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The dynamics of wordplay and wordplay research

Approaches, contexts and traditions

1 Discovering the dynamics of wordplay

Wordplay appears in a broad range of situations of communicative exchange, including spontaneous manifestations in everyday communication, strategic uses in advertising messages and argumentative texts as well as literary texts from different authors, cultures and historical periods. In spite of its ubiquity, however, wordplay also appears to be to a certain extent ephemeral: the ludic character of utterances can get lost over time as they become reused in other contexts, and in many instances, ludic language use merely functions as a momentary pause inserted into a communicative exchange that pursues different aims. Wordplay thus appears to be a complex phenomenon which is difficult to grasp, but which at the same time appears to be a highly interesting and relevant one, as it can reveal basic principles of language and communication.

In previous research on wordplay, there has been a strong focus on wordplay in specific authors (e.g. William Shakespeare, James Joyce, Raymond Queneau, see among others Kohl 1966; Mahood 1957; Delabastita 1993, 2011; Heibert 1993; Kemmner 1972) or literary domains such as nonsense literature (see among others Schöne 1951; Sewell 1952; Hildebrand 1970; Petzold 1972; Lecercle 1994; Zirker 2010a, 2010b). A particular interest can be observed in the translation of wordplay, frequently in relation to particular authors (Grassegger 1985; Heibert 1993; Rauch 1982; Delabastita 1994, 1996, 1997; Chiaro 2010a, 2010b; Vandaele 2011). Linguistic approaches have focused on the use of wordplay in particular text types, e.g. newspaper articles (see among others Hausmann 1974; Sullet-Nylander 2005, 2006, 2010; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2011) and textual elements (e.g. headings, see Dittgen 1989), or in particular domains such as the press, advertising or the media (see among others Carstensen 1971; Vittoz-Canuto 1983; Grunig 1990; Tanaka 1999; Chovanec and Ermida 2012), and in particular contexts of use, e.g. private conversation (e.g. Priego-Valverde 2003).

In addition, previous research has aimed to provide overviews and classifications of wordplay and verbal humor (see e.g. Preisendanz and Warning 1976; Hesbois 1986; Defays 1996; Alexander 1997; Guiraud 1976; Charaudeau 2006; Blake 2010). Raskin (1985) proposed a Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH),

which has been expanded into the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH; Attardo and Raskin 1991; see also Attardo 1994, 2001 as well as Attardo 2011 and the contributions of the issue 24(2) of *Humor – International Journal of Humor Research*).

Other works have focused on specific realizations of wordplay, e.g. puns (Culler 1988; Redfern 1985), and on further phenomena related to verbal humor, e.g. verbal irony (see among others Ruiz-Gurillo and Alvarado-Ortega 2013), figurative meaning (e.g. Gibbs and Colston 2012), allusions (Wilss 1989), verbal humor in garden paths (Dynel 2009), comic discourse (Nash 1985), functions of punning in conversation (Kotthoff 1996), or wordplay and the motivation of linguistic signs (Käge 1980; Rettig 1981; see also Partington 2009). Overviews of wordplay research and the state of the art of research on verbal humor are provided among others by Winter-Froemel (2009, 2016) and Attardo (2017).

In addition to the various approaches described above, recent research has aimed to integrate linguistic and literary perspectives as well as approaches from the point of view of rhetoric (see Rabatel 2008, 2012, 2013; Brône and Vandaele 2009; Valero-Garcés 2010), and various authors have argued for interdisciplinary approaches to wordplay, verbal humor and ambiguity (see Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2010; Bauer et al. 2010). In our view, there are indeed lessons to be learnt about language and communication (literary communication as well as everyday communication) by studying wordplay (see also Gauger 1971, 2006, 2014; Goldstein 1990; Koch, Krefeld, and Oesterreicher 1997; Goatly 2012), and this is one of the main motivations of the present volumes as well as of the book series *The Dynamics of Wordplay* in general.

This aim has already been pursued by the first two volumes in the series (Zirker and Winter-Froemel 2015, Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015) by bringing together linguistic and literary approaches. In addition, the inherently dynamic dimension of wordplay has been put forward in the interdisciplinary project “Dynamik des Wortspiels/The Dynamics of Wordplay/La dynamique du jeu de mots” (funded by the German Research Foundation and directed by Esme Winter-Froemel since 2013). Main aspects which have been explored in this project are the relations between wordplay and language contact, wordplay and linguistic innovation, and wordplay and speaker-hearer interaction.

Phenomena of language contact can give rise to playful language use (see among others the third volume of the book series, Knospe, Onysko, and Goth 2016), and the transitions between wordplay and linguistic innovation in synchrony and diachrony provide important insights into the importance of ludicity in language and language use (see among others Arndt-Lappe et al. 2018 and Full and Lecolle, in press). The interactional dimension of wordplay represents an

additional, transversal topic which is addressed in many contributions to these volumes. Another main result of the discussions in the research project was the difficulty of defining wordplay and its limits in an uncontroversial way. We thus set up a discussion forum (see pp. 9–94 in Knospe, Onysko, and Goth 2016, with contributions by Winter-Froemel, Thaler, Lecolle, Onykso and Knospe) aiming to debate the central question which is at the very heart of all analyses of wordplay: how can the phenomenon be defined and approached?

The contributions in the discussion forum were intended to foster further discussion and interdisciplinary explorations of wordplay, as launched in this book series. This was also the central aim of the conference organized in Trier from September 29, 2016 to October 1st, 2016. The topic chosen for the conference, “The Dynamics of Wordplay/La dynamique du jeu de mots – Interdisciplinary perspectives/perspectives interdisciplinaires”, was motivated by recent trends in wordplay research: New approaches have been proposed to link the domain of wordplay and verbal humor to Cognitive Linguistics (see e.g. Veale 2009; Brône, Feyaerts, and Veale 2015) and (cognitive) pragmatics (see e.g. Yus 2016). On the whole, it can be observed that recent research stresses the pragmatic and interactional dimension of wordplay and verbal humor (see e.g. Kotthoff 1998; Norrick and Chiaro 2009; Dynel 2011; Charaudeau 2015; Farhat 2015), which opens up new research perspectives, e.g. on humor as a metapragmatic ability (Ruiz-Gurillo 2016) or on the relationship between humor and gender (Chiaro and Baccolini 2014). All these recent approaches point to the dynamic nature of wordplay, which is not only a phenomenon to be described on the basis of its structural features, but also to be analyzed as an element of social interaction and dynamic processes of linguistic and social change. We thus chose the topic of the conference in order to investigate various facets of the dynamics that become apparent in wordplay, revealing basic principles of language and communication.

The high number of international submissions confirmed the interest in and relevance of the topic. In addition to the keynote lectures delivered by Salvatore Attardo, Dirk Delabastita, Dirk Geeraerts and Eline Zenner, Raymond W. Gibbs, Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Alain Rabatel and Françoise Rubellin, the thirty-six papers selected for the conference dealt with different aspects of the theory and practice of wordplay, studying cases of wordplay from different historical periods, languages and discourse traditions. In addition, the papers brought together research perspectives from fourteen different countries, including approaches from linguistics and literary studies as well as adjacent disciplines such as cultural studies, media studies, comparative literature, theater studies, and phonetics.

Finally, the research project has sought to cooperate with a “panel of practitioners” of authors, artists, and other professional “word players” to exchange on practical perspectives and applications of wordplay. As part of the conference program, the actors Aurélie Rusterholtz and François Chaix brought to life the comedy *L'Amour maître de langue* (1718) in a stage-reading at the Theater Trier. The performance was introduced by the specialist Françoise Rubellin, who not only gave an overview of the play and its historical context, but also motivated the audience to join in and sing the chorus of the final *vaudeville*, thus becoming part of the performance. The author Yoko Tawada, who writes in Japanese and German, presented some of her texts during another – plurilingual – lecture at the theater, and Joshua T. Katz directed a workshop on didactic perspectives of wordplay based on his long teaching experience at Princeton University. Finally, in her closing statement, the author, Oplepo member and specialist on potential literature Astrid Poier-Bernhard shared her reflections on creativity and wordplay with the conference audience, stressing the links between different research perspectives and approaches and stimulating further discussion and exchange.

2 Outline of contents

The two volumes of the conference proceedings bring together a selection of twenty-five research papers presented at the conference, focusing on cultures and traditions of wordplay and wordplay research (*The Dynamics of Wordplay* 6) and on the use of wordplay in different texts and contexts, stressing the social dimension of wordplay (*The Dynamics of Wordplay* 7). In addition, the volumes also include an interview and two papers on practical perspectives and applications of wordplay.

The Dynamics of Wordplay 6 opens with a section introducing new perspectives on the analysis of wordplay and, more precisely, the dynamic aspect of wordplay. The three contributions in this section focus on the question of how the production and the description of wordplay are inherently dynamic and how this dynamicity can be integrated into a descriptive model of wordplay. In his paper “Words making love together: Dynamics of metaphoric creativity”, Raymond W. Gibbs outlines a linguistic and psychological model of dynamic wordplay, focusing on metaphorical language use as one of the forms of language use in which people engage in wordplay. He argues that creative metaphor use cannot be reduced to conscious, deliberate acts that are intended to be seen as such by listeners and readers. Creative metaphor use rather emerges from an interaction of social, cognitive and linguistic forces that do not easily fall into a simple

division between the conscious and unconscious minds. The paper describes different studies that offer support for such an expanded view of metaphoric creativity and illustrates it with various examples. More generally, the paper aims to provide a more comprehensive, psychologically realistic way of what people are doing when they engage in wordplay.

From a different perspective, Dirk Delabastita's contribution "The dynamics of wordplay and the modern novel: A paired case study" also argues for a dynamic approach to wordplay. Delabastita's argumentation is based on a multi-dimensional definition of wordplay and illustrates the dynamic nature of wordplay by means of an analysis of two recent English-language novels, *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* (2007) by Xiaolu Guo and *My Sister, My Love* (2008) by Joyce Carol Oates. The former may be described as a "global novel" which turns out to suggest different wordplay readings to different readerships, depending on their cultural background and multilingual literacies. The latter gives an example of a multi-voiced postmodern narrative style in which wordplay is characterized by an elusiveness of a very special kind. Both examples thus illustrate the need for a dynamic approach to wordplay in the analysis of literary texts which can be extended to other forms of communication.

From yet another perspective, Astrid Poier-Bernhard in her essay "Wor(l)d-play: Reflections on a writing-experience" describes her personal writing-experience as a literary author and argues for an integral (or aesthetic) approach to wordplay in the sense that not only the techniques but also the experience of wordplay must be taken into consideration. In this context, she argues that (active) wordplay is always connected with (passive) *worldplay* or *play which happens*. Wordplay lets us experience the playfulness of language, the mind and the world all at once and often provokes a *pleasure of the text* or even an instant of *jouissance* (R. Barthes). At the same time, the aesthetic qualities of wordplay can be described with the help of the values suggested by Italo Calvino in his *Lezioni americane* (lightness, exactitude, rapidity, visibility, multiplicity).

The following section continues these reflections by presenting general thoughts and ideas about wordplay and verbal humor and different ways to approach these phenomena. Salvatore Attardo's paper "Universals in puns and humorous wordplay" is dedicated to an analysis of humorous wordplay and punning as universal phenomena. Building on previous research on puns in different languages, he identifies basic phonological and semantic mechanisms of punning. Moreover, it is argued that different kinds of evidence clearly show that naive speakers hold a Cratylistic view of language, which is at the very heart of the universal mechanism of incongruity resolution in puns.

The paper by Angelika Braun and Astrid Schmiedel “The phonetics of ambiguity: A study on verbal irony”, on the other hand, focuses on the phonetic dimension of a special kind of language use where the meaning of the utterance is somehow dissociated from its literal wording. In this sense, verbal irony also exhibits a potential ambiguity, and the basic research question of how the disambiguation of the utterances takes place can be linked to other phenomena of ambiguity and verbal humor. By presenting phonetic analyses of single-word utterances in sincere and ironic settings, the authors investigate how the irony is signaled by the speakers and on what cues its detection by the hearers is based. A basic result which emerges from their paper are the overall recognition rates of about 70 %. At the same time, the authors observe a strong variation between sarcasm and kind irony, which thus need to be distinguished as two basically different subtypes of verbal irony.

With “Exercises in wile”, Joshua T. Katz presents another general approach to wordplay: Based on his extensive experience of teaching a freshman seminar on the history and practice of wordplay at Princeton University, the author argues that wordplay can be used in a very seminal way in academic teaching to introduce students to the subject of linguistics. The paper, which was presented in a workshop format at the conference, gives an impression of this interactive potential of wordplay and language play as a means to foster metalinguistic awareness and reflection on orthographic, phonetic and lexical peculiarities of English (and other languages).

The papers in the third section of *The Dynamics of Wordplay 6* then turn to specific traditions of wordplay in different social and cultural settings, showing the social and cultural impact on the forms and functions of wordplay as well as on the ways in which wordplay is conceived in different historical settings and cultures. The four papers follow an inverse chronological order, which corresponds to different aspects of traditions and different degrees of traditionality and conventionalization: The first paper focuses on the rise of a specific subtype of Internet meme involving verbal humor as a new tradition shared by communities of Internet users. The second paper focuses on the role of wordplay in post-colonial spaces in expressing a new, hybrid identity. The third paper shows that new and old traditions are strongly intertwined in the Chinese novel *A Dictionary of Maqiao*, which reuses and reinterprets the Western literary tradition of texts structured as a dictionary or a lexicon in a new way. Finally, the fourth paper presents a historical perspective on wordplay in German baroque.

In “One does not simply process memes: Image macros as multimodal constructions”, Eline Zenner and Dirk Geeraerts present a Cognitive Linguistic analysis of the highly popular subgenre of Internet memes that consist of text

superimposed on an image. Having observed the importance of variation and modification and the difficulty of providing a straightforward definition of the new tradition of image macros, they characterize them as prototypically structured multimodal constructions sharing basic features with jokes and traditional wordplay. In addition, as many image macros also involve instances of “classic” wordplay, the question arises of what the basic processing difficulties are that can be involved in decoding the image macros. To describe the varying degrees of typicality, the authors propose four dimensions along which the image macros vary – multimodality, multilingualism, intra-genre intertextuality and external referencing included in the construction. This opens up perspectives for further research on the mechanisms involved in the production and processing of image macros along these basic dimensions.

Gesa Schole’s paper “Wordplay as a means of post-colonial resistance” describes the use of wordplay in a post-colonial context. More specifically, it analyzes the language use of the Mozambican writer Mia Couto in one of his novels and deals with the question of how wordplay phenomena can act as a means of post-colonial resistance in this context. The use of colloquial Mozambican Portuguese and thus the deliberate deviation from European Portuguese is described as wordplay in a wider sense. It is analyzed as a form of linguistic self-mimicry as opposed to the earlier colonial mimicry. Furthermore, wordplay in a narrow sense is identified in the form of lexical blends which may be seen as metaphors for the hybrid character of post-colonial spaces. We are thus dealing with a specific use of wordplay in the context of post-colonial literature.

The next paper by Monika Schmitz-Emans is dedicated to an analysis of “Examples and poetics of wordplay in Han Shaogong’s language-reflective novel *A Dictionary of Maqiao*”. The Western tradition of literary texts structured as dictionaries can be traced back to authors such as Rabener and Lichtenberg, followed by other satirical “dictionaries” by rationalist writers, by the literary and artistic works of the surrealists, and finally by the lexicographic novel as a specific novel genre emerging around 1970. Schmitz-Emans then shows how the Chinese author Han Shaogong takes up and uses this tradition. As the dictionary provides a model that points to the use of language itself, this tradition involves a self-referential dimension, and wordplay fulfils a key role within this tradition, creating a playful bridge between documentary and inventive narrative and in this way permitting the expression of political criticism.

The final paper of *The Dynamics of Wordplay* 6, “Wordplay and baroque linguistic ideas” by Natalia Filatkina and Claudine Moulin, takes a historical perspective on traditions of wordplay. It studies wordplay in Early Modern language philosophy, focusing more specifically on one of the language theorists of

17th century Germany, Georg Philipp Harsdörffer (1607–1658). The paper analyzes two of Harsdörffer's works, namely the eight-volume series *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele* (1643–1649) and the three-volume scientific work *Delitiae Mathematicae et Physicae* (1651–1653). It describes various subtypes of wordplay with letters and argues that in the context of baroque linguistic ideas wordplay should be defined in a broader sense. They show that wordplay as it is conceived by Harsdörffer is deeply rooted in the concept of language peculiar to European baroque culture. The latter provides a conceptual background not only for theoretical reflection, poetry, education and standards of knowledge, but also for the role and functions of wordplay.

Taken together, the papers collected in the first volume of the conference proceedings thus combine different approaches to wordplay and its dynamics and present different perspectives on universal and historical aspects of wordplay. These reflections are complemented by the papers in the second volume of the proceedings, where different aspects of the social dimension of wordplay, depending on its use in specific texts and contexts, are explored. The first section of the volume focuses on the evaluation and the success of wordplay in different contexts of use, including both everyday language and literary texts.

In her paper “Heurs et malheurs du jeu de mots”, Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni focuses on wordplay in the narrow sense, defined as a conscious and deliberate production of a *double sens* and thus simultaneously involving the levels of signifier and signified. The author then takes up the challenge of classifying wordplays as “good” or “bad”, and proposes three groups of linguistic criteria that are relevant for their evaluation: formal criteria permit us to evaluate different degrees of complexity (paronomasia *in praesentia*, antanaclasis, paronomasia *in absentia*, syllepsis), semantic criteria account for different degrees of motivatedness, and pragmatic criteria provide additional conditions for the success of a particular wordplay (comprehensibility, acceptability, adaptation to the genre). In spite of these criteria being well-defined and straightforwardly analyzable, however, the specific effect of a particular case of wordplay will remain highly unpredictable.

The following paper by Alain Rabatel, “À quelles conditions les lapsus clavis sont-ils des jeux de mots?”, analyzes cases of lapsus realized in electronic communication/writing, assuming that in certain circumstances, these unintentional phenomena can be reinterpreted as puns. After distinguishing different subtypes of lapsus and other kinds of errors and mistakes, the author analyzes various cases of lapsus along with the morphological and phonological deviations they exhibit, the semantic criteria which indicate a possible interpretation of the lapsus, and enunciative and interactional criteria, the latter being of key

importance for deciding on the communicative value and success of the lapsus. Moreover, it is argued that the conditions of success are co-constructed by the communication partners and that the conceptual conflict on which the lapsus is based can be analyzed in terms of conflicting points of view.

Jean-François Sablayrolles, in “Des innovations lexicales ludiques dans des situations d’énonciation marginales ou spécifiques”, focuses on instances of playful innovations which are characterized as taking place in marginal contexts of use. In the specific situation in which the innovations are used, these innovations can serve to amuse the hearers and to create a favorable attitude towards the speaker. Among the forms of lexical innovation analyzed are incorrect flexional forms, portmanteau words and words parodying scientific language use. Another context commented on is first language acquisition, when it can equally be observed that children take pleasure in producing paronyms, thereby exploring the ludic dimension of language.

Finally, the paper by Ilias Yocaris, “‘En trou si beau adultère est béni’: poétique du jeu de mots dans *Histoire* de Claude Simon”, takes as its starting-point Claude Simon’s observed predilection for wordplay to argue that wordplay is the most appropriate stylistic device in Simon’s poetics which claims to be purely formal. Several analyses of puns in the novel *Histoire* show that the puns form part of a complex relational system, serving a triple textual purpose: they densify the text (organizational purpose), they increase the investigative potential of “ordinary language” (referential purpose), and they draw the reader’s attention to the materiality of the text (metadiscursive purpose).

The contributions of the second section adopt a more specific perspective and focus on the social dimension of wordplay in particular historical and social contexts of use. In her paper “Pouvoir du jeu de mots. Dominer par la parole en contexte d’inégalité sociale”, Karine Abiven is concerned with the use of wordplay in unequal interactions in French court society of the 17th and 18th centuries. Based on courtesy books, collections of brief forms and memoirs, it is argued that wordplay, which is assimilated to the *bon mot*, functions as a social regulator, as it allows the speaker to save face even in situations of social inferiority, as a weapon of defence or a way to circumvent social domination, allowing the speaker to convey implicit meanings while maintaining the requirements of *decorum*. At the same time, precisely because of its inherently ambiguous and surprising character, the repartee is difficult to refute or reply to. In this way, wordplay exhibits the power to circumvent social domination.

The following contribution by Catherine Ruchon, “Le jeu de mots dans les discours sur le deuil: un jeu discursif offensif”, switches to current contexts

where the use of wordplay may at first sight appear to be surprising: grief discourse of parents who have lost an unborn child. Yet based on a corpus of works written by bereaved parents, the names of associations and texts provided on their websites, it is shown that wordplay can fulfill an important function in the expression of pain, permitting the parents to circumvent taboos surrounding the expression of grief and pain. The wordplays examined exhibit “classical” techniques such as homophony, paronymy and wordplay on phrasemes. Moreover, the wordplays are linked to Freud’s concepts of economy and condensation, as developed in his theory of the dream and then applied to verbal humor.

Another approach to the social dimension of wordplay and to further functions beyond amusing the hearer or reader is offered by Michelle Lecolle’s contribution “Enjeu du collectif – noms collectifs en jeux”. The paper examines utterances which play with the notions of collectivity and plurality by exploiting the morphosyntactic, semantic and interpretative potential of the linguistic material (e.g. *portrait de groupe avec individus, l’innombrable regard de la salle*). Based on her analyses of examples taken from the French press, and additionally literary and advertising texts, the author argues that wordplay is not necessarily humorous, but can also be characterized by the intellectual pleasure it provides.

The social significance of wordplay is also apparent in the communicative setting treated in Lisa Roques’ contribution “Jeux de banquet: mots de poète, mots de stratège”. Her analysis is based on the *Epidèmiai* by Ion of Chios, which describe a *symposion* taking place at the house of Hermesilaos and assembling the social, political and intellectual elite of Athens in the fifth century B.C. Examining various examples of Sophocles’ use of *paidia* – jokes and puns –, Roques shows that they not only aim to amuse the assembled company, but also serve to make fun of the adversary and attack the strategos Pericles by giving his words a malicious interpretation. Tying in with the contribution by Karine Abiven, this paper thus also points to uses of wordplay as a weapon in socially conflictive contexts.

The first two sections of the volume are followed by an interlude in the form of an interview with Aurélie Rusterholtz and François Chaix. The actors comment on their approach to wordplay and verbal humor in their professional lives in general as well as on their preparation and performance of the reading of the French comedy *L’Amour maître de langue* (1718), which was included in the program of the Trier conference. They talk about specific challenges that need to be met and dealt with when performing the plays, but also stress the overall accessibility of the verbal humor of 17th and 18th century comedies for different audiences.

The contributions in the following third section are dedicated to the use of wordplay in particular authors, literary trends, genres and text types, thus bringing together linguistic and literary perspectives. More specifically, the first two papers focus on French 20th century literary authors, including dramatic (Eugène Ionesco, Jean Tardieu) and narrative texts (Boris Vian). The perspectives provided on the importance of wordplay in these literary contexts are complemented by three linguistic contributions focusing on the role and use of wordplay in newspaper headings, advertising and domain names.

In her contribution “Le jeu de mots dans la dramaturgie d’avant-garde des années 1950”, Jiaying Li starts by examining the use of wordplay in comedies in the Aristotelian tradition, where it serves to reinforce illusionist effects. She shows that the avant-garde theatre of the 1950s introduces a fundamentally different value of wordplay which is no longer bound to the requirement of *verisimilitude* and serving the connivance between the author and the audience. Instead, wordplay gains a certain freedom, which is, however, exploited differently by Ionesco and Tardieu, although both authors share the ideal of an abstract theatre. While Ionesco stresses the eventual failure of communication with an anarchic spirit of joking, Tardieu puts forward the musical and aesthetic potential of language, respecting the principle of entertainment. Together both authors illustrate the key role of wordplay in the renewal of dramatic language which is a central preoccupation of post-war authors.

The following paper “La dynamique de la syllepse dans la construction fictionnelle chez Boris Vian” by Cécile Pajona pursues these reflections by analyzing another French post-war author, Boris Vian. Pajona’s paper is concerned with syllepsis and the literary effects of this figure of speech in his novels, and more specifically, with the role of syllepsis in the construction of a particular fictional world. After commenting on the relationship of syllepsis to wordplay and the delimitation between syllepsis and puns, Pajona shows that this figure operates a deidiomatization and thus plays a key role in the deconstruction of linguistic norms. Finally, the paper analyzes syllepsis from a pragmatic perspective and argues that syllepsis can be regarded as a privileged fictionalization tool aiming to create a bond with the reader, convincing him/her to adhere to the new norms presented.

The recipient-oriented function of wordplay also becomes very clear in Françoise Sullet-Nylander’s paper on “Jeux de mots à la Une d’hier et d’aujourd’hui: dynamique et diversité d’un genre”, where the use of wordplay in French newspaper headlines is analyzed. The author first presents the results of various previous studies she conducted on this topic, focusing on the headlines taken alone as autonomous texts, on their relationship with the following newspaper

article, and on their intertextual or interdiscursive relationship with other utterances. In a next step, Sullet-Nylander presents the results of a survey on 100 newspaper front pages (ranging from 1631 to 2012) collected by Bourseiller, and a second corpus of 372 headlines of the daily newspaper *Libération* (1972–2015), which are analyzed with respect to the importance of cultural references, phraseological expressions, proper names and paradoxical utterances. Whereas wordplay is shown to play only a minor role in the first corpus, which can be explained by the selection criteria put forward by Bourseiller, the second corpus reveals that over the last 40 years wordplay has been a basic feature of newspaper headlines.

Another domain where the importance of wordplay is generally recognized is advertising. This issue is addressed by Giovanni Tallarico's paper "Créativité lexicale et jeux de mots dans les messages publicitaires: formes et fonctions", which aims to determine basic forms and functions of wordplay in French advertising based on a corpus of the weekly *À nous Paris* (2015–2016). Main categories of wordplay identified by Tallarico are cases of wordplay exploiting language itself (alliteration, onomatopoeia), sound-based puns (homophony, paronymy), semantically based puns (polysemy, antonymy) and wordplay involving allusion (modification of fixed expressions). Tallarico shows that the third category – puns on meaning – accounts for about half of the cases analyzed, whereas neological creations play only a marginal role. Moreover, the author argues that in spite of the important role of the visual dimension in the advertisements, slogans are still a key element. Wordplay appears to be particularly apt in this context, as it is also characterized by concision, originality and efficiency. The originality and creativity of slogans can be seen in lexical blending and playful modifications of phrasemes, which fulfill the function of capturing attention and facilitating the memorization of the slogans. Further functions identified by Tallarico are the creation of effects of complicity and the aim of disguising the commercial dimension of the utterances.

The function of wordplay as an attention-grabbing device and a means of enhancing the memorization of the utterance is also clearly manifest in domain names, as studied by Peter Handler in his contribution "Les noms de domaine – une nouvelle source de créativité langagière". Adopting a broad perspective on wordplay, the author demonstrates the frequent use of various creative techniques in the choice of domain names or web addresses. These techniques include blends, phonetic spelling and phonetic deformation, paronymy, double meanings and permutations. Constraints of technical standardization define a certain morphology of domain names and thus impose certain limits, but also foster additional ways of playing with domain name extensions, which can be reinterpreted (e.g. *.tv* and *.fm*) and/or integrated into other terms or phrases (e.g.

superf.lu, find.me). This latter tendency is particularly noticeable in the developments following the introduction of “New generic Top Level Domains”, considerably enhancing the possibility of introducing playful domain names.

Taken together, the contributions of the third section thus reveal the key role – but also the internal variety – of wordplay in particular contexts of use. The four papers of the last section of *The Dynamics of Wordplay* 7 finally investigate specific scenarios of wordplay use which exhibit an inherent dynamics, as the use of wordplay takes place at the crossroads of different languages, traditions and social discourses. Again, this section brings together approaches from linguistics and literary studies.

The first contribution by Esme Winter-Froemel and Pauline Beaucé, “Contacts linguistiques et humour verbal dans le théâtre comique français au tournant des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles”, combines a linguistic and a literary approach to investigate the importance of plurilingualism in the society of the Ancien Régime for the verbal humor in the comedies of this period. The authors start by giving an overview of the historical conditions that are relevant to the analysis of the comedies, including the most important types of language contact and languages concerned as well as the conditions under which the comedies were performed at the different theaters, and strict constraints imposed on the *théâtre de la Foire*. Then they show that plurilingualism is strongly reflected in the comedies, where different forms of contacts can be observed: code-switching, interference and lexical borrowing, but also more inventive and more radical forms of innovations based on contact phenomena, including parodies of linguistic stereotypes and the invention of new languages. The verbal humor related to language contact phenomena points to specific social values attributed to the languages involved. At the same time, the verbal humor of the comedies partly transgresses linguistic and dramaturgic conventions, thus revealing a creative orchestration of existing linguistic differences and tensions.

Elena Meteva-Rousseva’s paper on “Les jeux de mots dans le *nadsat* d’Anthony Burgess – comment ses traducteurs français ont relevé le défi” provides another look at contact phenomena and the challenges imposed by linguistic differences. She studies the translation of wordplay in *nadsat*, the specific slang invented by Burgess for the young thugs of his dystopian novel *A Clockwork Orange*. As the wordplay mostly involves Russian, a language English readers are not familiar with, it can be analyzed as a case of secret wordplay. It thus appears to be fully appropriate to be used in a slang which aims to construct a group identity and which has both playful and cryptic functions. Based on these observations, the author distinguishes between two dominant functions of wordplay

in Burgess' *nadsat* – a referential and a qualifying function –, and provides examples for the ways the challenges of translation have been met by the French translators of the book.

The following contribution by Anda Rădulescu, “Du calembour simple au calembour complexe dans le roman *À prendre ou à lécher* de Frédéric Dard”, is also dedicated to the analysis of creative language use in a literary context. To study the use of puns in Frédéric Dard / San Antonio, the author selects one of his novels and analyzes the puns used according to the underlying mechanisms and the degree of complexity of the puns, referring to established categories of wordplay. Moreover, she shows that the puns frequently involve languages other than French (mainly English and German). A main aim of the puns identified by Rădulescu is to create a connivance between the writer and the readers.

The use of wordplay in the interaction between speaker and hearer (or between writer and reader) is likewise addressed by Hélène Favreau. In her contribution “‘Allumeeez le fun’: le jeu de mots comme lieu de croisement des dynamiques linguistique et socio-linguistique dans le discours publicitaire”, she emphasizes the intentional deviation from established linguistic norms by the speaker in advertising discourse in order to capture the hearer's attention and make them smile or laugh. Favreau argues that wordplay in advertising, which involves the phonological, lexical and semantic level, thus reflects the dynamics of language itself. At the same time, the decoding of the messages may require a more or less active participation on the part of the hearer, who needs to reconstruct the meaning, taking into account both common cultural knowledge and intertextual allusions and suggested subtexts. Moreover, the paper is also concerned with the further evolution of the deviant items and the sociolinguistic dynamics at work, and the author shows that the advertising discourse not only reflects ongoing developments, but can also create and foster new trends in the evolution of the French language.

In spite of the linear order of presentation of the papers contained in the two volumes of the conference proceedings, the various papers present numerous different links and common interests which the reader is invited to discover. To facilitate access to all of the contributions, each volume of the conference proceedings provides an appendix listing all the contributions contained in both volumes, with additional translations of the abstracts of the other volume, and short profiles of all the contributors to the conference proceedings. In addition, both volumes have an index listing the main key words of the contributions contained in the respective volume.

3 Final remarks and acknowledgments

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