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## Ludicity in lexical innovation (I) – French

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to explore the importance of the ludic dimension for linguistic innovations by combining synchronic and diachronic analyses of lexicographic sources from French and by reinterpreting the data from a usage-based perspective. I will discuss the possibilities and methodological challenges in tracing ludicity in the lexicon, taking into account contemporary and historical dictionaries, most importantly *Le Petit Robert* 2016 and different editions of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*. Moreover, I will analyse how innovations are introduced and perceived by speakers, distinguishing different subtypes of innovation based on structural, semantic, and pragmatic features. Finally, I will turn to the diachronic evolution of ludic innovations in order to identify general tendencies and pathways of evolution and argue that markedness plays a key role for ludic innovation, which represents an important, albeit so far neglected, domain of lexical dynamics. \*

### 1 Introduction: Ludicity as an important factor for lexical innovation

If we compare the target language equivalents of English *V.I.P.* (*very important person*) in French and German, we can observe an interesting difference: while the French dictionary *Le Petit Robert* 2016 (= PR 2016) indicates that this form is used in familiar French and in ludic contexts (see the lexicographic marks “fam[ilier]” and “plaisant”), the German dictionary *Duden* does not indicate any special value for this item.

- (1) (French) **V. I. P.** [veipe; viajpi] nom invariable ETYM. avant 1959 ◊ sigle anglais de *Very Important Person* «personne très importante» FAM. et PLAISANT Personnalité de marque. *Une V. I. P.* (PR 2016)

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\* Some of the reflections of this paper and the following paper were presented in a “tandem talk” given together with Claudine Moulin at a linguistic colloquium at Trier University in December 2016. We would like to thank our colleagues at Trier for their valuable feedback. Moreover, we would like to thank Peter Kühn and two anonymous reviewers for their very helpful comments and suggestions. In addition, our thanks go to Martina Bross and Angela Oakeshott for the stylistic revision of our papers.

- (2) (German) **VIP**, der oder die [vip] [Abkürzung für englisch *very important person* = sehr wichtige Person] wichtige Persönlichkeit [mit Privilegien] (Duden)

Given the common source language origin of the two borrowings, this difference appears surprising and raises the question of how the presence (or absence) of a ludic dimension of certain lexical innovations can be explained. The example thus points to ludicity as a specific and challenging dimension of lexical innovation, and this paper aims to explore the importance and diversity of ludic innovations in the context of lexical expansion. The following reflections will be mainly based on French, and they will be complemented by Claudine Moulin's survey on ludic innovations in German (this volume).

The term *ludic innovation* incorporates two basic concepts: ludicity and innovation.<sup>1</sup> The notion of ludicity, seen as the expression of a certain kind of verbal humour, will be used here to describe linguistic items which are used playfully in situations of speaker-hearer interaction. The notion of innovation, in turn, points to the domain of language change, and more specifically to lexical change and lexical expansion. We are concerned here with lexical items that are newly created or introduced and that can diffuse in the speech community and eventually become lexicalised (for general reflections on modelling language change, see Winter-Froemel 2011: 197–227). However, in theoretical reflections on lexical change, the ludic dimension is mostly passed over. “Classical” factors motivating lexical innovation are the need to name new concepts and referents, the need to account for cultural and social change, linguistic economy, social reasons such as taboo, and emotional markedness or expressivity (cf. e.g. Blank 1997; 2001: 95–100; on neology and neonymy, see also Sablayrolles 2000; 2003; Pruvost & Sablayrolles 2003; Luna 2014). Ludicity can be included in the category of expressivity; however, this notion is often used in a fuzzy and relatively unclear way<sup>2</sup>, and the importance of a ludic dimension of

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**1** In Winter-Froemel (2016a), I used this term to refer to a subset of innovations, namely ludic word formations and semantic innovations which are usually semantically transparent for the speakers. Following the lexicographic practice of the dictionaries consulted for this paper, which mark different types of lexical items and usage as being ludic, the following reflections will adopt a broader definition of the term ‘ludic innovation’ and include not only ludic word formation and semantic innovations / change, but also cases of ludic borrowing and ludic deformation (see e.g. the examples of French *coolos* and German *Atöljö* which will be discussed below). Furthermore, the ludic pseudo-translations included in the data can be linked to the ludic translations discussed in Winter-Froemel (2016a).

**2** It has been argued that the notion of expressivity has been used as a cover term including a broad range of different phenomena, and that it still needs to be discussed and defined in a more precise way (see e.g. Pustka 2015).

lexical innovation thus has not yet been sufficiently determined and integrated into a general framework of lexical innovation.

In previous research, the phenomenon of ludic innovation has been primarily approached in the context of literary studies, where it has been studied as a stylistic device used by individual (literary) authors (see the seminal study by Spitzer 1910; for more recent studies we can think of e.g. Kemmner 1972 on Raymond Queneau; Klein 2016 on Louis-Ferdinand Céline, André Martel, Jean-Pierre Verheggen and Valère Novarina; Arrivé 2016 on Alfred Jarry and Novarina; Galli 2016 on San Antonio, etc.). However, at least to my knowledge, up to now ludic innovations have not been systematically studied as a subtype of lexical innovation in linguistic and theoretical approaches.

First reflections in this direction have been exchanged in the scientific network “The Dynamics of Wordplay”<sup>3</sup> and in the Discussion Forum opened in the third volume of this series (Knospe, Onysko & Goth 2016). A basic observation made in this context was that ludic innovations are often intuitively assigned to the category of wordplay, but if we compare different kinds of innovations and linguistic usage with a ludic dimension, we can immediately see considerable divergences between these manifestations of verbal humour. Moreover, innovations such as French *V.I.P.* cannot be considered to fall into the category of wordplay proper if this latter notion is defined by a juxtaposition or manipulation of linguistic items, as illustrated by the following definition:

Wordplay is a historically determined phenomenon in which a speaker produces an utterance – and is aware of doing so – that juxtaposes or manipulates linguistic items from one or more languages in order to surprise the hearer(s) and produce a humorous effect on them. (Winter-Froemel 2016a: 37)

For French *V.I.P.* there is no juxtaposition or manipulation, but only the introduction of a linguistic item into another language where it has a special communicative value. How this special ludic value arises, however, still needs to be explained.

Based on these observations, the aim of my paper is to contribute to defining and exploring this domain of investigation and to argue that ludic innovations should be recognized as a subtype of lexical innovation. More specifically,

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<sup>3</sup> The academic network, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) since 2013, brings together 14 linguistic and literary scholars from Germany, Austria and France as well as international co-operation partners in order to confront different approaches and perspectives and establish an interdisciplinary dialogue on wordplay in the context of language contact, lexical innovation and speaker-hearer interaction (see [www.wortspiel.uni-trier.de](http://www.wortspiel.uni-trier.de)).

synchronic and diachronic analyses of lexicographic sources for French will be combined to gain insights into the importance of ludicity in different historical contexts. Occasionally, the data will be complemented by examples found in everyday communication in order to illustrate how the innovations are produced and perceived by the speakers.

The paper is structured as follows: section 2 will outline basic types of lexical innovation and show that ludicity plays a potentially important role across the different categories. Section 3 is dedicated to methodological reflections on the possibilities and challenges in tracing ludic innovations based on contemporary and historical dictionaries. In the next step, I will analyse how the lexicographic data can be reinterpreted from the perspective of the speakers. I will examine how ludic innovations are coined and interpreted, and which different subtypes of ludic and humorous innovation can be distinguished according to structural, semantic, and pragmatic features (section 4). Finally, section 5 will turn to the question of how the innovations evolve in diachrony, aiming to identify general cross-linguistic tendencies and pathways of evolution. Although these tendencies will need to be verified in further research, the analysis of ludic innovations in different historical contexts (and languages, see the following contribution by Claudine Moulin) sheds light on the complex interplay of markedness and ludicity: ludicity is often based on a relative markedness of the innovations, and otherwise marked forms can be ludically reused or reinterpreted, but we can also observe a general tendency of wearout effects that also applies to ludically marked items which thus tend to become unmarked in their diachronic evolution.

## 2 Delimiting the area under investigation: Ludicity in lexical innovation

One of the few previous studies in the domain of ludic innovation is the lexicographic analysis of comical forms in twentieth-century French presented by Preite (2007). Her study reveals considerable differences with respect to the proportion of comic forms in standard dictionaries: the search parameter used – the occurrence of expressions indicating a comic dimension (French *badiner*, *burlesque*, *comique*, *dérision*, *humoristique*, *ironie*, *moquerie*, *parodie*, *plaisanterie*, *raillerie*, *ridicule*) in the microstructure of the dictionary entries – identifies

between 0.6% (for *Le Grand Robert* 1962<sup>4</sup>) and 4.2% (for the *Trésor de la Langue Française*) of the total number of entries. As these differences appear to be considerable, no clear picture of the importance of ludicity in the lexicon emerges. Moreover, it should be added that the search criterion used by Preite does not distinguish between items that are used to convey humorous effects (i.e. items that belong to the domain of interest of this paper) and other items with a lexical meaning which belongs to the semantic field of verbal humour (e.g. the items French *railler*, *humoristique*, *ridicule* are included in Preite's search, but do not represent ludic forms). In spite of these issues that would require further research, it seems possible to interpret Preite's results as a general confirmation of the potentially important role of ludic innovations.

However, ludic innovations embrace very different subtypes of innovations. To begin with, a potentially important role of ludicity can be observed for semantic change and word formation. Phenomena of this kind have already been discussed under the label of 'ludic innovation' in Winter-Froemel (2016a), and will be investigated in more detail in this paper. What appears to be central here is that the items are semantically motivated or transparent for the speakers. For borrowings, which can be analysed as another basic type of lexical innovation, we have already seen that borrowed items such as *V.I.P.* may also be interpreted as being ludic. In this case, the ludic effects are accounted for by structural features, the loanwords being to some extent different from native, or less marked items. Moreover, ludicity can also affect other subtypes of borrowings such as calques, and other types of contact-induced innovations (Winter-Froemel 2008b; 2009). In addition, structural manipulations (see also Dal & Namer, this volume) and certain phenomena of loanword integration (or non-integration) can equally be perceived as being ludic.

### 3 Tracing ludic innovations in lexicographic sources

To illustrate the challenges of tracing ludic innovations, I will first present some observations based on two case studies on French, the first focusing on ludic items in contemporary French according to the dictionary *Le Petit Robert* (2016)

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<sup>4</sup> Preite indicates 1962 for the year of publication. The volumes of the first edition of this dictionary were published between 1953 and 1964, the second edition was published in 1985 (see references section).

(see also Winter-Froemel 2016b), the second analysing ludic items in historical dictionaries of French. To identify ludic items, lexicographic marks were used as a search parameter in both surveys.

Generally, we are concerned here with diaevaluative marks, a subcategory of pragmatic marks in lexicography (see Ludwig 2009: 1585–1587). These marks form a less homogeneous group than diatopic or diastratic marks, which represent key topics in lexicography and metalexicography (see e.g. the contributions in Baidier, Lamprou & Monville-Burston 2011). For *Le Petit Robert* 2016, the standard lexicographic marks used to signal ludic forms and usages are “plaisant” (PLAIS.) and “par plaisanterie” (PAR PLAIS.). The search for lexical entries containing the string “plais” yielded 347 items, which corresponds to about 0.64% of the total of 54,466 dictionary entries.<sup>5</sup> These entries can be illustrated by the following items:

- (3) **réformette** [...] PLAISANT Réforme jugée superficielle, peu sérieuse (par ses adversaires). → aussi *mesurette*. *Une réformette sans lendemain*. (PR 2016)
- (4) **antédiluvien, ienne** [...] FIG. (FAM. ou PAR PLAIS.) Très ancien, tout à fait démodé. → préhistorique. «*Figurez-vous une voiture antédiluvienne*» (Gautier). (PR 2016)
- (5) **couvre-chef** [...] PAR PLAIS. Ce qui couvre la tête. → chapeau, coiffure. *Un curieux couvre-chef*. *Des couvre-chefs*. (PR 2016)
- (6) **accoucher** [...] II. [...] FIG. 1. Tr. ind. PAR PLAIS. Élaborer péniblement. → créer, produire. *Il a fini par accoucher d'un mauvais roman*. (PR 2016)

Compared to the previous study by Preite (2007) mentioned in section 2, the number of ludic forms thus appears to be very low in the 2016 edition of *Le Petit*

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the 347 ludic forms that were correctly identified, 45 false hits had to be excluded. These are either lexical entries containing the sequence “plus” which were equally identified by the search criterion (this can only be explained as resulting from a technical problem), or entries indicating near-equivalents where only the equivalents have a ludic dimension (e.g. “*néerlandais, aise* • adj. et n. PLAIS. *batave*”). These forms were manually checked and excluded from further analysis (the ludic equivalents such as *batave*, which were equally identified by the search criterion, however, were of course included). It should also be added that the results slightly diverge from the numbers given in the previous study by Winter-Froemel (2016b), the divergences being confined to the ludic items *mouillé,e* and (*en*) *titi* and the false hit *bise*, which were additionally retrieved in the new query conducted in May 2017. Although for both queries, the bibliographical references indicated in the electronic version of the dictionary are identical (i.e. PR 2016), these minor changes are probably due to updates in the electronic version of the dictionary.

*Robert*. However, a few sample surveys show that this is partly explained by the fact that not all lexical items which can be perceived as being ludic or ludically used are characterised by the lexicographic marks cited above. The basic definition given by *Le Petit Robert* for the mark “plaisant”, «emploi qui vise à être drôle, à amuser, mais sans ironie» (‘usage which aims to be funny, to amuse, but without irony’), also applies to items characterised by other lexicographic marks expressing pragmatic usage strategies or rhetorical techniques, as illustrated by ex. (7) to (13). Among these lexicographic marks are the following (the number of search results for each expression is given in brackets): ALLUSION (LITTÉRAIRE) (108), PAR ANTIPHRASE (36), PAR DÉNIGREMENT ‘deprecatif’ (2), EMPHATIQUE (5), EUPHÉMISME (76), and HYPERBOLE (8). This means that in addition to the 347 lexical items retrieved, there is a certain number of other items in PR 2016 that are also potentially ludic. However, as the marks can also apply to forms which are not ludic, the items retrieved by additional searches require manual checking.

- (7) **substantifique** [sypstâtifik] adjectif [...] ALLUS. LITTER. (Rabelais) «*La substantifique moelle*»: ce qu’il y a de plus riche en substance (III), dans un écrit. → quintessence. «*Cette substantifique moelle qu’est le fric*» (Queneau). (PR 2016)
- (8) **dormitif, ive** [dɔrmitif, iv] adjectif [...] ■ VIEUX MED. Qui provoque le sommeil. → *soporifique*. = ALLUS. LITTER. «*Pourquoi l’opium fait-il dormir?... Parce qu’il a une vertu dormitive*» (Molière), cité pour ridiculiser une explication purement verbale. (PR 2016)
- (9) **beau, belle** [...] PAR ANTIPHR. Mauvais, vilain. → 1. sacré. *Une belle coupure. Une belle bronchite*. → 1. bon, joli. *C’est du beau travail! Être dans de beaux draps\*. C’est un beau gâchis. La belle affaire!* ce n’est pas si important. [...] (PR 2016)
- (10) **culotte** [...] VIEILLI *Culotte de peau*, que portaient autrefois les militaires. FIG. et PAR DENIGR. *Une vieille culotte de peau*: un militaire borné. (PR 2016)
- (11) **bout** [...] morceau. EMPHAT. *Ça fait un bout de chemin! c’est loin*. (PR 2016)
- (12) **précaution** [...] LOC. FAM. (EUPHEM.) Prendre ses précautions: aller aux toilettes en prévision de situations qui ne le permettront pas. (PR 2016)
- (13) **seau** [...] PAR HYPERB. *Il pleut à seaux*, abondamment. (PR 2016)

Another basic problem which immediately becomes clear from the examples is the difficulty of clearly distinguishing ludic items in the lexicon from ludic usage: Some of the entries containing the mark “plaisant” represent items for which a ludic effect appears to be regularly observed independently of specific contexts of use (e.g. *réformette*, *antédiluvien*), for other entries, in contrast, we

are dealing with specific instances of ludic usage (e.g. *une belle bronchite*). Thus, a basic difficulty emerges from the fact that for some entries, the lexical item as a whole is marked as being ludic, while for others, only specific uses are involved. These latter uses may represent citations, i.e. uses that directly evoke individual discourse events, or complex items that are conventionalised to different degrees (see also Lecolle 2012, Rabatel 2016, Winter-Froemel 2016c, and the contributions in Anscombre & Mejri 2011). However, it seems difficult to establish a strict delimitation between ludic items pertaining to the lexicon and ludic usage, as there are different types of phenomena that suggest a continuum (see e.g. idiomatic expressions such as *vieille culotte de peau*, *il pleut à seaux*), and this is also confirmed by the phenomena investigated in the contributions by Moulin, Dal & Namer, Filatkina, and Stumpf (this volume). Moreover, from the perspective of language change, adopting a usage-based approach to language change implies that lexical change needs to be interpreted as going back to individual usage events, so that ludic usage represents a potential innovation initiating a process of diffusion and subsequent language change (see Winter-Froemel 2008a; 2011). This means that we are faced with a broad variety of items that form a continuum between ludic usage in the sense of individual discourse events (which may represent lexical innovations that can become lexicalised) on the one hand, and fully conventionalised elements of the lexicon, i.e. ludic innovations which have become part of the language system, on the other (on the difficulty of tracing lexical innovations, see also Walter 1991).

A further question that arises is whether ludic usage and irony are really mutually exclusive, as suggested by the definition given above. At least for the following examples it seems also possible to analyse them as cases of ludic usage. The 62 search results for entries containing the expression “iron.” thus also need to be taken into account and checked with respect to their ludic character:<sup>6</sup>

- (14) **ange** [...] *Anges gardiens*, appelés à protéger chaque personne. [...] FIG. *C'est son ange gardien*, la personne qui veille, guide et protège en tout une autre personne (par iron. garde du corps). (PR 2016)
- (15) **sorte** [...] VIEILLI *De (la) bonne sorte; de belle sorte*: comme il faut, et PAR IRON. sévèrement. (PR 2016)

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<sup>6</sup> An additional difficulty arises from the fact that contrary to the other lexicographic marks cited above, “par iron.” ‘ironically’ has a different lexicographic status, i.e. it is not part of the “marques d’usage et de domaine” used by *Le Petit Robert*.

In other cases, forms that can convey a ludic effect are characterised by yet other, more general marks, such as “fam.” (*français familier*, e.g. *coolos* in ex. (16)). This means that we can assume a higher number of ludic items in the French lexicon than suggested by the first query, but for the moment no quantitative statement can be made (a query for “fam” yields 5,994 results, containing a high number of items that are not ludic or humorous).

(16) **cool** [...] FAM. (langage des jeunes) Agréable, excellent ; sympathique. *C'est trop cool, les vacances !* ▫ VAR. FAM. *coolos* [kulɔs] adjectif (PR 2016)

In addition, random native speaker judgements on the items and uses identified as being ludic / humorous (“plaisant”) by *Le Petit Robert* have revealed a high degree of interindividual variation, i.e. the speakers’ perception of the items as being (potentially) ludic diverges considerably. This adds to the methodological difficulties of tracing the items in the lexicon.

If we turn to historical dictionaries of French, we are faced with additional challenges. The second case study on ludic items in historical dictionaries of French was conducted using the ARTFL database “Dictionnaires d’autrefois”. The queries included the following dictionaries (the years of publication and the abbreviations that will be used in the remainder of this paper are indicated for each dictionary):<sup>7</sup>

- Jean-François Féraud, *Dictionnaire critique de la langue française* (1787–1788) [Fér]
- Émile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (1872–1877) [Litt]
- *Dictionnaire de L’Académie française*, 1<sup>ère</sup> édition (1694), 4<sup>e</sup> édition (1762), 5<sup>e</sup> édition (1798), 6<sup>e</sup> édition (1835), 8<sup>e</sup> édition (1932–1935) [DAF 1 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 8]

A first observation to be made is that contrary to contemporary dictionaries, there is not yet a standard lexicographic mark that is used to characterise ludic items. The concept of being “plaisant” already prevails as a marker of ludicity in the earliest sources included in the survey, but we can find different expressions containing this lexical root in the dictionaries, and there are also other expressions which appear to be used as equivalents:

«par plaisanterie»	845 results
«en plaisantant»	339 results

<sup>7</sup> For Féraud, the database contains the three volumes of the dictionary issued in 1787–1788. The database also includes Jean Nicot, *Thresor de la langue française* (1606), which, however, did not yield any results for the queries made.

«pour plaisanter»	19 results
«en badinant»	72 results
«pour badiner»	9 results
Total:	1,284 results

Due to the overall less systematic manner of signalling special forms and restrictions of usage for the lexical items contained in the dictionaries, it is even more difficult to make quantitative observations about the importance of ludicity in the French lexicon for earlier periods of time.

From a qualitative point of view, the indications about the ludic character of the items and uses are more explicit in the historical dictionaries. Another notable difference with respect to the descriptions provided by PR 2016 consists in the importance of a normative dimension of metalinguistic reflection. This becomes clear if we compare different expressions that indicate a ludic dimension: these expressions range from primarily descriptive to strongly normative statements, where the latter admit the use of certain items in specific communicative contexts only. In this sense, ludic contexts appear to be a specific case of communication where special rules apply.

#### DESCRIPTIVE

«On dit en plaisantant» ('it is said in jest')

«Il ne se dit qu'en plaisantant» ('it [the lemma / expression] is only used in jest')

«Il ne se dit guère qu'en plaisantant» ('it [the lemma / expression] is rarely used and only in jest')

«On ne pourroit le dire qu'en plaisantant et en se moquant» ('it could only be used in jest and mockingly')

«Cela ne peut se dire qu'en plaisantant» ('this can only be said in jest')

«on ne doit l'employer qu'en plaisantant» ('it [the lemma / expression] may only be employed in jest')

#### NORMATIVE

Summing up the results of the two case studies on French, we can say that lexicographic marks offer a first way of approaching lexical items which are ludic or which can be used ludically. The queries yield some false positives, but these forms can be relatively easily and straightforwardly excluded from further research. Yet we can also assume that there is a high number of false negatives, i.e. of items in the lexicon which are also used in a ludic way, but which are difficult to retrieve (semi-)automatically, as they are indicated by other lexicographic marks and / or unsystematically characterised by lexicographic marks. Interestingly, the data retrieved from the dictionaries not only contains fully conventionalised lexical items, but also citational uses and collocations or complex units that are potentially on the way to becoming part of the French

lexicon. Therefore, in spite of the dictionaries' primary focus on lexicalised forms, these sources also permit us to approach the domain of ludic usage.

## 4 Structural, semantic and pragmatic features of ludicity: Production and perception of ludic items in French

Having identified a set of ludic items and uses based on lexicographic sources, the following section aims to address the question of how ludic items and uses are characterised. I will take into account both the speaker's and the hearer's perspective<sup>8</sup> and consider both the production and perception of ludic forms. In this way, the following reflections also address the question whether we can identify typical innovation scenarios for ludic innovations, and how ludic innovations are introduced and interpreted. However, as we have already seen in the introduction, it appears difficult to identify ludic forms in a straightforward and unequivocal way. The following subsections will therefore combine reflections on structural, semantic, and pragmatic features of ludic items in the lexicon, based on the data from PR 2016 and the ARTFL dictionaries.

### 4.1 Structural markedness

Concerning the structural features of ludic items, we can first observe that a broad range of parts of speech is represented in the data sample of PR 2016 (see Table 1; as some of the items were counted in several categories, the total number of ludic items is 374 instead of 347 and the total number of items in PR 2016 on which the proportions are calculated is 64,860 instead of 54,466 [see section 2.1]). The quantitative order differs from the data collected by Preite (2007) with respect to the relative importance of verbs and adjectives (in Preite's data, there are more verbs than adjectives), but corresponds to the overall frequency of the parts of speech in PR 2016. Otherwise, the general results of both studies are quite similar and no special restrictions are observed, i.e. in principle, ludicity

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<sup>8</sup> Both terms are used in a broad sense here, including writers and readers.

seems to affect all parts of speech and roughly to the same extent as that to which the parts of speech are represented in the lexicon.<sup>9</sup>

**Tab. 1:** Proportions of ludic items in PR 2016

POS	Ludic items in PR		Total number of items in PR	
Noun	213	57.0%	41,181	63.5%
Adj.	82	21.9%	13,518	20.8%
Verb	53	14.2%	6,717	10.4%
Adv.	17	4.5%	1,749	2.7%
Interj.	3	0.8%	222	0.3%
Phrase	3	0.8%	221	0.3%
Pron.	3	0.8%	100	0.2%
Other	-	-	1,152	1.8%
Total	374	100%	64,860	100%

However, some ludic items are characterised by specific features that permit us to analyse the items as being structurally marked. A first type of markedness is markedness through rhyme effects and, more generally, repetition structures (see ex. (17) to (22)).<sup>10</sup> This feature concerns especially ludic usage, i.e. specific uses of otherwise unmarked lexical items in phrases or utterances that can have a citational value. For many cases, the uses can be characterised by the fact that a rhyming word is added to an otherwise unmarked and highly frequent routine formula (e.g. *À la tienne, Tu parles!, ¿me entiendes?*), the rhyming word being semantically unmotivated in the concrete context of use, but creating an effect of ludicity. The feature matches what Jakobson (1960) described as the “poetic” quality of messages (projecting the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination). The general framework proposed by Jakobson would require extensive further discussion (see Winter-Froemel 2016a; Kabatek 2015), which cannot be developed in more detail here. However,

<sup>9</sup> The divergences that can be observed (especially the relative under- / overrepresentation of ludic nouns / verbs) would need to be investigated in further research.

<sup>10</sup> It seems possible to analyse the interjection in (21) along the same lines as the other examples, even if a strong wearout effect can be assumed (i.e. today the item does not have a strong ludic effect, which is reflected by the fact that PR 2016 does not indicate a ludic dimension).

let us note that this “poetic” quality is not observed for other forms of ludic usage, i.e. it cannot be analysed as a necessary condition of ludicity.

- (17) **tien, tienne** [...] = FAM. *À la tienne!* formule accompagnant un toast (cf. *À ta santé!*). PLAISANT (pour l’assonance) *À la tienne, Étienne!* (PR 2016)
- (18) **dilater** [...] 2. *se dilater* v. pron. Augmenter de volume. [...] PLAIS. «J’ai la rate qui s’dilate» (chanson). (PR 2016)
- (19) PLAIS. *Ça roule ma poule!* (PR 2016 s.v. *rouler*)
- (20) *Tu parles, Charles!* (PR 2016, s.v. *parler*: [...] ABSOLUMENT, FAM. (à la 2e personne de l’indic. seulement, avec une nuance de moquerie ou de colère, parfois d’admiration). *Tu parles! Tu parles, Charles! Sa reconnaissance, tu parles! Tu parles d’un idiot!, quel idiot!*)
- (21) **patati, patata** [...] interjection ETYM. 1809; *patatin, patata* « bruit du cheval au galop » 1524 ◊ onomat., de *patt-* évoquant un coup, un choc [...] FAM. Onomatopée qui évoque un long bavardage. → blablabla. «*Comment va-t-il? Qu’est-ce qu’il fait? Pourquoi ne vient-il pas? Est-ce qu’il est content? [...] Et patati! et patata! Comme cela pendant des heures*» (Daudet). (PR 2016)
- (22) [Spanish] ¿*Me entiendes, Mendez? ¿o me explico, Federico?* [Do you understand me, Mendez? Or should I explain myself, Federico?] (Spanish catchphrase, personal communication by Dardo de Vecchi)

Another basic form of structural markedness arises from divergences from the structural features of the language system and / or from the expected realisation of the linguistic item. This leads us back to the domain of linguistic borrowing, as the deviations frequently concern the pronunciation and spelling of loanwords which differ from the “normal” degree of loanword adaptation that is considered to be adequate in a certain speech community. The deviations can be characterised by extremely weak or extremely strong loanword integration. Similar deviations are rarely attested in lexicographic sources, but can be observed in everyday communication. They have been commented on in the research literature on linguistic borrowing (see e.g. the potentially humorous dimension of anglicisms conveying a certain tone described by Galinsky,<sup>11</sup> i.e. arising from weak loanword integration; for strong loanword integration, see e.g. ludic spellings such as French *niouses* [*news*] attested on the internet as

<sup>11</sup> Among his list of basic stylistic functions of anglicisms in (post-war) German, he mentions “conveying tone, its gamut ranging from humorous playfulness to sneering parody on America and ‹Americanized› Germany” (Galinski 1967: 71, see also Winter-Froemel, in press).

well as ex. (23); cf. Winter-Froemel, in press). These ludic spellings can also be observed for native items which are “deformed” by substituting native segments with non-native segments, as illustrated by ex. (24) (see also the analyses of types of wordplay based on paronymy as discussed by Braun, this volume). This shows that the speakers may play on items and structures that are marked in the recipient language or that require additional linguistic knowledge of other languages.

(23) [German] *Atöljö* (deviation from the conventional spelling <Atelier> ‘studio’, see Figure 1

(24) [German] *El Kawé* (ludic deformation of the conventional abbreviation *LKW*, short for *Leberkäswecken* ‘roll filled with a specific type of meat loaf popular in Germany and Austria’, via hyperforeignisation into pseudo-Spanish [determiner *el* + noun, non-native grapheme <é>; however, these features clash with the graphemes <k> and <w>, which are part of German, but do not belong to the inventory of native Spanish graphemes; the same holds for the use of the capital letter <K>], see Figure 1)<sup>12</sup>



**Fig. 1:** Atöljö (Loretto-Areal, Tübingen, Germany, © Esme Winter-Froemel, 20 April 2014) / El Kawé (Advert for Truffner the butcher’s, Wilhelmstraße 80, Tübingen, Germany, © Esme Winter-Froemel, 09 October 2017)

<sup>12</sup> Due to the ambiguity of *LKW*, which can also be interpreted as an abbreviation for *Lastkraftwagen* ‘heavy goods vehicle’, the abbreviation itself already has ludic potential (however, neither the full form nor the abbreviation in the gastronomic meaning are indicated in *Duden*). Ex. (24) thus exhibits a secondary ludic innovation which points to a certain wearout effect of the ludic character of the abbreviation *LKW* for *Leberkäswecken*. Moreover, this example functions as a riddle for the passer-by, as the larger-than-life size of the original image in the advertisement hinders the immediate recognition of the object that is represented (we will return to this additional pragmatic function in section 4.3).

In addition to ludic deformations that play on pronunciation and spelling as well as on the grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence rules of the linguistic system, there are also ludic deformations of linguistic items that rely on the morphological level, e.g. by suffix alternation (see the contribution by Dal & Namer, this volume).

Another form of structural markedness can be observed for items characterised by an internal disparateness: polymorphemic ludic items may combine morphemes of different etymological origin, playing not only on the different structural patterns of the languages involved, but also on their different prestige, typically combining elements that can be perceived as being “high” with allegedly “low” items or contents (cf. Sablayrolles 2015: 204–205). This feature can be linked to the principle of *héroi-comique*, which has been identified as a general source of humour (see already Ducháček 1967: 118–119). It can be illustrated by the following examples, which combine Greek or Latin elements on the one hand, and items belonging to informal language (*français familier*) on the other (ex. (25) and (26); see also certain ludic word formations on *-itis* such as German *Flitzeritis* or *Scheißeritis* for ‘diarrhea’, cf. DO 2017), the combination of the native item *pipi* (belonging to child language) and the item *room*, borrowed from English, in ex. (27) as well as the pseudo-borrowing or pseudo-Latin translation in ex. (28) (playing on the phraseme *tiré par les cheveux* ‘far-fetched’ [literally, ‘pulled by the hair’]). The basic principle underlying these items cited is incongruity, which has been identified as a basic source of humour in various previous approaches (with different accentuations, see e.g. Bergson 1993 [1940]; Attardo 1994; Attardo, Hempelmann & Di Maio 2002).

- (25) **flémingite** [flemɛ̃ʒit] nom féminin ETYM. 1879 *flemmingite* ◊ de *flemme*, avec finale de *laryngite*, *méningite*... ■ PLAIS. Flemme (considérée comme pathologique). *Crise de flémingite aiguë*. (PR 2016)
- (26) **baisodrome** [bɛzodrom] nom masculin ETYM. 1946 ◊ de 1. *baiser* et *-drome*, d’après *hippodrome*, etc. ■ FAM., PLAISANT Lieu réservé aux ébats amoureux. (PR 2016)
- (27) **pipi-room** [pipirum] nom masculin ETYM. milieu xx<sup>e</sup> ◊ formation plaisante, de *pipi* et anglais *room*, d’après *living-room* ■ PLAISANT Toilettes (notamment d’un lieu public). *Aller au pipi-room. Où sont les pipi-rooms?* (PR 2016)
- (28) **capillotracté, ée** [kapilotrakte] adjectif ETYM. 1968 ◊ de *capillo-*, du latin *capillus* «cheveu», et *tracté* [...] ■ PLAIS. Amené d’une manière forcée et peu logique (cf. *Tiré par les cheveux\**). *Une histoire capillotractée*. (PR 2016)

Summing up, the structural features discussed here illustrate different kinds of structural markedness which characterise certain types of innovations having a

ludic dimension. The structural features illustrate specific techniques of creating ludic innovations (which corresponds to the perspective of the speaker) and provide cues for recognising a ludic dimension of certain linguistic items (which corresponds to the perspective of the hearer).

## 4.2 Semantic features

Ludic innovations can also be produced and recognised on the basis of certain semantic features. Main aspects which clearly emerge from the data are negative contents, denigration, deprecative uses, and taboo concepts. Denigration and deprecative uses can be illustrated by the following items; as we can see, the examples may among others involve social criticism of individuals, political protagonists, or political measures. However, as observed in section 3, the definition of the lexicographic mark “plaisant” in PR 2016 excludes items expressing irony. The seriousness of the criticism expressed thus marks a limit of ludicity.

- (29) **flémingite** [flemɛ̃ʒit] nom féminin ETYM. 1879 *flemmingite* ◊ de *flemme*, avec finale de *laryngite, méningite...* ■ PLAIS. Flemme (considérée comme pathologique). *Crise de flémingite aiguë*. (PR 2016)
- (30) **roitelet** [...] ETYM. 1459 ◊ de l’ancien français *roitel*, diminutif de *roi* [...] 1. PEJ. ou PLAISANT Roi peu important, roi d’un petit pays. «*Les roitelets sont morts ou déchus*» (Sartre). (PR 2016)
- (31) **réformette** [...] ETYM. v. 1960 ◊ de *réforme* ■ FAM. PLAISANT Réforme jugée superficielle, peu sérieuse (par ses adversaires). → aussi *mesurette*. *Une réformette sans lendemain*. (PR 2016)
- (32) MUSEAU, s. m. [...] Cette partie de la tête du chien, et de quelques autres animaux, qui comprend la gueule et le nez. Par mépris ou par plaisanterie, on le dit des personnes. “Elle est venue montrer son museau. “On lui a donné sur le museau, sur son museau. [Fer]
- (33) FROC, s. m. [...] C’est proprement la partie de l’habit monacal qui couvre la tête; mais on le dit ordinairement de tout l’habit. “Porter, prendre, quitter le froc. On ne s’en sert guère que par plaisanterie et par mépris. [Fer]

Ludic innovations can also function as euphemisms or dysphemisms to refer to taboo concepts (on the role of euphemism, dysphemism, and playfulness in contexts of borrowing, see also Winter-Froemel, in press). In these cases, ludicity can arise from the fact that the taboo is deliberately violated by the speaker by choosing a dysphemistic expression. For euphemisms, a ludic effect can

arise from the indirect way of expressing the respective concept, so that the speaker's utterance functions as a social game and a riddle to the hearer, creating an effect of complicity (or French *connivence*) between the speaker and hearer (potentially excluding other hearers) if the utterance is successfully decoded by the hearer (see ex. (34) to (36)). This means that semantic transparency / intransparency represents an important dimension in these cases, and this aspect immediately leads us to the pragmatic and social dimension of ludic innovations.

- (34) **partie** [...] ▫ *Parties génitales*, (xv<sup>e</sup>) VIEILLI *parties honteuses*. (1651) ABSOLUMENT, POP. ou PLAIS. *Les parties*: les organes génitaux externes de l'homme (cf. pop. *Les organes*) (PR 2016)
- (35) **pipi-room** [pipirum] nom masculin ETYM. milieu xx<sup>e</sup> ◊ formation plaisante, de *pipi* et anglais *room*, d'après *living-room* ■ PLAISANT Toilettes (notamment d'un lieu public). *Aller au pipi-room*. *Où sont les pipi-rooms?* (PR 2016)
- (36) **baisodrome** [bezodrom] nom masculin ETYM. 1946 ◊ de 1. *baiser* et *-drome*, d'après *hippodrome*, etc. ■ FAM., PLAISANT Lieu réservé aux ébats amoureux. (PR 2016)

### 4.3 The pragmatic dimension: A social game of linguistic mastery

The discussion of structural and semantic features of ludic innovations has already revealed that certain items and uses are strongly marked by an interactional dimension. This aspect, which determines the production and perception of ludic items, can be formulated as follows: by using items that are to some extent “difficult” or marked and that require specific / additional knowledge in order to be correctly decoded, the speaker demonstrates linguistic mastery, and if the hearer equally possesses the required knowledge and succeeds in adequately decoding the speaker's utterance, an effect of complicity arises.

The difficulty of the items used can have different sources, the first being their obsolescence and uncommonness / marginality (cf. Leclerc 2012). Based on the data collected in the two case studies on French, we can assert that obsolete forms lend themselves to ludic usage. This can be illustrated by the following examples; additional evidence is provided by the fact that the lexicographic marks “plaisant” and “vieux” ‘obsolete’ frequently cooccur, i.e. many items are characterised by both marks.

- (37) **goutte** [...] *ne... goutte* Négation renforcée (avec les v. *voir*, *entendre*, *comprendre*, *connaître*) (milieu xii<sup>e</sup>) VIEUX ou PLAISANT *N'y voir goutte*: ne rien voir du tout. «*Quand il n'y*

*voit goutte, le plus malin n'est pas fier»* (Bernanos). *N'y entendre goutte*: ne rien comprendre (cf. **Pas\* du tout**). (PR 2016)

(38) **occire** [...] VIEUX ou PLAIS. Tuer. «*Mais pourquoi qu't'as occis le mataf?*» (Genet). (PR 2016)

(39) **NONNAIN** [...] s. f. Synonyme, qui ne se dit plus que par plaisanterie, de nonne. [Litt]

A second way in which the social game of proving and testing linguistic mastery can be realised, are interlingual games, i.e. ludic items which are created by referring to patterns from other languages. This is explicitly commented on in the historical dictionaries of French for the items *platatim* and *durissime*:

(40) **PLATATIM**. Mot forgé par plaisanterie en manière latine, adverbiale, etc. qui signifie, *Plat à plat*. *On sert platatim*. [DAF 5]

(41) **DURISSIME** [...] adj. Très dur. Il ne se dit que par plaisanterie. Cette volaille est durissime. Étymologie Lat. *durissimus*, superlatif de *durus*, dur. [Litt]

Moreover, many ludic innovations function as riddles for the hearer. This can be illustrated by the innovation *personnel rampant*, introduced in the argot of aviators according to PR 2016, which clearly confirms this function. Other examples are provided by the various designations that have been introduced in German to refer to the concepts of GLASSES and BICYCLE in a creative and unexpected way (see also Winter-Froemel, in press). Likewise, we could cite again the items French *pipi-room* and *flémingite*.

(42) *personnel rampant*: PAR PLAIS. (1918 argot des aviateurs) *Personnel rampant*, qui ne vole pas, employé à terre (opposé à *personnel navigant*). N. *Les rampants*. (PR 2016 s.v. *rampant*)

(43) [German] *Intelligenzprothese* ('intelligence prosthesis'), *Nasenfahrrad* ('nose bicycle'), *Nasenuetscher* ('nose crusher'), *Spekuliereisen* ('speculating iron') for GLASSES (DO)

(44) [German] *Drahtesel* (or *Esel*) ('wire donkey' / 'donkey'), *Stahlross* (or *Ross*) ('steel steed' / 'steed'), *Hirsch* ('deer'), *Eierschaukel* ('nutsswing') for BICYCLE (DO)

An important feature which characterises all of these forms is the fact that they are relatively marked as well, as there are other expressions that are used more frequently to refer to the respective concept (e.g. French *souris (d'ordinateur)*, *personnel au sol*; German *Brille*, *Fahrrad*; see also French *capillotracté vs. tiré par les cheveux*, *pipi-room vs. toilettes*, *occire vs. tuer*; German *Atöljö vs. Atelier*, *El Kawé vs. LKW (vs. Leberkäswucken)*). The examples confirm that we are dealing with a very general characteristic of ludic items, and this leads us to another

source of markedness, which is pragmatic markedness by virtue of the lexical items being different from more frequent and more established near-equivalents (see Winter-Froemel 2011: 295–319; Onysko & Winter-Froemel 2011; Winter-Froemel & Onysko 2012; Winter-Froemel, Onysko & Calude 2014; Winter-Froemel, in press). It has been shown that borrowings which are introduced alongside near-equivalent native items, i.e. non-catachrestic borrowings, systematically convey additional pragmatic meanings. This can be illustrated by the example of French *V.I.P.* as compared to *personnalité*, *célébrité* (however, the fact that German *V.I.P.*, which also competes with items such as *Persönlichkeit*, is not indicated as being ludically marked by the *Duden online* suggests that additional factors may come into play here).<sup>13</sup>

(45) French *V.I.P.* vs. *personnalité*, *célébrité*

A straightforward explanation of their specific communicative effect is provided by Levinson's theory of presumptive meanings (Levinson 2000), which is based on the assumption that "when we say something, we find ourselves committed to much more, just by virtue of choices between all the ways we could have said it" (Levinson 2000: 367). According to Levinson, this principle accounts for stable additional pragmatic meanings which are related to utterance types (Levinson 2000: 373) and to single elements of utterances. More specifically, we are faced here with one of the three basic types of generalised conversational implicatures as discussed by Levinson (Q-, I-, and M-implicatures, resting upon the principles of quantity, informativeness, and modality), viz. M-implicatures. These are based on the general heuristic assumed by the hearer: "What's said in an abnormal way, isn't normal; or Marked message indicates marked situation" (Levinson 2000: 33). According to this heuristic, if the speaker uses an uncommon, creative way of referring to a certain concept, thus choosing not the conventional expression, but a different expression which is more difficult to process, the hearer will assume that the speaker wants to convey an additional meaning, which can be an interactional meaning in the sense of an invitation to participate in a linguistic game of decoding a partly enigmatic utterance. The ludic innovations exhibiting this characteristic can thus be ranged into the general category of non-catachrestic innovations, i.e. of innovations that do not arise from a need to designate a new concept, but develop for other, interactional reasons (for a more detailed discussion of the notions of catachrestic /

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<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, a certain ludic potential can also be observed for uses of German *V.I.P.* in contexts where the native item *Persönlichkeit* would equally have been a plausible choice.

non-catachrestic innovation, see Winter-Froemel 2011: 295–315; Onysko & Winter-Froemel 2011; Winter-Froemel, in press).

Finally, for yet other items, the additional knowledge that proves the extensive linguistic and general knowledge of both the speaker and the hearer consists in being familiar with and recognising certain citations. We can thus also observe a complicity dimension here, which can be linked to Galisson's concept of *lexiculture*, coined to underpin the indissoluble links between lexicon and culture and to emphasise the existence of a certain cultural knowledge which is linked to particular linguistic items and shared by the speakers (Galisson 1988). In the dictionaries, the items concerned are sometimes marked as being ludic; in other cases, however, the entries only contain the lexicographic mark "allusion", sometimes with an indication of the original source of the citation.

(46) **dive** [...] VIEUX ou PLAISANT Divine. — ALLUS. LITTER. *La dive bouteille*: le vin. «on eût dit un prêtre de Bacchus officiant et célébrant les mystères de la dive bouteille» (Gautier).

(47) **substantifique** [...] ALLUS. LITTER. (Rabelais) «*La substantifique moelle*»: ce qu'il y a de plus riche en substance (III), dans un écrit. [...] «*Cette substantifique moelle qu'est le fric*» (Queneau).

(48) **dormitif, ive** [...] ■ VIEUX MED. Qui provoque le sommeil. [...] ALLUS. LITTER. «*Pourquoi l'opium fait-il dormir?... Parce qu'il a une vertu dormitive*» (Molière), cité pour ridiculiser une explication purement verbale.

Similar effects can also be observed for more recent citational uses. For instance, French *mulot* 'computer mouse', which originates via semantic change from the meaning of 'field mouse', is marked as ludic ("plaisant") in PR 2016. The ludic effect can be explained by the fact that the conceptual and semantic relations established can be perceived as being surprising and showing the speaker's creativity. At the same time, the form *mulot* is unexpected and relatively marked compared to the conventional designation for the computer device *souris*, of which the original meaning is co-taxonomically related to the meaning of *mulot*. Moreover, as one of the reviewers of this paper points out, for many speakers this lexical item will recall specific uses, "for example, Jacques Chirac, not noted for his computer literacy, famously asked about using 'le mulot' (on *Guignols de l'information* and still brought up on television twenty years after the event)."<sup>14</sup>

(49) **mulot** • n. m. (1997) PLAIS. Souris d'ordinateur. (PR 2016)

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<sup>14</sup> I would like to thank the reviewer for this important observation.

Summing up, ludic innovations show a great variety of patterns and motivations. The items discussed appear to be generally characterised by being marked in a certain respect and / or by violating certain communicative rules and principles of “ordinary” communication. This markedness and these violations can be realised in different forms including a structural markedness which deviates from the rules and norms of grammar and usage as well as violations of the internal harmony of the linguistic items by combining structurally and / or semantically heterogeneous elements, producing a sort of clash for the hearer. Finally, we have seen that the interactional dimension is paramount to ludicity and that the use of ludic items in communication can be seen as (part of) a social game where the speaker’s and hearer’s linguistic mastery is at stake, potentially permitting a confirmation of social relations, complicity, and in-group / out-group structures.

## 5 Ludic innovations in diachrony: Pathways of evolution of ludic innovations in French

Let us now turn to the diachronic development of ludic and humorous items in the lexicon. I will first present some general observations on the lexicographic description of ludic items across the five editions of the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* contained in the ARTFL database (section 5.1). Then I will present some general patterns of evolution that emerge from the ARTFL data, including the dictionaries by Littré and Féraud (sections 5.2 to 5.5; for parallel observations on German, see Moulin, this volume).

### 5.1 General observations

Taking into account the five editions of the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*, there are altogether 238 items which are marked as being ludic (“plais” / *plaisant*) in at least one edition of the dictionary. If we look at the total numbers of ludic items in the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*, we can see that in the first edition, the lexicographic mark “plaisant” is not yet established and only a very low number of items is characterised as being ludic. In the following editions, the number of items marked as being ludic constantly increases until the 1835 edition, which clearly has the highest number of new ludic items. The number of items decreases again for the 1932–1935 edition (see Table 2). Moreo-

ver, the 1835 edition also clearly has the highest number of first occurrences of ludic items, i.e. of items newly marked as being ludic.

**Tab. 2:** Ludic innovations in different editions of the DAF

<b>Edition</b>	<b>DAF 1 1694</b>	<b>DAF 4 1762</b>	<b>DAF 5 1798</b>	<b>DAF 6 1835</b>	<b>DAF 8 1932– 1935</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of ludic items	8	70	75	161	93	407
First occurrences of ludic items	8	67	13	113	37	238

With respect to the diachronic stability of the items, Table 3 shows that the majority of ludic items is only registered as being ludic in one edition (which does not exclude of course their occurrence in other editions of the dictionary, but without the respective lexicographic mark). None of the 238 ludic items analysed occurs as a ludic item in all of the five editions of the dictionary. This means that the average life span of ludic innovations is reduced, and this observation already suggests that ludic items represent a highly dynamic domain in the lexicon. I will therefore discuss various developments that emerge as basic pathways of the diachronic evolution of ludic items in the following subsections.

**Tab. 3:** Occurrence of ludic items in several editions of the DAF

<b>Number of editions indicating a ludic dimension</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of ludic items	132	62	25	19	0	238
Percentages	55.5%	26.1%	10.5%	8.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Before investigating these pathways of evolution, however, it has to be added that the results given above should be taken as approximative numbers only, as the lexicographic description of the items cannot be taken to represent a diachronically stable and objective analysis, but depends on a broad range of external factors influencing the lexicographic practice (for general reflections on

this issue, see also Moulin, this volume). For instance, the general increase in marking ludic items until the 1835 edition goes along with a general increase in the use of lexicographic marks indicating pragmatic, rhetorical or stylistical features. For the first edition of the dictionary, there is a general reluctance to use lexicographic marks. This has been explained as being partly motivated by a relatively tolerant attitude (i.e. the Academy members' lexicographic practice is more tolerant than the puristic outline in the preface suggests; moreover, Popelar argues that in some cases, the lexicographic marks are used in a clearly unsystematic and even careless way in the first edition of the dictionary; cf. Popelar 1976: 202–220). For the second edition (issued in 1718), in turn, a much stricter puristic practice is already manifest.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, we have already seen in section 3 that the lexicographic descriptions become increasingly standardised, which means that the lower number of items retrieved for the first editions may also be partly explained by the fact that the analysis only included items identified by the search string “plais”. Besides, for all of the editions, we have to take into account a certain influence of external factors, i.e. the lexicographic practice is strongly influenced by the historical context, by inter-individual variation between the different members of the *Académie française* elaborating the different editions of the dictionary, etc. It can be assumed that these aspects equally influence the ways in which the items are judged and described. And finally, the present survey does not allow us to evaluate the status of the linguistic items before the first edition of the DAF, i.e. for the items that are already marked as being ludic in the first edition, their possible preexistence as ludic forms is not taken into account.

## 5.2 Ludic usage of catchphrases and citations

Concerning the question of how ludic items and uses are introduced, a first pattern to emerge from the diachronic (and synchronic) data are cases in which individual utterances (i.e. individual discourse events) are repeated by other speakers and become part of the linguistic knowledge of the members of the speech community. This has already been commented on with respect to the lexicographic mark “allusion” in PR 2016, and conventionalised phrases have also been looked at in 4.1 for ludic innovations having a “poetic” quality. In the diachronic case study, this pattern is also frequently attested and it is addition-

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<sup>15</sup> However, the second edition of the dictionary is not included in the ARTFL database and is thus not included in this survey.

ally confirmed by the frequent cooccurrence of the lexicographic marks “*par plaisanterie*” and “*proverbialement*”:

- (50) FARCE. s. f. Comédie bouffonne. On dit figurément et proverbialement, *Tirez le rideau, la farce est jouée*, pour dire, C'en est fait; et cela se dit ordinairement par plaisanterie. [DAF 5]
- (51) BRETAUDER. v. a. Tondre inégalement. Prov. et par plaisanterie, *Bretaudef les cheveux de quelqu'un*, Les lui couper trop courts. [DAF 6]
- (52) CHOU.1 s. m. Plante potagère de la famille des crucifères. *Bête comme un chou....* Cette locution viendrait-elle, par plaisanterie, de ce que le chou a une tête et ne pense pas? [Litt]

The examples show that additional aspects that explain the ludic dimension come into play here: ex. (50) can be seen as a more prolix, more difficult, and less straightforward way of expressing a given subject matter. In this sense, the expression is clearly marked and can convey an additional pragmatic meaning. At the same time, there can be an effect of complicity between the speaker and hearer if the latter succeeds in decoding the message. For (51) and (52), there is a clear dimension of denigration; for the latter example, the reflections put forward by Littré also hint at the partly enigmatic character of the utterance.

### 5.3 Conventional items > obsolete items > ludic items

Another tendency which can be observed in the data is represented by ludic reinterpretations of otherwise marginal items of the lexicon, i.e. of items which have become obsolete (cf. Ludwig 2009: 1577–1580). This can be illustrated by the examples of French *ne ... goutte* and *occire* (see section 4.3) as well as the following examples.

- (53) BONNETADE. s. f. Coup de bonnet, salut qu'on fait en ôtant son bonnet. Il a vieilli, et ne se dit que par plaisanterie. [DAF 6]
- (54) *Réponse congrue*, Réponse précise. *Phrase congrue*, Phrase correcte. Ces deux locutions ont vieilli et ne s'emploient guère que par plaisanterie. [DAF 6, s.v. *congrue*]
- (55) TÂTER s'emploie aussi intransitivement et signifie Goûter à quelque chose, goûter de quelque chose. Je tâterais volontiers de ce vin, de ce perdreau. Il vieillit en ce sens et ne se dit guère que par plaisanterie. [DAF 8]

- (56) BEDON. s. m. Vieux mot, qui signifioit autrefois Petit tambour, mais qui n'est plus en usage que dans cette phrase, *Un gros bedon*, qui se dit par plaisanterie d'Un homme gros et gras. *C'est un gros bedon*. [DAF 5]

Based on these observations, we can assume the following steps of evolution: conventional and unmarked items become obsolete, but may then, instead of disappearing completely, be preserved as ludic items, as they permit the speakers (and hearers) to demonstrate their extensive linguistic knowledge which includes marginal items of the lexicon (see section 4.3).

#### 5.4 Remaining stability of ludic innovations

The reflections above have shown how ludicity can arise; if the innovations and ludic uses are perceived as being communicatively efficient, they can diffuse in the speech community and become conventionalised. Another question which arises in this context, however, is the question whether there are additional tendencies in the diachronic evolution of ludic items. In spite of the general dynamics of ludic and humorous items, for some ludic innovations we can observe a relative stability. For the 19 items which are indicated as being ludic in four editions of the DAF, we can find a high number of items where only specific uses of the respective lemma are ludic. These lemmas include items of a very high frequency (see ex. (57)) and items where the ludic uses remain very stable (ex. (58)).<sup>16</sup> Besides, there are items which keep their ludic dimension, but for which different uses are indicated by the different editions of the dictionary (ex. (59) / (60) / (61)).

- (57) BON. [...] Et dans le style familier, soit par injure, soit par plaisanterie, on dit, *C'est un bon coquin, un bon fripon, un bon débauché, un bon vaurien, une bonne ame, une bonne pièce, une bonne bête, un bon bec*. [DAF 4, see also DAF 5, DAF 6, which adds “On dit de même, par exclamation, La bonne pièce! la bonne langue! etc.”, DAF 8]
- (58) COMPAGNIE. Se dit aussi d'Un nombre de gens de guerre sous un Capitaine. On dit proverbiallement & par plaisanterie, qu'*Un homme est bête de Compagnie*, pour dire, qu'il aime la société, & qu'il se laisse facilement mener où l'on veut. Il fera ce que vous voudrez, *il est bête de compagnie*. [DAF 4, see also DAF 5, DAF 6, DAF 8]

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<sup>16</sup>For (57), we can assume that the expression *bon bec* cited in the entry evoked for many 18th century speakers the refrain of Villon's famous poem “Ballade des femmes de Paris”, “Il n'est bon bec que de Paris” (as it still does for many speakers today).

- (59) CROÛTRE. v.n. Devenir plus grand. On dit proverbialement & par plaisanterie, Des enfants qui croissent beaucoup, Mauvaise herbe croît toujours. [DAF 4, see also DAF 5]
- (60) CROÛTRE. v. n. Devenir plus grand. Prov., *Mauvaise herbe croît toujours*, se dit par plaisanterie Des enfants qui croissent beaucoup. Prov., *Ne faire que croître et embellir*, se dit D'une jeune personne qui devient tous les jours plus grande et plus belle. *Cette jeune fille ne fait que croître et embellir*. On le dit, par plaisanterie, De certaines choses qui augmentent, soit en bien, soit en mal. *Il se débauche tous les jours de plus en plus, cela ne fait que croître et embellir*. [DAF 6]
- (61) CROÛTRE v. intr. Se développer, en parlant des Hommes, des animaux, des plantes. Fig., Ne faire que croître et embellir, se dit d'une Jeune personne qui devient tous les jours plus grande et plus belle. [DAF 8]

## 5.5 Ludic innovations > unmarked items

In addition to the tendencies observed in 5.4, however, we can also observe wearout effects. Ludic and playful items can be considered to be marked items of the lexicon. This markedness may favour the usage of these items in order to attract the hearer's attention and to convey additional pragmatic effects and meanings; however, if more and more speakers use the items in this way, the special effect will increasingly get lost. This wearout effect has been described among others in the context of Keller's (1994) approach to language change (for a critical discussion of this framework, cf. Winter-Froemel 2011: 131–177, 2013–2014).

For the data studied in this paper, we can mention the example of German *Drahtesel*, which does not convey strong pragmatic effects in contemporary German. Similar wearout effects can be observed for the following examples; interestingly, these developments are often accompanied by a semantic generalisation (see ex. (63), which has made the example below an unmarked expression for excursions of any type, not only for excursions that convey the literal meaning of German *Flug* 'flight').

- (62) PHÉNOMÉNAL, ALE [...] adj. Néologisme. Qui tient du phénomène. Familièrement et par plaisanterie, surprenant, étonnant. Voilà qui est phénoménal. [Litt]
- (63) **Ausflug** Sm std. (13. Jh.), mhd. *uzvluc* [the correct form is *ûzvluc*, however, EWF]. Zunächst nur vom Ausfliegen der Vögel gesagt, dann (seit Luther) übertragen auf Menschen, spezialisiert auf 'Wanderung, kleinere Reise' im 17. Jh. [...] (EWDS) [At first, only for the birds' leaving their nest, then (since Luther) transferred to humans, with a specialisation on 'walking-tour', 'short journey' in the 17<sup>th</sup> century]

Such developments can also be accompanied by other semantic innovations in which the items are reused to express new concepts (e.g. in technical contexts, etc., see ex. (64) / (65)).

- (64) CONVERTISSEUR. s. m. Celui qui réussit dans la conversion des âmes. Il signifie également, Celui qui s'efforce de convertir les autres à sa religion. Il est familier dans les deux sens, et ne se dit guère que par plaisanterie. [DAF 6]
- (65) **convertisseur** [kɔ̃vɛrtisœʁ] nom masculin 1 RARE Celui qui opère des conversions (1°). [...] 2 (1869) Cornue basculante où l'on transforme la fonte en acier par oxydation du carbone, en y insufflant de l'air comprimé. [...] 3 *Convertisseur (de devises, de monnaie)*: dispositif (calculette, tableau...) permettant de connaître l'équivalent dans une monnaie d'un montant exprimé dans une autre monnaie, et inversement. (PR 2016)

These examples thus confirm the observations made in the diachronic study of ludic items in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*: ludic items represent a highly dynamic domain in the lexicon, as ludicity motivates lexical innovation, but is also subject to different tendencies with respect to the subsequent development of the ludic items.

## 6 Conclusion

I have argued that ludicity represents an important dimension of lexical innovation and expansion. Studying the information on ludic lexical items provided by contemporary and historical dictionaries of French, it has been shown that this dimension is indicated by nowadays established lexicographic marks. It can thus be assumed that ludicity is also an important aspect perceived by the speakers when using or interpreting the lexical items. At the same time, however, the lexicographic treatment of ludic items is still in part unsystematic, as the categorisations are at times intuitive, and lexicographic marks indicating ludicity overlap with other marks. The overall number of ludic items indicated in *Le Petit Robert* seems to underrate the importance of this dimension of lexical innovation. Another observation that has been made is that normative and evaluative statements about ludic items are still strongly present. In order to contribute to a descriptive approach to ludicity in lexical innovation, basic structural, semantic, and pragmatic features of ludic innovations have been investigated. In addition, I have identified various subtypes of ludic innovations and ludic usage. Diachronic analyses of the introduction and evolution of ludic items have finally revealed basic pathways of evolution and confirmed that ludic innovations represent a highly dynamic domain which offers interesting in-

sights into processes of lexical change. Important issues that will need to be addressed in further research concern the aptitude and productivity of certain patterns and processes of lexical innovation for ludic innovation / reuse (e.g. compounding, blending, reduplication, abbreviation, truncation, borrowing; see also the contributions by Arndt-Lappe and Braun, this volume). Another interesting topic for further research are specific patterns such as French *un beau X / une belle Y*, where the adjective functions as a ludic (ironical) augmentative. Finally, it seems necessary to investigate in more detail the evolution of ludic expressions along the continuum of context-dependent ludic uses and stable lexicalised items as well as the boundaries between ludic innovations and other types of innovations.

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