

# Insults and Swear Words in the *TinTin* Comic: Morpho-Pragmatic Contrastive Study

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## Abstract

*Most linguists consider insults and swear words as interjections carrying an expressive function through which the enunciator manifests his/her emotions (Guiraud 1975; Rouayrenc 1998). Their function is, therefore, cathartic. The aim of the present study is to provide a contrastive study of insults and swear words. We investigate whether there are specific morphological or syntactic structures pertaining to insult and swear words, and discuss the cross-cultural similarities and differences in the pragmatic use of this kind of language, focusing on the perspective of politeness. In order to do so, we analyse examples drawn from Hergé's TinTin and their translation into Greek and English, since this comic is extremely rich in insults and swear words due to the particularities of the genre of discourse and Captain Haddock's expressive character, giving rise to orality and hyperbole. The question here is whether the implicit pragmatic and cultural values are the same in all the texts or maybe there are important differences, derived from the particularities of each of the languages of study, which can be traced. It emerged that Greek prefers joined compound words and that the chosen utterances reflect all the parameters influencing the original, be they phonological, semantic, pragmatic or stylistic. In contrast, the English version seems to be more distant on all levels of linguistic analysis. Accordingly, the (non)preservation of the parameters depends on the peculiarities of, respectively, the Greek, French and English languages, as well as on the collective images of the recipients. Our conclusions match the conclusions reached in previous research, proving Greek to be rather positive politeness oriented, as opposed to English (see also Romero 2000; Sifianou 2001).*

*Keywords: insults, swear words, pragmatics, morphology, linguistic politeness, cultural values, cross-cultural communication, Greek, French, English, discourse analysis*

## Streszczenie

Zniewagi i przekleństwa w komiksie *TinTin*: kontrastywne studium morfopragmatyczne

*W opinii wielu językoznawców zniewagi i przekleństwa uważane są za wtrącenia transmitujące funkcję ekspresywną wypowiedzi, poprzez którą osoba wypowiadająca je*

*manifestuje swoje emocje (Guiraud 1975; Rouayrenc 1998). Ich użycie ma więc charakter oczyszczający. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przeprowadzenie kontrastywnej analizy językowej w odniesieniu do zniewag i przekleństw. Autorka bada czy istnieją specyficzne struktury morfologiczne i syntaktyczne, które odnoszą się do zniewag i przekleństw, jak również omawia, z punktu widzenia uprzejmości, międzykulturowe podobieństwa i różnice w pragmatycznym użyciu tego rodzaju języka. Aby osiągnąć zamierzone cele, autorka zestawia przykłady zaczerpnięte z komiksu TinTin Hergé'a i ich tłumaczenia na grecki i angielski, a to z uwagi na fakt, że komiks ów, ze względu na specyficznym typ dyskursu obecnego w nim i ekspresywny charakter Kapitana Haddoka, obfituje w zniewagi i przekleństwa, co z kolei jest źródłem oralności i hiperboliczności. Należy zadać pytanie: czy pragmatyka wyrażona implicite i wartości kulturowe są takie same we wszystkich analizowanych tu tekstach, czy też można zaobserwować znaczące różnice? Okazuje się, że wersja grecka preferuje powiązane ze sobą wyrazy złożone, a wybrane wypowiedzi stanowią odzwierciedlenie wszystkich parametrów zamieszczonych w oryginale, tj. fonologicznych, semantycznych, pragmatycznych i stylistycznych. W odróżnieniu od powyższego, wersja angielska wydaje się być bardziej oddalona na każdym poziomie analizy. Jednocześnie (nie) utrzymywanie parametrów zależy od specyficznych cech języka greckiego, francuskiego i angielskiego, jak również od wspólnych wyobrażeń odbiorców tekstu. Uzyskane wyniki są spójne z wcześniejszymi wnioskami i potwierdzają, że język grecki, w przeciwieństwie do angielskiego, jest raczej zorientowany na pozytywne formy uprzejmość (zob. Romero 2000; Sifianou 2001).*

*Słowa kluczowe: zniewaga, przekleństwa, pragmatyka, morfologia, grzeczność, wartości kulturowe, komunikacja międzykulturowa, grecki, francuski, angielski, analiza dyskursu*

## **1. Introduction**

The aim of the article is to present a contrastive study of insults and swear words. Greek, French and English are our working languages. We investigate whether there are specific morphological or syntactic structures pertaining to insult and swear words, and discuss the cross-cultural similarities and differences in the pragmatic use of this kind of language. Given that, as stated by Mateo and Yus (2013: 88): “an insulting utterance incorporates cognitive and linguistic behaviour shaped by socio-cultural constraints”, we investigate if the implicit pragmatic and cultural values are the same in all the texts or whether important differences, which derive from the particularities of each one of our languages of study and the socio-cultural constraints that shape each utterance, can be traced. For our study, in order to do so, we will be focused on examples drawn from French comics and their translation into Greek and English.

We should point out that our study does not constitute a general theoretical contrastive analysis of common insults and swear words in different languages, comparing occurrences (words/expressions) that are supposed to be synonyms. Actually, it rather focuses on insults and swear words that have been already used and are attested in published comic albums. By

doing so, using parallel corpora, we hope, first of all to avoid the basic trap into which linguists are accused of falling: creating examples in order to match the theory they are advancing. Furthermore, we opted to be focused on attested translations in order to be able to extract conclusions concerning the pragmatic use of our three languages, as well as about the *cultural ethos, cultural values of the respective audiences*, defined as “the affective quality of interaction characteristic of members of a society” (Brown, Levinson 1978: 248). These conclusions will be proved to be important from the perspective of both pragmatic use of language and discourse analysis, given that attested translations are authentic specimens of language which “can provide rich and strategic sources of data to tackle impoliteness within individual cultures and cross-culturally” (Pavesi, Formentelli 2019: 565). This being said, it should become obvious that the major issue is not about personal choices made by the translator nor the strategies he/she uses, but about the choices imposed by the cultural and pragmatic/stylistic constraints of each of our language systems and by the respective audiences. The translators’ subjectivity is susceptible to affect his/her choices, but our major concern lies in detecting the target languages’ compliance with the cultural values of source language (see also Pavesi, Formentelli 2019: 564).

### **1.1. Swear words and insults from a linguistic, pragmatic and cultural point of view**

Rouayrenc (1996: 110) explains that “swear words, in principle, are not addressed to the interlocutor, at least not directly”. On the contrary, they serve to “comfort our heart (...) they may not be considered as enunciation, since, in the case of insult reflex, they do not aim to communicate” (Rouayrenc 1996: 110). Their function is, therefore, cathartic (Guiraud 1991: 25; Soriano 1999: 590). Most linguists consider swear words as interjections (Guiraud 1975: 102; Rouayrenc 1998: 95; Laforest, Vincent 2004: 62) carrying an expressive function, through which the enunciator manifests his/her emotions.

Insult is described as “(...) an offensive word. You hit someone to hurt him or her, to inflict harm on him or her” (Guiraud 1991: 31; Mateo, Yus 2013: 88). Insult is more a matter of expressiveness than of pure description (Guiraud 1991; Rouayrenc 1998; Soriano 1999; Mateo, Yus 2013: 88). Guiraud's (1991) statement that “insult expresses less an idea than a feeling” is revealing and allows us to come to interesting conclusions concerning the emotional expressiveness of the respective audiences and their cultural ethos. This thesis concerning insults and swear words is also advanced by Mateo and Yus (2013: 89) when claiming that “the power to wound depends more on cultural and pragmatic variables than on

their purely semantic meaning”. That is why insults are spontaneous and include highlighting processes and forms that express intensity, from sound effects to the creation of specific semantic meanings. We consider an insult any act of language that is contextually endowed with an illocutionary force which is (potentially) outrageous for the positive image of the person to whom it is directed. Nevertheless, Mateo and Yus (2013: 90) point out the case “where an insult is used to motivate the addressee to do something and, although only the insulting remark is used, he interprets it, both as an insult, and as an encouragement”. To illustrate, one example from *TinTin*, namely Captain Haddock’s words: “Come on! You bastards! We can beat them!”.

After having explained basic concepts of insult/swear word, by putting in contrast the original French text to its translations, we are attempting to reach conclusions as to *the degree of politeness/rudeness associated to each pragmatic and socio-cultural use of this kind of language* in our three working languages. We are focused on previous studies (Brown, Levinson 1987), which display an abundance of instances of negative/off-record verbal politeness, while in other languages/cultures insults are communicated in a more indirect, less rude or more polite way (Sifianou 2001: 133; Bayraktaroglu, Sifianou 2001: 3–4; Sidiropoulou 2004: 106; Antoniou 2004: 125; Antoniou 2014a; Antoniou 2015; Antoniou 2018 etc.).

It is undeniable that most languages and cultures express insults and swear words using a variety of conventional linguistic options. It would, therefore, be useful to examine whether our cultural groups share similar ways of encoding insults/swear words, for instance, whether speakers draw from the same repertoire of lexical forms (features of specific words, etc.) and link them to qualities of the target audiences in a similar way (as explained by Mateo, Yus 2013: 109).

## 1.2. Methodology

We begin with a presentation of a typology of insults and swear words in order to proceed in a contrastive study of examples drawn from authentic texts, put in contrast with their translations. By doing so, we will be able to offer insights into the communicative conventions and patterns [i.e. into the underlying pragmatics, (cross)-cultural, rather than purely lexical or semantic procedures] that characterize these linguistic ways of speaking in each one of our three working languages, namely modern Greek, French and English, which may range from pure offense to a reinforcement of a social bond.

As far as our corpus is concerned, we chose to work on Hergé's comic *TinTin*, because it is extremely rich in insults and swear words. We are conscious of the particularities of this genre of discourse, mainly the orality and the hyperbole, which are even more prominent in *TinTin* (compared with other albums), due to Captain Haddock's expressive character. The specificity of his insulting discourse, apart from hiding "l'horreur du dit" (Fisher 2004: 56–57), is also characterized by the hyperbole, whose main aim to achieve by the speaker would be to solicitate the empathy of addressees, according to Verine's hypothesis (2008: 121; see also Mateo, Yus 2013: 93) concerning the hyperbolisation of forms.

The particularities of this kind of discourse, that is to say, orality and hyperbolisation, are not binding; they could not restrict us from perceiving characteristics, which, in any case, are congruent to the use of swear words and insults in our working languages. Our methodology mobilizes both qualitative and quantitative criteria. Identifying the markers in each case is possible via the interpretation of the discourse rather than the application of pre-established criteria. Within the present study, priority is given to the morphological and pragmatic levels of linguistic analysis, and to a culture-bound analysis of interpersonal relations (Pavesi, Formentelli 2019).

### 1.3. Theoretical frame about Politeness Theory

Before proceeding the examination of our corpus, we shall briefly refer to Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness (1987), which is based on Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975; see also Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2002b: 439-441), according to which politeness can be viewed as a deviation from maximally efficient communication. Brown and Levinson (1987: 95) explain that "Politeness is then the major source of deviation from such rational efficiency, and is communicated precisely by that deviation". Reminding our audience that the term *face* refers to "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown, Levinson 1987: 61), while *positive face* and *negative face* are, respectively, defined by Brown and Levinson (1978: 67) as the desire to be appreciated and approved of by selected others and as a person's wish to be unimpeded and free from imposition (see also Tracy 1990: 210; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2002a: 259). An act of verbal or non-verbal communication that "runs contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or the speaker" (Brown, Levinson 1978: 70) is called a "face-threatening act" (FTA). There are four cases of Face Threatening Acts:

1. *Face Threatening Acts for the hearer's negative face* would be an order, a request, an advice, every act that diminishes the hearer's independence, since this signifies that the

speaker (S) is intervening by asking the hearer (H) not to do what he wants, but rather to act according to the speaker's wants.

2. *Face Threatening Acts for the hearer's positive face*: a disagreement, an accusation, an insult, any act that can destroy the hearer's public image.

3. *Face Threatening Acts the speaker's negative face*: offers and promises made by him/her at his/her expense, that bind him/her: accept apologies, thanks.

4. *Face Threatening Acts for the speaker's positive face*: self-criticism, confessions, excuses, accepting compliments (the speaker must reply to these compliments, consequently a certain way of behaving is imposed to him/her) (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2002a: 260).

When the utterance contains expressions showing solidarity towards the interlocutor, we have markers of *positive politeness*. In other words, positive politeness is about utterances that value the interlocutor, maintaining his/her positive face. On the contrary, it is about *negative politeness* when the interlocutor proceeds to actions aiming at redressing threats to negative face, when the speaker hesitates to impose his/her will on the interlocutor, in order not to hurt his/her sensitivity or honor (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1996: 55; 2002b: 441). Here are included compliments, appreciation, wishes or any other expression praising the image of the addressee. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1996: 65) pointed out that, at an interpersonal level, politeness allows one to smooth the rough edges of the conversational machine.

The distinction between positive and negative politeness resides on the assumed universal needs of individuals to build and protect a social image for themselves. The strategies allocated to these types of politeness are questioned on the grounds that societies are not similar in the face needs of their members, a thesis that reminds us of the more general Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis. This awareness led Brown and Levinson (1987: 248) to consider cross-cultural variation and recognize that some societies may be oriented towards one or the other type of politeness (i.e. negative or positive).

## **2. Morphological or structural linguistic particularities, characteristic to insults and swear words**

Rouayrenc (1998) argues that the morphology of insults and swear words is subject to the rules that govern the formation of words in general. Therefore, in French (hence FR), there are simple words, words formed through derivation and compounding (open, hyphenated or

closed compound words). Obviously, this precept is valid for Modern Greek (hence GR) and English (hence ENG). The structure of insults varies, according to Perret (1968: 12):

- 1) N (*καπεργάρι, gredin, scoundrel*),
- 2) adjective-N (*καημένο παιδί, pauvre enfant, poor child*),
- 3) N1-de-(adjective) N2 (FR: *espèce de trafiquant de chair humaine, peau de...*, ENG: *kind of trafficker in human flesh, skin of...*, GR: there is no equivalent structure, consequently a closed compound word is used *Σωματέμπορα*).

Perret insists that “in more elaborate expressions, the more frequent structures are such as N1-de-N2”.<sup>1</sup> The addition of more complex and redundant structures, the latter consisting in the repetition of words (as in *Mille millions de mille milliards de mille sabords!*), attributes to the utterance an hyperbolisation, whose aim is to seek empathy of the addressee (Verine 2008: 121; Mateo, Yus 2013: 93), in other words, to seek the establishment of a close *interpersonal relation* between the speaker and the addressee. Nevertheless, in other languages/cultures, the use of more redundant structures is either partially or not at all tolerated, hence the used utterance are, interpersonally speaking, more indirect or quite directly oriented towards negative politeness and even rudeness (Sifianou 2001: 133; Bayraktaroglu, Sifianou 2001: 3–4; Sidiropoulou 2004: 106; Antoniou 2004: 125; Archakis, Georgakopoulou 2011:40; Antoniou 2014a; Antoniou 2015; Antoniou 2018; Pavesi, Formentelli 2019 etc.) as it will be demonstrated later.

Comparing morphologically the data of our corpus, we could not fail to notice that the Greek language is more inclined to compound words joined together (closed compounds), whereas the French language prefers simple words, adjectives or compound words like N1 + preposition + N2. In order to illustrate our conclusion, we present the following examples:

Table 1. Morphological characteristics of insults and swear words

FR simple or compound words	GR Compound <sup>2</sup> words (closed compounds) or derivatives comporting a diminutive suffix	ENG simple words or compound words
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<sup>1</sup> The English translation of Perret’s statement was done by ourselves.

<sup>2</sup> When two words are used together to yield a new meaning, a *compound* is formed. Compound words can be written in three ways: as *open compounds* (spelled as two words, e.g., ice cream), *closed compounds* (joined to form a single word, e.g., doorknob), or *hyphenated compounds* (two words joined by a hyphen, e.g., long-term). Sometimes, more than two words can form a compound (e.g., mother-in-law). The most common spelling quandary writers face is whether to write compounds as separate words, one word, or hyphenated words. Source: <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/open-and-closed-compound-words/>.

(1) <i>Canailles!</i> [ka'naj] [scoundrel, villain] Crabe 37	<i>Παλιόμουτρα!</i> (compound noun) [pa'lomutra] [rogue]	<i>Swine!</i> (noun) Crab 39 <sup>3</sup>
(2) <i>Fichue espagnolette!</i> [Fi'ʃy españo'let] [espanolet-te lock with twist bolt] TinTin et les Picaros 17	<i>Βρωμομάνταλο!</i> (compound noun) [vromo'mandalo] [dirtylatch]	<i>stupid...stubborn</i> (adj.+ compound)  TinTin and the Picaros 17
(3) <i>Moule à gouffres!</i> [mul a 'gufr] [Abyss] Cok en stock 9, Temple Soleil47, Rackham Rouge <sup>4</sup> 28	<i>Βλογοκομμένε!</i> (compound adj = past participle) [vlojoko'mene] [pockmarked]	<i>Porkmark!</i> (compound noun) The Red Sea Sharks 115/Prisoners of the sun 177/ Red Rackham 30
(4) <i>Espèce de trafiquant de chair humaine!</i> [e'spes də trafikã də la ʃɛr y'men] Cok en stock 48	<i>Σωματέμπορα!</i> (compound noun) [soma'tebora] [pimp]	<i>You trafficker in human flesh!</i> (compound noun)  The Red Sea Sharks 114
(5) <i>Cet espèce de porc épique mal embouché!</i> [set e'spes də la por epik mal äbu'ʃe] [This kind of rude porcupine] Cok en stock 41	<i>Αυτός ο φαλτσoskanτζό- χοιρος</i> (compound noun) [af'tos o faltso'skan'dzoçiros] [This deceptive hedgehog]	<i>The insolent porcupine</i> <sup>5</sup> ! (adj.+ compound noun)  The Red Sea Sharks 107
(6) <i>Coloquintes!</i> [kɔlɔ'kɛ̃t] [Colocynths]  <i>Zigomars!</i> [zigɔ'mar] [eccentric, naive, weirdo] Le secret de la licorne 29	<i>Κολοκυθάκια!</i> [Zucchini+- άκια ['aca] (diminutive- suffix of plural)!  <i>Αποπλήματα!</i> [apo'plimata] (prefix από + noun)  Leachates!]	<i>Crab-apples!</i> (compound noun)  <i>Goosecaps!</i> [silly persons] The secret of the Unicorn 159

It is noteworthy that, while in FR structures of compound words like N1 + preposition + N2 prevail, GR prefers closed compound words, as shown in examples (1)-(5). As far as ENG is

<sup>3</sup> We give just the number of pages of the FR and ENG versions, since there are differences in them. In contrast, the GR version of the Albums follows the typographical norms and the numeration of the original.

<sup>4</sup> It is noteworthy that we find the same example in different albums, as seen in example (3). Nevertheless, we avoid giving all the references concerning each one of our examples, since this would be very anti-economic rather than operational.

<sup>5</sup> The word "porcupine" comes from Latin *porcus* pig + *spina* spine, quill, via Old Italian (Italian "porcospino", thorn-pig)—Middle French—Middle English. A regional American name for the animal is "quill-pig". Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porcupine#Etymology>.

concerned, simple words [cf. (1)] seem to be more frequent, although more than one, placed in parataxis (2), closed compound words, as in (3)-(6), and hyphenated compounds as in (6) *Crab-apples* also occur. These are also instantiated by Pavesi and Formentelli's (2019: 576) claim that “[a]nglophone films present a wider variation of types and instantiate more structurally-complex forms”, noticing “greater syntagmatic elaboration and paradigmatic variation points to a distinctive authorial playfulness in staging impoliteness in English language films”. Establishing a catalogue with different cases of morphological structures helps us to distinguish the subcases below:

### 2.1. The translation almost never depends on borrowed words

Given the large scale of lexical possibilities in order to denote swear words and insults, our three working languages almost never depend on borrowed words.

Table 2. Translation almost never depending on borrowed words

FR(7) <i>Voyons, moussaillon!</i> [vwajɔ̃ musajɔ̃] [let's see ship's apprentice] <i>TinTin au Tibet</i> 5	GR <i>Μα, ναυτάκι!</i> [Ma na'ftaki= little sailor] (instead of <i>μούτσε!</i> /mutse < moussaillon)	ENG <b><i>TinTin</i></b>  <i>TinTin in Tibet</i> 135
(8) <i>Ce misérable traître</i> [sə mizerabl 'trɛtʁ] [This <i>filthy traitor</i> ] <i>TinTin et les Picaros</i> 29	<i>Αυτόν τον άθλιο προδότη</i> [a'fton ton 'aθlio pro'doti] [This <i>filthy traitor</i> ]	<i>The dirty rat!</i>  <i>TinTin and the Picaros</i> 29
(9) <i>Sauvages!</i> [so'vaʒ] [savages] <i>Grenouilles!</i> [grə'nuj] [frogs] <i>Marchands de tapis!</i> [mar'ʃɑ də ta'pi] [carpet dealers] <i>Rénégat!</i> [ʀəne'ga] <i>Esclavagiste!</i> [ɛsklava'ʒist] <i>Hérétique!</i> [ere'tik] <i>Crabe</i> 55	<i>Άγριοι!</i> ['aγrii] [savages] <i>Βάτραχοι!</i> ['vatraçi] [frogs] <i>Γυρολόγοι!</i> [jiro'loji] [peddlers]  <i>Αποστάτη!</i> [apo'stati] [apostate] <i>Δουλέμπορε!</i> [du'lebore] [trafficker] <i>Αιρετικέ!</i> [ereti'ce] [heretic]	<i>Savages!</i> <i>Toads!</i> <i>Carpet-sellers!</i>  <i>Twister!</i> <i>Slave-Trader!</i> <i>Heretic!</i> <i>Crab</i> 57
(10) <i>Doryphore !</i> [dɔʀi'fɔʀ] [doryphores] (insect)] <i>Noix de coco !</i> [nwa də ko'ko] <i>Crabe</i> 56	<i>Δουλοπάροικε!</i> [dulo'parice] [serf] <i>Μπουμπούνα!</i> [bu'buna] [thickhead]	<b><i>Anthracite!</i></b>  <i>Coconut !</i>  <i>Crab</i> 58

(11) <i>Paltoquet!</i> [palto'kɛ] [boor] Crabe 57	<i>Τσομπάνη</i> [tso'banis] [shepherd]	<i>Nincompoop!</i> Crab 59
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From these examples, it becomes obvious that, albeit GR is faithful to the semantic meaning of the FR original, the ENG version, as seen via examples marked with bold, has gone much further from the semantic meaning of the original text, without any valid, worthwhile reason.

## 2.2. The translator chooses a borrowed word/expression

We could claim that in this case borrowed words/expressions are used, “emprunts” according to Vinay’s and Darbelnet’s (1958) terminology, even though there is an equivalent Greek word. This case is illustrated by the following examples, where the attachment to the form of the FR original is.

### 2.2.1. Total

It is easily observed that the GR version is identical to the original. In contrast, the ENG version, in most cases (marked in bold), provides important insights of differentiation from the structures of the original FR text, as it can be observed throughout the following examples:

Table 3. Cases where the GR attachment to the form of the FR original is total

(12) <i>Canailles!</i> [ka'naj] [ruffian, knave] Temple Soleil 19	<i>Κανάγια!</i> [ka'naja] [ruffian, knave]	<i>Young swine</i> Prisoners of the sun 149
(13) <i>Vampire!</i> [va'mpir] TinTin au Tibet 26	<i>Βαμπίρ!</i> [va'mpir]	<i>Vampire !</i> TinTin in Tibet 156
(14) <i>Zut!</i> ma casquette! [zyt ma ka'skɛt] [Damn! my cap!] TinTin au Tibet 9/  <i>Zut!</i> ma casquette! [zyt ma ka'skɛt] Crabe 60	<i>Να πάρει!</i> Το κασκέτο μου! [na 'pari to kas'keto mu] [Damn! My cap!] TinTin in Tibet  <i>Τζίφος</i> ['tzifos] [no good/nil] Crabe 60	<b><i>Hey</i></b> , my cap!  TinTin in Tibet 139  <i>Confound it!</i> Crab 162
(15) <i>bayadère de carnaval</i> [Baja'der də karna'val] [Bajadere of the carnaval] *Cok en stock 26	<i>μπαγιαντέρα του καρναβαλιού</i> [baja'dera tu karnava'lu] [Bajadere of the carnaval]	<i>You fancy-dress</i> <b><i>Fatima</i></b>  The Red Sea Sharks 92

<p>(16) Veux-tu bien te taire, <i>espèce de cornichon!</i> [vø ty bjɛ̃ tə fɛʁ ˈtɛʁ ɛ'spɛs də kɔʁni'ʃɔ̃] [Do you want to shut up, <i>kind</i> <i>of gherkin?</i>] Temple Soleil 9</p>	<p>Θα το κλείσεις κι εσύ ρε <i>Ø</i> <i>αγγουράκι;</i> [θa to 'klisis ci e'si re agu'raki]  [Will you shut up, you <i>gherkin?</i>]</p>	<p>And you shut up, <i>you</i> <i>sealion</i>, you!     Prisoners of the sun 139</p>
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In these examples, the ENG utterances are quite different from the FR original sentences. In (14) the ENG utterance *Hey!* seems more neutral compared to the original *Zut*. This neutrality is not transmitted by the FR *zut!*, which means that this option does not succeed in rendering the meaning of the original expression: a non-offensive replacement for *damn it* or *goddamn it*. On the contrary, this very same FR expression *zut!* is translated as “Confound it!” in another album (Crab 162), where it is successfully used to express surprise, frustration or anger with success.

### 2.2.2. Partial

The elements in italics below refer to the common semantic feature “canailles”, since, according to Babiniotis’ *Dictionary of Modern Greek*, *παλιο*-<sup>6</sup> has a pejorative sense indicating “a bad quality or situation”, therefore a dishonest, despicable person. In the following examples the FR *canailles* is translated by a variety of words, both in GR and in ENG, each one of which has different connotations. We should remind our reader that this diversification is observed not only between translations of various albums but also within one album, which means that the translator destroys the verbal tic, the rhythm created by the repetition of the same word. Clearly, we avoided writing down the context where every occurrence/word or expression we examined appeared, since this would have influenced the number of words we must respect for the current publication in order not to go beyond the word limit and because it would have been of no the point we are trying to make within the framework of the present study. Even without context, our examples, hopefully, succeed in presenting the variety of choices and the destruction of rhythm that goes along with this variety.

<sup>6</sup> “**Παλιο-** κ. **παλιό-** [paʎo-], 1<sup>st</sup> part of a compound word, referring to **1**. State of being old, used *παλιό-ρουχα* (old clothes) [...]. **2**. old, as opposite to new, of nowadays [...] *παλιο-ημερολογίτης* (old calendar). **3**. Bad quality or situation/state: *παλιο-χαρακτήρας* [...] [pa'ʎohara'ktiras] bad character”.

Table 4. Cases where the attachment to the form of the FR original is partial.

(17) <i>Canailles</i> [ka'naj] (the same word translated by a variety of words within the same album)	<i>Παλιάνθρωποι</i> [pa'lanthropi] [villains] Crabe 22	<i>Swine!</i> (singular) Crab 24
	<i>Παλιόμουτρα</i> [pa'lomutra] [rogues] Crabe 37	<i>Swines !</i> (plural) Crab 39
	<i>Παλιοτόμαρα</i> [pa'lo'tomara] [rogues] Licorne 50	<i>You gangsters!</i> The secret of the Unicorn 180
(18) <i>Petite canaille</i> [pe'ti ka'naj] Temple Soleil 8	<i>Παλιοκανάγια</i> [pa'loka'naja] [oldknaves, oldruffians]	<i>Little devil</i>  Prisoners of the sun 138
(19) <i>Gredin(s)</i> [grə'dɛ̃] [scoundrel, rascal, khave]  (the same word translated by a variety of words within the same album)	<i>Αχρείοι</i> [a'hrii] [villains_plural] Crabe 12	<i>Scoundrels</i> Crab 14
	<i>Μασκαράς!</i> [maska'ras] [rascal] Crabe 16	<i>The little devil!</i> Crab 18
	<i>Κατεργάρι</i> [kater'gari][rapscallion] Rackham Rouge 14	<i>Scoundrel</i> Red Rackham 16
	<i>Τον άτιμο!</i> [ton 'atimo] [The ignoble] Rackham Rouge 15	<i>The wretched dog!</i> Red Rackham 17
	<i>Ο άτιμος!</i> [The ignoble]Licorne 41	<i>Little devil, Unicorn</i> 171
	<i>Λωποδύτης</i> [lopo'ditis] [pickpocket] Licorne 32	<i>You scoundrel</i> Unicorn 162
(20) <i>sale</i> (bête) [sal 'bet][dirty animal]  <b>sales</b> (moustiques) [sal mu'stik]  (the same word translated by a variety of words within the same album)  Saleté d'appareil à	<i>Παλιο-(σκυλο)</i> [pa'loskilo] [old-(dog)] TinTin au Tibet 46	<i>You horrid animal</i> TinTin in Tibet 176
	<i>Παλιο-κούνουπα</i> [pa'lo'kunupa] [old-mosquitoes]Temple Soleil 37	<i>These beastly mosquitoes!</i> Prisoners of the sun 167
	<i>Ηλίθιο (ζώο)</i> [i'liθio 'zoo] [stupid (animal)] Temple Soleil 35	<i>Bloodsucker</i> Prisoners of the sun 165
	<i>Βρωμο-</i> [vromo-] [dirt-y] Cok en stock 56	<i>You slot-machine</i> The Red Sea Sharks 122
	<i>Άτιμος</i> ['atimos] [ignoble, rogue] Licorne 41	<i>Little devil</i> Unicorn 171



(21a) <i>Pauvre homme !</i> [ˈpovr om] [poor man] Le secret de la Licorne 21	<i>Ο καημένος!</i> [o kai'menos] [The poor]	<i>Poor man!</i> The secret of the Unicorn 151
(22) Il a fait arrêter la Castafiore, le <i>pauvre</i> <i>homme!</i> [il a fε are'te la kasta'fjɔʁ lə povr 'om] [He arrested Castafiore, <i>the</i> <i>poor man</i> ] TinTin Picaros 4	<i>Συνέλαβε την Κασταφιόρε, ο</i> <i>ταλαίπωρος!</i> [Si'nelave tin kasta'fjore, o <i>ta'leporos</i> ] [He arrested Castafiore, the beleaguered/poor]	He's arrested Castafiore, <i>silly fellow!</i>  TinTin and the Picaros 4

In *Le Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé*<sup>7</sup>, we find the following variants among the meanings and the use of the word *pauvre*:

“Pauvre : [as adjective, placed before the noun]

A) Which inspires pity, commiseration. *Pauvre homme; pauvre monde*

B) Who is in a bad pitiful condition, or of bad quality. *Va voir le pauvre jardin!(...)*

D) Familiar: (...), 2. [expressing disdain, contempt] *Pauvre andouille; mon pauvre ami!*  
*Piètre, mauvais dans son genre. Pauvre écrivain.*

That said, *Pauvre* in (21)-(21a) is, semantically and pragmatically, quite different than in (22). Specifically, in (21)-(21a), *pauvre*, referring to TinTin, seems to point to the notion of “pity, commiseration” that appears under A in the definition given above, whereas in (22), *pauvre* falls under D. 2 of the definition (expressing “disdain, contempt” and the fact that we are talking about a “poor, bad character of his or her kind”). In other words, General Topioka is actually a bad dictator, because he got Castafiore arrested. By this contrast, it is clear that *pauvre* constitutes an axiological epithet that expresses either a positive qualification, that is compassion in (21)-(21a), or a neutral or even a negative qualification in (22). This approach reminds us of the taxonomy proposed by Mateo and Yus (2013: 102), who suggest a category for a “conventional utterance with praising intention”, referring to cases with a clear intention to praise the interlocutor.

Once we have explained these differences, the decision to translate *pauvre* as *καημένο* [kai'meno(s)] and *ταλαίπωρος* [ta'leporos] in GR appears to be relevant, given that both signs are equivalents of *pauvre*. When comparing them, *καημένος*, along with the preceding definite

<sup>7</sup> Source: <http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/advanced.exe?8;s=1504101945>.

article ο [o kai'menos], is used when talking about someone who is poor, in a difficult state, for whom one has compassion. On the other hand, *ταλαίπωρος* [ta'leporos] refers to someone whose life is full of difficulties, except this time there is no indication of compassion. *Καημένος* is not used in (22), because describing a dictator as *καημένος* [kai'menos] would be inappropriate. Therefore, the translator's decision to render *pauvre* by *καημένος* [kai'menos] and *ταλαίπωρος* [ta'leporos], where appropriate, adequately conveys the diverse nuances of communication achieving a pragmatic adaptation.

The above remarks lead us to believe that Perret's (1968) postulate concerning the interpretation of insults is verified, since, despite the fact that insults are used to provoke a reaction in the co-enunciator/addressee, they are also used in a friendly manner demonstrating an affective value, which Perret considers to be hypocoristic. Lagorgette (2004; 2006: 33) and Leech (1983: 144) also describe this use as the expression of solidarity.

When comparing it with ENG, we immediately realize that the meaning of (22) (*silly fellow*) differs from that of (21) and (21a), choice, which is not pragmatically faithful to the original, as it confers a negative, not to say pejorative qualification, and expresses irony, which is not noticed in the original. So it can be argued that in (22) *pauvre* could be translated as *unfortunate*, even as *poor*, since it seeks to refer to someone *unlucky* rather than *silly fellow*. The same approach can be adopted on other occasions, such as in examples (24) and (26), discussed below.

#### 2.4. Efforts to correct stylistic effects which could not be achieved elsewhere

Another explanation for the diversity of translations is part of the efforts to correct stylistic effects, which could not be achieved elsewhere. Such is the case of:

Table 6. Cases of diversity of translations being part of the efforts to correct stylistic effects that could not be achieved elsewhere

(23) Tu veux me tuer, vieux cornichon? <i>Sinapisme!</i> [ty vø mə ty'e vjø kɔrni'ʃɔ? sina'pism] <i>Licorne</i> 20	Ὡστε θες να με καθαρίσεις αγγουράκι; <i>Σιναπόσπορε!</i> [sina'pospore] [mustard seed]	You'd like to kill me, eh gherkin? Scoffing <i>braggart!</i> The secret of the Unicorn 150
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*σιναπόσπορε* [sina'pospore] does not correspond to *sinapism*. This semantic non-equivalence is due to the fact that *sinapism* is what is also known as mustard plaster. It is used by applying it

to the upper chest to clear the bronchial tubes and its basic component is mustard flour. However *συναπόσπορος* [sina'posporos], it is the mustard seed.

That said, one might argue that the signifier used in GR betrays the meaning of the original, in other words that it does not constitute a faithful translation, since it refers to something semantically completely different. Nevertheless, we believe that this choice, however semantically mistaken it may seem, is pragmatically successful, since the translator endeavours to make the text more explicit, given that *συναπισμός* is not enough transparent in GR and that, stylistically speaking, the use of a periphrasis would destroy the effect of slowness provided by the relatively short word in the original. In contrast, *συναπόσπορε* is transparent. Hence, the diversified choice combines both greater transparency and higher degree of fidelity to the comic book's peculiarities. Note that we are referring to the combination of *sound effects*, which in our mind are efficiently conveyed (Antoniou 2019) by the GR term used in these example. Examples such as (23) show that GR tends to respect the sounds of the original, using either the same words (*zouave*, *satrape*, *vimpire*) or words that have the same sounds for words whose semantics are not sufficiently clear in GR. This method is also partially used by the ENG translator, who has many options in relation to the original, attributing a distance that may be greater or lesser (marked in bold). *Distance* here refers to the semantic or pragmatic distance of the ENG word/expression from the FR original, that is the extent to which the ENG translation deviates from the original, as discussed below:

Table 7. Cases demonstrating the ENG translation is far more distant to the original than the GR one

(24) <i>Emplâtre!</i> [ã'platʁ] [plasters!] <i>Doryphore!</i> [dɔʁi'fɔʁ] [doryphores] (insect) <i>Zouave!</i> [zu'av] [zouave] Crabe 56	<i>Κατάπλασμα!</i> [ka'taplazma] [Cataplasme] <i>Δουλοπάροικε!</i> [du'lo'parice] [serf!] <i>Ζουάβε!</i> [zu'ave] [Zouave]	<b><i>Blackamoor!</i></b> [nigger]  Anthracite  <b><i>Fuzzy-wuzzy!</i></b> <sup>8</sup> Crab 58
(25) <i>Doryphores</i> [dɔʁi'fɔʁ] [doryphores! (insect)] Crabe 38	<i>Δουλοπάροικοι!</i> [du'lo'parici] [serfs!]	<b><i>Caterpillars!</i></b> Crab 40
(26) <i>Satrape!</i> <sup>9</sup> [sa'trap]	<i>Σατράπη!</i> [sa'trapi] [satrape]	<b><i>Cleptomaniac!</i></b>

<sup>8</sup> *Archaic, offensive, slang.* A Black native of any of various countries, esp. one with curled hair. Source: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/fuzzy-wuzzy>.

<sup>9</sup> *Satrap:* (noun) 1. a governor of a province under the ancient Persian monarchy. 2. a subordinate ruler, often a despotic one. Source: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/satrap>. Synonyms: Caesar, czar, czarina, emir, emperor, empress, kaiser, khan, khedive, king, lady, lord, mikado, mogul, pr

TinTin au Tibet 27		TinTin in Tibet 157
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In these examples, the ENG version proves to be inadequate since it shows greater distance from the FR original and greater creativity. Actually, this creativity seems to betray the original, as the semantics of each signifier is not properly conveyed. How close is *emplâtre* to *blackamoor* or *satrape* to *cleptomaniac*?

It is noteworthy that occasionally the GR version is distant without taking into consideration the sounds of the original, as in (27), where the semantic meaning of *Bibendum* is not transparent enough to be maintained in GR. The same remark is valid about the non-repetition of sounds in the ENG translation. Moreover, (27a) is an example of a rare case in which the ENG text appears to respect the sound effect of the original by maintaining the repetition of [s] and [t]. We qualify this case as rare, because, usually, the sound effect of the original is not maintained in the ENG version, as shown below in (27):

Table 8. Cases where the GR and ENG versions are distant without taking into consideration the sounds of the original

(27) M'en vais vous apprendre la politesse, moi, <b>espèce de Bibend-um!</b> <sup>10</sup> [mã ve vuz a'pɛãdɛ la poli'tes e'spɛs dɔ biben'dum] Cok en Stock 35	Θα σας μάθω εγώ καλούς τρόπους, <b>παλιορουφήχτρα!</b> [na sas 'maθo e'ɣo ka'lus 'tropus pa'loru'fihtra] [I will teach you good manners, oldwhirlpool!]	I'll soon deflate you, <b>Ectoplasm!</b>          The Red Sea Sharks 101
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Table 9. Rare cases where the ENG text appears to respect the sound effect of the original

(27a) Cette espèce de <b>sacr..fichue espagnolett-e!</b> <sup>11</sup> [set e'spɛs dɔ sakr fi'fjɛspaño'lɛt] TinTin et les Picaros 17	<b>Να πάρει... Βρωμομάνταλο!</b> [Na 'paɾi...vromo'mandalɔ] [damn it...bloody latch]	Come on open...you <b>stupid... stubborn...</b>          TinTin and the Picaros 17
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ince, , queen, shah, sultan, sultana, suzerain, autocrat, monarch, potentate, ruler, sovereign, (also sovran), **tyrant, dictator, despot**. Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/satrap>. Captain Haddock uses the term rather in its' metaphorical use, denoting "tyrant, dictator", a person who is peremptory and oppressive, thus it constitutes an insult in FR as well as in GR.

<sup>10</sup> Bibendum, commonly referred to in English as the Michelin Man or Michelin Tyre Man, is the official mascot of the Michelin tyre company. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelin\\_Man](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelin_Man).

<sup>11</sup> Espagnolette: lock with twist bolt, bloody latch.

Apart from the example (27), where *Ectoplasm* is not faithful to the repetition of the sound [b] of the original *Bibendum*, the semantic distance of the other examples (as in 27a, where *stupid... stubborn* has no connection to *sacr..fichue espagnolette*) is obvious. Nevertheless, a tendency to restore some of the sounds existing in the original version can be observed, as seen in the above example (27a) marked in bold. This effort undoubtedly takes into consideration the sound symbolism (Antoniou 2019). It is also crucial to Pavesi and Formentelli's (2019: 571) point of view that insults become more salient when an alliteration pattern is followed, as in our cases FR and ENG (27a).

Leaving aside the stylistic effects caused by the words chosen in these examples and trying to approach the meaning of these terms and their pragmatic use in a specific situational and sociocultural context, it is apparent that (24) *Blackamoor* is a contemptuous term used to refer to a black person and, therefore, it has a strong connotation that goes beyond mere contempt as it has a strong racist connotation. As for GR, (24) *κατάπλασμα* [plaster] is also associated with a pejorative use (*the sticky man - ο γλοιώδης άνθρωπος*), therefore, it succeeds in conveying the original connotation. As for *Fuzzy-wuzzy*, an archaic, offensive, slang term, it does not fit the pragmatic use of the original. As a result of these clarifications, it is clear that, since the register undergoes changes, the ENG version finally conveys a more significant negative emphasis, relating to outrage, which clearly is hardly the case of the original.

As regards the ENG language, one cannot prevent us from mentioning the discrepancy in relation to the original, which is for reference quite significant in many cases. Indeed, even though insults and swear words are viewed as a means of expressing one's state of mind, it goes without saying that demeaning terms are implicitly derived from a socio-cultural code establishing a breach of an established moral norm, linked to a civilization and its values. In other words, the cultural ethos of each of our three linguistic communities is directly shown through the linguistic choices which can be found in each of our three versions of the albums, the readers of which are likely to readily identify. This incongruity of ENG compared to cultural frames of reference of the source language can be interpreted as an ideological bias of the ENG speaker expressing:

- ✓ **Racism**, as in (20) *You horrid animal*, (24) *Blackamoor* (nigger) *Fuzzy-wuzzy*;
- ✓ **Sexism: (16) you sealion**;
- ✓ **(anti)religion**:
  - (15) *you fancy-dress Fatima*: making fun of miracles happened in the Portuguese city of Fatima, while

- (18)–(20) *little devil* refers directly to the bad spirit (while in other cultures this reference is either indirect or a taboo).

Indeed, insults and swear words can be classified in one of these four categories, linking them with: racism, sexuality, religion and scatology. In addition, a relative cultural consensus among the ENG audience was reported in many studies (Fowler 1991; O'Donnell 1994) that explain how some culturally stereotypical images are reinforced and reproduced to give a negative image of other people, thereby suggesting the superiority of the ENG language and culture, compared to all other cultures and languages. Although this trend is more visible in newspapers, it is equally noticeable in the examples we are studying here, as evidenced by lexical choices such as: *Blackamoor*, *fancy-dressed Fatima*, etc., and also by the irony found in several other examples. In such a context, the use of insults in a denotative sense is considered to be more offensive than the use of insults in a metaphorical sense within the framework of a given social group. The metaphorical use is thus considered to be less offensive or not at all. In this light, insults and swear words would be more negatively marked in ENG because they would be considered as lexicons of symbolic use and not of denominative value. Apart from this first meaning, we should point out that, despite the ubiquitous, rampant phenomenon of the so-called political correctness, consisting in addressing the others using a polite way of speaking, avoiding to insult, or diminish our interlocutor's value, which is supposed to have prevailed for the last few decades, the *English cultural ethos* clearly allows the use of qualifiers deviating from this political correctness. The frequent use of the words *Blackamoor* meaning *nigger*, *fancy-dressed Fatima* in ENG is a clear indication of this.

Trying to attribute such qualification to translator's personality and choices would have been inappropriate, since it is admitted (Antoniou 2014c) that translators do not translate according to their personal tastes; they must adjust their choices to the preferences of their era. Moreover, it is not to be forgotten that every translation undergoes review for both language and ideology aspects (the latter assured by the editor, who has both financial interest in editing a text that will be reader friendly and easy going, in order to get the invested money back multiplied many times and, also, wants his/her fame to be assured).

Furthermore, in the same vein, as demonstrated by Telwall (2008), there has been an increase in the use of insults among young people, especially in the United Kingdom. In this regard, it is noteworthy that *TinTin* is addressed to young people, not children. Consequently, Telwall's conclusion seems to be verified, since the versions examined here are those made before or short after Telwall's study. Undoubtedly, it would be extremely interesting to

conduct a research comparing the use of such language diachronically that is in different versions of the comic translated in the last decades.

Compared to ENG, our other languages of study, FR and GR, not only do not share this mark of cultural superiority and arrogance towards other languages and cultures, but, on the contrary, they seem to reinforce either neutrality or solidarity towards them in general as well as towards the interlocutor, allowing the GR language to be even more marked by positive politeness than the FR language, as it has been demonstrated by various studies. These remarks match Pavese and Formentelli's (2019: 564) findings about the ENG language pleading for our conclusions concerning the negative politeness of the ENG audience. The reason for this preference is offered by Dynel (2012: 75), who explains that "the audience (...) can take pleasure in viewing tremendously boosted and usually superfluous face threatening act(s) of which they are not the target, but "may also identify and experience empathetic participation with the characters" (Mereu, Keating 2014: 300).

At this point, we must draw our reader's attention to the fact that this conclusion relating ENG language to negative politeness as opposed to FR and GR language is not an arbitrary generalization, qualifying ENG audience as bad. After all, a linguistic research is not intended to attribute qualifications. It is, nevertheless, expected to describe the language use in various linguistic communities and periods using concrete and measurable tools. For us, our tools come from Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory. Further qualifications that might come to our reader's mind are not of our own. However, relating language to way of thinking and acting is a common practice to linguistic research and to common logic. Beginning with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, coming to Blum-Kulka (1987); Lakoff (1975; 1990) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997: 70), not to mention but few, we can refer to Ifantidou (2011: 177) explaining that linguistic markers "guide metapragmatically aware readers into implicated assumptions and implicated conclusions retrieved".

Apart Fowler's (1991) and O'Donnell's (1994) studies mentioned previously, it is rather a conclusion underlined by various linguistic studies, beginning with Brown and Levinson themselves (1987: 13–14, 48) who compared the "cultures of positive politeness", characterized by small social distance (U.S.A.) with the "cultures of negative politeness", characterized by stronger hierarchy and greater interpersonal distance (Great Britain, Japan). Besides, Brown and Levinson (1987) themselves explained that "[d]iscovering the principles of language usage may be largely coincident with discovering the principles out of which social relationships, in their interactional aspect, are structured: dimensions by which individuals manage to relate to others in particular ways". Even Goffman (1967: 5-45), who

claimed that participants are required to act within the dictates of the socially required norm of behaviour, had begun a similar discussion comparing the U.S.A. conception of face to the Chinese. Additionally, about the GR language, many studies (Marmaridou, 1987; Pavlidou 1991; Sifianou 1992; 1996; 2001; Kontossopoulos 1998; Chadzisavidis 2000; Symeon 2000; Makri-Tsilipakou 2001; Kanakis 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis 2008; Bella 2009; Antoniou 2014a; 2014b), associate GR language to positive politeness, while other studies (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980; 1996; 2002b; Kontossopoulos 1998; Bidaud 2012) attributed to the FR language a more negative politeness oriented qualification.

After these important clarifications, coming back to our examples, one could argue that contradictory principles are being formulated, since we have just before positively commented the translation of (23) *sinapisme* by a word that does not reflect its semantic meaning, but here we are against it. This is, however, not the case. To illustrate our point, we will refer to Soriano (1999) who, addressing this proliferation of signifiers in the target language, especially concerning the French-Spanish pair, makes some remarks which we consider to be relevant for our working languages:

All these expressions are translated in different ways throughout the story: this proliferation of equivalents for the same word and by the same translator does not seem appropriate. It deletes, on the one hand, the comic effect produced by the recurrence of the same interjection in FR and, on the other hand, the category of «verbal tic» in which this interjection appears in the text and this greatly is typical of the captain's way of speaking. (Soriano 1999: 591)

Consequently, the proliferation of equivalents is successful in the GR version but not in the ENG one, since in GR it involves signifiers that are recurrent, so that the comic effect, the *verbal tic* will not be deleted. On the one hand, the ENG version sometimes tends to depart too much from the original, thus influencing significantly the *verbal tic*, on the other hand, giving rise to:

#### A. Wrong meaning, as in (24), (26), (28)-(29):

Table 9. Cases demonstrating ENG translation to be far more distant to the original and, thus, influencing the verbal tic giving rise to wrong meaning

(28) <i>Espèce d'équili- briste</i> [ɛ'spɛs dekili'brɪst]	<i>Ανόητε σχοινοβάτη</i> [a'noite shino'vati]	You <i>milk-maid</i>
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nevertheless, is semantically totally distant from the original, given that *αποπλήματα* [apo'plimata] is the water left, after having washed clothes or other dirty things, having no relevance with *Zigomars*.

One quick remark concerning the use of a diminutive in GR (30) *Κολοκοθ-άκια*: the diminutive *-άκια* attributes more solidarity to the utterance, more politeness and even affection. The neutrality, or, to be more accurate, the distance created in the original by *Coloquintes* is, consequently, spoiled in the GR version which becomes more familiar, thus more polite. This is due to the fact that diminutives function as markers of positive politeness (Lagorgette 2004: 871), given that they estimate the interlocutor. This fact allows us to conclude that, in the case of familiar discourse, diminutives are far more often used in GR than in FR, explaining a major tendency of the GR language towards positive politeness (Antoniou 2014a). These cultural characteristics of our languages of study have been discussed by many linguists from a pragmatic and cultural point of view, that is by Romero (2000: 38); Sifianou (2001: 133); Antoniou (2004: 125); Antoniou (2014a; 2015; 2018) (see also further in this study).

## B. Utterances that are negatively marked compared to the original, as in (32)–(35):

Table 10. Cases demonstrating ENG utterances being negatively marked compared to the original

(32) <i>Sale pays</i> [sal pe'i] [dirty country] Temple Soleil 39	<i>Παλιοχώρα</i> [pa'lo'hora] [old/dirty country]	<b><i>Beastly steaming jungle!</i></b>  Prisoners of the sun 169
(33) <i>boit-sans-soif</i> [bwa sã 'swaf] [alcoholic] TinTin au Tibet 26	<i>μεθύστακα</i> [me'thista'ka] [drunkard]	you <b><i>old alcoholic</i></b>  TinTin in Tibet 156
(34) <i>Va-nu-pieds!</i> [va ny'pje] [Go bare feet!] Temple Soleil 47/Cok en stock 76, Crabe 37	<i>Ξυπόλητοι!</i> [xi'po'li'ti] [bare feet]	<b><i>Pickled herrings!</i></b> Prisoners of the sun 177, The Red Sea Sharks 112, <b><i>Toffee-noses</i></b> Crab 39
(35) Et moi, je vous dis, <i>tête de mule</i> , partez pour le Népal [ε 'muwa ʒə vu 'di tət də 'myl pa'rte puε ne'pal]	Ε λοιπόν, <i>ξεροκέφαλε,</i> <i>τραβάτε και στο Νεπάλ</i> [ε li'pon ksero'cefale tra'vate ce sto ne'pal]	All right, <b><i>be obstinate!</i></b>  TinTin in Tibet 136 à comparer avec <i>Mister Mule</i>

[And I am telling you, head of mule, go to Nepal] TinTin au Tibet 6	[So <i>stubborn</i> , go to Nepal]	(TinTin and the Picaros 11)
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In the above examples it is obvious that the ENG utterances *Beastly steaming jungle! You old alcoholic! Pickled herrings!* and *be obstinate!* are negatively marked as compared to the FR original. The negative marking is assured by the presence of more qualifying adjectives in (32)-(34) and by the imperative mood in (35), which constitutes a strong order compared to the FR *tête de mule*, which is rather a *neutral qualification*. From the comparative analysis of these examples, it can be conducted that the ENG utterances present characteristics of a more direct and, thus, impolite discourse. This characteristic matches conclusions from previous research of ours (Antoniou 2014a; Antoniou 2015) and others as far as the ENG utterances are concerned. We are referring to Sifianou (2001: 132), who, studying the GR-ENG couple of languages, explained that “There is evidence from all levels of linguistic analysis which support the claim that *Greece and England have different politeness orientations: relatively more positive in Greece, relatively more negative in England*” and that in GR “intimacy and solidarity are valued more than distance”, that is *positive politeness strategies*. Sidiropoulou’s research (2004: 106) reaches the same results as Sifianou that modern GR is oriented towards positive politeness, while ENG towards negative politesse. Romero (2000: 38) had also explained that the Mediterranean cultural societies are famous for using far more often positive politeness. Of course, these conclusions represent the cultural ethos of the respective (GR, FR and ENG) audiences.

### C. Utterances that destroy the sound effect/the rhythm of the original:

Table 11. Cases demonstrating that ENG utterances destroy the sound effect/the rhythm of the original

(36) <i>un crétin de l'Himalaya</i> [œ kre'tě də l imala'ja] [A Cretin of the Himalaya] TinTin au Tibet 24	Τον κρετίνο των Ιμαλαΐων [ton kre'tino ton imala'ion] [The Cretin of the Himalaya]	<i>sort of village idiot</i> TinTin in Tibet 154 <i>Scoffing braggart</i> [boastful person] The secret of the Unicorn 150
(37) <i>Crétin des Alpes!</i> [kretě de'zalp] [The Cretin of the Alpes] Rackham Rouge 20	Κρετίνε των Άλπεων! [kre'tine ton 'alpeon] [Cretin of the Alpes]	<i>Abominable Snowman</i> Red Rackham 22

(38) Vous avez fini à faire le <i>zouave</i> <sup>12</sup> ? [vuza've fi'ni a fer lə zu'av] [Did you finish acting the <i>zouave</i> ?] Cok en stock 9	Εμπρός, αρκετά κάνατε τον Ζουάβο! [emb'ros arce'ta 'kanate ton zu'avo] [Hey, you have done the Zouave enough]	Haven't you finished <i>acting the goat yet</i> ?  The Red Sea Sharks 75
(39) Et moi, <i>stupidement</i> .. [And me <i>stupidly</i> .] Cok en stock 53	Κι εγώ ο βλάκας... [Ci ε'γο ο 'vlakas] [And me the idiot...]	You've worked so long on the radio and then <i>I am so clumsy</i> . The Red Sea Sharks 119
(30a) <i>Zigomars!</i> [zigo'maʁ] [eccentric, naive, weirdo] <i>Gargarismes!</i> [gɑʁgɑ'ʁizm] [gargling] <i>Emplâtres!</i> [ɑ̃'plɑʁ] [plasters!] Le secret de la licorne 29	<i>Αποπλήματα!</i> [apo'plimata] [Leachates!] <i>Γαργαρίσματα!</i> [γαργα'rizmata] <i>Εμπλαστρα!</i> [embla'stra] [Cataplasme] Translated earlier also as κατάμπλασμα! [Cataplasme]	<i>Goosecaps!</i> [a silly person]  <i>Gogglers!</i> [who stare stupidly] <i>Jelly-fish!</i>  The secret of the Unicorn 159

In these examples, mainly in ENG, the occurrences marked in bold letters use qualifiers that do not exist in the original: translating “un crétin de l'Himalaya” by “sort of village idiot” means acting at the level of connotations and destroy the rhythm of the original. Similarly, “acting the goat” translates the idea, leaving aside both the connotations and *verbal tic*. Consequently, in ENG, sometimes the message is *reinforced*: A) ENG (37) *Abominable Snowman* is reinforced compared to FR *Crétin des Alpes*, since it is associated with an qualitative adjective *Abominable*, which attributes a subjective qualification to the noun, while in the FR original there is absolutely no marker of subjective qualification. B) Second case is when the ENG message is reinforced after a change in the grammatical category, which attributes a subsequent reinforcement/attenuation: ((39) *stupidement* (*stupidly*) is obviously more neutral than both GR *me the idiot*/ENG *I am so clumsy*). The reason of this attenuation resides in that the adjective qualifies an act, while the adjectives qualify the person in a more permanent way. C) Third case of attenuation is as shown in (38), since *goat* is not related to

<sup>12</sup> 1. (formerly) a member of a body of French infantry composed of Algerian recruits noted for their dash, hardiness, and colourful uniforms. 2. a member of any body of soldiers wearing a similar uniform or otherwise modelled on the French Zouaves, esp. a volunteer in such a unit of the Union Army in the American Civil War. Source: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/zouave>.



<p><i>Mille millions de mille milliards de mille sabords!</i> [Thousand millions of thousand billions of thousand flavours] Temple Soleil 5</p>	<p>The GR translation is the same as here above</p>	<p><i>Billions of blue bubonic barnacles!</i>  Prisoners of the sun 135</p>
<p>(42) <i>Bourge de phénomène de moule à gouffres de tonnerre de Brest!</i> ['burz də feno'mɛn də mul a gufr də to'nɛr də 'brɛst] Cok en stock 9</p>	<p><i>Τί βλοιοκομμένος είστε εσείς, μα τους κεραυνούς της Βρέστης!</i> [ti vložokomenos 'iste e'sis ma tus ceravnus tis 'vrestis] [.What <i>porkmark</i> you are, by the thunders of Brest]</p>	<p><i>Haven't you finished acting the goat yet?</i>  The Red Sea Sharks 75</p>
<p>(43) <i>Sale vilaine bête de tonnerre de Brest!</i> Qui est-ce qui m'a fabriqué des animaux pareils! [sal vi'lɛ̃ 'bɛt də to'nɛr də 'brɛst] [by the thunders of Brest] Temple Soleil 2</p>	<p><i>Απαίσιο βρωμόζωο, μα τους κεραυνούς της Βρέστης! Ποιός μου είπε να μπερδεύομαι μαζί τους!</i> [a'pesio vro'mozoo ma tus cera'vnus tis 'vrestis] [Terrible filthy animal, by the thunders of Brest]</p>	<p>Ungrateful brute! <b>Ø</b> Animals like that shouldn't be allowed!  Prisoners of the sun 132</p>
<p>(44) <i>Et rien à faire pour reprendre pied sur cette espèce de rocaille de tonnerre de Brest!</i> [ɛ ʁjɛ̃ a 'fɛʁ pur ʁə'pɔ̃dɛ pje syʁ sɛt ɛ'spɛs də ʁɔ'kaj də tonɛr də 'brɛst] [Nothing to do to regain a foothold on this kind of rocks by the thunders of Brest] TinTin au Tibet 40</p>	<p><i>Κι αδύνατον να φτάσω αυτόν τον καταραμένο βράχο!</i> [ci a'dinaton na 'ftaso a'fton ton katara'meno vraho] [Impossible to reach this <i>cursed rock</i>]</p>	<p>And, <i>thundering typhoons</i>, there's no way of regaining a foothold on that <i>perishing rockface</i>.  TinTin in Tibet 170</p>

### 3.2. Is this enhancement through reduplication conveyed in Greek?

Let us dwell on a point that lends itself to ambiguity in FR and results in a double interpretation in GR as well. When comparing the utterances, we see that in (42)–(43), *tonnerre de Brest* (*by the thunders of Brest*) is translated as *μα τους κεραυνούς της Βρέστης* (lit.: *by the thunders of Brest*), it is, therefore, viewed as an interjection. On the other hand, in (44), it is not viewed as an interjection, thus it is translated by an epithet adjective (*καταραμμένο/cursed rock*). Rouayrenc (1998: 118) explains that *de* lends itself to ambivalence and is “a simple element of concatenation or that introduces a syntagmatic segment”. So, linking *de* to *tonnerre de Brest* results not only in an interjection, hence the translation as *μα τους κεραυνούς της Βρέστης* (42)–(43), but also in a noun/adjective [the participle *καταραμμένο* (44 *cursed*)].

Coming back to the aforementioned issue, we note that the translation of this ambivalent structure concerning reduplication is subject to pragmatic constraints, such as *the degree of accumulation of signifiers*: the more the swear words/insults, the more we use interjection, as in (41). On the other hand, the prevalence of accumulated terms in FR means the translator should render part of the utterance by an epithet, as in GR (44).

In trying to explain this fact, one could do so referring to the acceptability of accumulation, that is, the *(in)acceptability of the inter-subjective relationship indicators*, given that insults and swear words pertain to the enunciators’ expressivity (Antoniou 2004). More precisely, even though it is often used in FR, the accumulation of insults/swear words (qualifying signifiers) clearly is not allowed in GR. What is the reason for this prohibition/constraint of the GR language consisting in not accepting an accumulation of insults/swear words? This may be pertinently attributed to findings associated to the translation of advertisement into GR.

In the case of advertisements launched by international companies, their GR translations contain fewer qualifying adjectives. This is due to the fact that the target audience is more “information-sensitive” (Sidiropoulou 1998: 202; Antoniou 2004: 120–121; Antoniou 2014a; Antoniou 2015) and requires more objective information, hence the minimal use of qualifying adjectives, which are, by definition, subjective. For example, in (45), the qualifying adjective (*sublime*), originating from a subjective qualification, disappears in GR:

- (45) Opération peau *sublime*: veloutée, hydratée, stimulée  
[operation *sublime skin*: smooth, moistured, stimulated]

(45') Περιποίηση Τριπλής Δράσης. ΥΔΑΤΩΝΕΙ (sic) ΑΝΑΔΕΙΚΝΥΕΙ  
ΑΝΑΖΩΟΓΟΝΕΙ

(litt. *Triple action* traitement. Moisturizes, highlights, revitalizes)

When applying Sidiropoulou's (1998) approach, adopted by Antoniou (2004), and the findings on exaggeration appearing in ENG advertisements (Quillard 1999) as regards FR, GR and ENG swear words/insults, concerning the enhancement through reduplication of insults and swear words, it would not be inappropriate to state that the rate of *subjective* information allowed in GR differs from the one allowed in FR. Specifically, the FR comic strip seems to allow more qualifying indicators, but this is not the case in GR, which does not allow exaggeration, i.e. the accumulation of a large number of signifiers, including *hyperbole*. As a result, comic strips are modified in GR to reflect these collective images of GR recipients (Sifianou 2001: 133; Bayraktaroglu, Sifianou 2001: 3–4; Antoniou 2004: 125; Antoniou 2014a; Antoniou 2015) as well as the cultural ethos that differentiates societies and that derives from the daily interactions of speakers (Brown, Levinson 1987). For this purpose, the tool used by the translator is *loss* (according to Vinay and Darbelnet's terminology):

In the transition from the source language to the target language, there is loss or entropy when part of the message can no longer be explained due to a lack of structural, stylistic or metalinguistic tools.

Consequently, the *lexical loss*, the choice to alleviate the translation is imposed by constraints arising from the languages' unwillingness to exaggerate in accumulating insults/swear words and by the collective images of the GR and ENG audiences, which are not acquainted with the exaggeration of reduplication, as in (40) *Tonnerre de tonnerre de Brest! > Thundering typhoons!*). Many studies address the absence of reduplication in the ENG language. For example, Millward and Hayes (2012) state that reduplication is a phenomenon borrowed from the FR language and Crystal (2003: 130) points out that "reduplication is not a major means of creating lexemes in English, but it is perhaps the most unusual one". Although this statement refers to the creation of lexemes, it is obvious that ENG is not generally acquainted with reduplication, hence the absence of this phenomenon in our examples. Moreover, when translating, the translator modifies the original's connotations, as shown in examples (42)–(43).

Even though not acquainted with reduplication, ENG seems to be well acquainted with exaggeration. So there is no need for the translator to intervene in a catalytic way, as he may be unable to translate the specific effects of Captain's speech, characterized by hyperbole. Moreover, when using *conciseness* (Delisle 1999: 21), in other words, eliminating the number of important signifiers, the translator deprives the text of the comic aspect that is typical of the Captain's speech. As a result, the speech becomes more aggressive and even ironic (Karky 2004: 72), contrary to the original. This finding is in line with the thesis put forward by Brown and Levinson (1987), also shared by Philippaki-Warbuton (1982: 106), that, culturally speaking, the ENG society is more geared towards negative politeness, contrary to GR society, that is geared towards positive politeness (see also Marmaridou (1987); Pavlidou (1991); Sifianou (1992; 1996; 2001); Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997: 70); Chadzisavidis (2000: 134–135); Makri-Tsilipakou (2001); Sidiropoulou (2004); Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008); Bella (2009; 2011), Archakis, Georgakopoulou (2011: 40); Antoniou (2014a); Antoniou (2015); Antoniou (2018)).

#### **4. Conclusion**

Our goal was to contrastively study insults and swear words. We examined the morphology, linguistic structures specific to this kind of language and the underlying pragmatic and cross-cultural processes. It emerged that GR prefers joined compound words. We also tried to define the constraints governing the translation into GR and ENG, as a cultural process, and it seems that GR utterances consider all the parameters influencing the original, be they phonological, semantic, pragmatic or stylistic. This preservation depends on the peculiarities of GR, as well as on the collective cultural images of recipients. In other words, while the breakdown of these segments rests on morpho-pragmatic features, the consideration of factors relating to pragmatic and cultural processes also plays a key role in the final choice.

In general, when tackling GR texts, the comic strip's specificities and the Captain's speech, his verbal tic, should be considered. Of course, there are cases where the contrasted language peculiarities do not allow the establishment of correct equivalences, but the translator's concern to remain close to the original is permanent. In addition, the ENG version, contrary to the original, is marked by a distance affecting all levels of analysis that is far greater when compared to the GR text, obviously without any valid reason. The only possible explanation is in that the translator must adjust to the pragmatic and cultural specificities of the

ENG audience, which has a preference for negative politeness, therefore prefers shorter, more accurate and even offensive, not to say ironic, structures.

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