

## *Words from the Cage aux Ours*

### WHAT IS THIS?

This book is based on the languages spoken in the area around Place Verboekhovenplein in Schaerbeek that is known as the 'Cage aux Ours' (bear cage). All words can also be found as audio recordings in the online dictionary at [www.lalangueschaerbeekoise.be](http://www.lalangueschaerbeekoise.be).

Since the voices, tonalities, moods and sounds of recordings usually disappear in the black ink of the written word, this has become a very special dictionary, one with pictures, unique stylistic and grammatical features, and explanatory texts.

It has been created for both the people who live in the neighbourhood and anyone in general who is interested in languages and big cities. You can read it as a snapshot or a portrait, but you can also carry it around with you as a pocket dictionary while exploring the neighbourhood. And for those who wish to delve into the enormous richness created by the melting pot of languages one hears every day in a metropolis, this book is a beginning, an invitation and hopefully also a work instrument.

Salam!

## WORDS AS INSTRUMENTS

Peter Westenberg

The Schae/arbeek Language is a social-artistic project that was conducted between 2009 and 2012 around a public square known as *La Cage aux Ours*. In front of you is a book full of words that were collected during that period. Words used in the streets. Words from faraway countries. Mysterious acronyms, surrealist expressions. Odd words, but also common words that have a special meaning in the context of the neighbourhood in which they are used.

The words were collected in the bilingual Brussels-Capital Region, in the multilingual neighbourhood of Schaerbeek, in the highly multilingual area around the Cage aux Ours. Official name: Place Verboeckhovenplein. Also known as *la Cage, de Kuil, La grande place, кольцо (calzo: the ring)*.

Next to French, which is the dominant language, and Dutch, which is the second official language, numerous languages are spoken here that for generations have travelled here along with a population of mixed origin: hard-working North Africans who have now retired here after labouring in the Walloon coal mines in the 1960s. Young world citizens and *Schengen-trotters* who have found relatively affordable housing in Schaerbeek, in the shadow of the nearby European district. And more importantly: people use body language, sign language, the language of friendship, the language of love, respect and curiosity... But one also hears and reads the language of bureaucracy, envy and social exclusion.

In order to fully understand this book, we ask you to listen closely to the words listed in the anthology. Imagine how *D'eizels van Schoorbeek* sounds when spoken by a spirited old Brussels lady. Or *Manko'o Shop*... Imagine a beautiful black woman, sitting relaxed in her chair behind the counter, with a thick African accent, her speech slowed down by years and years beneath a burning sun. Because of their different accents, the words used by the residents of Schaerbeek are loaded with associations, sentiments, desires and the patina of life.

During the project we organised listening sessions, exhibitions,

meetings and other moments in which we gave back the words to the city. This book also returns the words to where they come from. It can be used in different ways. Its pocket-sized format is designed for you to carry it around on your daily trips throughout the city. Leafing through the book, you could recount stories about the neighbourhood. It is also imaginable that the words could be used in classes on street slang or in addressing a public audience. Lastly, we rely on your creativity to let the contents of this book resonate in the city in your own way.

When you reach the final page and if you are interested in learning more, remember that this book is an adaptation of the project's database which you can find online at: [www.lalanguageschaerbeekoise.be](http://www.lalanguageschaerbeekoise.be). Here you can listen to all the words and the various radio shows and audio creations.

### *Language as a binding agent*

The modern-day big city is a hub where people meet and from where connections to elsewhere are made. Because of its role as the capital of Europe, Brussels operates on a global scale, but the poorer neighbourhoods are also characterised by extensive international networks. Family ties and economic relations with countries of origin are not often seen as part of a globalised world. Still, they open up many possibilities. Brussels is a *patchwork city*, a mosaic, a place that is fragmented. Communication is vital in such a city, but not always easy. Communication bridges need to be built in order to keep the differences between residents' associations and the authorities, between different perceptions and beliefs manageable. Multilingualism can be a useful instrument in this respect. The versatility of languages, their absorption capacity and their ability to adjust to a reality are also useful.

How can all this be developed in a positive way? We have tried to give an idea of the surreal experience of the colourful mix of hybrid words that can be heard on the streets. Our project, which was set up as an art project, could as such reveal a potential that often remains hidden. The Schae/arbeek Language refers to the large grey language zone between the official languages, waiting to be explored.

Being in touch with, empathising and understanding others and your environment is a skill: something you can become good at.<sup>1</sup> A population that knows how to be creative with language proves that it has such skills: being able to listen, interpret and switch between different languages makes it easier for people to coexist. And that is important since people who can coexist can create a city one enjoys living in. Words are instruments for looking at the world. They are enriched by the experience of the speaker and are a sign of his or her ability to interact sensibly with the environment.

Schaerbeek boasts many residents who excel at coexistence. It would be great if their qualities could be used to create a more liveable neighbourhood.

### *To the streets*

You could say we tried to develop an ecological work method: instead of being production-oriented and *searching* for words, we *accepted* the words that were *given* to us. In choosing who to work with and which words to include, we were motivated by the fact that we wanted to incorporate the complex socio-political context into the project. The participants gave meaning to the words by voicing them. What is said is important, but also how it is said. It's the *melodies of speech* that people use to express themselves that make listening an aesthetic experience. Speech is not only a way to convey information or content; speech is mainly a way of being alive. The sound of your speech is part of who you are; while speaking you are not separate from the sound you produce.<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes the person who is talking or the situation in which the word is used is more interesting than the word itself. So in this anthology you will find more than just words: sample sentences that include a particular word, users explaining the meaning of a word, imaginary stories prompted by words, and the fascinating *Miscellaneous (Autre)* category, which even contains snatches of song.

The Schae/arbeek Language project can be seen as a participative audio

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill*, New York, Routledge, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> In more poetic terms: "People pour out their beings in the melodies of speech", "Speech grows out from your entire being", "There is no sound broken from the tree of life". Leos Janáček, *Janáček's Uncollected Essays on Music*, trans. and ed. Mirka Zemanová, London, Marion Boyars, 1989.

project of a neighbourhood that has grown organically over the past three years. We organised a series of film screenings, performances, interviews, get-togethers, and discussions about subjects people are concerned about. Discrimination, the sense of insecurity, immigration. But also, growing vegetables, a lantern procession, the best pastries in the neighbourhood. You will find the full list of activities further on in this publication.

In a participatory process such as this one, each and every participant has his/her own concerns and interests. The creative challenge was to develop situations that were suited to everyone's needs. We decided to organise small-scale activities because they allow deeper interaction. During these activities, we looked for interesting expressions and words, which were then added to the database which is available on the project's website. This way, the project has been compiled and influenced by everyone who participated. The residents literally lent their voice to the project by adding their dialects, accents and individual tonality to the words.

When you take a look at the words listed below, you will see that some countries of origin are not included in the collection, even though they are very prominent in the neighbourhood. The Eastern European communities, for example, are growing rapidly, but we didn't easily find appropriate ways to connect. There are also few Flemish words in the list. To everyone who feels underrepresented: we hope our paths will cross during a future project.

#### *Context: The neighbourhood contract of Navez-Portaels*

The neighbourhood contract of Navez-Portaels gave us the opportunity to develop this project. A neighbourhood contract is a project focused on promoting long-term urban renewal. Assigned with a budget for a four-year programme and the task of 'strengthening social cohesion' by 'promoting a more positive image of the neighbourhood', we boldly set out on our mission. We built up a network of enthusiastic residents, exchanged ideas with co-workers of the Brussels Region, the commune of Schaerbeek, the coordinating bureau Renovas and other partner organisations involved in the neighbourhood contract. As number 7b in

section 5B of the CQNP (the *contrat de quartier* of Navez-Portaels), we tried to find a creative balance between being employed as an instrument in a large-scale urban redevelopment programme, our own artistic integrity, and the interest third parties had in our work.

The assignment was to create a more positive image of the neighbourhood. This is a political action. We aimed for a productive way of dealing with this assignment that at the same time remains open to critical observations. We didn't want to organise a disproportionately positive project that only emphasises the good aspects of the neighbourhood. The Schae/arbeek Language developed as a multifaceted mirror that allows reality to glitter like a many-sided diamond, but without ignoring the problematic aspects of that reality. The Schae/arbeek Language engages itself in the neighbourhood by underlining the rich diversity of a multicultural environment. The project tried to uncover subtle differences by revealing the beauty hidden in the occasionally grim day-to-day reality.

And it wasn't even that difficult, since this part of Schaerbeek is sexy. It still has that edge that more upscale neighbourhoods lack. With the *Château de la Commune* as the stately embodiment of authority and its exotic mix of residents, busy shops and bustling street life, the neighbourhood is highly mediagenic, although most media are not yet aware of this.

But it is also a place of prostitution and homelessness, where trams are the targets of shootings and retailers are moving out. The gutter, the underground – that's where things get heated. Part of the collection therefore contains *gangster*-like words. Hardcore swear words and hyper realistic strong language that are quite impressive. After all, this is the neighbourhood where Jean-Claude Van Damme spent his fictionalised youth.<sup>3</sup> We are talking about the birthplace of comic-book artist François Schuiten and cherries, about *1030 en force* by rappers Pitcho and Ommario del Barrio. Real heroes in their field!

### *Constant*

When I say *we*, I am referring to Constant, a non-profit organisation for

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<sup>3</sup> The 2008 film *Jean-Claude Van Damme* by Mabrouk El Mechri was filmed in the neighbourhood.

art and media which is active in Brussels. This project was led by Clémentine Delahaut, An Mertens and myself. Constant is a group of artists, computer programmers, writers, academics and activists who share an interest in digital culture, new technologies and the Internet, and who wish to promote *free digital culture*.

A participatory project in a neighbourhood with real people that runs on an urban renewal programme instead of on a computer with software may seem like a curious job for such an organisation. But that can easily be explained: technology connects people. The city is the hardware.

Language is the technology. Urban, economic, political and social programmes are the software. There are urban users and programmers.

There are people who have no idea of how a computer or a city works, but there are also city freaks and computer geeks, maintenance engineers, hackers, officials and more.

We people are also cultural products: we conform to all kinds of regulations and unwritten rules, codes and conventions. Culture can be seen as 'a set of control mechanisms – plans, recipes, instructions (what computer engineers call *programmes*) that allow us to control our behaviour'.<sup>4</sup> We adopt rules and meanings and develop a way of behaving that is acceptable to our fellow human beings so that we can lead a social existence. But then again, we are not robots that can be completely programmed. People are critical beings who are aware of the processes that guide and support them.

Perhaps you will find this analogy far-fetched. However, even though web culture and urban culture differ in almost everything, they still have a lot to learn from each other.

### *Editorial*

In putting together this book we held editorial meetings with Fatima Zibouh, Myriam Stoffen, Rachida El Haddad, Paul Simonetti, Bram Borloo, Judith Van Istendael, Mohammed Sellam, In Koli Jean Bofane, Milady Renoir, Donatella Portoghese, Jamal Youssfi, Jérémie Piolat and Jean Musway. Driven by their professional interest and involvement as residents, they gave their vision on the project. Together we reflected

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<sup>4</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books, 1973.

on the nature of this compilation of words. Based on their practice, each one of them was asked to select five words and explain why they were important to them.

In this book, Jérémie Piolat, Judith Vanistendael, Milady Renoir and Jamal Yousfi also share their vision on the project. Urbanist and Schaerbeek expert Isabelle Doucet explains the importance of words for the evolution of a city. And lastly, in order to document the voices, tonalities, moods and atmosphere of the sound recordings in this book, we invited Pablo Castilla to photograph the neighbourhood and its residents.

To all the people who participated in the project: *merci & poka!* To Entrez Lire, Passa Porta and the commune of Schaerbeek for making it possible for this book to take on a life of its own within and beyond the Schaerbeek area: *dank & B-əs-slâma!*



## WORDS IN ACTION

An Mertens

### **User warning: read this first!**

#### *A dictionary?*

Yes, a dictionary, literally a book of words, as the challenge of recording an oral culture in the traditional form of a dictionary. The words were chosen intuitively during our encounters. Each word features the sentence in which we first heard the word, and for most words you will also find a definition, given to us by the inhabitant. For most, but not for all. Because in spite of our intention to create a dictionary, human nature, coincidence and the flow of conversations often took over the form. We chose not to add definitions from written sources. If you would like to complete a word, please send us an e-mail at [info@constantvzw.org](mailto:info@constantvzw.org), and don't forget to mention the oral source. The dictionary is in French, the language of communication for all residents of the Cage aux Ours area. Contrary to the accompanying texts, the dictionary has not been translated into Dutch or English. The reasons for this are purely practical: time, energy and the required budget for this sort of undertaking.

#### *Transcription*

You will notice in the way the headwords are written that their representation remains true to reality. They are literal transcriptions of the audio recordings that you can find in the online dictionary. Why literally? Well, for most residents and for two out of the three artists that worked on this project, French is not the mother tongue. *Errors* are thus part of the communication. Rewriting a transcription in *correct* French would not do justice to the richness of the material. For it is precisely these errors that make it interesting because they bear witness to a different language, a different perspective, a different world. Errors in content also form part of a conversation, so you might spot some inaccuracies in the definition of a word.

### *Spelling*

Words that also appear in existing dictionaries go by their official spelling, even though the word is pronounced differently in the audio fragment. Concerning the spelling of words of Arabic origin in the Roman alphabet, there are no clear-cut rules. 'As long as it's understandable', is the general guideline. But given the multilingualism of this book, *understandable* is not the same for a French or Dutch speaker. That is why a few standard rules were set out in collaboration with linguist Najet Boulafdal. You can find them in the *Immigratien* category. Words for which we did not find any official spelling also fall under this category, because in a transcription the mother tongue sneaks in as well.

### *Searching for words and finding them*

In order to make this book readable, the words and their definitions have been brought together in this chapter called *Words in Action*. At the end of the book, you will find the same words once more in categories that are also used in classic pocket dictionaries, such as a list of everyday words, a classification by language and an alphabetical list. The lists are a quick way to look up a word, learn or even use it on a day-to-day basis, from Place Liedtsplein to the Cage aux Ours, and possibly beyond.

Words are powerful actors and hopefully 'Words in Action' can prove that. The categories in this chapter are the result of three editorial meetings with residents and language lovers.

Each category appears with a quote uttered during the meeting. The division into categories is not perfect. Some words belong to different categories at the same time. The last category is called *The Absent Ones*. It's an endless, virgin list of words that are not included in this book, an invitation to complete the book, to each day again listen to your own words and those you hear around you, to inquire about the meanings of words and to be aware of the effects of words on your life, relationships, neighbourhood, city and country.

### *The title*

This book carries the title The Schae/arbeek Language, but actually Schae/arbeek Languages would have been more accurate. Just like Brussels should be talked about in the plural, because the identity of the city has so many different dimensions, you cannot classify Schaerbeek neatly under one category. This compilation of words is a sample card of the different languages spoken in Schaerbeek in the year 2012. If the same method were to be used in another neighbourhood, it would create a different sample card.

It's about more than just a dictionary. For us, it's about communication between people who live side by side amidst a multitude of languages. Even people who haven't learned any grammar or possess only a limited vocabulary are able to communicate. Many of the words are also used in a wider context, as inserts in other languages. During our encounters, for example, we discovered that some of the words included in this book are also conjugated as in French, such as *tu hayares, je hayare, nous hayerons* (*hayar* is the Arabic word for *to exaggerate*). Various words also have a set of unwritten rules that determine where and when the words are used in this or that meaning. Without knowing the codes, which are often secret or confidential, you cannot repeat those words. Or like Fatima Zibouh remarked during one of the editorial meetings: "Being bilingual is not enough in Brussels. You also have to be multilingual in a way, in order to use dialects, to use the language of Muslim women and of youths, to use academic language and the language of the political field. You talk differently to people in order to convey a message. There are various levels of language as there are various cultural codes. There are plenty of examples of the fusion of languages. You have already collected a good deal."

This book is thus not an exhaustive work, nor a scientific or anthropological research report. It is not an ending but a beginning, a subjective compilation of fragments of real language use.

## The Dictionary

### The Guides

#### *The Keywords*

Words that are considered to be generally accepted by most people. These are mostly words that one often hears and that are easy to learn, such as *mooi* (beautiful) in Dutch; or words that make one sound supportive of others, such as *merhaba* (hello) in Turkish. However, in spite of their simplicity and extensive use, these words can still be a source of confusion.

Rachida El Haddad: "I chose *inshallah*, because you hear it all the time. I have a lot of discussions about this word. When somebody tells me, 'Inshallah', I look at him and say, 'What does your *inshallah* mean? Is it *inshallah* as I mean it, or is it *inshallah* to say, don't ask me this again, I won't come?' *Inshallah* means *if God wishes*. In theory you say *inshallah* because you will come, but if my child is sick or if something unexpected happens I shall not come, but if nothing happens I will come. I prefer that you tell me you can't come rather than saying *inshallah*. Because when you organize activities with groups of women for instance, it is a lot of work in itself. So you ask them, 'Will next week suit you? Is it difficult? Could you?' If they can't, we think of something else. So, you can't tell me *inshallah* and then not come. I ask them to look at me and tell me, 'No, I shall not come' or 'Yes, I shall come, you have my word'."

Fatima Zibouh: "What has been said is very important. *Inshallah* also conveys a certain fatalism. It's true that in Muslim culture, it is a polite way to say no. But it is also a way of saying, 'I am willing to come, but sometimes I don't have the autonomy, the freedom to be in control of my own choices. It may depend on my husband, my children, my family obligations, my household tasks and so on.' So it conveys that too. When you say it, I see mothers who say it, they say they would like to attend, but they are not always in control of their time. This word conveys a day-to-day conception which doesn't leave much leeway. In

intercultural mediation we should take the time to deconstruct this kind of word.”

### *The Landmarks*

Walking through the Cage aux Ours neighbourhood, there are many places that serve as geographical reference points. You can recognise them in the landscape, such as organisations, statues, shops and squares.

### *The Travel Agents*

These words have the power to take you on a journey. They will take you to a far-away place, where they will reveal themselves and give you a new perspective on the here and now.

In Kali Jean Bofane: “All those words from all those countries, they are all influenced by something. Some are really influenced by Brussels and Schaerbeek idioms, but others come from far away, such as *malangua*, but it’s not that far away, no. They don’t arrive straight from the Congo or Cameroon, but through Surinam and Holland. It’s a journey, it travels. But it also means that rather than take a fish coming directly from Holland, we eat a fish from home, or not from home but which has the name of a fish from home. There is a nostalgia to return to the language that nourishes us. We have to be there from time to time, to bring up this *malangua*, to use Arabic or Turkish words. I think human beings need this, especially when they are far away. Because this *malangua* comes from Holland, but when I eat it, I feel like it comes from Congo. And I eat it with fufu, but not even real fufu. It’s cornmeal and potato starch, I mix them, and it looks like fufu. Do you see what I mean?”

### *The Time Travellers*

These words recall a different time, either a past or a future.

In Kali Jean Bofane: “When you were speaking about *Flemish* earlier, I wrote this word in a text which was published by Bozar. In this text, I described a guy who was in prison and he said, ‘The Flemish time has passed’. As a Congolese from the 1960s, it’s obvious for me to say *the*

*Flemish time* and then the publisher of the book, who was Brazilian, told me: 'Listen, what does it mean, *the Flemish time has passed?*' So it is not that obvious. Because in Lingala you don't say *colonisation times*. The word *colonisation* doesn't exist, but you say *the Flemish time*. Why? You have to go back to the situation between French and Flemish speakers in this country. When I talk to you about the time before independence, what does it mean? It means that the Belgian who was in front of the Congolese, the supervisor, the sergeant, the corporal, was Flemish. The general, the big boss, the CEO, was French-speaking. Oh yes! This was the terrible part. For us, it was obvious to be faced with a Flemish person, but there was a reason to this. The reason was that the territory's general administrator, the big boss, was French-speaking, and we never saw him. And who did we see? The Flemish, who was not in charge, who was only the guy in front of you! Between them, they would talk in Flemish. For us it was *the Flemish time*."

#### *The Semantic Movers*

Over time, these words have acquired a new meaning, although it is not always clear how these semantic shifts occur.

Jean Musway: "A word comes to mind: *mbila*. In the imagination of people of Congolese origin, there is a tendency to call the police *mbila*. In Matongé for instance, they call a police intervention *mbila akueyi*, which literally means: the nuts fell down. *Mbila* means palm nut. In Congo there are four official languages: Kikongo, Tshiluba, Swahili and Lingala. *Mbila* is Lingala. Lingala has increasingly become our linguistic identity in Brussels. So I had difficulties understanding the relation between palm nuts and the police. Maybe their interventions looked like the ones in countries with palm trees? In Indonesia, people would understand, or in Congo, where there are also palm plantations."

Jean Bofane: "*Mbila* is the emblematic tree, the tree you find everywhere. It's a very strong tree. Palm fibre is one of the strongest; if you build your house with it, it won't break."

## The Makers

### *The Designers*

Words that have a specific intention, which want to give us new insights, want to comfort, surprise and captivate us or merely help us to survive.

Peter Westenberg: "I was thinking of the word *Anti-crise* (anti-crisis). It's the name of a shop where they sell things at low prices. It's a good idea: this shop's goal is to solve the crisis for the people, to sell products at a low price. It's a local initiative in a more global issue. I think this applies to all words. Words themselves are abstract components, but they are strongly linked to several realities which are very important to people. *Anti-crise* as a store name says something about the imagination. It's a way to consider reality differently. And then, why would someone do this? Maybe because they think that the world should change? It's a way of saying, 'I want reality to change'. Words don't remain words, words are also a way to change things, to change reality."

### *The Bureaucrats*

A great deal of common words belong to the field of administration, the commune, official documents, school applications. They are often terms imposed on us that lead to heated discussions.

Peter Westenberg: "I once did a documentary workshop with small children. They were in the street to interview people. The girls instantly asked, 'Are you Turkish?' And people did not know how to answer. So we invited this policeman, who said, 'You have to ask them what is written in their passport.' I like that; it's a legal ID which does not always match the way you feel. If you ask someone whether they feel Belgian-Belgian or Belgian-Moroccan, it's very difficult to answer. I can feel Belgian-Moroccan. It's completely confusing. Maybe this has nothing to do with the reality of being of Moroccan origin. Maybe we

could ask, 'What is your ethnic background? Where does your family come from?' Mine comes from Germany, I think, but I have no connection with that country. My ethnicity was shaped by Holland and Belgium. I already felt like a Brussels inhabitant when I was still living in Rotterdam, but I did not know at that time that Brussels interested me."

### *The Matchmakers*

These words span a bridge between words that are difficult to pronounce or unfamiliar and places or people that are familiar. They are sometimes accompanied by a gesture or a certain sound. They assist, they connect.

Milady Renoir: "I organised a writing workshop in a school in Schaerbeek, on Rue Gaucheretstraat, where most of the kids were Turkish, Romanian, Albanian and so forth. In a classroom for so-called newly arrived migrants, I did pantomime. Writing took place in the fourth session, where they came up with some words. The purpose was to write songs. The theme was all that we want to get rid of in the world. When I talked in French and there were words they did not understand, I noticed that the kids would partner with the ones speaking a bit of the language of the others. In the end another language developed, which was the *language of mutual aid*, to try to understand me, me speaking French. So, one day, we were talking about all we wanted to get rid of in the world. There are the obvious things happening in the neighbourhood: the trash, the pigeons, the dirtiness. And then, some kid said, 'I want to get rid of the *snake flowers*.' Question: what is a *snake flower*? She draws something, it's a plant. I understand that when you rub it, it stings. So we think it over. I come up with *nettle*, but I am the only one who understands this word in the classroom. Nobody wants to validate my word *nettle*. So, they are all against me, saying no, it's *snake flower*. Even the ones who didn't agree in the first place agreed on *snake flower*. I was alone with my *nettle*. I stepped out of the room with my *nettle*, and it was useless, because it's *snake flower*. And of course, the song was called *Snake flower*."

### *Immigratien*



*Immigratien* is a term coined by Jérémie Piolat, a philosopher and organiser of writing workshops for people learning French. In the context of this project we have extended the meaning of *Immigratien* to all words in all languages that you learn orally and transcribe by way of your own mother tongue. A French speaker will hear a word differently and consequently visualise it differently than a Dutch or English speaker. The spelling and meaning of these words can be very exotic to some.

### *The Newcomers*

Invented words with no other intention than to name themselves or others.

In Koli Jean Bofane: "At first, when I was writing, I was told, so you are a writer? You are a Congolese writer? A Belgian writer? So I finally came up with a definition: I consider myself as a Belgian writer but of Congolese origin and rationality. Otherwise, I don't know how to explain that I am Congolese, that I am Belgian, that it doesn't mean anything to me. So, I had to find a definition."

## The Storytellers

### *The Biographers*

People who shared a word with us were also asked to give a definition of that word. They often replied with a story, a memory, an experience, an opinion – a definition that says as much about that person's life as about the word itself.

Jamal Yousfi: "The word *qatran*, with the French derivative *goudron*, is well known by teenagers of my generation. They used that at the time when there was a lot of hashish dealing. Each time we, the kids, would go to Morocco with our parents in the van and we wanted to take with us our little hashish stash, we would fetch *qatran* and wrap it in paper, so dogs would not smell it. That's how I know this word. Besides *qatran* has a particular smell, because it's good. When we are in North Africa, in Morocco, and we are thirsty, sometimes there are big jars of water outside, from which you can help yourself. They put a black thing around them, made of that stuff called *qatran*."

### *The Journalists*

Some words, through their language or context, contain a political story. They have the power for us to experience a political situation that we know of through the news and the media, but that has been made tangible by these words.

Jérémie Piolat: "One word really struck me, *Nols*, because I know its history, and he is living proof of an implemented policy. He was conducting the same policy as in France today... However, it isn't a word that means anything. It's a word belonging to Schaerbeek's imagination, or maybe it is used, for instance, as an insult to say to somebody 'You are a *Nols*', or 'You are going to *Nolsify* me'. Sarkozy, in France, symbolises a similar, violent move towards ultraliberalism, he came for that, he kept his word. He changed a lot over the past decade. In slang, there is 'Don't Sarkozy me' in France. 'Don't *Nolsify* me' might be better."

### *The Local Stars*

These words are names of people who have achieved recognition in certain circles.

Judith Vanistendael: "I've chosen words that affected me personally. I chose *Pipi Langkous* (Pippi Longstocking) because it's by a great Swedish writer, Astrid Lindgren, and I am looking for the secret of her language. Because she writes with great ease, it's fascinating. She wrote tons of children's books and each book is a wonder of simplicity, beauty, joy, energy and positivity. Not at all childish. She is in the midst of life itself. In addition, her books were translated in beautiful Dutch. For me, *Pipi Langkous* represents good writing, at the highest level. A beautiful story, for children, clear, complex, all at once. I chose this also because I grew up with it, my daughter is growing up with it, everybody grows up with it. It's incredible, how she could create a character of an insufferable nature. She's an awful girl, but everybody loves her."

### *The Decoders*

Code words are constantly being introduced into languages to denote activities, people or objects. They are only known to insiders and prefer to remain secret to everyone else. Once revealed, forever revealed.

Jamal Yousfi: "I have a word which is culturally linked. For three or four days a year, everyone uses this word in Schaerbeek. Everyone uses it very low, because it shouldn't be heard. It's the word *hawli* or the word *kebsh*. It means *sheep*. Because during the three or four days before the Feast of the Sheep, everyone goes to buy his sheep, and 80% will slaughter it at home illegally. So, the word should stay secret. And it's true, nobody notices, but suddenly a car will pull up in the car park. 'Did you bring the *hawli*?' 'Yes, yes, it's in the trunk'. 'Get a blanket for the *hawli*!' 'Ok, nobody's there, we can wrap it in the blanket, let's get it inside!'"

## The Annoyers

### *The Troublemakers*

These words might not belong in a publication that wishes to create a more positive image of this neighbourhood, yet they are such a big part of everyday life that it would be a shame to ignore them. Here they are: swear words for country folk, city folk, Flemish people and cops.

Rachida El Haddad: “When I hear a youth saying, ‘This is a *blédard*’, I give him a lecture, and say, ‘You can’t call him a *blédard*’. A *blédard* is someone who comes from the *bled*. The *bled* is the countryside, it’s like living in the countryside. So it often applies to newly arrived migrants. I shout at him and say, ‘You, you call him a *blédard*? Where is your father from?’ ‘Oh, he comes from Morocco.’ ‘So he is also a *blédard*?’ ‘No, he’s my father’. I am really sad to hear this coming from third or fourth generation migrants, these youths, using this word without understanding that it’s a word that hurts, which can cause harm.”

Myriam Stoffen: “When you talked about these words, *blédard*, *smeks*, I instantly thought of the word *loser*, a word which is popular among young people in the Flemish community. I’m always amazed at how easily we integrate words that label and dehumanise people in our daily language. It’s astonishing. Mostly, I talked about how words can create links and dialogue, but they can also create instant breaches. I can’t avoid talking about it to people around me who use such words. To tell them that I don’t feel well when they say that. It is not alright with me at all. And in three seconds you start a genuine discussion.”

### *The Unknown*

These words were handed to us without us knowing their precise meaning. Sometimes, as interviewers, we had no idea to which language a word belonged or how to spell it, and if we did know to which language it belonged, neither the person who shared it with us nor anyone else was able to translate it.

Donatella Portoghese: "When I came to Belgium, I worked part-time in an Italian supermarket. The customers were migrants speaking either regular French or a local Italian dialect, but not at all Italian. It was really striking. They spoke more or less regular French, which they learned here with regional accents, when coming from Charleroi or Liège, but mixing it with dialectical words that are very different according to the region of origin. I wonder whether Arabic or Congolese words in the dictionary also refer to something more specific than the nationality, like a region, a city or a situation. The specificity of language is very important in writing, in fiction, because such a specific word will make you enter a world that is instantly something else. If you talk about bread, it can be any bread. But if you say *baguette*, or *kolo*, or *pelmenis*, or *bodink*, you place those words in a context. Even if the word or the context is unknown to the reader, they carry a very different reference."

### *The Absent Ones*

These are words that are missing from this book which we thought, at the beginning of this project, would definitely be included, such as *witlof* or *bougnoul*. We would like to reserve a place for them here, together with all the other absent words that the reader of this book might think of.

## SOURCES

### Encounters

#### Exchange of ideas

##### **- Editorial meetings on the object of the dictionary, the words and the language**

In preparation for this book of collected words, we organised editorial meetings to nourish our thoughts. We invited writers, sociologists, a philosopher, a comic-strip author, a visual artist and participants to Schaerbeek's life.

**#3** 27/06/2012 | 09:30 – 11:30 | Constant Variable, Rue Gallaitstraat 80  
With: Fatima Zibouh (political scientist, CEDEM, University of Liège), Myriam Stoffen (director of the Zinneke Parade), Rachida El Haddad (moderator, Navez-Portaels neighbourhood contract), Paul Simonetti (local resident), Bram Borloo (artist and local resident), Peter Westenberg, Clémentine Delahaut, An Mertens (project)

**#2** 30/05/2012 | 19:30 – 22:00 | Constant Variable, Rue Gallaitstraat 80  
With: Judith Vanistendael (comic-strip artist), In Koli Jean Bofane (writer), Milady Renoir (writer, performance artist), Paul Simonetti (local resident), Donatella Portoghese (linguist, Constant), Peter Westenberg, Clémentine Delahaut, An Mertens (project)

**#1** 24/04/2012 | 19:30 – 22:00 | Constant Variable, Rue Gallaitstraat 80  
With: Jamal Youssfi (Compagnie des Nouveaux Disparus & Mimouna festival), Jean Bofane (writer), Jérémie Piolat (philosopher), Milady Renoir (writer, performance artist), Jean Musway (Centre laïque de Charleroi & local resident), Mohammed Sellam (local resident), Peter Westenberg, Clémentine Delahaut, An Mertens (project)

##### **- Mots saufs & sûrs (Safe & certain words)**

09/10/2010 | 10:00 – 13:00 | Renovas, 9 Place Verboeckhovenplein

Exchange around the theme of (in)security and the voice of women in the public space. In collaboration with Garance, a partner organisation for the neighbourhood contract fighting against gender-based violence since its creation in 2000: [www.garance.be](http://www.garance.be)

**- Les propos verts (Green words)**

12/09/2010 | 14:00 – 18:00 | Rue Navezstraat, Infrabel plot of land

A stone's throw away from the Cage aux Ours, we managed to grow vegetables! A wonderful opportunity to visit this amazing green area and chat with the gardeners.

**- La musique (Music)**

31/03/2010 | 10:00 – 13:00 | Renovas, 9 Place Verboeckhovenplein

Talk on the theme of music between the neighbourhood's inhabitants and the women of Feza, a partner organization of the neighbourhood contract that welcomes *Femmes Epanouies et Actives* (Active and fulfilled women) for activities based on parent-child relationships. With: Selma, Hannan, Sangül, Saïda, Laurence, Agnes, Anne, Peter, Rachida, Clémentine.

**- L'identité (Identity)**

10/03/2010 | 14:00 – 17:00 | Feza, Rue Van Ooststraat

Talk on the theme of identity between local residents and the women of Feza. With: Selma, Hannan, Sangül, Saïda, Laurence, Agnes, Anne, Peter, Rachida, Clémentine.

**Walks**

**- Chez nous on dit... (Around here we say...)**

22/04/2012 | 10:30 – 17:00 | Constant Variable, Rue Gallaitstraat 80

As part of the Heritage Day on the theme of the hero, we searched for narratives about and expressions relating to past and present heroes. In Schaerbeek you can virtually hear the heritage. Traces of the various waves of migrations, which changed the neighbourhood, are found through the various languages that are spoken in this part of Brussels:

[www.erfgoeddag.be](http://www.erfgoeddag.be)

**- La Louche d'Or (The golden ladle)**

21/05/2011 | 10:00 – 13:00 | Magasin de Mots, Rue Gallaitstraat 178

Renovas organised a discovery walk to non-profit organisations around a soup tasting. Each passer-by was offered a bowl of lentil soup in exchange of a word.

**- Pain à la Cage (Bread at the Cage)**

24/06/2010 | 10:00 – 13:00 | Place du Pavillon / Paviljoenplein

A meeting, a conversation and a session of multicultural sampling. With the generous participation of pastry chef Chez Angelo, Délices & Gourmandises and the bakers around the Cage aux Ours: Vermeersch, Verbist, Boulangerie du Coin, Boulangerie Sultana, Boulangerie Elisabeth.

**- La Balade du Maelbeek (The Maelbeek walk)**

25/04/2010 | 14:00 – 18:00 | Place Verboeckhovenplein

We went for a walk along the Maelbeek with our vox-pop backpacks. The walk was organised by Le Vide technique, a partner of the contrat the neighbourhood contract.

**- Lâchez les Ours (Let loose the bears)**

11/10/2009 | 15:00 – 17:00 | Place Verboeckhovenplein

A long, fun walk through the neighbourhood streets of Navez-Portaels, organised by Patrimoine à Roulettes, a partner of the neighbourhood contract: [www.patrimoinearoulettes.be](http://www.patrimoinearoulettes.be)

**Listening session**

**- Finissage au Magasin de Mots (Finissage at the word shop)**

29/05/2011 | 12:00 – 18:00 | Rue Gallaitstraat 178

Le Magasin de Mots (the word shop) was an exhibition space in Rue Gallaitstraat. We wish to thank the non-profit organisation nadine vzw for offering us us this window for three months. While waiting for the tramway you could listen to the database and the radio programmes and participate by contributing a spoken or texted word.



**- Radio à La Cage (Radio at the Cage)**

13/05/2010 | 19:00 – 19:30 | Place Verboeckhovenplein

The first programme by Radio la Cage/Radio Berenkuil on public radio was broadcast by Radio Panik 105.4 FM, based on the meetings organised by Feza & Constant. We took this opportunity to install our *radio-active* beach umbrellas on the square and served fresh juice for this collective session.

**Film screenings**

**- *A la recherche du gitan perdu* (In search of the lost gypsy)**

21/05/2011 | 20:00 – 21:00 | Magasin de Mots, Rue Gallaitstraat 178

In Schaerbeek, winter, unemployment, rising prices and so on reality catch up with you, pushing you down. Music, dance, sunshine submerges you. And this song keeps on playing, making you remember where you came from, who you are. *A la Recherche du gitan perdu* (52 min., filmed with the help of the CEDAS) is a documentary by Jérémie Piolat, who was present to lead the debate.

**- *HoneyShop***

30/04/2011 | 11:00 – 18:00 | Magasin de Mots, Rue Gallaitstraat 178

Between September and October 2010, Christina Stadlbauer exchanged 15 pounds of honey – collected from an urban bee colony in a beehive located at 80 Rue Gallaitstraat – with bees and honey stories in the HoneyShop. A film lasting 15 min. With the support of the non-profit organisation nadine: [www.nadine.be/honey-shop](http://www.nadine.be/honey-shop)

**- *Place Belgique***

07/04/2011 | Magasin de Mots, Rue Gallaitstraat 178

Screening of the documentary in presence of the film-maker Foued Bellali. *Place Belgique* is about double identities and invites us to meet with those men and women born in Belgium of Moroccan parents.

**- *Rue du Nord***

24/03/2011 | Magasin de Mots, Rue Gallaitstraat 178

Screening of the documentary *Rue du Nord*, in presence of Foued Bellali,

one of the film-makers. Accounts from the first generation of Moroccan migrants to Belgium. In collaboration with the non-profit organisations 2bouts and nadine.

### **Workshop**

#### **- L'écriture slam et radio (Slam writing and radio)**

12/04/2011 et 27/04/2011 | Magasin de Mots, Rue Gallaitstraat 178

The young people from Cité Marbotin made a radio programme on rap with Hervé Brindel, Cécile Michel and Jérémie Piolat. They coined the word 'boromites' which was added to the dictionary. In exchange we recorded their commentaries on the word *flamand* (Flemish, Fleming), the subject of their first radio programme, which was rebroadcast on Radio Panik 105.4 FM. In collaboration with the non-profit organisation Gsara. More info on the radio workshops: [www.micro-ondes.be](http://www.micro-ondes.be)

### **Radio programmes**

We produced radio programmes entitled Radio la Cage/Radio Berenkuil and based on words collected near to the Cage aux Ours. The idea for the programme was to echo the discussions and to discuss words with language experts, academics, amateurs, artists. The programmes were broadcast every six weeks, on Thursday at 7 p.m. on Radio Panik 105.4 FM and in streaming on [www.radiopanik.org](http://www.radiopanik.org). You can listen to them on: [www.lalanguageschaerbeekoise.be](http://www.lalanguageschaerbeekoise.be).

**#17** | 07/06/2012 | Grand Cri de la Cage aux Ours

Broadcast of the performance by Delphine Auby, on 12 May 2012.

Sound, editing, mixing: Anthony Dupriez.

**#16** | 26/04/2012 | Klette!

An encounter between genuine Brussels words from the audio dictionary and Mark Quintelier, expert from the *Academie van het Brussels*:

<http://www.avhb.be>.

**#15** | 15/03/2012 | Marche des hommes contre le machisme

This walk was organised by Afaf Hemamou, the alderwoman of Schaerbeek in charge of equal opportunities, on Thursday 8 March. It started from Place Colignonplein and went to the *Maison des femmes* (Women's house).

**#14** | 02/02/2012 | La langue ... oiseau

Milady Renoir, author, performer and Schaerbeek resident, read her texts made from words drawn from the audio dictionary, intermezzos of *créa-sons* (sound/creations) by Daniel Martin-Borret, sound artist, who aired texts by Milady Renoir. Followed by: an invitation for the programme *Poésie à l'Ecoute* on 2 January 2012 and a rerun of *créa-sons* on Mondays between 7 May and 15 July 2012 on Radio Campus Bruxelles 92.1 FM.

**#13** | 20/10/2011 | Collé-monté

Three proposals with sounds from The Schae/arbeek Language: a collage by Peter Westenberg, a culinary remix by Whitebread, and the collage *Je suis une schaarbeekoise* (I'm a Schaerbeek resident) by Clémentine Delahaut.

**#12** | 08/09/2011 | Le Cri Pavillon

Interview with the town crier and letter writer Delphine Auby. Repeat of her performance on Place du Pavillon / Paviljoenplein on 29 May 2011.

**#11** | 28/07/2011 | Le mot comme un virus

A remix of the dictionary by the Schaerbeek artist MoZ HoruS.

**#10** | 16/06/2011 | Radio Marbotin: Le flamand 2/2

**#9** | 19/05/2011 | Radio Marbotin: Le flamand 1/2

Radio Marbotin is a radio created by 11 adolescents from the Marbotin neighbourhood in Schaerbeek. Seven boys and four girls, about 16 years old, asked people (passers-by, friends) on the streets what they thought a *flamand* was. In exchange of a workshop in our space, they offered us their testimonies around this word. With the support of the non-profit organisation Gsara.

**#8** | 31/03/2011 | Journée de la Femme

Words and sounds linked to the solidarity walk organised from Place Colignonplein on Women's Day, 8 March 2011.

**#7** | 24/02/2011 | Mario Sommarti

Conversation with Mario Sommarti, sculptor of dummies near the Cage aux Ours, and who grew up using Friulian, a northern Italian regional dialect.

**#6** | 27/01/2011 | Manko'o Shop

Conversation on the languages used in Cameroon, with Béatrice, following a savoury visit at her shop on Rue Gallaitstraat.

**#5** | 09/12/2010 | Arabistix II

**#4** | 28/10/2010 | Arabistix I

A discussion with Najet Boulafdal, who holds a Master's degree in Arabic Languages and works for the non-profit organisation Mana, on words and sounds from the dictionary linked to Arabic languages. Rerun in the special programme *Révolutions? Arabes?* on 23 and 26 June 2012 on Radio Panik.

**#3** | 23/09/2010 | Propos au vert

Words and sounds recorded in the open gardens of Infrabel, on Rue Navez-Portaelsstraat on 12 September 2010. With Raphaël, Marcial, Aïcha and her son from the wholesale store Las Vegas.

**#2** | 01/07/2010 | Pain dans la Cage

Words and sounds collected during the walk, on 24 June 2010, at the bakeries around the Cage aux Ours.

**#1** | 13/05/2010 | Radio La Cage

The first episode of the programme made from an encounter between the women of the non-profit organisation Feza and local residents.

## **INTERVIEWS**

Through chance meetings, people came to us, or we went to them, and eager to hear their stories, we recorded them.

Thanks to the following people, who offered us their words: Aziz, Dr Lichic, MoZ HoruS; Marcial, Raphaël, Michel, Aïcha and her son in the vegetable gardens of Infrabel; Béatrice and her husband at Manko'o Shop; Mario Sommarti; Mohammed, Badema, Ibrahim, Pauline of Okup collective, Congolese artists from Eza Possibles during their residency at Nadine 80 Rue Gallaitstraat; Ismael, Hasdine and Khalil of the Voltaire centre, a few people from Garage 29, Rue de Moerkerkestraat; people from the Pater Baudry retirement home, Square Prévost de Delaunaysquare 107.

In May 2011, we met the technical engineer and the young cast on the film set of LA CAGE RPZT, a project of the Zumba association, partner for the neighbourhood contract, in collaboration with film professionals. More info and videos: <http://lacagerpzt.blogspot.be>

## **Creations**

### **Backpack**

The backpack was a mobile recording device that was really popular with children! A click on a key of the joystick recorded a word, another key played the sound back immediately. It was also possible to record new words while listening to the existing words. For the more talented there was a file key to remix live with all the dictionary words.

Unfortunately this device, created by Michael Murtaugh (software) and Peter Westenberg (DIY), was stolen in Molenbeek and never reappeared.

### **A Schaerbeek robot**

On the homepage of the project's website Michael Murthaug and Femke Snelting created a robot which generates nonsensical sentences using the words in the dictionary. Each time you load the page, you get a new text.

## **Cartography**

Using the places where the words were recorded, the artists Pierre Huyghebaert and Pierre Marchand created a map where words gave a new design to the local streets. The map exists as a poster, as an interactive picture next to the words on the website and as a cover inside this book.

## **Texting schrbk**

During the residency at the Magasin de Mots, visitors were invited to send a text message with a neighbourhood word to a free phone number. An automatic answer shouted Schaerbeek words in the street and on this website: <http://constantvzw.org/test>. Created by Denis Devos (software) and Michel Cleempoel (concept).

## **Sound creations**

### **- Sound Installation: L'arbre à Palabres (The tree of never-ending discussions)**

**22/04/2012 | 10:00 – 17:00 | Infrabel vegetable gardens**

During the audio walk organised for Heritage Day we ended our visit at the vegetable gardens hidden among the railroad tracks. There, in the middle of the tall grass, the cherry tree and the redcurrant bush, the voices of the neighbourhood inhabitants echoed all together with their accents as various as their stories. L'Arbre à Palabres is a creation by Clémentine Delahaut with the help of Guillaume Bernier to construct autonomous amplifiers.

### **- Radio pieces by Milady Renoir & Daniel Martin-Borret**

The writer and prolific performer Milady Renoir took part in the audio dictionary and wrote fictions using the following words: *Anachid, Mons/Bergen, Cage aux Ours, Intégriste, Goudron, Etranger.e, Bleddar, Femme, Gombo, Boromites, Khadafi, Kuvertine*. Sound artist Daniel Martin-Borret put the text on air. All audio pieces were broadcast on Radio Campus Bruxelles 92.1 FM every Monday between 7 May 2012 and 15 July 2012.

- **A Remix of the audio dictionary The Schae/arbeek Language by MoZ HoruS**

Following the encounter with MoZ HoruS at the Magasin de mots, this Schaerbeek artist remastered the audio dictionary, following the tread of the word like a virus, according to the writings of Burroughs and the zombie film *Pontypool*.

**Les Cris du quartier (Shouts from the neighbourhood)**

For several years now, the actress Delphine Auby has performed *shouts* in various neighbourhoods of the city, in the context of the project *Écrivez, je crierai* (Write, I'll shout). Equipped with a megaphone and mailboxes placed ten days in advance on several squares in Brussels in order to collect all the things the inhabitants wanted to write to her and a little travelling desk, Delphine Auby plays her role of town crier. The messages are of all kinds, but they have one thing in common: they give you shivers when shouted in the place they were written. More info: <http://ecrivezjecrierai.unventdunord.be>.

12/05/2012 | 17:00 – 18:00 | Place Verboekhovenplein

With the students of the Institut Technique Cardinal Mercier

10/09/2011 | 17:00 – 17:30 | Place Verboekhovenplein

29/05/2011 | 17:00 | Place du Pavillon / Paviljoenplein

## What do you mean exactly?

Judith Vanistendael

*During the second editorial meeting, Judith Vanistendael observed: "I believe that even a dictionary like this one could be very useful in schools, to work with kids around certain words in class. Children have to interact with many different cultures. And in order to express their ideas, a dictionary like this one can be very practical."* We asked her to shed light on her idea for this book.

I think this dictionary can be a useful tool for schools in Brussels. Language is who you are, language links you to a specific group of people.

Even though we are all capable of the same emotions, each language expresses them differently. Language can repress certain concepts or emphasise other ones. Language forms a mirror through which one looks at the world.

Brussels is an extraordinary melting pot of languages and this reality is reflected in primary and secondary schools. Kids with very different *dictionaries* spend their days together in class; they form a group and are thus required to interact. This may sometimes lead to tense situations. Being different does not always result in a positive attitude.

I think the dictionary can be a great tool to let kids function in a group. As I said during the meeting I attended, this dictionary is about enjoying playing with language, hearing new sounds and discovering possible new words.

To me this enjoyment is not elitist at all. I am convinced that everyone shares this same pleasure, the joy of language: we are all homo sapiens and we all use language. It is typical of our species to possess such linguistic complexity. It has nothing to do with intellect, but with seeing and feeling the importance of language and communication.

But man is also a *homo ludens*, a player. Each human being, except the



most embittered, enjoys playing.

Building your own group dictionary in class, to reveal your identity as a group, but also to discover the differences as a group, combines the human capacity for language with our desire to play, to have fun and to explore.

I believe that that is the strength of creating a *dictionary*.

**I am (also) an author**  
Milady Renoir

I joined the project The Schae/arbeek Language when more than 300 words had already been collected. Simply by hearing the term The Schae/arbeek Language, a perceptible idea of this language took shape in my mind, even before I had heard the first words.

When I saw the project's website, an overview (this whole language...) took hold of my reality and my fiction of Schaerbeek. I have lived in this neighbourhood for more than four years now, it's my home, through its public and private places, its emotions and stories.

Each Brussels resident should have a notion of each neighbourhood,  
a sensory, cultural, urbanistic and human perception.  
Each Schaerbeek resident should feel a singular 'home'.  
Each Brussels resident should have a vision of who these Schaerbeek  
inhabitants are that are speaking this language.

On the website's homepage, random sentences formed by words and read by a virtual robot spoke to me (the software allows you to hear those sentences). Nothing understandable. It's a game, a labyrinth, with no arrow or sign at the entrance. The words revealed themselves to me. I stepped into this world of language.

I made a sensory scan.

I became a listener for some words, I just listened to them. For others, I remained a spectator. I read their names, I remained impenetrable.

Others were so full of meaning that they did not speak to me.

Others, at last, spoke to my desire of fiction.

I met Clémentine Delahaut, one of the project's coordinators. She told me, 'If you want to write about certain words... Dig and write'.<sup>5</sup>

A word among others: *Kuvertine*<sup>6</sup>. As for other words, there is a direct

<sup>5</sup> The texts are presented on [www.deschaarbeeksetaal.be](http://www.deschaarbeeksetaal.be), as part of the dictionary entries *Anachid*, *Blédard*, *Boromites*, *Bouchrie*, *La Cage aux Ours*, *Etranger*, *Femme*, *Goudron*, *Intégriste*, *Khadafi*, *Mons/Bergen*. More info: [www.miladyrenoir.be](http://www.miladyrenoir.be).

<sup>6</sup> The text on *Kuvertine* is part of *Words in Action*.

evocation and a tone. Beyond this encounter, a total misunderstanding of this word. *Kuvertine* could have been a heroine, a city, a music band, an adjective... I liked not knowing this word, feeling lost. The *original* word has become other and mine. I knew it had another meaning in *another* language and finally, I couldn't avoid seeing what it meant. I tamed it to make it even more plural, through my language, my writing.

What becomes of these words when they are spoken, told within this project? Their path.

Recorded people and passers-by are the speakers. The *speakers*, the *tellers* convey their words. They include their symbolism, a story (their clan, culture, family, country, accent, past) and a portrait of themselves in front of the interviewer.

The testimony refers to a subjectivity, but this subjectivity aims to identify as truth what it shows. A form of narrative, almost a fiction, but not yet.

The speakers/tellers become *authors*, in a literary and legal sense (they sign their word and the history surrounding it). This event incorporates the field, the archive, the puzzle of The Schae/arbeek Language.

By expressing their experience with the word, the speakers also induce their interlocutor to observe their social reality, their selves, through their objectivity and subjectivity. The *listeners/spectators* are in the language, in the universe of this speaker/author. As in a lexical dictionary, each entry (word) becomes a piece of the Language which we will be able to recognise, to hear (in a street in Schaerbeek). This language builds itself up indefinitely, exponentially.

How did I make the unreal emerge out of reality?

When I am an author/writer wishing to write on the words of this Language, I listen, I hear, I read these words, I am in a state of *pre-fiction*. Language is spiritual, literary and emotional nourishment. As soon as I take the creator's place, there occurs the transformation of these effects towards fictionalization. I can tell a story with those words by ignoring or integrating the first causes of pre-fiction.

Every dictionary is a universal tool, a mysterious athanor, an attic, a cellar for any person wishing to embrace a piece of the world through the people who create it, relentlessly and without restraint.

**Marhaba! Welcome!**

Jamal Youssfi

*A Brussels-Moroccan monologue written by the artistic director of the theatrical company Les Nouveaux Disparus.*

*Mine ta?* Where are you from?

Are you from here or from there? You're *bledi oula romi*.

Are you from Brussels or a *smeks*?

You're a *smeks*, that's it!

At first sight, when I see you, I see your neighbourhood, I tell myself you're from here, but you don't have the look, and I'm almost certain you're from there!

*Mine ta?* You don't have the look from there.

Say something, *sahbe*.

*Smah lia!* I'm sorry!

If you don't want me to talk to you, no problem.

But something is bugging me. You're from where?

Maybe you're *abé*? No, *kardash*?

I can't label you.

But I'm sure that you're not.

Go on, *khoya!* Go on, brother!

Speak!

Say 'Schaerbeek', just once, you're wondering why I ask you to say this word?

The way you pronounce it will help me.

It'll point me in a direction, as you might say. I'm like you.

I'm from here, from there, but where are my roots?

Here? There?

There? Here?

Schaerbeek! Schaerbeek! Schaerbeek!

I'm not judging you, *jar!*<sup>7</sup>

You see here, we're obliged to put a little thing behind everyone.  
It's an obligation because there are so many people.  
If one day you lose yourself or you don't know who you are anymore.  
What you give me, can help us to help you and tell you who you are.  
It can happen real fast, cousin, *smack*, all it takes is a small fall or  
an emotional shock.  
And no more memory.

*Chekoun ana?* Who am I?

No, it isn't labelling.  
We don't put labels, it's a sort of pedigree.  
You see each being, each human being, everyone, dog, cat, man, woman,  
tree...

We all have a sort of small notebook assigned to us, a small book that  
is hidden in a very secret place, and systematic notes which are taken  
on almost everything we do, from an early age on.  
The advantage : you don't have to open your mouth. We will tell you  
right away, who you are, just by looking at you.

No, nothing to do with the *hnouch*.  
I see in your eyes, you're thinking...  
No, no, *khoya*, stop telling yourself that!  
Nothing to do with the *hnouch*.

We are not *hnouch*, it's not to put you on file.

Go to Molem, it's worse there.  
In Schaerbeek it's cool!  
Close your eyes and let yourself be guided!

<sup>7</sup> A term used by the Algerian-Schaerbeekians meaning *my friend*, like *khoya*, but the real meaning is *my neighbour*.

*Sahbe. Migré? Or rather smeks?*

Hey, *khoya*, I can't do nothing for you.

*L'Allah I Hayoun.*

*T-Hala. See you.*

## Language, our model of openness

Jérémie Piolat

In the book *Portrait du colonialiste* (Portrait of a colonialist),<sup>8</sup> I mention what I call the *linguistic creativity of migrants*, with whom I work. When they learn, write or speak French, shifts occur, and words, idioms are transformed. I named the language resulting from these shifts *Migrant Creole* or *Immigratien*. I put this Creole in italics since Caribbean Creole is a language in itself. There is something in the migrant language which reminds me of it; a similar process is at work.

Caribbean Creole was born from the forced encounter between very different populations: Muslims, animists, Africans, and even later, Indians from India, Chinese, Lebanese.<sup>9</sup> These populations, and firstly the Africans, were all confronted with French, which was the language of the oppressors, of those in favour of slavery, and they were forced to assimilate it without becoming lost in it. Creole represented the possibility of not getting entirely lost in the French language as in the experience of being uprooted and losing one's cultural origins. Creole was the outstanding invention of a language able to welcome other uprooted languages. If Creole kept many French words, it supplemented many others and, mostly, neither did it preserve the grammatical structure, nor did it preserve the *etymological* structure of French in writing. In French, you don't write to give expression to sounds, but rather to reveal the history, the origin of words. This specificity of the French language often bothers migrants. In written Creole, you write sounds as you pronounce them, and a sign or a group of signs equals a sound. You don't write *l'examen* (the exam) for instance, but *lègzanmen*, just as you pronounce it. This spelling represents an opposition from

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<sup>8</sup> Jérémie Piolat, *Portrait du colonialiste*, Paris, La Découverte/Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> On the West Indian colonial experience and its consequences, see: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, New York, Grove Press, 2008.



spoken cultures that have been jeopardised in Western Europe.<sup>10</sup>

I think you will find the same will at stake, through what I call *Migrant Creole*, not to bury an oral tradition under the written word and thus not to bury popular culture, spirituality or the intellect, which are also carried with the body.<sup>11</sup>

You will not write for instance *j'ai beaucoup d'histoires à dire* (I have a lot of stories to tell), but *j'ai bokou distoire a dir*. You will not write *dans mon cœur* (in my heart), but *dan mo cor*, engraving the mark of the accent (Moroccan in this case) and thus producing an ambiguity between *cœur* (heart) and *corps* (body). This is a sound ambiguity, for both are places of feelings, and what we call here in Europe *le cœur* (the heart) is often used to refer to *le corps* (the body). Could the use of the word *cœur* in westernised cultures be the polite way of talking about feelings without referring to the *corps*, considered as dirty, low, the source of primal instincts?

The social and existential background that is specific to migrants, and from which *Migrant Creole* takes shape, is not unrelated to what the Caribbean have experienced. Migrants are not assimilated to slaves, but they are subject to exploitation and are often considered as uncivilised or less civilised. Through immigration, they also face both a different culture and the language of the promoter of literacy, of the master, the boss, the dominant.

Thus the language, culture and imagination of origin that tries to survive in exile live on, sometimes by distorting a word or an expression of the language of the country whose language is being learned. This doesn't change the meaning. It often enriches it and challenges the language it distorts.

Here's an example of one of these *distortions*. A Fulani person from Mauritania, talking about somebody he often meets in his neighbourhood in a state of drunkenness, will say, 'Il est un alcooliste.' Instead of *alcoolique* (alcoholic)? Maybe. But in the word *alcooliste*, there is something that is spontaneously less passive, less disparaging than in

<sup>10</sup> On Creole and Creole identity, see: Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, *Eloge de la créolité*, Paris, Gallimard, 1993. Edouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*, Paris, Gallimard, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> On oral cultures, see: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, Oxford, James Currey, 2008.

the word *alcoolique*. Just as if this Fulani man, who has never drunk alcohol and who considers it totally forbidden, didn't even judge the one who drinks, and grants him a certain form of knowledge from within his alcoholism. *Alcooliste* sounds like a title, not a disease. This shift hides more than a deficient memory, say. From what they showed me, most Fulani people of Mauritania are extremely tolerant and not judgemental at all, even towards lifestyles that are different from their own. Fulani people with whom I have worked were curious about everything and about different habits they had heard about or observed, even far from their own. I believe that the shift from *alcoolique* to *alcooliste* is the sign of this tolerant curiosity where the desire to search for the meaning of things is stronger than the need to judge or to denigrate.

Like Caribbean Creole, *Migrant Creole* also stands out through the introduction of terms foreign to the French language.

The literary work of Raphaël Confiant is an extraordinary example of this permanent enrichment and abundance of the French language, by injecting Creole words and sometimes Frenchifying them, sometimes by only adding an article to a name. He has also revived old and forgotten French words.

The work on the language of Schaerbeek points to this aspect of what I call *Immigratien* or *Migrant Creole*.

Take, for instance, the expression *7nouch*, which features in Schaerbeek's language dictionary. It comes from the Arabic word meaning *worm*, and the expression refers to the police. It is a coded language, still spoken in the streets, the place where the strength of the spoken language often took refuge in Europe. You can notice creativity at work on a literary level in this expression with the use of the number 7, used to represent the Arabic letter ح, which looks like the number and which sound does not exist in French. This is like a sketch of a gift of a new letter to the Roman alphabet. There are several layers of meaning. The Arabic word first. Then the translation: *vers de terre* (worm), which is a common Arabic expression. Then what it means: *police*.

It expresses a particular relationship with the police, which the

neighbourhood's inhabitants did not choose and which takes its place in the tragic heritage of immigration – whatever is said, whatever is kept silent, whatever remains to be hoped for or to be established.

Many French words come from elsewhere, from Arabic or Romany among others, and this will continue. In the 1970s and 1980s in France, in the working-class neighbourhoods where I grew up, most words used to designate those who occupy the streets came from Romany. *Je suis marave: je me suis battu* (I got into a fight). *Il a chouravé: il a volé* (he stole something). *On va piave: on va boire* (let's get drunk), and so on. We used them without knowing their origin. We thought they belonged to French, to our French at least. They are still there. And there were other words.

To listen to this language in the making and which cannot be stopped is to question the desire of a connection out of the acknowledgment of this almost natural opening of language. The Schae/arbeek Language dictionary tells us: *look at our language and how it is alive, how it moves, how it opens.*

Our language is indeed much more open than we are, much more open than politics aimed at those called *others*, at a time of checkpoints and closed borders, more open than experts who reflect on it and sometimes confine it.

To put forward the language of migrants or mixed neighbourhoods is to wonder whether we should not take language as an example for thinking about the future and our openness. Our language, in its orality, goes a lot further than our systems of urban community management, our political systems.

And beyond this, shedding light on this openness of language amounts to pointing out the importance and infinite wealth of spoken words and restores its importance to the body, to the living, without whom there would be no spoken language.

## **Making Brussels with words**

Dr Isabelle Doucet, The University of Manchester

Is language, are words important for making cities and for building society? The immediate response is obviously yes. Citizens indeed *talk* about the city, about their neighbourhoods, about living in their neighbourhoods. Those more *officially* in charge of discussing – *talking about* – the city, develop visions for the city's future. In particular, architects and planners *narrate* the city through drawings, models and writings. Citizens too talk about proposals and plans developed, by others, for their city. In fact, on an everyday basis, citizens share thoughts. And they do so in many languages. It is, therefore, perhaps not so strange that when the different actors who *talk* about the city come together, they sometimes have difficulties understanding one another. Not because they do not want to but because they each bring experiences, knowledge, and languages that may be hard for others to understand. For example, when I analysed participatory meetings in neighbourhood contracts in Schaerbeek (and Brussels more generally), it was clear that some words and ideas act in these meetings but are not explained, and thus may lead to frustration and miscommunication. Also, for example, I sometimes sensed a suspicion amongst the Brussels population towards architects and urban planners. Brussels has, of course, a quite traumatic history when it comes to torturing the population with destructive planning (e.g., the Manhattan project, the North-South Junction, the Palace of Justice). So I wonder: is it possible that these *traumas* are present whenever citizens, politicians and planners/architects meet (as in the context of a neighbourhood contract)?

Before further elaborating this question, let's start from the issues that are raised when accepting that language *makes* a city.

Firstly, if many languages are used, as is surely the case in Brussels, then how to avoid getting lost in translation? Communicating across and through different languages can trigger misunderstandings, tensions, and sometimes conflicts. But it can also be a source of laughter, fun,

surprise and learning. Allowing oneself to get lost in the labyrinthine world of multilingual communication may in fact be a productive way of learning.

Secondly, if language is understood as a way of expressing oneself, and of expressing ideas and visions on the city, one should acknowledge that such ideas and visions do not just travel through written and spoken words but also through drawings, plans, models, even buildings.

Architects and planners *speak* through their buildings. As soon as words are materialised, they no longer just *mean* something, but may create a whole world around them. For example, history has taught us that architects may *speak* the city through their plans, models and realised buildings, but that does not necessarily mean that they have also *understood* the city nor that their proposals are *being understood* (as by citizens). A history of *top-down* planning disasters has shown how those *living* the city are often kept at a safe distance from those *thinking* the city. Likewise, and perhaps more surprisingly, thinking the city from a *bottom-up* perspective does not necessarily guarantee a mutual understanding between citizens and planners. Many actors and voices are at work in participatory meetings and these are not, or cannot, always be accounted for. Often this is interpreted as purposeful exclusion. However, many voices are unheard also simply because these voices are difficult to identify. They travel in ways that are powerful yet difficult to grasp. In a few moments, I will introduce such *mysterious* actors.

Thirdly, and in relation to the previous point, everyday urban life is bursting with ideas, words, myths and legends that play an important part in making and thinking the city and yet are largely underestimated. These everyday words shape the city as much as do official plans, but because they are more implicit it is difficult for them to be *heard* and thus to be acknowledged. Nevertheless, they inform and shape how we think about the city and what we expect from it. These words *act*, sometimes very vividly, and they travel through space and time, often for years, even decades. Travelling through everyday life, through people, but also through books and buildings, such words play a significant role in building and thinking the city. Therefore, it is

important to find ways not just to make these words *speak*, but by doing so, to make them be *heard*.

Two such important travellers, in Brussels, are the words *architek* and *Bruxellization*.<sup>12</sup> As most citizens of Brussels know, *architek* is an insult coined to mock Joseph Poelaert, the architect of the megalomaniac Palace of Justice, and first emerged in the Brussels dialect in the 1880s. *Bruxellization*, a more recent term dating back to the 1960s and 1970s, refers to the destruction of a city by profit-driven developers and architects. Both words thus remind us of the Brussels *urban trauma*, namely the harassment of citizens by destructive urban planning. *Architek* and *Bruxellization* both are *old* terms, but that does not make them *outdated* or less active. In an article I wrote for the journal *City, Culture, and Society* (in print, 2012) called “Making a City with Words: Understanding Brussels through its urban heroes and villains”, I chronicled the travels of *architek* and *Bruxellization* (e.g., in poems, crime novels, graphic novels and tourist guides) as a way to understand their continuous agency in everyday life. Following J.L. Austin’s work on the *performative* potential of words, I unravelled why words travel with great significance and ease whilst their impact often remains unnoticed and unrecognised.<sup>13</sup>

This is the case because words travel in different shapes, in different *disguises*, or what Austin called ‘misleading forms’ and ‘masqueraders’.<sup>14</sup> *Bruxellization*, for example, travelled, amongst many other disguises, as ‘massacre urbanism’,<sup>15</sup> ‘frenzied destruction party’,<sup>16</sup> or in the comparison of Brussels with a bonsai: ‘trimmed, mutilated, and mistreated’.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, when words travel, they use all sorts of *tricks* to reinforce their effect on the audience. *Architek* offers a good example

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<sup>12</sup> The remainder of this article is based on Isabelle Doucet, “Making a City with Words: Understanding Brussels through its urban heroes and villains”, *City, Culture, and Society* (in print, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1990 [1962]. For a detailed analysis and elaboration on the use of Austin’s work as a methodological guidance tool, see Doucet, “Making a City with Words”.

<sup>14</sup> Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Thibaut Vandorselaer and Jean Van Hamme, *Bruxelles dans la BD. Itinéraire découverte*, Louvain-La-Neuve, Versant Sud, 2004, pp. 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> Geert Van Istendael, *Arm Brussel*, Antwerp/Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Atlas, (2002 [1992]), p. 171.

<sup>17</sup> A. Duchesne in Labor, Maison de la Francité and Brussels 2000 (eds.), *Dictionnaire de Bruxelles: définition d’une ville par les gens qui y vivent, y passent, ou y travaillent*, Brussels, Labor, 2000, p. 59.

since it has used such tricks to reinforce its insulting effect. For example, it has travelled with an exclamation mark: *architek!* Also, it has made use of all sorts of adjectives to reinforce the insult, such as 'smeergen' or 'vuile(n') architect, meaning *dirty* or *filthy* in the sense of *unjust*.<sup>18</sup> Most famously, *architek* has travelled accompanied by the term 'skieven' or 'schieven' architect, in the meaning of *crooked* and, more figuratively, *false and untrustworthy*.<sup>19</sup>

But words also travel in non-linguistic ways, reinforcing their effect and impact. For example, when *architek* and *Bruxellization* circulate in books that are published in large quantities, are well distributed, reprinted in several versions and editions, and are made available in several copies in public libraries, this helps these words travel more smoothly, more widely and more rapidly. Likewise, one finds one's way more easily to *architek* and *Bruxellization* when these are included in indexes of books, either literally or, once again, in disguise (e.g., as 'ruin', 'terrain vague', 'chantier', or 'in progress').<sup>20</sup> In the neighbourhood of Les Marolles, somehow the very birthplace of both *architek* and *Bruxellization*, these terms have travelled through material inscriptions too. *Bruxellization* is engraved in stone in a plaque<sup>21</sup>: 'Bataille de La Marolle. 13-9-1969. Here lies the Developer with his faithful spouse Bureaucracy. This tomb is permanent.'<sup>22</sup> In the heart of Les Marolles, a popular bar is called Skieven Architek. And finally there is the continuous material presence, and thus reminder, of the Palace of Justice itself.

What we can learn from the journeys of *architek* and *Bruxellization* is that cities are not just represented and narrated through words, but that cities can also be *enacted* by words. Cities can be *fabricated* by words (Doucet, 2012). And these words, so I argued, travel, seemingly innocently, through everyday life. If Brussels was, at several

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<sup>18</sup> J. D'Osta and L. Quiévreux, *Dictionnaire du dialecte bruxellois*, Brussels, Éditions Libro-Sciences, fifth, revised edition (1985 [1951]). Originally published by Jean d'Osta, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup> D. De Moor, T. Deburghgraeve, B. Goes et al. (eds.), *Brusselse Toeren: 10 straffe wandelingen, een fietstocht en een metrotoer*, Tielt, Lannoo, 2006, p. 62. The use of 'skief' has also been brought back to a misreading of the English word 'chief' – see Doucet, "Making a City with Words".

<sup>20</sup> Labor, et al., *Dictionnaire de Bruxelles*.

<sup>21</sup> André de Vries, *Brussels: A Cultural and Literary History*, Oxford, Signal Books, Cities of the Imagination series, 2003, p. 191.

<sup>22</sup> In French: "Bataille de la Marolle, 13-9-1969. Ci-gît le promoteur et sa fidèle épouse la bureaucratie. Concession à perpétuité".

historical instances, *traumatised* by destructive urban planning, this trauma is kept alive by words such as *architek* and *Bruxellization*. Likewise one can imagine that other words also influence the way we think the city. Words *make* the city, not just because of what they *mean*, but also because of the way they travel. To *make* or to *think* the city thus requires taking into account *many* actors, and not just the most obvious ones. It requires engaging with more, not fewer actors, and thus with more rather than with less complexity. And this, of course, runs against the logic of planning, often still relying on the *reduction* of complexity.



List of words

## By language

### Albanian

Vendim

### English

Fukushima Basta

Hackerspace

Key Grip Systems

Patchwork

Speedy Gonzalez

### Classical Arabic

`Ayn

Allah-3awan

Anachid

Burqa

Ha'

Hnouch

Inshallah

Kebsh

Kharij

Khobze

Ladid

Makla

Maqla

Marhaba

Mimouna

Qafaz

Qâf

Tajine Lughat

### Slang

Abdubulasak

Chick

DH

Din din fuck

DM

Drari

Fritkot

Hettiste

Khoroto

Khoya

Mbila

Momie

Oufti

Poulets

Schmett

Schmitt

Smeks

Tek

### **Berber**

Amazigh

Berbères

Makla

### **Brussels**

Bodink

Boet

Brusseles

D'eizels van Schoorbeek

En stoemelings

Fontaine d'amour

Franskillon

Hayar

Klette

Lekke

Maalbeek

Maelbeekois

Maroxellois

Mbila

Met  
Nols  
Pogge  
Schaerbeekoise  
Tembere  
Ultra MarocBelgique  
Verboeckhoven  
Zinneke  
Zinneke maghrébin

### **Cameroonian**

Bamoun  
Bayangi  
Eru  
Fufu ou foufou  
Gombo  
Haricot oeil noir  
Kolo  
Makayabu  
Malangua  
Manioc  
Manko'o Shop  
Miondosa  
Ndolé  
Pondou  
Salot  
Shuké  
Tubercule

### **Chinese**

Nǐ hǎo

### **Darija**

B-əs-slâma  
Boulis  
DH  
DM

Drari  
Fatira  
Harsha  
Hawli  
Hayar  
Hette  
Kebsh  
Kharij  
Khbizat zra3  
Khoroto  
Khoya  
Qatran  
Rahma  
Rghaif

### **Spanish**

Galerear  
Oh oui, oh oui!  
Partchis

### **Farsi**

Khoroka  
Nawid

### **French**

25 mots  
500 mots  
Allochtone  
Anti-crise  
Artiviste  
Atelier  
Baguette  
Baiser de Malmédy  
Belge  
Belgo-belge  
Belgo-marocains  
Blédard

Bon côté  
Boromites  
Bouche du village  
Bougnoul  
Bratz  
Bruxelles  
Bruxellois  
Bérets rouges  
CA  
Calendula  
Cerises  
Chenilles  
Cosmopolitain  
Discrimination positive  
Défi  
Etranger-e  
Etres humains  
Faim  
Femme  
Flamand  
Flamand Flamand  
Fleur  
Fleur de serpent  
Foyer Voltaire  
Frioul  
Féministe  
Goudron  
Graisse de boa  
Grand Pont  
Grand-Place  
Génie populaire  
Hippie  
Intégration  
Intégriste  
Jacques Brel  
Jardin  
Jeans

L'espace public  
La Cage aux Ours  
La langue ... oiseau  
La soupe au chocolat  
Le pied  
Les ânes  
Logiciel libre  
Mamans fatiguées anonymes  
Mannequin  
Miroir  
Mons/Bergen  
Multiculturalité  
Muriel  
MZI  
Naples  
Negerinnetet/Tête de Nègre  
Néerlandais  
Oh oui, oh oui!  
Pain de campagne  
Pain français  
Pakistano-Belge  
Patchwork  
Porc  
Potager  
QG  
Racisme  
Rifain  
Régularisation  
Sabena  
Santé & Bien-Etre  
Sororité  
Souchiens  
Système d'inscription  
Traître  
Vacanciers de 28 jours

**Friulian**

Bonheur  
Frioulien  
Jeans  
La Marilengue  
Mandi  
Sommarti

### **Greek**

Kalimera  
Pipas

### **Italian**

Mannequin  
Minga no té  
Péperonnade  
Spaghetti

### **Lingala**

Eza  
Fufu ou foufou  
Makayabu  
Malangua  
Mama  
Mbila  
Mbote  
Nsango nini  
Pondou

### **Lybian**

Khadafi  
Zenga zenga

### **Dutch**

Berenkuil  
Brusseles  
Brussels  
Daag!

D'eizels van Schoorbeek

Energie

Fritkot

KriekKlak

Mannequin

Mega Mindy

Mengeling

Mons/Bergen

Mooi

Pippi Langkous

Spiegel

Thuis

Tot Morgen

Zwaantjes

### **Russian**

Calzo

Pelmenis

Poka

Vareneki

### **Susu**

Tami

### **Senegalese**

Mengi dem

Thieboudienne

### **Turkish**

Abi

Ahmet Özhan

Atlas

Dolma

Efendimiz

Feza

Gecebilir miyim

Güçlü



Hayır

Iyi günler

Kekik

Kilim

Kuvertine

Kuşburnu

Las Vegas

Merhaba

Nasreddin

Tamam

Teşekkür ederim

Tsjehiler

Çiçek

### **Vietnamese**

Chào

Dê thương

## **For daily use**

### Personal relations & other useful words

#### **Abbreviations**

CA

DH

DM

Défi

Feza

MZI

QG

#### **Friendship**

Abi

Drari

Khoya

Muriel

Rahma

#### **Woman**

Chick

Çiçek

Défi

Femme

Fleur

Féministe

Güçlü

Le pied

Mama

Mamans fatiguées anonymes

Momie

Muriel

Oufti

Sororité

## **Swear Words**

Blédard  
Din din fuck  
Flamand  
Franskillon  
Hnouch  
Khoroto  
Minga no té  
Smeks

## **Identity**

Allochtone  
Belge  
Belgo-belge  
Belgo-marocains  
Berbères  
Brusseles  
Bruxelles  
Bruxello-Néerlandophone  
Bruxellois  
Etranger-e  
Etres humains  
Flamand Flamand  
Franskillon  
Intégration  
Intégriste  
La Marilengue  
Maelbeekois  
Maroxellois  
Pakistano-Belge  
Patchwork  
Porc  
Rifain  
Schaerbeekoise  
Smeks  
Souchiens  
Traître

Ultra MarocBelgique  
Vacanciers de 28 jours  
Zinneke  
Zinneke maghrébin

### **Passe-partout**

Hayır  
Tamam

### **Perception**

25 mots  
Bon côté  
Bonheur  
Bruxelles  
Cosmopolitain  
DH  
Dê thương  
Energie  
Faim  
Galerear  
Jacques Brel  
Kharij  
Ladid  
Mengeling  
Mooi  
Multiculturalité  
Oh oui, oh oui!  
Rahma  
Traître  
Vacanciers de 28 jours

### **Greeting**

Allah-3awan  
B-əs-slâma  
Chào  
Daag!  
Iyi günler

Kalimera  
Mandi  
Marhaba  
Mbote  
Mengi dem  
Merhaba  
Nsango nini  
Nǐ hǎo  
Poka  
Salot  
Teşekkür ederim  
Tot Morgen  
Zdrova

### **SMS**

`Ayn  
Ha'  
Hnouch  
Qâf

### Food

#### **A la carte**

Bouche du village  
Chenilles  
Dolma  
Eru  
Fritkot  
Fufu ou foufou  
Khoroka  
La soupe au chocolat  
Macayabu  
Makla  
Malangua  
Manioc  
Miondosa  
Ndolé

Negerinnetet/Tête de Nègre

Pelmenis

Pundu

Péperonnade

Shuké

Spaghetti

Thieboudienne

Tubercule

### **Fruit**

Cerises

Kolo

Kuşburnu

### **Vegetables**

Eru

Gombo

Haricot oeil noir

Ndolé

Péperonnade

Tsjehiler

Tubercule

### **Bread**

Baguette

Fatira

Harsha

Khbizat zra3

Khobze

Makla

Maqla

Pain français

Rghaif

Tami

### **Pastries**

Baiser de Malmédy

Bodink  
Maisla koterivanais  
Miroir  
Negerinnetet/Tête de Nègre  
Spiegel  
Vareneki

### Work & Home & Hobbies

#### **Entertainment**

Abdubulasak  
Bratz  
Foyer Voltaire  
Hette  
Mimouna  
Partchis  
Pippi Langkous  
Speedy Gonzalez  
Ultra MarocBelgique

#### **Artists**

Artiviste  
Atelier  
Eza  
Fukushima Basta  
Génie populaire  
Mimouna  
MZI  
Okup  
Sommarti

#### **World Cup**

Ultra MarocBelgique  
Zenga zenga

#### **School**

500 mots

Bratz

Naples

Néerlandais

Porc

Système d'inscription

### **Flowers**

Calendula

Çiçek

Fleur

Fleur de serpent

### **Computers**

Hackerspace

Logiciel libre

### **Language**

Bamoun

Bayangi

Bouche du village

Brussels

Bruxellois

Eza

Flamand

Frioul

Frioulien

Hayar

Jacques Brel

La langue ... oiseau

La Marilengue

Néerlandais

### **Home**

Ahmet Özhan

Anachid

Bruxelles



Efendimiz  
Fukushima Basta  
Hawli  
Hettiste  
Inshallah  
Jacques Brel  
Kebsh  
Kilim  
Maalbeek  
Mega Mindy  
Régularisation  
Speedy Gonzalez  
Tajine Lughat  
Thuis  
Zenga zenga

Tools  
Key Grip Systems  
Mannequin

### **Politics**

En Schmett  
Klette  
Lekke  
Met  
Tembere

### **Vegetable Garden**

Goudron  
Jardin  
Kekik  
Kuvertine  
Kuşburnu  
Pipas  
Potager  
Péperonnade

## **Health**

Calendula  
Santé & Bien-Etre

## **Work**

Atelier  
Discrimination positive  
En stoemelings  
Key Grip Systems  
Logiciel libre  
Sabena

## **Clothes**

Burqa  
Bérets rouges  
Jeans

## Public Space

L'Espace public  
Okup

## **Place**

Atlas  
Berenkuil  
Bruxelles  
Calzo  
Fontaine d'amour  
Grand Pont  
Grand-Place  
Hackerspace  
KriekKlak  
La Cage aux Ours  
Maalbeek  
Manko'o Shop  
Mons/Bergen

Naples  
Pogge  
Potager  
Qafaz  
Vendim  
Verboeckhoven

### **People**

Amazigh  
Boromites  
D'eizels van Schoorbeek  
Hettiste  
Hippie  
Jacques Brel  
Khadafi  
Nasreddin  
Nols  
Pippi Langkous  
Pogge

### **Police**

Boulis  
Graisie de boa  
Hnouch  
Khbizat zra3  
Mbila  
Poulets  
Qatran  
Schmitt  
Zwaantjes

### **Transport**

Boet  
Gecebilir miyim  
Les ânes  
Tek  
Wollah wollah

## Colophon

### Book

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## BACKCOVER

“There is a standardization of a particular vocabulary which is not acknowledged. I think the interest of this work lies in the index of words and vocabularies, which are used regularly, but are not formalized in textbooks or dictionaries.” Fatima Zibouh, political scientist, Université de Liège

“What is interesting in this exercise of talking about words, is to create conditions that make us talk together.” Myriam Stoffen, director for the Zinneke Parade

“No matter where you are or where you come from, nothing should stop you from thinking about the language you use as a human being.” Bram Borloo, artist

## **(Backcover)**

“Il suffit juste d'ouvrir ses oreilles dans le métro à Bruxelles ou dans le bus pour qu'on voie bien qu'il y a des mots qui sont utilisés, qui viennent parfois de l'argot, mais qui viennent aussi parfois de langues étrangères, qui sont utilisés par tout le monde. Il y a une normalisation d'un certain vocabulaire qui n'est pas reconnu. Je crois que l'intérêt de ce travail est d'avoir fait le recensement de certains mots, vocabulaires qui sont utilisés assez régulièrement mais qui ne sont pas officialisés dans des manuels ou des dictionnaires”.

Fatima Zibouh, politicologue, chercheuse au Centre d'études de l'ethnicité et des migrations (CEDEM), Université de Liège

“Deze discussie over woorden creëert een kader om met elkaar te praten, en dát is interessant. Terwijl we praten, wisselen we perspectieven uit over de betekenis van een woord en via associaties denken we na over ons dagelijks leven, onze stad, wat opnieuw inspiratie geeft voor een ander woord, waardoor we weer over iets anders praten. Het is een efficiënte manier om uitwisseling en dialoog tot stand te brengen”.

Myriam Stoffen, directrice Zinneke Parade

“No matter where you are or where you are from, nothing keeps you from reflecting on the language you use as a human being”. Bram Borloo, artist