Gibberish or Flemish: Translating eye dialect in Tintin[1]

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Pardon my French: language in Tintin

Belgium has been a member of the European Union (EU) since 1958; the country is also one of the founding members of the European Economic Community (EEC), which came to be merged into the EU. In the heart of Brussels there is the Leopold Quarter, which is now mainly known as the European Quarter since it hosts a number of EU institutions. After having Brussels defined as the capital of the EU, Belgium has regained a lot of international attention.

Following the *Worldometer* calculator, out of 233 countries listed by size, Belgium figures as number 140. Besides being a small country with an imperialistic past, which has left enduring marks still present today in different colonial aspects, Belgium has a prominent cultural relevance in modern global society. Many Belgian pop culture icons have broken through the mainstream media in online platforms, and the graphical and textual concepts produced by Belgian literary intellectuals have had a great impact

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on their contemporary zeitgeist. The country is known worldwide for great beer, fantastic chocolate, and *Bande Dessinée* (BD)[2]. If a hall of the greatest names of the 9th art were to be created, one could mention Franquin, Gaston, and Peyo, among many other Belgians from the Wallonian and the Flemish regions, but the name that no one would forget to add to this list would be Hergé, the father of Tintin—the great reporter of the *Petit Vingtième*.

Created by Georges Remi, later known as Hergé, during the 1930s, Tintin is a very popular Belgian character; he is the protagonist of one of the greatest BD ever to exist. Despite having been published years ago, the *Tintin Collection* continues to entice people, and Tintin has become quite a brand in itself. The market value of the character is immense, and it has been commercialised everywhere; one can find a shop anywhere in the world just by going to the *tintin.com* shop locator. The reason why all the figurines, books, pens, pencils, shirts, and whatever merchandising they offer are so popular is directly related to the cultural impact Tintin has had internationally. This international influence is, of course, related to the branding and the marketing of the BD in general lines, but the international aspects of Tintin were present in the stories from the start, much before any possible branding or commercial ideas were drawn out.

Les aventures de Tintin follows a narrative recipe that is very dear for travel literature readers: building up major adventurous plot twists from beginning to end. Our main character is an investigative journalist, and he takes the readers on travels all around the world through his investigative work. Despite Tintin's job as a journalist, you won't see him doing much journalistic craft; one might imagine that he is just a detective rather than someone working for the press.

> For the first time in any of his adventures, Tintin is to be found at home at the start of The Broken Ear—in bed and then in the bed, to be precise. For the last time he appears as a convincing, practising journalist, dashing off to chase a good story after hearing of the robbery at the Museum of Ethnography. (FARR, 2001, p. 61)

[2] There is a larger discussion that puts on debate the differences between *Bande Dessinée* and Comics, but for the purposes of this article, both ideas will be used interchangeably.

A great deal of the albums start with some local crime that, very quickly, becomes international or includes some international travel that, very shortly, turns out to be investigative criminal work. The reason why the character is so popular all around the globe started much earlier than the boom of globalisation. The fact that Tintin would travel everywhere would allow different cultures to identify with different characters from the series and to have their own country or region portrayed as part of Tintin's adventures.

The original albums in French offer a broad and robust, interesting *corpus* for analysis within linguistic terms. When Hergé portrays the speech of black characters, for example Coco—the little Congolese boy guiding Tintin in the jungle in *Tintin au Congo* (HERGÉ, 1931)—he uses a variation of French language called *petit-nègre*; when Spaniards or Hispanophones speak, Hergé often uses popular words like *señor* to give some sort of linguistic identity or reference, if you will, to these characters; in *Tintin et le Lotus Bleu* (HERGÉ, 1935), we can find an arsenal of visual linguistic elements that can be analysed through the lenses of Chinese studies; not to mention that in several of the series' books one can find the presence of Syldavian, a made-up language that Hergé created to be the national language of Syldavia, a fictional Balkan kingdom.

Therefore, the original collection itself is enough for linguistic interest. However, given the international aspects of the plots and the popularity of the character, Tintin has been translated into several languages. Following the *Index Translationum,* there are around 1100 translations of Hergé's work. Not all languages have all the albums, which means that besides major languages such as English and Spanish, it is not easy to find the whole collection in translation; nevertheless, Hergé's oeuvre has been translated profusely, and many albums can be found in a variety of more than 80 languages (GRUTMAN, 2020). All the linguistic aspects that emerge from the original collection in French present enormous challenges for translators. Therefore, creativity comes along, and among the surprising variety of translations, many different ways to approach these peculiar subjects can be found.

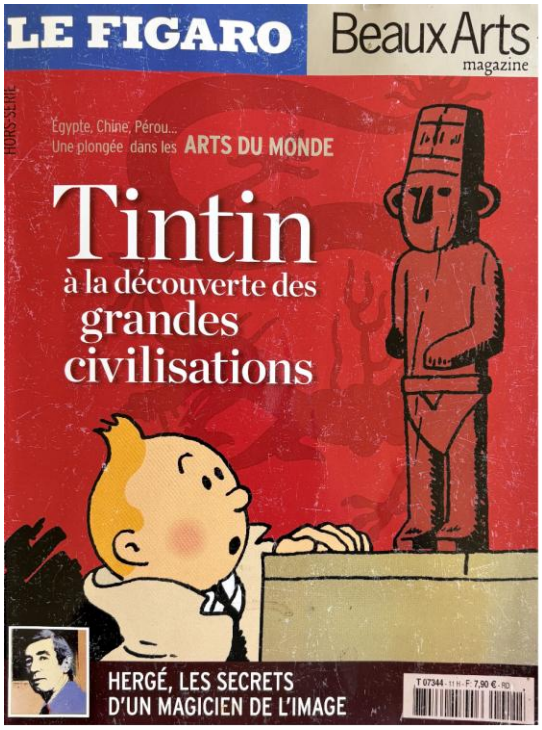
This article is concerned with one of these linguistic curiosities presented by Hergé: the fictional language used by the Arumbayas (fictional pre-Colombian indigenous Latin-American people) that I will be calling

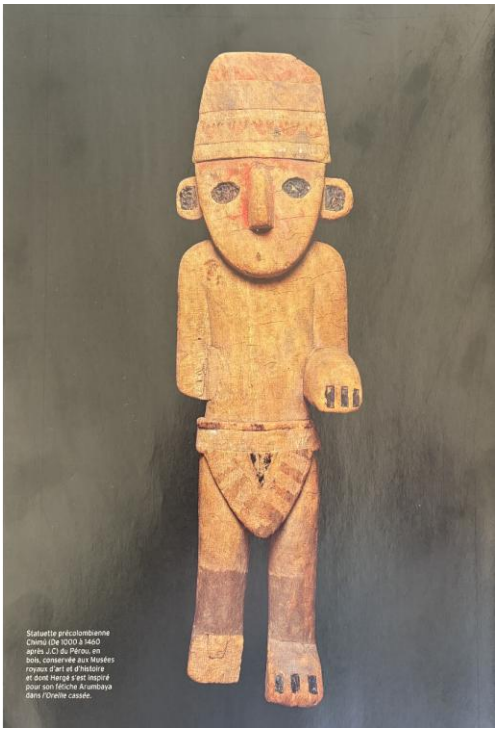
Arumbayan from now on. One of the aims of the article is to investigate which possible avenues different linguistic contexts would take to translate Arumbayan. Having in view that this made-up language is more of a phonetic representation than a structured phrasal and grammatical representation of speech, this article understands Arumbayan as an *eye dialect* more than a language per se. The comparative analysis will show how different languages (French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German) have chosen to portray Arumbayan and what could possibly be the implication of othering the characters of the fictional tribe of Arumbaya. The reader will encounter the Arumbayas in two different books: *L'Oreille Cassée* (HERGÉ, 1937) and *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976), but the comparative analysis will be focused on the latter. This article is a preparatory work that shows preliminary results from a broader research project that investigates the use of *eye dialect* in the *Tintin collection*.

Voyage aux Amériques

An idol, originally confectioned by the Arumbayas, has been stolen from the *Musée Ethnographique* in Brussels. After hearing about the heist on the radio, Tintin leaves his house with Milou, and they are on their way towards the museum to investigate the case. After some very shallow investigation—only five vignettes—Tintin returns to his house and goes directly to his bookshelf to find a book called *Voyage aux Amériques* by a traveller called CH. J. Walker who has travelled to South America and has encountered the Arumbaya tribe. Tintin will soon set out on a new trip—an adventure in San Theodoros, a small country located on the extreme northeast of South America, somewhere near Brazil and the Guyanas—to recover this Indigenous idol.

Image 1: Pages one and 26 of Le Figaro Beaux Arts, Tintin à la découverte des grandes civilisations, 2008.





***Source**: Researcher's private archive collection.*

> *The Adventures of Tintin and the Broken Ear* opens with a visit to the Museum of Ethnography. Hergé found his inspiration through the Royal Museums of Art and History in Bruxelles and at the Tervuren museum: he has put together a variety of elements as polychrome pottery from Dahomey, nowadays Bénin [...] The visitors of Hergé's museum end up stuck in front of a statuette, an idol, Arumbaya, from the tribe that lives along the river Coliflor in the Republic of San Theodoros (South America). This small statuette with a broken ear is directly inspired by a piece discovered in the pre-Inca site of Pachacamac, in Peru, attributed to the Chimu civilisation (from 1000 to 1460 after Christ). This piece is conserved in the Royal Museum of Art and History.[3] (GODDIN, 2008, p. 24, translated by me)

Overall, it is needed to mention that Mister Walker is not a real writer; the book he wrote doesn't exist; the country where this adventure is set to

[3] "*Les Aventures de Tintin et l'Oreille cassée* s'ouvre sur la visite d'un musée ethnographique. Hergé s'est documenté aux Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire de Bruxelles et au musée de Tervuren: il a rassemblé divers éléments dont des poteaux polychromes du Dahomey, l'actuel Bénin [...] Les visiteurs du musée d'Hergé restent en arrêt devant une statuette, un « fétiche Arumbaya », du nom d'une tribu qui « habite le long du fleuve Badurayal, sur le territoire de la République de San Théodoros (Amérique du Sud)». Cette petite statuette à l'oreille cassée est directement inspirée d'une pièce découverte sur le site pré-Incaïque de Pachacamac, au Pérou, attribuée à la civilisation chimú (de 1000 à 1460 après J.C.). Elle est conservée au Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire."

happen is made up; the idol, surprisingly, exists, and it is a real piece; however, it is not from the Arumbaya tribe, because these Indigenous people are also fictional. This intriguing narrative that is nourished, creatively, from real artefacts and real places to create a fictional reality are the elements that plot *L'Oreille Cassé* (HERGÉ, 1937).

During the 1930s, South America experienced a prominent rise in military presence, and the army got significantly stronger and more equipped. In September of 1930, a coup d'état took place in Buenos Aires. The Argentine government of Hipólito Yrigoyen was to be overthrown by the branch of the army loyal to General José Félix Uriburu. The military forces would take power in other South American nations such as Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay during the 1960s and 1970s. However, many countries of Latin America in general were experiencing the rise of military forces as early as the 1920s. Countries like Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cuba, Peru, and Haiti would be under some kind of dictatorial power or influence very early in the past century (SADER, 2006).

Since the beginning, Tintin's travels have always had an agenda. Sometimes that agenda would be ordered by the head of the *Petit Vingtième*, but in later years Hergé would have more control over this subject. Nevertheless, from the start, Tintin's agenda was about contemporary topics. After the success of *Le Lotus Bleu* (HERGÉ, 1935), the collection "mirrors some real-life political situation of the era" (FORSTER, 2013, p. 9). Given the geopolitical chaos found in Latin America, it came as no surprise that in the late 1930s Hergé decided to set Tintin's new adventure on Latin American soil, under military siege, surrounded by a dictatorial regime, with Hispanic and Indigenous characters.

> Very realistic imaginaire countries: San Theodoros, Syldavie, Bordurie, Khemed Emirates... If the countries invented by Hergé have lost geographic limits, their political situation is tight with the context of their time. They also allowed Hergé to avoid criticism and even censorship.[4] (GAUTHERET, 2009, p. 26, translated by me)

[4] "Des pays imaginaires assez réalistes: San Theodoros, Syldavie, Bordurie, Émirat du Khemed... Si les pays inventés par Hergé ont des contours géographiques flous, leur situation politique témoigne du contexte de l'époque. Ils lui permettent aussi d'éviter toute critique, voire la censure."

Hergé was experiencing a first glance into the liberty of creation. Having many interferences and requests done to his previous albums, *L'Oreille Cassé* (HERGÉ, 1937) was a chance to explore creative freedom for once. The archives show that some changes were requested and demanded in between the newspaper fascicles and the transition to the actual publication of the album itself. Nevertheless, Hergé used his freedom of writing and drawing in a more incisive way in this album. Having been questioned and attacked for his negative depictions of foreigners in the past, Hergé found a very clever way of criticising and pointing a finger without getting in trouble, at least avoiding direct conflict. Creating a new country, new peoples, new spaces, and mixing up different references, Hergé was able to point out his views over the dictatorial rise in Latin America without offending the specific countries that would be under dictatorial regimes at the time of the publication.

There is so much that can be said about *L'Oreille Cassée* (HERGÉ, 1937); this album has been responsible for several intriguing clichés of the series. One of the most important remarks that can be made is the narrative structure, which was noticed by Renaud Nattiez in 2016 in his book *Le Mystère Tintin*. Nattiez points out that after *L'Oreille Cassée* (HERGÉ, 1937), the composition of the albums works in a mirroring fashion as it follows: starting from some simple and tranquil banal occasion that is soon interrupted by a crime or a possible investigation that will set Tintin on the quest for someone or something across the world, and at the end he will either bring someone or something back home or back to a starting point. This structure came to be used several times with very few changes throughout the many years of publication of the *Tintin collection*.

Besides the legacy for the series itself, this album has a lot of analytical potential. There are several events happening at the same time. For instance, the fact that Hergé shamelessly puts Tintin in blackface on *planche* 16 when he is undercover trying to arrest some criminals or the fact that the thief that has stolen the idol is called Rodrigo Tortilla or that one of the military men behind the dictatorship is called General Tapioca, not to mention the very ingenious mix of Latin American identity shown in the album, making use of Mexican sombreros, Peruvian ponchos, and some Argentinian military clothing articles in what is supposed to be the north of

South America. It is really a cauldron of possibilities when it comes to comparative analysis.

Closer to the linguistic aspects of the album, it should also be mentioned the depiction of accent that has been chosen for some of the Hispanic characters. For example, Ramón Bada has his speech heavily marked by what Hergé imagines is a Hispanic speaker's accent when making use of the French language:

Table 1: Selection of lines from Hispanic characters in L'Oreille Cassée (HERGÉ, 1937).

Character	**Phrase**
General Alcazar	"[...] Pour te récompenser, je te nomme colonel aide de camp." (HERGÉ, 1937, p. 22) "[...] Figurez-vous que mon homme s'est évanoui de frayeur?" (HERGÉ, 1937, p. 30)
Alonso Perez	"Caramba ! C'est Tintin: j'aurais dû m'en douter!" (HERGÉ, 1937, p. 16). "Une minute... " (HERGÉ, 1937, p. 26).
Ramón Bada	"Yé m'excouse señor." (HERGÉ, 1937, p. 5) "[...] Tou sais qué yé déteste les expressions capitales." (HERGÉ, 1937, p. 26)

In *Table 1*, we are presented with lines from three different characters, all of whom are of Hispanic heritage, working in San Theodoros, where Spanish is the national language. Going through the first line of the table, we have the lines of General Alcazar, which are not affected at all. One might say he speaks perfect French. If a reader would imagine an accent, they would probably imagine a Spaniard/Hispanic accent, given that the idea that he is Latin American from a Hispanic-speaking region is a known fact in the comic. However, his speech is not affected in any form. Following that we have Alonso Perez. In this character we do have a little bit of affectation in his speech, but it is very mild, concentrating only on the use of words such as "señor" and "caramba". Lastly, we have Ramón Bada, who is not more Hispanic than the others, but for some reason his accent is affected in

different ways. When speaking French, this character is not able to produce the sound [ʒ] when saying words like "je". He also makes no differentiation between the sounds [y]—used in words like “Tu” or “Minute"—and the sound [u] [ˈ]—used in words like “vous” or “douter”. Both General Alcazar and Alonso Perez showed no affectation in their speech regarding the sounds [ʒ], [y], nor [u].

That alone raises many questions that I will not be able to answer or investigate in this article. But there is one major issue that is relevant for this research paper: why does Ramón Bada have an accent and not the others? Better yet: what makes it worth giving a character an accent? Is it for comic reasons? Is it for identity? Is it a random decision? All of those questions have many possible answers that would vary according to the conditions of the analysis. Taking into consideration the scope of this research, it is also interesting to explore what can be done with those aspects of marked speech when it comes to translation.

The examples raised here so far are from *L’Oreille Cassée* (HERGÉ, 1937), while the main analysis to be presented in this article is actually from *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976). Those albums are connected in many ways; during *L’Oreille Cassée* (HERGÉ, 1937), we are finally introduced to the language spoken by the Arumbayas, and this language will be encountered again in *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976). The next section will provide an analytical review of the Arumbayan language and will offer a table comparing lines in Arumbayan in the original album *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976) and its translations into English, German, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Wa?

As mentioned above, *L’Oreille Cassée* (HERGÉ, 1937) is one of the first albums in which Hergé had a larger creative power as a cultural creator. He imagines more. This album has been praised by critics in several forms; nevertheless, some have pointed out that the meticulous traditional attention to background details has been sloppier in this album. Much of that is attributed to the amount of work Hergé was facing in this period of time. For instance, one can see bananas growing upside down on page 32. Another element that critics brought up is the linguistic aspects presented in this album are not as elaborate as in other albums; some will go as far as to say that it was “a little tiresome” (THOMPSON, 1991, p. 89). Still, Hergé

introduced a new language, Arumbayan, that will be reprised in his last finished adventure in 1976.

In *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976), Tintin returns to San Theodoros this time to rescue his friend Bianca Castafiore, the opera singer, who has been taken as a prisoner by General Tapioca. She is accused of plotting against the government established by the dictator, and, apparently, there is nothing else to be done but to pack the bags and go on a trip to save her. At this point in time, Hergé has learnt much of his own craft. The way he produces BD has severely changed, and his art is now much more polished. When you take into consideration imagery, he will no longer produce *visual others*[5] as he did in *Tintin au Congo* (HERGÉ, 1931), and when it comes to the textual matter, he is much more intelligent and instigating to the readers, producing interesting verbal scenarios.

This is Hergé's last complete album; there are 17 albums in between *L'Oreille Cassée* (HERGÉ, 1937) and *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976) and almost 40 years of work. Hergé was more aware of the importance of proper representation and the impact of the depiction of otherness, visually and textually. San Theodoros is not the only new country Hergé created; as a matter of fact, Syldavia, another nation created by Hergé, has much more effort and is much more developed when it comes to the culture and, most importantly, the language. This language, Syldavian, has been vastly explored, and its structure can be found online on the Mark Rosenfelder website, *Le Syldave d'Hergé: une grammaire*, at zompist.com. According to Rainier Grutman (2010), the Syldavian language is a Germanic dialect from the region of Brussels called Bruxellois or Marollien.

> Marollien is essentially the Dutch language in its Brabantian dialect, strongly influenced by French. There are literary works, performances, and musicals written and staged in Marollien, as well as dictionaries and journals published in it. Historically, the Marollien dialect is a sociolect: it was generally used by Belgians coming to Brussels from Wallonia in search of a job and settling in one of the districts of Brussels—Marolles. (ULIANITCKAIA, 2020, p. 1)

[5] This is a concept I have been working on. A *visual other* is a character that is drawn in different styles or in different lines from the other characters in the same universe. For example, Coco in *Tintin au Congo* (HERGÉ, 1931) is a *visual other* because he looks alien to Hergé's typical hand drawing.

As mentioned in a previous section of this article, Hergé was getting inspiration from real political matters, and his imagery selection for the exotic was informed by his visits to museums and galleries. It doesn't come as a massive surprise that he would also be inspired by the linguistic environment he was immersed in.

> The Arumbayas' language, as well as that of the Rumbabas, stems from the Brussels dialect known as *Marollien,* centred on the Marolles district of the city and now little spoken. Hergé picked up what he could from his grandmother, who would speak it. It was a great ruse for, while appearing to be invented gibberish to the average reader, it would give an added dimension of pleasure to anyone in the know. (FARR, 2024, p. 17)

The way that Hergé decides to portray the Marollien dialect as Syldavian is more related to the phonetic representation than grammar rules or traditional phrasal structure, so in a way what Hergé is doing is describing an accent, and that is an *eye dialect* (KRAPP, 1926). The idea of an *eye dialect* has levels of categorisation and differentiations, but for the purposes of this article, I will focus on the concept of *eye dialect* as the verbal representation of accent and affected speech in comparison to standard language context, for example, when Ramón Bada says "yé" while the other Hispanic characters say "je." The technique of *eye dialect* is used to other some specific character or group of characters; it can be used in a negative way—as the case of the lines in *petit-nègre* in *Tintin au Congo* (HERGÉ, 1931)—or can be light and fun—as the case of the Scottish representation of speech in The Broons (LOW; WATKINS, 1936).

Here is where the case of this *eye dialect* becomes intriguing: Syldavian is a Balkan language that has Germanic roots, and it is known to be basically a replication of the Marollien dialect through the attempt of portraying an accent textually. Hergé puts a lot of effort into the creation of this linguistic world of Syldavian; however, what at first would seem to be gibberish of Hergé's own choosing, when the Arumbayas speak, it is actually a language that is also based on how Marollien would sound if its phonetics were to be represented graphically. Therefore, in the world of Tintin, if anyone would ever try to compare these two languages, one would find that Syldavian and Arumbayan are from the same root, which sounds very

unlikely. I don't have the intention of comparing these two made-up languages in this article, but I will offer an analysis of Arumbayan.

To prove that the linguistic potential of the *Tintin collection*, even if already explored, is inexhaustible, the following analytical comparison was produced based on one page of the album *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976).

Table 2: Selection of lines in Arumbayan from Les Picaros (HERGÉ, 1976).

Phrase in the first edition	**Phrase in Dutch**	**Meaning**
"Wa païsde douvan?" (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Wat peins jij daar van?	What do you think of that?
"Fretmô... Fretmô" (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Vreet maar... Vreet maar	Go ahead, eat.
"stoumpô" (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	stamppot	Stew
"Opa! Opa!" (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Op jou! Op jou!	to your health!
"Nagoum wazehn! Yommo! Nagoum ennegang!" (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Nu gaan we wat zien! Ja maar! Nu gaan we een gang!	Now we're gonna see something! Come on! Now we're going somewhere.
"Mô preufh mô niki" (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Maar proef maar een keer	Taste it!

Displayed in the first column of *Table 2* are the phrases as they were available in the original French text; in the second column, I have made an attempt of "translating" what those phrases would look like if they were written in Dutch[6] using the same choice of words from the Marollien variety;

[6] I've chosen to use Dutch instead of Marollien for a few reasons; here they are: 1) Marollien is not a very prominent dialect at the moment; therefore, it is hard to find proper materials to support linguistic decisions; 2) My personal knowledge of the dialect is grounded on interaction and not proper studies; 3)

and finally, in the third column, there is a possible translation of the meaning of these phrases made by me in an attempt to elucidate what dialogue is being explored by these characters. Much can be said about the choices of words for these phrases, for instance, the use of "*païsde*" which is directly related to the infinitive verb *peizen* in Dutch, which is not very often used; Dutch speakers would prefer to use *denken.* Another oddity is the use of "*fretmô*" which is the Marollien variation related to the Dutch verb *vreten,* which is more "devour" than "eat."

There are many different levels of otherness shown in this *planche*. For a francophone reader from Canada or Switzerland, for instance, these phrases would sound like a made-up language that is not necessarily reasonable or logical, but for a francophone reader from Brussels or this central region of Belgium, they would most likely understand the phrases. Make no mistake, the otherness would still be there, but it would not be the same. Therefore, the intent of the text regarding the otherness of the Arumbaya tribe offers two specific levels of linguistic variety: on the one hand, the readers that don't understand Flemish, Marollien, or Dutch would find these lines a foreign form of speech, and that would be othering. On the other hand, those who would be able to understand the phrases would feel the otherness by another avenue since the spelling is not proper Dutch, Flemish, or Marollien. This aspect of the text establishes a complex situation for translators who would engage in translating this album:

Table 3: Selection of lines in Arumbayan from Les Picaros (HERGÉ, 1976) in various translations.

Edition	**Phrase**
Tintin et les Picaros, 1976 (French)	Wa païsde douvan?
Tintin and the Picaros, 1976 (English)	Owzah g'rubai?
Tim und die Picaros, 1978 (German)	Wa paisde douvan?
Tintin y los Picaros, 1989 (Spanish)	¿Wa païsde douvan?
Tintin e os Pícaros, 2008 (Portuguese)	Wapaïsde douvan?

The few Marollien grammar books I was able to find display different rules of use, and that makes me think the use of this language is not as formal as one would expect for analysis.

A quick look into *Table 3* reveals that besides minor changes, as for example, the inclusion of "¿" in the Spanish translation and the absence of the diacritic mark in German, this phrase in Arumbayan from the French publication is not translated at all; the same phenomenon happens to all the other phrases in Arumbayan in the analysed *planche*. The only exception to this rule is the English translation.

For comparison, in this specific *planche* there are other verbal references that are displayed in a more visual form (they are not in the *bulles* or *cartouches*). The onomatopoeias on this page are translated:

Table 4: Selection of onomatopoeias from Les Picaros (HERGÉ, 1976) in various translations.

Edition	**Phrase**
Tintin et les Picaros, 1976 (French)	POUAH! GLOU GLOU GLOU
Tintin and the Picaros, 1976 (English)	PFOUAGH! GLUG GLUG GLUG
Tim und die Picaros, 1978 (German)	PFUÏACH! GLUCK GLUCK GLUCK
Tintin y los Picaros, 1993 (Spanish)	¡PUAF! GLU GLU GLU
Tintin e os Pícaros, 2008 (Portuguese)	PUUAH! GLU GLU GLU

Onomatopoeias are part of the textual fabric of comics, and evidently they change according to different languages; however, in the selection in *Table 4*, the first line "POUAH" is produced by one character that is fluent in French and Arumbayan, but the second one, "GLOU GLOU GLOU" is produced by an Indigenous character that only speaks Arumbayan. Is his onomatopoeia in Arumbayan too? If so, why was it translated while the rest of the Arumbayan lines were disregarded? I don't have the answer for these

questions, but they are interesting when it comes to understanding how the act of othering can be portrayed verbally.

This specific album of Tintin has been translated into many different languages. The selection of *Table 3* is based on my personal collection, the albums and translations I have access to, and it is also due to the range of languages that I can work with. That means that there is a possibility that other translations have chosen the same path as English (which would be an amazing scope of study, but I really doubt it happened) or something similar, but for this study, English was the only translation I could find that offers its own version of Arumbayan language.

Table 5: Selection of lines in Arumbayan from Les Picaros (HERGÉ, 1976) and their English translations.

Phrase in the first edition (French)	**Phrase in English**	**Meaning**
“Wa païsde douvan?” (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Owzah g’rubai?	How’s the grub, eh?
"Fretmô... Fretmô” (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Oozfa sek ‘uns’?	Who’s for seconds?
“stoumpô” (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Otnôsh	Hot Nosh
“Opa! Opa!” (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Ava ‘n ip?	Have a nip?
“Nagoum wazehn! Yommo! Nagoum ennegang!” (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Goh' blimeh! Wa' samma ta, li li li va?... Lem eshohya!	Cor, blimey! What's the matter, Lily-Liver? Let me show you!
“Mô preufh mô niki” (HERGÉ, 1976, p. 34).	Sum in’ksup tivit!	Something is up with it!

The English translation decided to base its form of Arumbayan on the Cockney dialect:

> Cockney is definitely not a word that would sound unfamiliar to most people. What comes to one's mind first is probably the rhyming slang. Nevertheless, the Cockney dialect as a whole offers much more than this. Besides the mentioned witty and amusing peculiarity, it includes various interesting variables at the levels of grammar, lexicology, and phonetics. (NECHANSKY, 2010, p. 6)

While the uninformed readers of other translations are touched by the otherness of taking the Arumbayan language as gibberish, the anglophone readers have a similar experience as the one offered at the original publication, that is, a double level of otherness[7]. From one part, the Arumbayan language is translated through the lenses of a Cockney English variation; therefore, the reader that understands this form of speech will have one type of experience; from another part, not all the readers that are from English-speaking countries will be able to grasp the concept of the Cockney variation and will interpret the linguistic otherness as gibberish.

Having in view that both Marollien and Cockney are dialects, neither of these dialects is portrayed in *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976) or in its English translation. What we have is an exercise of reproduction of colloquial accent through an unconventional spelling, and that is how writers use *eye dialect*. This term was established in 1926 by George Krapp; he was using this concept as a device for minor subjects as the spelling of *enuff* for "enough." Since Krapp, the academic and analytical use of *eye dialect* has changed and acquired other meanings and subgenres; nowadays, some intellectuals would prefer the use of *semi-phonetic spelling* (BRETT, 2009). When it comes to *eye dialect*, there is always the question of why, and maybe this is not a question that arises to the general reading public but certainly emerges from an analytical point of view.

The definitions of what is a language, what is a dialect, or when an accent ends and another one starts are very blurry definitions. While an accent describes the way pronunciation takes place and dialect encompasses syntax and lexicon, it would be hard to split Arumbayan in between those two definitions given that the fictional language is based on a dialect but is

[7] Which comes to fall in the discussion raised by Anthony Pym (2000) about the general paradigm of representation, that is, the concept that in the extremes of the paradigm one would find the idea that cultures' equivalents are real and precise and, on the other side, the proclamation of eternal difference. Is the concern of losing value (avoiding translation) or losing vraisemblance (finding a misleading equivalent).

written down as a replication of the sounds one would make to pronounce it. This kind of linguistic variation is usually noticed regarding the identity of a speaker or a group of speakers and happens at different levels, taking into consideration geographical location, race, and social class. But the fact is that having an accent is a universal phenomenon.

> In anglophone linguistics, "accent" and "dialect" are used as neutral descriptors—language varieties might differ in terms of phonetics, phonology, lexicon, and syntax, and they might differ in *social status* (depending largely on who speaks them), but they are all considered equally complex and rule-governed. As a result, all varieties, including the "standard variety," could be considered as dialects and everyone has an accent. (MARKL; LAI, 2023, p. 4424)

Departing from the idea that everyone has an accent, does it make sense to have "accented" and "unaccented" characters?

> Describing speakers or language use as "accented" as in "accented speech" or "accented English" also implies the existence of "unaccented" speech or speakers [...] From a (socio)linguistic perspective these labels are not particularly meaningful, if we assume that all speech is characterised by an accent of some kind. (MARKL; LAI, 2023, p. 4425)

Briefly, an *eye dialect* is a graphic representation of a character or a group of character speech, in other words, it is a systematic way of portraying an accent (at some level, it works as an onomatopoeia, a graphic way of portraying a sound instead of a word). However, if an *eye dialect* portrays accents and everyone is supposed to have an accent, how come only a few characters have their accents depicted? While from a linguistic point of view the variety of accents is appreciated and different accents would have equal value, society doesn't appreciate some accents in the same way as they do others. That is the role of prestige, and some accents have more prestige than others in our society.

The reasons to describe a character through an accent can have many different explanations, but they would all have something in common: otherness. I would struggle to find an *eye dialect* that doesn't imply othering a character. Accents are directly related to identity; the way people change

their prosodies and inflections to portray their accents says a lot about how they want to be perceived, and when a writer, for instance, Hergé, decided to use this figurative power to describe someone with a specific accent, the purpose of this exercise is othering the character. This otherness produced by this type of mechanism plays a role in translation[8]; it affects how the character will be portrayed in a foreign language. Therefore, it can shape how a certain character will be perceived in another culture.

Otherness is not always negative. Hergé hasn't made use of *eye dialects* with the sole purpose of being harmful. I do believe that the use of *petit-nègre* in *Tintin au Congo* (HERGÉ, 1931) has had a very different tone from the use of Arumbayan in *L'Oreille Cassée* (HERGÉ, 1937) and in *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976). While the use of *petit-nègre* others the Congolese characters in a diminishing way, the use of the made-up language of the Arumbayas offers a fun punch for those that are able to understand the references, and it gives a curiosity and oddity for those uninformed readers. Therefore, in the use of *eye dialect* for the Arumbayas, otherness assumes a role of exotic speech in an interesting form, certainly less problematic than the use of *petit-nègre*. Regarding the translations, depicting a character with an accent will always bring an issue to the translation of this character's speech. In the case of Arumbayan, it seems to me that the strategy used for the English version is clever and useful, and it is a surprise to me that it didn't inspire the other languages investigated in this article.

Final words

The *Tintin Collection* shows tremendous potential for analysis in different research fields. It's quite impressive that Hergé managed to produce comics that were in tune with their times at the same time as they are timeless and part of pop culture today. From the perspective of linguistics and translation studies alone, the possibilities are countless. Throughout the collection, the use of *eye dialect* in different sets and situations can be a niche of studies in itself. The use of Arumbayan in *L'Oreille Cassée* (HERGÉ, 1937) and *Les Picaros* (HERGÉ, 1976) is not only interesting as a curiosity but is also a nice

[8] Not every use of *eye dialect* is necessarily negative. When it comes to translation, much of it relies on the dynamics of parody and authenticity (PYM, 2000), and these dynamics of making fun of or diminishing a character's identity or simply proudly marking its identity through an accent can require difficult analytical parameters. Not to mention that this kind of foreignisation happens in the source text and turns out to be an even harder subject in the translation process.

way to ponder the diminishing way Hergé uses *petit-nègre* in his earlier work. Yet again, the collection surprises with its potential in its original publication and different translations. Portraying otherness through text can be a powerful tool; it can create and perpetuate stereotypes as much as it can develop and redesign impressions. The use of Arumbayan is a good example of how *eye dialect* is not always managed in a negative manner, and the selection of translations shows how difficult it can be to translate an accent.

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Abstract
This article offers a multilingual comparative analysis of the lines in *Arumbayan—a* fictional language used by Hergé in the speech of pre-Colombian fictional characters in *L'Oreille Cassée* (1937) and *Les Picaros* (1976). Departing from the French text, the article will compare a selection of lines and their English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German translations. The main objectives of this research are to explore the avenues taken to translate the artefacts above-mentioned and to understand *Arumbayan* as an eye dialect and the implications of textually othering a character.
Keywords
Hergé, *Bande Dessinée*, *Eye Dialect*, *Tintin*

Resumo
Este artigo oferece uma análise comparativa multilíngue das falas em *Arumbayo—uma* língua inventada por Hergé para representar o discurso de personagens ficcionais pré-colombianos em *L'Oreille Cassée* (1937) e *Les Picaros* (1976). Partindo do texto em francês, o artigo vai comparar uma seleção de falas e suas traduções em inglês, espanhol, português e alemão. Os objetivos principais desta pesquisa são explorar as avenidas tomadas para tradução dos álbuns mencionados acima, assim como interpretar

Arumbayo como um *dialeto ocular* e entender o que implica produzir um "outro textual".

Palavras-chave
Hergé, Bande Dessinée, Eye Dialect, Tintin