

# The Shifting Trends of Heterolingual Caribbean Literatures in Translation

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**Abstract:** In recent decades, the trend in Anglophone Caribbean literary production has been increasingly shifting towards practices that highlight the fluidity and unmarkedness of a multilingual language setting. This article explores these trends and the ways in which they affect how Caribbean works are translated as well as which books are translated, using translations into Finnish as a case in point.

**Keywords:** Caribbean literature, translation, heterolingualism, Creole, Finnish

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## 1. Introduction

In the Caribbean region, multilingualism is such a deeply ingrained quality of the language communities that their literatures too have embraced various heterolingual practices. Caribbean authors mix languages in a very organic and fluid way, which is a representation of the fluidity of languages used in the communities in which their works are set. In Caribbean language communities, switching between languages, such as English and Creole, is so commonplace that multilingualism has become the unmarked form of language use, and in many instances it is impossible to draw borders between one language and another (see for example D'Costa 2014). Language in general is a key component in these narratives and receives a lot of attention. In the past, the heterolingual practices used by Caribbean authors have included, for example, different kinds of code-switching and the use of spoken language as a representation of Creole languages. Even a simple mention of a language being spoken by a character draws attention to the linguistic complexity of the text's setting.

In recent years, instead of drawing attention to the multiplicity of languages used for literary expression, the Caribbean literary scene has been increasingly shifting towards practices that highlight the fluidity and unmarkedness of a multilingual language setting (see for example Lalla 2014a). One of the manifestations of this trend is the campaign by Caribbean authors (initiated by Junot Díaz) to stop italicising code-switching in their work in order to place the different languages used on an equal footing. This literary trend coincides with the gradual improvement in the status of and attitudes towards Creole languages in the Caribbean.

This article explores the shifting trends of Caribbean literary production as well as the ways in which they affect how Caribbean works are translated and which books are translated into Finnish. The analysis is based on a selection of Caribbean novels and their Finnish translations from different decades as well as some original Caribbean

works that have not been translated into Finnish, ranging from the 1950s to the 2020s. This provides a cross-section of the history of Caribbean novels in Finnish translation as well as a basis for discussing which works are translated and which works are not. The article is based on thirty original Anglophone Caribbean novels, of which nine are examined more closely in order to provide examples of how the representation of heterolingualism has changed over the decades. The novels discussed in more detail include Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) and *The Farming of Bones* (1998), Robert Antoni's *Carnival* (2005), Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), Andrea Levy's *The Long Song* (2010), Marlon James's *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2014), Kei Miller's *Augustown* (2016), and Monique Roffey's *The Mermaid of Black Conch* (2020). Out of these nine works, six have been translated into Finnish: Rhys's novel by Eva Siikarla in 1968, Danticat's novels by Leena Tamminen in 1999 and 2000, Antoni's novel by Einari Aaltonen in 2005, Díaz's novel by Vuokko Aitosalo in 2008, and Levy's novel by Kirsi Kinnunen in 2014.

The following sections examine the changes that have taken place over time in the use of heterolingual practices in original Anglophone Caribbean literary works; I then move on to discuss the impact these trends have on translated literary works.

## 2. Heterolingualism in Caribbean literatures

Traditionally, the majority of Caribbean literary works have been produced in European languages, English being the most common literary language. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002, 50) explain, "post-colonial writing abrogates the privileged centrality of 'English' by using language to signify difference while employing a sameness which allows it to be understood". Caribbean authors have used various heterolingual practices to represent the multilingual reality of their language communities as well as to mould the language of the coloniser so as to harness it to their needs. In many cases, this requires a delicate balancing act between the authenticity of representation and the intelligibility of the text for international audiences. Robert Fraser (2000, 9) has termed such works "transcultural narratives" which "are very often addressed explicitly to the world at large rather than to a local audience".

Based on the work of Rainier Grutman (2006, 18), I have differentiated between multilingualism as language used in "real-life situations stemming from language contact" and heterolingualism as the literary representation of multilingualism. Although heterolingualism may have a reference point in a real-life situation or language community, this is not always the case. The heterolingual practices used in Caribbean literary works do generally have a reference point in the language community in which the text is set, but differentiating between real-life multilingualism and its heterolingual literary representation serves to highlight the differences between these two types of language use.

Even when the literary work is set in a language community in which real-world multilingualism is used, the heterolingualism in the literary work is always, to some degree, an approximation or illusion of multilingualism rather than a faithful reproduction of the multilingualism used in the language community (Grutman 2006, 18–19).

In her study on code-switching between Spanish and English in Chicano/a literary works, Laura Callahan (2004, 121) discusses the authors' "preoccupation with language", which encompasses both actual heterolingualism within the literary works as well as metatextual references to language use. A similar preoccupation with language can be seen in the works of many Caribbean authors. It manifests in many forms, from code-switches and Creole dialogue to simple mentions of a language being spoken by a character or the narrator pointing out specific features of a character's speech. For this reason, Simona Bertacco (2020, 22) argues that we should approach Caribbean and other postcolonial literatures as "translational", as the "writing voice claims, by means of the rhetorical choices made, a foreign language, a foreign accent, or a creole language, within the space of writing". Indeed, postcolonial literary works have been studied using Translation Studies methodology as a kind of intercultural translation. Maria Tymoczko (2000, 148) writes that the translational nature of postcolonial texts makes them "communicative agents with powerful resonances, having the capacity to mediate between languages and cultures in radical and empowering ways".

It can also be argued that the translational nature of Caribbean literary works is, in part, a requirement imposed upon authors by international publishers. If, in Fraser's (2000, 9) terms, the Caribbean novels discussed here are to be seen as transcultural narratives, they are, by definition, located in the sphere of the global literary marketplace, which places its own restrictions on what kinds of books are published and subsequently translated. Sarah Brouillette (2007, 58–59; italics in original) identifies some common characteristics for texts that are the most likely to be selected for international publication; they are novels written in a European language, most commonly in English, and they are more often than not written by authors "who are *literary* in a way recognizable to cosmopolitan audiences". The latter sentiment is echoed by Bertacco (2020, 18–19), who writes that the Caribbean, "a region once deemed the antithesis of civilization has become one of the most creative laboratories of verbal art, both oral and written, and this is thanks to its radical creolization of the colonial languages".

That the novels discussed in this article are published in English is of course a simplification, as their heterolingual nature entails the presence of multiple languages. However, the restrictions imposed by the global literary marketplace mean that English, in one way or another, takes precedence over the other languages present in the text. The authors discussed in this article switch between English and various other languages in their works. Insertions from other languages can be anything from single words to

several sentences. Therefore, although English brings these authors together, their choice of other languages differs. For example, Haitian author Edwidge Danticat switches between American English, Haitian Creole, French, and Spanish, whereas Trinidadian V. S. Naipaul switches between British English, Trinidadian Creole, and Hindi.

Robert Fraser's concept of transcultural narrative is also linked to Rebecca Walkowitz's (2015, 3–4) ideas on global literary production involving books that she argues to be "born translated". This means that the literary works are produced either with the expectation – or at least the anticipation – that they will be translated or translation, in some respect, already takes place within the source text. In "born-translated literature", Walkowitz (ibid.) describes, "translation is not secondary or incidental to these works [. . .] but a condition of their production".

In contrast, as Walkowitz (2015, 32–33) explains, there are also works that are "born untranslatable". This means that the texts are consciously produced in a way that flaunts the practices and requirements of global publishing, aiming at a more localised readership. "By using nonstandard versions of a national language", Walkowitz argues, "a work opposes political and cultural homogenization, both the kind imposed by other speakers of that language and the kind imposed by translators and publishers". She compares her notion of the untranslatable to what Doris Sommer (1999, x) has termed "particularist" writing, which she describes as a way of writing that opposes the "assumed cultural continuity between writer and reader". Walkowitz (2015, 33) further argues that particularist works "are not meant to circulate globally" as they "are born untranslatable in the sense that they do not travel well and in fact often resist it".

The publication dates of the novels discussed in this article range from the 1950s to the 2020s. The style of language use and the kinds of heterolingual practice employed differ between authors, but there are also some wider trends that can be identified over time. Especially the position of Creole languages in Caribbean writing has changed significantly over the years. Barbara Lalla (2014a) discusses the history of Creole in Caribbean literature using Jamaican Creole as a case in point. She identifies four different phases in the development of Creole use in Jamaican literature: "ventriloquism", "censorship", "alternation", and "expansion" (Lalla 2014a, 57). According to Lalla's study, before the late 19th century, Creole in written form was mainly found in accounts written by the colonisers "for the purpose of legitimizing imperial power" (Lalla 2014a, 46). Creole being used in the works of Creole-speaking authors began to appear in the late 19th century, and in the early 20th century Creole began to be used much more extensively, "with substantial progress beyond earlier dismissive or derisive evaluations of Creole" (Lalla 2014a, 52). In the current expansion phase, Lalla (2014a, 58) writes, the more privileged status given to Creole languages "effects a perspectival shift that relocates the Caribbean speaker to the center rather than the margin of the area in view

and, in this sense, the discourse operates as an instrument of identity construction". In previous decades, authors have used different kinds of innovative technique to represent the Caribbean linguistic and cultural setting, paving the way for contemporary authors and providing them with much more freedom in how they use language in their works.

A shift of cultural influence on Caribbean authors can be seen in that, prior to the 1990s, many authors used British English as the primary language of their works, whereas from the 1990s onwards American English began to be used more regularly (Ekberg 2019, 17). British or American English was used as the primary language, and switches were then made to, for example, Creole languages or other European languages, such as French or Spanish. In earlier works, Creole was generally restricted to dialogue, where a sort of mixture of English and Creole was used as an approximation of spoken Creole (13). In more recent works, a similar kind of approximated spoken Creole has also been used, for example, in first-person narration. In third-person narration, older texts generally treated Creoles, alongside the European languages, as switches to foreign languages, whereas in dialogue the Creole approximation was considered more akin to dialect and treated as a form of spoken English. Contemporary authors, such as Jamaican Marlon James and Kei Miller as well as Trinidadian-British Monique Roffey, also produce works that are written completely in a Caribbean variety of English (Jamaican English or Trinidadian English), where switches between English and Creole generally present as switches between registers or varieties of the same language rather than as switches from one language to another.

The difference between whether two languages are treated as different languages or as varieties of the same language within a literary work is exemplified by the following passage from Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) in which Christophine's dialogue is rendered as spoken English but with the French Creole word *béké* (a word referring to white European colonists) placed in italics as an indication of it being treated as a foreign word: "If *béké* say it foolishness, then it foolishness. *Béké* clever like the devil. More clever than God. Ain't so?" (Rhys [1966] 2000, 97). In more recent works, even such unfamiliar Creole words are generally written without using italics to separate them from the English text, such as is the case in this passage from Robert Antoni's *Carnival* where a character called Eddoes uses the Trinidadian Creole word *geegeeree* (nervous or uneasy):

"Wha?" he laughed. "Save my life you know. Me did feeling plenty geegeeree to go across them stage."

"That was only to give you the edge."

"Think so?" he steupsed. "Me ain't accustom to them kinda crowd, unnastand?"

(Antoni 2005, 180)

The shifting trend of renouncing the use of italics for code-switching has been significantly expedited by Dominican-American author Junot Díaz's active campaign to omit italics from his works. In an interview, the Haitian author Edwidge Danticat identifies the publication of Díaz's short story collection *Drown* (1996) as a kind of watershed moment for the non-use of italics in Caribbean literary works; afterwards authors and editors alike were more open to the idea of not using italics, and the practice spread quickly (Ekberg 2019, 23). Díaz, who writes his works in a mixture of English and Spanish, has called his non-use of italics "a very important political move" with the aim to "remind readers of the fluidity of languages" and "to mark how steadily English is transforming Spanish and Spanish is transforming English" (Ch'ien 2004, 204). After having had the editor insist on adding italics to his first short story, Díaz has included a provision in all his publishing contracts that italics are not to be added to his texts (207).

Danticat's work shows the influence of this shift rather clearly. In her debut novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), italics are used for switches to Haitian Creole and French, whereas italics are not used in her second novel *The Farming of Bones* (1998), which was published after Díaz's *Drown*. Interestingly, although Danticat is very aware of the trend and clearly embraces it in her writing, she has not made corresponding changes to more recent editions of her older works. A 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of *Breath, Eyes, Memory* was published in 2015. In this new edition, Danticat made some typographical changes to Haitian Creole code-switching to reflect the updated official orthography for Haitian Creole, but she did not remove italics from the new edition.

To see whether this pattern is repeated in other works from this period, I looked at thirty novels by fourteen different authors published between 1953 and 2020.<sup>1</sup> Out of the novels published prior to 1996, all but one contained italicised code-switching, and out of the novels published after 1996, italics were used in only two. Robert Antoni's *Divina Trace* (1991) did not use italics even though it was published several years before Díaz's *Drown*. Antoni is, in fact, another author who consistently omits italics from his works, making him another early adopter of this trend. However, his use of language differs from that of Díaz in that he mixes English with Trinidadian Creole, which, as mentioned above, can more readily be treated as varieties of the same language within

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<sup>1</sup> These included *The Orchid House* (1953) by Phyllis Shand Allfrey, *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *Miguel Street* (1959), *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961) and *A Bend in the River* (1979) by V. S. Naipaul, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) by Jean Rhys, *Green Days by the River* (1967) by Michael Anthony, *Divina Trace* (1991), *My Grandmother's Erotic Folktales* (2000), *Carnival* (2005) and *As Flies to Whatless Boys* (2013) by Robert Antoni, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), *The Farming of Bones* (1998), *The Dew Breaker* (2004), *Brother, I'm dying* (2007), *Claire of the Sea Light* (2013) and *Everything Inside* (2019) by Edwidge Danticat, *Mangos, Bananas and Coconuts: A Cuban Love Story* (1996) by Himilce Novas, *The Agüero Sisters* (1997) by Cristina García, *Midnight Robber* (2001), *Brown Girl in the Ring* (2001), *The Salt Roads* (2003) and *Skin Folk* (2015) by Nalo Hopkinson, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) by Junot Díaz, *The Long Song* (2010) by Andrea Levy, *The Book of Night Women* (2009) and *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2014) by Marlon James, *The Last Warner Woman* (2010) and *Augustown* (2016) by Kei Miller, and *The Mermaid of Black Conch* (2020) by Monique Roffey.

a literary work than Spanish and English perhaps would. This could mean that the use of italics might not have been as much of an issue for the publisher as in Díaz's case, who in turn has had to make an active stand against differentiating between Spanish and English.

The two works published after 1996 that I found to contain italicised code-switching were *The Agüero Sisters* (1997) by Cuban author Cristina García and *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2014) by Jamaican author Marlon James. In García's case, the novel was published so soon after *Drown* that it is reasonable to assume the book was already in production by the time other authors were aware of Díaz's work. James, who uses Jamaican English and Creole in his works and employs language very organically, uses italics for code-switching into Spanish. For example, in the following passage, Josey Wales, a gang leader in the fictional Kingston neighbourhood of Copenhagen City, is pointing out his language skills, which he is keeping hidden from the American CIA agent with whom he is in contact:

I don't tell him that I about to set up a man in Miami and one in New York. I don't tell him that *yo tengo suficiente español para conocer que eres la más gran broma en Sud-américa*. I chat to him bad like some bush naigger and ask dumb question like, So everybody in America have gun? What kinda bullet American fire? Why you don't transfer Dirty Harry to the Jamaica branch? Hee hee hee. (James [2014] 2015, 44)

James does not provide a translation for the Spanish phrase ('I don't tell him that I know enough Spanish to know that you are the biggest joke in South America'). The character Josey Wales is deliberately exploiting the CIA agent's stereotypical views of the inhabitants of Kingston's ghettos to present himself as less intelligent and capable than he is. At the same time, by not providing a translation for this switch, the author is letting those readers who understand Spanish in on the secret while excluding those who do not.

Although the technique employed by James in this context is similar to that used previously for Creole code-switching, there is a clear shift in perspective. Whereas italicised code-switching into Creole languages can be seen as a way to make the text more accessible to international audiences, James's goal seems to be to highlight a language that is not at home in the Jamaican setting. The perspective, then, is local rather than international. Lalla (2014a, 59) points to this change in perspective in her account of the history of Creole use in Jamaican literature: "conscious negotiation of the oral and scribal characteristics in Caribbean discourse turns the gaze inward, reorienting the Caribbean consciousness to the center of our universe of discourse".

The use of spoken language in the representation of Creole has also moved towards a more organic and fluid use of language over the decades. Whereas in older novels

from the 1950s and the 1960s, Creole is often rendered as generic spoken language with some features commonly attributed to Creole languages, more recent novels use a closer representation of the specific Creole used in the community in which the novel is set. This distinction can be seen in the following passages from Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Monique Roffey's more recent *The Mermaid of Black Conch* (2020):

She looked gloomy. 'When man don't love you, more you try, more he hate you, man like that. If you love them they treat you bad, if you don't love them they after you night and day bothering your soul case out. I hear about you and your husband,' she said. (Rhys [1966] 2000, 90–91)

I am an ol' man now, and sick sick so I cyan move much, sick so I cyan work, go out to sea, and so I go write my story. I go sit down and drink a rum or two to drown my sorrow, drown my damn fuckin heart in this bottle. After Hurricane Rosamund, everything changed, man, every last damn thing blow away and then, one year on from the time we meet, yeah, she come back! (Roffey 2020, 11–12)

In the passage from Rhys, the illusion of spoken Creole is mainly created by using simple structures and omitting some verbs, which is representative of the highly analytic nature of many Creole languages, which tend to contain very little inflectional morphology (see for example Bartens 2013, 93). Roffey uses similar analytic verb structures in her text, but the passage also contains features more closely related to Trinidadian Creole, such as the verb *cyan* (cannot) and reduplication (*sick sick*), which in this instance is used to mark intensity.

### 3. Many become one

The changes and trends taking place in the publication of original Caribbean literary works bring forth the question of where to draw the line between a monolingual and a heterolingual text. All languages are, to different degrees, influenced by other languages. In the case of Caribbean Creole languages, this is very visible due to their relatively young age and the manner of their creation as a consequence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (see for example Singler 2008, 334–335). Creoles are, by their nature, very flexible in that there is often not a widely used official orthography and therefore many words have several alternative spellings. Different varieties of a Creole language can be placed along what has been termed the creole continuum based on how far removed the variety is from the lexifying European language (Kouwenberg and Singler 2008, 12). For example, in the case of Jamaica, there are numerous varieties ranging from Jamaican Standard English, which is very close to British English, to Jamaican Creole, some varieties of which would not be understandable to a speaker of American or British English. There is no clear border between Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole.



Barbara Lalla discusses the changing role of Creole in Caribbean literatures and the problem of drawing borders between different varieties. Although Standard English is still considered a more prestigious variety, Lalla (2014b, 102) argues that “the growing recognition of Caribbean culture privileges and even favors Creole as the popular medium”, while the authors’ tendency to mix different varieties of a Creole within a single text and to switch between them freely “increases general ambivalence about distinctiveness”.

The changes that have taken place over time in heterolingual practices in Caribbean literary works show that the trends seem to be splitting into two different directions, although the two could be seen to travel relatively side-by-side: firstly, there is the more organic representation of heterolingualism, and secondly, there is a trend towards a certain ‘monolingualisation’ of works mixing English with Creoles.

The first trend relates to the changes instigated by Díaz’s campaign against italicising code-switching, which has led to a representation of heterolingualism where the various languages are given equal value within the text. This trend becomes manifest in works that use several languages that are considered clearly distinct from one another, such as is the case in the previously mentioned works by Díaz and Danticat. Indeed, Walkowitz (2015, 39; italics in original) argues that Díaz’s work should in fact be considered to represent one language rather than multiple languages, as they are used as the representation of a mixture of languages that acts as the unmarked variety in the given situation: “readers of Díaz’s fiction are meant to *learn* words rather than to *translate* them. This is one reason why Díaz’s work might be best understood as regional rather than global. It is written in one language”.

The second trend relates to works that have previously combined languages or language varieties that are so closely related that drawing clear-cut borders between them can be difficult, even superfluous. Here the argument for seeing them as representing one language is even stronger. Such works include, for example, V. S. Naipaul’s texts, which utilise a mixture of British English and the English-lexifier Trinidadian Creole. For the part of this style of writing, the trend has been to move away from the British and American English varieties that used to be the primary language of these novels and towards Caribbean English varieties and Creoles, which was already seen above in the passage from Roffey’s *The Mermaid of Black Conch*.

Although Caribbean literary works still contain heterolingual elements, the perspective of them seems to have shifted somewhat from the global to the local. Instead of including the kind of heterolingualism that enables an international reader who is not familiar with Caribbean languages or cultures to understand the text, the perspective for the heterolingualism is more Caribbean. This was seen in the previously mentioned passage from James’s *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, where Spanish is italicised

but not translated. Generally, however, the language used in these novels seems to be an organic representation of the languages used in the communities in which the works are set. Is it, then, correct to call these works heterolingual? *A Brief History of Seven Killings* does contain switches between Jamaican and Spanish, but beyond that, James's writing is best characterised as simply Jamaican, as exemplified by the following passage containing dialogue between Josey Wales and a young woman named Lerlette:

–Beg you di bone nuh?

–Dutty gal, move you bombocloth from here so. You no see big man is here?

–Lawd, yuh hard, eh? A weh Weeper deh?

–Me look like Weeper's keeper?

She doesn't answer, just walk away, pulling her panty out of her batty. I know for sure her mother drop her on the head when she was a baby. Twice. If it's one thing I can't stand is when people chat bad. (James [2014] 2015, 41)

Josey Wales does not hold Creole in high regard and despises Lerlette, whose speech in this dialogue is represented with a variety of Creole that is further away from Standard Jamaican English than Wales's speech. In the earlier example, Wales was purposefully "chatting bad" with the CIA agent, whereas here he wishes to show his superiority by speaking in a more standardised manner.

Fraser (2000, 9) divided the evolution of postcolonial literatures into different phases of which transcultural narrative is the last. The more recent developments show that Caribbean literatures have, if not moved on to a different phase, then certainly seen significant evolution within the framework of transcultural narrative. In some ways, the current trend seems to be circling back on itself, shifting away from the international, 'born translated' style of writing and moving towards the local and particular, with fewer concessions being made for making the language more accessible to foreign readers. Consequently, heterolingual may no longer be the best term to describe these works.

Bertacco (2020, 18) and Walkowitz (2015, 45) have called for new kinds of vocabulary for discussing heterolingual texts or those written in Creole. As can be seen from the passages quoted above, even the word heterolingual has its issues when used about literature in Creole. Many of the aspects of Caribbean literatures published for international audiences that can be described as heterolingual have, in fact, been considered impositions by the authors, as voiced by both Díaz and Danticat. In addition to the removal of italics, Danticat also mentions, for example, being thankful that her publisher has not insisted on adding a glossary of Haitian Creole words to her novels (Ekberg 2019, 46). Consequently, a shift towards seeing these works as a representation of one language rather than a combination of many would provide a more

accurate picture of the authors' intention. Consider, for example, the following passage from Miller's *Augustown* (2016), where we can see dialogue between two Jamaican characters, a woman named Ma Taffy and a young boy named Kaia:

Kaia stops and resumes his sulking. He is not used to this kind of tone from his grandma.

"Mi ask if you was there," Ma Taffy insists.

"No," Kaia whispers, "I never did dere."

"Well then, hush up you blasted mout and don't try fi tell me things that you don't even know, or things that Babylon decide fi tell you."

(Miller 2016, 17)

Miller switches here between Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole, and the language used in narration is more standardised than that used for dialogue. The dialogue contains some features that are specifically characteristic of Jamaican Creole, such as the first-person pronoun *mi* and the preposition *fi* ('to' or 'for') (see for example Farquharson 2013). The spelling of some words also indicates Jamaican pronunciation as opposed to other varieties of English, such as in the case of *dere* instead of *there* and *mout* instead of *mouth*.

Although there are switches between varieties and the level of standardisation varies within the text, heterolingual might be somewhat misleading a term to use for this type of writing, as the different varieties are used to represent natural variation within the language community. However, calling such a text monolingual would be equally misleading. Using the term Creole would perhaps fall closer than either of these terms. Creole as a term embodies hybridity and variation, and the different varieties employed by the Caribbean authors discussed here would neatly fall under this title of one language. Lalla (2014b, 103) argues that Creole also "embodies contradiction", as "it distances the reader even though the use of the Creole signals intimacy". She also writes that using English orthography for writing in Creole adds to this contradiction "because a dimension of the literary empowerment of Creole is the ongoing acknowledgment of resistance conveyed in the contending linguistic systems" (ibid.).

#### 4. Caribbean heterolingualism in Finnish translation

Above I have described some of the characteristics and changing trends of Caribbean literary works. For the translator, the unique way in which language is used in these works brings some challenges. In a text that mixes languages and language varieties in a fluid way, where does one draw the line between one language and another? For the reader of, for example, an original Jamaican novel mixing English and Creole, such a distinction is usually unnecessary. Especially in more recent Caribbean works,

language is approached in a highly organic manner, and mixing English and Creole is considered the unmarked form of language use. Trying to find borders between the different language varieties serves no purpose for the reader of the novel. This is indeed one of the reasons for the campaign against italicisation in Caribbean literary works. Many authors consider the use of italics to create unnecessary and arbitrary borders between languages in a setting where such borders do not naturally exist.

However, the translator of such a work is faced with the difficult position of having to make decisions based on these arbitrary distinctions between languages. In earlier works, where italics are used to separate code-switching from the main body of the text, making the distinction was much easier than in the more recent works with more organic transitions. Translated literature also tends to be somewhat slower to react to such trends than original works. This can also be seen in the Finnish translations of Caribbean novels, where italics have been added to the translations of some novels that do not use italics in the original. Such is the case, for example, for Danticat's *The Farming of Bones* (translated in 2000 by Leena Tamminen) and Andrea Levy's *The Long Song* (translated in 2014 by Kirsi Kinnunen). The following passage from *The Long Song* and its translation shows an instance where italics have been added to the translation. In the passage, the slave woman Kitty is giving birth to a daughter, the book's protagonist, July:

But the white man had fathered the child she was birthing and if he was not gone soon, she thought to rise from the mattress, grab this ugly bakkra by the leg, swing him above her head and hurl him like a piece of cane so far-far that he would land head first in a heap of trash upon some other talked-of island. (Levy [2010] 2011, 18)

Lapsi, jota hän oli nyt synnyttämässä, oli juuri tämän valkoisen miehen alkuun panema, ja Kitty oli varma, että jos mies ei häipyisi pian, hän nousisi patjaltaan, tarraisi rumaa *bakkr*aa jalasta, pyöräyttäisi tätä vimmaisesti päänsä yläpuolella kuin sokeriruo'on vartta ja viskaisi tämän sellaiseen lentoon, että mies päätyisi pää edellä sokeriruokosilppukasaan jonnekin toiselle saarelle. (Levy 2014, 21)

Kinnunen has italicised the word *bakkr* (white person) here to separate it as a foreign word. Tamminen uses a similar strategy for any Haitian Creole and Spanish used in her translation of *The Farming of Bones*, such as in this passage, containing a switch with both Creole and Spanish:

The pigeons always make him draw in his breath, suck his teeth, and say, "Ay, pobrecita manman mwen." My poor mother. (Danticat [1998] 2000, 25)

Aina kyyhkyjen äänen kuullessaan hän vetää henkeä, maiskauttaa ja sanoo: "Ay pobrecita manman mwen." Äiti parkani. (Danticat 2000, 33)

In Tamminen's case it should be pointed out that she translated both *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and *The Farming of Bones* one after the other, and as Danticat uses italics in one but not the other, it could be that the publisher, for example, wanted to add italics to the latter for the sake of consistency.

Kinnunen's translation was published in 2014, which is nearly two decades on from the publication of *Drown*, and italicising code-switching still seems to be a common practice in Finnish translations. It is clear that the rapid spread of this trend within original Caribbean works has not extended to the translations. There are, however, some translated Finnish works beyond the Caribbean where italics have been purposefully removed. This was the case for the 2014 translation of Nigerian Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958). The Finnish translator Heikki Salojärvi had agreed with the publisher to "tone down the exoticism of Igbo code-switching and to make it stand out less from the text, because they felt that the italics in the original were 'meant for the Western eye'" (Nurminen 2015, 50). This is in line with Díaz's views on italics, which he considers an act of violence against language. By not italicising Spanish he is "enacting retaliatory violence against English" (Ch'ien 2004, 209).

The translators' strategies vary even in the translations of Díaz's own works. Although Díaz is adamant in not using italics in his original works, he does not extend this requirement to translations of his works. Three of Díaz's published works have been translated into Finnish; *Drown* and Díaz's debut novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) were both translated in 2008 by Henrik Laine and Vuokko Aitosalo, respectively, and the short story collection *This Is How You Lose Her* (2012) was translated in 2014 by Jonna Joskitt-Pöyry. Out of these, the translation of the novel is the only one that does not use italics for Spanish. Walkowitz (2015, 38) also mentions a French translation of *This Is How You Lose Her* that has used italics for Spanish.

Ulla Ahola (2012) has examined Vuokko Aitosalo's Finnish translation of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* in more detail. She concludes that the translation uses a combination of strategies where some of the Spanish has been maintained while some has been translated into Finnish (Ahola 2012, 66). This combination of strategies can be seen in the following passage where some of the Spanish in the source text has been left in and some has been translated into Finnish:

Listen, palomo: you have to grab a muchacha, y metéselo. That will take care of *everything*. Start with a fea. Coje that fea y méteselo! Tío Rudolfo had four kids with three different women so the nigger was without doubt the family's resident méteselo expert.

[Listen, coward: you have to grab a girl and stick it in. That will take care of everything. Start with an ugly one. Take that ugly girl and stick it in. Uncle Rudolfo had four kids with three different women so the nigger was without doubt the family's resident stick it in expert.]

(Díaz 2007, 24)

Kuunteles nyt, palomo: isket jonkun muchachan ja panet sitä kunnolla! Niin se homma etenee. Isket aluksi läskin. Kaadat sen ja panet sitä feaa kunnolla. Metéselo! Tío Rudolfolla oli neljä lasta kolmen eri naisen kanssa joten hän oli epäilemättä perheen asiantuntija mitä tuli metéseloon.

[Listen now, palomo: you pick up a muchacha and bang her hard! That's how it goes. First pick up a fat one. Knock her over and bang that fea hard. Metéselo! Tío Rudolfo had four children with three different women, so he was without doubt the family's expert when it comes to metéselo.]

(Díaz 2008, 26–27)

Aitosalo has omitted repeated occurrences of Spanish words (*metéselo* and *fea*), replacing them with translations. In this way the passage contains the same information in both Finnish and Spanish, although the Finnish is not a direct translation of the Spanish. The Spanish in the translation has also been reduced to single words instead of full phrases. The reason for such omissions is most likely that Finnish readers are generally expected to be less familiar with Spanish than American readers. Ahola (2012, 86) also points out some instances where the translator has compensated for the omission of Spanish code-switching by adding Spanish to the translation in places that do not contain Spanish in the source text. This can be seen, for example, in a passage where Aitosalo has translated the English phrase “number one” (Díaz 2007, 6) with the Spanish “numero uno” (Díaz 2008, 13).

There is also some indication that translations of works that have not used italics in the original have used more domesticating strategies, which has led to a noticeable decrease in heterolingualism (Ekberg 2019, 84). This is perhaps due to Finnish translators being more used to texts where heterolingual passages are indicated with italics and, in the absence of such typological markers, they have more often opted to translate such passages into Finnish instead of retaining the code-switching found in the original. Another explanation could be that the lack of italics has been interpreted by the translators as an indication on the author's part of less significance placed on the text's heterolingualism. The use of italics in the original puts greater emphasis on the code-switching and thus the translator is more likely to pay attention to it. In some cases, it might simply be the case that the translator has not considered the text a heterolingual one but translated it as if it were a monolingual text.

The trends in how these strategies have changed differs somewhat depending on the kinds of languages represented in the text. Díaz uses a mixture of English and Spanish in his works, and Danticat mixes English with Haitian Creole and French in hers. As these languages are quite distinct, differentiating between them even without the aid of typological indicators is quite easy for the reader. In the case of works mixing languages that are much more closely related, such as Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole, changing from one to the other occurs in a much more fluent and organic way,

which makes distinguishing one from the other much more difficult and, as I argued above, mostly superfluous from the reader's point of view.

Consequently, the translator needs to assume a role where they must draw lines between languages and language varieties that might not necessarily exist in the original literary work. Even though the determination of heterolingualism or language borders within a work of fiction might not be necessary for the reader, it does often become necessary for the translator. In interviews with the Finnish translators of Caribbean novels (see for example Ekberg 2019, 99–100), it became apparent that not all of them had necessarily considered the works they were translating to be heterolingual. Whether a translator approaches a text as monolingual or heterolingual naturally affects the choice of translation strategy.

The question of drawing borders between languages becomes particularly complex in a situation where a Creole text that might be viewed as 'monolingual' (in the sense that it is written using varieties of the same Creole) is translated into another language in a way that preserves some Creole words as code-switching, as is the case in the above example from Levy's *The Long Song* and Kinnunen's translation of it. If we are to consider such a text monolingual, does the act of translation then make it heterolingual? Translating such a work monolingually into a language like Finnish would mean that a lot of the fluidity of the language in the original and the hybrid nature of Creole would be lost to Finnish readers. The 'heterolingualisation' of the translations could be considered a way of bringing back some of that fluidity.

The return to a more particularist style of writing as discussed in the previous section does seem to have affected the availability of Caribbean literary works in translation, at least in Finland. None of the works discussed in this article that were published after 2010 have been translated into Finnish. Liisa Tiittula and Pirkko Nuolijärvi (2013, 252) discuss what considerations Finnish publishers take into account when selecting books to be translated, and they mention "does it travel?" as one of the questions asked. A more particularist novel would, by design, be less likely to travel well than books that are, in Walkowitz's (2015, 3–4) words, "born translated". The kinds of translation strategy traditionally used for heterolingual Caribbean literary works would not perhaps be sufficient for the purposes of translating a more particularist Caribbean novel.

Díaz himself collaborated with Cuban-American author and translator Achy Obejas in translating his own work into Spanish, employing an innovative process of rewriting. Walkowitz (2015, 38) explains that, when the Spanish edition of *A Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* was produced, they first created a new version of it in Spanish and later replaced parts of it with English in places where such replacements were suitable, reproducing the relationship between the languages "structurally if not locally". The

Spanish edition, then, is not a direct translation of the English edition but the same story told with the languages given different weight. Perhaps more innovative translation strategies such as this, where parts of the work are recreated in the target language, could be possible for translating Creole works into other languages, too. Such a strategy would require rethinking the relationship between not only languages but also the role of original and translated literary works.

## 5. Conclusion

This article explored some of the recent developments in Anglophone Caribbean literatures. The improving status of Creole languages and the greater weight placed on highlighting the fluidity of language use in the Caribbean has brought about some changes in the ways in which original Caribbean literary works are written, shifting the focus from international to local, or from “born translated” to particularist writing. As a result, instead of heterolingual, these works would perhaps be better described as Creole, a term indicative of the hybrid and innovative nature of the language used in these works. These developments have also brought about changes in the ways in which Caribbean literary works are translated into Finnish, as the increased fluidity of language and the strategic non-use of italics has, in some cases, led to the reduction of code-switching in the translations. In translations where code-switching has been maintained, italics are often still used in the Finnish translations even when they are not used in the original works.

The shifting trends of Caribbean literary production are also manifest in the fact that fewer Caribbean works seem to be published as translations, as the more particularist and fluid literary works do not lend themselves as readily to traditional strategies of literary translation. More innovative approaches to translation and recreation could provide new ways of producing Caribbean literary works in different languages around the world. Such an approach was explored in Díaz’s collaborative translation of *A Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Although an author, in many ways, has more freedom than a translator to recreate their own literary work in ways that can alter the text quite radically from what the original work was – indeed requiring us to question what the role of original and translation would be in this case – similar innovative approaches would perhaps be possible even to literary translators, especially in collaborative projects.

Bertacco (2020, 34), advocating a new kind of reading of Caribbean literary works, argues that “translation and creolization [. . .] demand that we set aside notions of language that are inapplicable to many contexts, not just postcolonial ones, and that we learn from the texts themselves how to read them”. The same sentiment carries over to translating these works. There is no single solution or strategy to deal with the



unique nature of these texts, and each must be approached with sensitivity to the book's spirit, exploring innovative ways to find bridges for its expression.

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## Muutuvad suundumused Kariibi piirkonna erikeelsete kirjanduste tõlgetes

Laura Ekberg

**Võttesõnad:** Kariibi piirkonna kirjandus, tõlge, erikeelsus, kreooli keel, soome keel

Kariibi mere piirkonnas on mitmekeelsus keelekogukondadele niivõrd sügavalt omane, et ka nende kogukondade kirjandustes on hakatud rakendama mitmesuguseid erikeelsuspraktikaid. Kariibi kirjanikud segavad keeli äärmiselt orgaaniliselt ning sujuvalt, mis kajastab keelelist muutlikkust kogukondades, milles nende teoste tegevus aset leiab. Kariibi keelekogukondades on ümberlülitumine ühelt keelelt teisele, näiteks inglise keelelt kreooli keelele niivõrd tavaline, et mitmekeelsusest on saanud keelekasutuse markeerimata vorm ning paljudel juhtudel pole võimalik eri keelte vahele piire tõmmata.

Viimastel aastatel on kirjanduslike väljenduskeelte paljususele tähelepanu juhtimise asemel Kariibi kirjandusmaastikul toimunud üha enam nihkeid praktikate suunas, mis toovad esile mitmekeelsusliku tausta muutlikkust ning markeerimatust. Käesolevas artiklis vaadeldakse muutuvaid suundumusi Kariibi kirjandusloomingus ning viise, mil need mõjutavad seda, kuidas tõlgitakse Kariibi teoseid, ning seda, milliseid raamatuid tõlgitakse soome keelde. Eriti on aastate jooksul oluliselt muutunud kreooli keelte positsioon Kariibi piirkonna kirjutuses. Eelnenud kümnenditel on kirjanikud Kariibi piirkonna keelelise ja kultuuritausta kujutamisel rakendanud erisuguseid uuenduslikke võtteid, sillutades teed nüüdisaegsetele autoritele ning pakkudes neile tunduvalt suuremat vabadust nende teoste keelekasutuses.

Kariibi kirjanduse teoste erikeelsuspraktikates aja jooksul aset leidnud muutustest ilmneb, et suundumused näivad lahknevat kahes eri suunas, kuigi paistab, et mõlemad neist liiguvad edasi suhteliselt kõrvuti: esiteks on olemas erikeelsuse orgaanilisem kujutamine ning teisalt esineb inglise ja kreooli keeli teineteisega segavates teostes suundumus teatava „ükskeelestamise“ poole. Kuigi Kariibi piirkonna kirjandusteosed sisaldavad ikka veel erikeelsuselemente, tundub nende perspektiiv olevat mõneti nihkunud globaalsemast lokaalsema suunas. Erikeelsuse kaasamise asemel, mis võimaldab teksti mõista rahvusvahelisel lugejal, kes ei ole kursis Kariibi keelte ega kultuuridega, on erikeelsusperspektiiv muutunud kariibilikumaks.

Tõlkijale esitab nende teoste ainulaadne keelekasutus teatavaid väljakutseid. Kuhu tõmmata keeltevahelisi piire tekstis, mis sujuvalt segab omavahel keeli ja keelevariante? Paljud autorid kaaluvad kursiivi kasutamist, et luua mittevajalikke ja meelevaldseid keeltevahelisi piire tingimustes, kus sellised piirid loomupäraselt puuduvad. Ent sellise teose tõlkija seisab silmitsi keerulise olukorraga, milles ta on sunnitud langetama otsuseid selliste meelevaldsete keeltevaheliste eristuste põhjal. Varasemates teostes, kus kursiivi kasutatakse koodivahetuse eristamiseks teksti põhikorpusest, oli sellise eristuse tegemine tõlkijale palju lihtsam kui uuemates teostes, kus üleminekud on orgaanilisemad. Ka kipub tõlkekirjandus sellistele suundumustele reageerima algupärastest teostest mõneti aeglasemalt. Seda võib täheldada Kariibi romaanide tõlgetes soome keelde, kus kursiivi on lisatud ka mõne sellise romaani tõlkesse, mis seda originaalis ei kasuta.

Paljudel juhtudel peab tõlkija asuma rolli, milles tal on tarvis tõmmata keelte ja keelevariantide vahele eristusjooni, mida algses kirjandusteoses ei tarvitse tingimata olemas olla. Isegi kui erikeelsuse

või keelepiiride määratlemine kirjandusteose raames ei ole lugeja jaoks tihtipeale vajalik, võib see muutuda vajalikuks tõlkija jaoks. See, kas tõlkija läheneb tekstile kui ükskeelsele või erikeelsele, mõjutab mõistagi tõlkestrateegia valikut. Nende tekstide ainulaadse olemusega tegelemiseks ei ole ühtain-sat lahendust või strateegiat, vaid igale neist tuleb läheneda raamatu vaimu tundlikult arvesse võttes ning uurides uuenduslikke võimalusi selle väljendusvahendite jaoks sildade leidmisel.

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