais:	It's all right. I'm not gonna let myself get **bent out of shape** over this. I'll just have to try harder for the next opportunity that comes my way.
Tanya:	I like your attitude. Go get 'em, girl!

Hater
Noun

Haters is a slang term referring to people who are negative and purposely discourage or criticize others. A **hater** is a person who is always showing hate and belittling other people or things, usually for no apparent reason. Usually, **haters** are simply people who are incapable of being happy for others' successes, so they try to make the successful person feel bad with insults.

Here are a couple more examples with **hater**:

Helen:	I love BTS. They are such talented singers.
Tracy:	They're overrated, if you ask me. They've got no talent, just pretty faces.
Helen:	Why do you have to be such a **hater**? I swear, the only reason you don't like them is because they are popular. You don't like anything mainstream.
Tracy:	Whatever. Maybe I just don't like your lousy taste in music.

Juan:	I started this YouTube channel to let people know about how our constant desire for comfort and convenience is killing our planet and how we need to make drastic changes now if we want to continue to live on it in the future.
Derrick:	I know. Your show is amazing. But why do you look so sad right now?
Juan:	Well, I've been getting all of these horrible comments recently on my videos about how I'm a liar and I'm trying to brainwash my viewers into following my liberalist agenda.
Derrick:	Don't listen to those trolls. **Haters** are always gonna hate. You just have to focus on the people who support you and forget about the rest.
Juan:	I guess you're right. It still sucks, though, seeing these people not only insult my work, but also completely ignore the harmful things that are happening to our planet each and every day.

To cross one's fingers
Phrase

To cross your fingers is a phrase that people use when they are telling others to hope for good luck or a good outcome. If someone says **cross my fingers**, it means that person is wishing good luck upon himself. The actual act of **crossing one's fingers** is to take one's middle finger and place it over the index finger. If one believes in superstition, the act of **crossing one's fingers** is supposed to bring good luck or, likewise, ward off bad luck.

Here are a couple more examples with **to cross one's fingers**:

Chris:	Do you think the Raptors are gonna win the championship today?
Frank:	Who knows? They've been playing well all season, but the Dutchmen are really good. It's gonna be a close game.
Chris:	Well, let's **cross our fingers** and hope for the best. If they win, I say we celebrate tonight.
Frank:	Definitely! First round's on me.

Cora:	How did your audition go?
Rayna:	All right, I guess. I'm really not sure. I was so nervous.
Cora:	Well, I'm **crossing my fingers** for you. You get the results tomorrow afternoon, right?
Rayna:	Yup, at 3:00.
Cora:	Call me as soon as you find out.
Rayna:	You got it.

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Quiz

1. Which phrase below does not mean to be thinking similar thoughts?

a) to be one the same wavelength
b) to be on the same page
c) to be in the same boat
d) to be on the same side of the fence

2. Which gesture does not signify good luck?

a) crossing one's fingers
b) crossing one's heart
c) wearing a good-luck charm
d) finding a four-leaf clover

3. Which word is used to emphasize a lack of something?

a) zero
b) totally
c) lots of
d) infinite

4. Which personality trait is the opposite of bubbly?
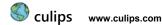
a) cheerful
b) perky
c) devious
d) dull

5. Which is an example of something that might cause someone to get their nose bent out of shape?

a) sleeping late
b) winning the lottery
c) watching a lot of TV
d) getting insulted

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. **What do you think about the topic that was discussed in this episode? Do you think Halle will make a good Ariel for the live-action film?**

2. **How do you feel about live-action remakes? Are they as good as the originals? Why or why not?**

3. **Which Disney movie is your favourite and why?**

4. **Have you ever met a hater? In what situation?**

5. **What is something you experienced that caused your nose to be bent out of shape? Why did you feel this way?**

Quiz Answers

1.c   2.b   3.a   4.d   5.d

Episode credits	
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