

Does Mulan speak Chinese?

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One day, my daughter was at her pretend kitchen pretending to prepare a party for all the Disney princesses. (Yes, this was during her Disney princess phase.) The pretend phone pretend-rang, and she handed it to me. “It’s Mulan.”

I dug deep into my brain and pulled together enough Mandarin Chinese words to form a reply: “你好. 你來嗎?” I asked. (“Hello. Are you coming?”)

My daughter corrected me.

“Mulan doesn’t speak Chinese.”

Some time later, we took a trip to Disneyland, and my daughter had the opportunity to meet Mulan. My wife discreetly asked Mulan, “Do you speak Chinese?”

Mulan quietly replied, “Sorry, no.”

So my daughter was right.

To be fair, Belle probably doesn’t speak French,¹ Jasmine probably doesn’t speak Arabic, and Pocahontas probably doesn’t speak Algonquian.

May is Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month.

¹ Well, unless you go to Disneyland Paris.

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