1 Theoretical Choices: Ways of Approaching and Analysing Wordplay

1.1 Wordplay is an interface phenomenon. It is therefore useful to choose an interdisciplinary approach to wordplay, or at least to have in mind the “larger picture” when analysing specific aspects of wordplay.

1.2 Wordplay occurs in concrete linguistic utterances, in speaker-hearer interaction (understood in a very general sense, including direct and indirect communicative exchange as well as dialogical and monological settings, communicative immediacy and communicative distance, cf. Koch and Oesterreicher 2011), and it should be studied from a usage-based approach (Coseriu 1958; Keller 1994; Barlow and Kemmer 2000; Winter-Froemel 2011).

1.3 Wordplay involves (to various degrees, and in different forms) all of the basic semiotic entities in communication: the sign, the speaker / sender, the hearer / recipient, and the objects and circumstances (according to the ‘Organon’ model by Karl Bühler; Bühler 1934). Further refinements or alternative labels for the various semiotic entities are of course possible, for example by referring to Raible’s (1983: 5) and Blank’s (2001: 9; cf. 1997: 102) semiotic models (see also

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Winter-Froemel 2011: 251–257; 259–293), to Schulz von Thun’s (1981) expansion of Bühler which adds the social dimension (relationship between the speaker and hearer) or to the fundamental distinction between the content and relationship levels of communication put forward by Watzlawick, Beavin Bavelas and Jackson (2011 [1967], 2.3).

1.4 Wordplay can be analysed from the perspective of the speaker (encoding, onomasiological perspective) and from the perspective of the hearer (decoding, semasiological perspective). The terms of ‘speaker’ and ‘hearer’ are understood here in a general sense, including writers and readers.

1.5 Moreover, ‘speaker’ and ‘hearer’ may include several persons and/or several groups of persons, permitting complex social games based on complicity/in-group communication vs. excluded thirds (see below, 2.1.1, 2.7.8 as well as Verena Thaler’s contribution to the discussion forum, this volume).

1.6 Being a form of verbal exchange, wordplay has a cognitive as well as a communicative dimension. In analysing wordplay, we can focus on what happens in the speakers’ and hearers’ minds, and on what happens between them at a communicative and social level. Wordplay always involves cognitive and social aspects, but to various degrees, and in different forms.

1.7 Wordplay is transmitted in the phonic or graphic medium or a combination of both, and in specific contexts of communication (e.g. literary communication, publicity, social media). These aspects influence the ways in which wordplay may be used and interpreted, and co-determine the possibilities of referring to various types of contexts and various types of language-related and extra-linguistic knowledge. The medial realisation of wordplay and the reference to different types of contextual knowledge thus represent basic parameters along which different realisations of wordplay can be described and analysed (cf. Winter-Froemel, this volume).

2 In the following, cross-references to other contributions to the discussion forum will be made by giving the name of the respective author and using the abbreviation DF.
2 Functions of Wordplay / the Pragmatics of Wordplay: Encoding and Decoding

2.1 Concerning the interactional dimension of wordplay, it is often necessary to distinguish between several speaker and hearer instances and / or between several speaker and hearer groups.

2.1.1 In cases of in-group humour, wordplay involves two hearer groups, the in-group which plays the game and which includes the speaker and part of the hearers, and the out-group of further hearers who are excluded from the game. These cases of wordplay are thus based on strategies of complicity (French con-nivence).

2.1.2 Another basic pattern involving several speakers and / or hearers arises from the multiplication of levels of communication in literary texts. In analysing this kind of wordplay, it is important to clearly separate the different communicative levels in order to determine where wordplay proper takes place (see below, 2.6.2; cf. also Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015a).

2.1.3 Wordplay which is based on different speaker and hearer groups and roles can be analysed in terms of polyphony (see Bachtin 1971, 1979 [1934 / 1935], and Ducrot’s 1980; 1984 distinction of locuteur L und λ, sujet parlant, énonciateur, as well as Rabatel 2005, 2008, 2015, and the concepts of posture énonciative and points de vue), and by referring to Goffman’s distinction of different types of speakers – the animator, the author, the principal – as well as of different types of hearers – ratified and unratified participants / bystanders (see e.g. Goffman 1981).

2.2 Speakers can use wordplay in order to fulfill different functions.

2.2.1 The core function of wordplay is to produce a humorous effect and to amuse the hearer.
2.2.2 Moreover, wordplay can be used to fulfill a broad range of other social functions related to the image of his / her self the speaker wishes to convey by using wordplay (e.g. esteem / admiration of the speaker’s wit, creativity, and linguistic mastership), or the social relations – between the speaker and hearer as well as between different hearer groups – confirmed, revealed or created by using wordplay (e.g. shared aesthetic pleasure, inclusion / exclusion of certain hearer groups).

2.2.3 Further functions may add to these (e.g. a motivational or didactic function in uses of wordplay in teaching in order to increase the students’ motivation or attention, wordplay as a means of enhancing the memorisation of the speaker’s utterance like in advertising slogans, cf. 2.7.4, or wordplay as a means of persuasion, cf. patterns like the one described in 2.3, where “non-humorous wordplay” is used to reveal [hidden] truth[s]).

2.3 For cases in which the formal features of wordplay are realised, but the humorous dimension is absent, the question whether they should be considered to be in the domain of wordplay proper has been controversial. Such instances of “non-humorous wordplay” can be found e.g. in Biblical texts (see example (1)), or other contexts of “serious” (religious / philosophical) argumentation (see example (2), cf. also Heidegger’s philosophical arguments, which are often described by referring to the notion of wordplay).

(1) Du bist Petrus, und auf diesen Felsen will ich bauen meine Gemeinde. / Et moi, je te dis que tu es Pierre, et que sur cette pierre je bâtirai mon Eglise. [And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church]
(Matt. 16,18, wordplay on Aramaic kephas ‘stone, rock’ / Greek πέτρος – πέτρα; Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments nach der Übersetzung Martin Luthers [1968] / Louis Segond Bible; http://saintebible.com/matthew/16–18.htm (15.11.2015); cf. John 1,42; cited from Winter-Froemel 2009: 1433; English translation according to New International Version of the Bible)

(2) Nous ne naissons pas seuls. Naître, pour tout, c’est connaître. Toute naissance est une connaissance. [We are not born alone. To be born is,
for all things, to know / to be born with. Every birth is knowledge / a co-birth.]

2.4  Wordplay can be successful (if the intended functions are fulfilled) or fail.³

2.4.1  The primary criterion for the success of wordplay is its being understood, i.e. the speaker(s) and hearer(s) must recognise that a specific instance of wordplay is realised, and be able to identify the linguistic items involved and their respective meanings.

2.4.2  The communicative success of wordplay is shared between the speaker and hearer or at least some of the hearers (cf. in-group humour, where excluded thirds imply included second persons).

2.4.3  Many contexts of using wordplay require explicit feedback by the hearer(s) in order to signal that the wordplay has been understood (e.g. in telling jokes). In situations of communicative distance (especially with temporal distance between the communication partners, e.g. in literary texts; cf. Koch and Oesterreicher 2011) and thus without the possibility of the hearer giving direct feedback to the speaker, the success of an individual realisation of wordplay can only be evaluated at the stage of the hearer’s interpretation of the speaker’s utterance.

2.5  Wordplay involves producing an utterance in a linguistically competent way (competence with respect to the linguistic code and the specific semiotic entities which are actualised in the utterance). It involves an active choice of wording based on the form and meaning of the linguistic items and on a certain communicative function intended. The person who realises a particular in-

³ I would like to thank Alexander Onysko and Sebastian Knospe, whose comments have permitted me to refine the following remarks on the communicative success of wordplay.
stance of wordplay is aware of doing so, and we can speak here of a strategic use (in a large sense of the term ‘strategy’).

2.6 Wordplay is speaker based and concerns the act of encoding.

2.6.1 Hearers may misinterpret an ambiguous utterance and introduce an additional meaning which is unintended by the speaker and which would normally be ruled out in cooperative communicative settings because of its implausibility in the concrete communicative context (see example (3); cf. Winter-Froemel 2013: 151; Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015a: 318–319). In such a situation, however, the active part of the hearer needs to become explicit or at least in some way perceivable, and it could be postulated that the hearer’s reaction implicitly involves imagining that the speaker’s utterance could be repeated by the hearer himself / herself, so that it would be an example of “standard” (speaker-based) wordplay (see (3’) as well as (4) / (4’)). We could speak of ‘ludic reinterpretations’ here, and we are dealing with specific instances where the hearer is (at least temporarily) linguistically more competent than the speaker, who exhibits a lack of awareness with respect to his / her utterance being potentially ambiguous. Very often, this superiority of the hearer inverts the otherwise prevailing social hierarchy between the speaker and the hearer (e.g. between teacher and pupil, or between different politicians in political hierarchies). Another interesting case of hearer-induced reinterpretations is provided by typing errors (see Rabatel, in preparation).

(3) − Teacher (handling a technical device): Jetzt fehlt nur noch, daß das Gummi reißt! [All I need now is that the rubber tears.]
− Pupils (pubescent): *Laughter.* [indicating sexual reinterpretation of *rubber* in the sense of ‘condom’]

(3’) Teacher handling a technical device.
Pupil (commenting on the teacher’s action): All (s)he needs now is that the rubber tears.

(4) − Und damit wir besser sind als die, brauchen wir Kraft, für Bildung. Brauchen wir Kraft. [And in order to be better than them, we need
power / Kraft, for education. We need power / Kraft.] (the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and president of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany Angela Merkel during the election campaign for the North-Rhine Westphalia state election, 2012; Hannelore Kraft was the leading candidate for the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the opposite party)
– Supporters of the Social Democratic Party of Germany present in the hall: Laughter.
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1waQuZaPrO8, accessed 17.05.2012; translation into English EWF)

(4′) Supporter of the Social Democratic Party: Damit sie besser ist, braucht sie Kraft. [To be better, she needs power / Kraft.]

2.6.2 In the superposition of several levels of communication, wordplay proper is situated at the level of the competent speaker and hearer recognizing wordplay (i.e. not between Meister Eder and Pumuckl in example (5), but between the author of this text, Ellis Kaut, and the reader of the book / listener to the audio version / viewer of the film version):

(5) – Meister Eder to Pumuckl: Wenn man an Katarrh hat, dann läuft die Nasen andauernd. [If you have a cold, your nose is running all the time.]
– Pumuckl: Also meine Nase, meine Nase nicht. Meine Nase kann überhaupt nicht laufen, weil sie keine Füße und sowas hat. [No, not my nose, my nose not. My nose cannot run at all, because it does not have feet and things like that.]

(Ellis Kaut, Pumuckl und der Schnupfen [first published in 1966], http://www.pumucklhomepage.de/phf65.html; 15.11.2015; translation into English EWF)

2.7 Wordplay can be indicated by various types of hints.

2.7.1 If wordplay is based on paronymy (see below, 3.6), the formal difference functions as an indicator of wordplay (e.g. Cogito ergo boom vs. Cogito ergo sum in example (14) below).
2.7.2 Wordplay based on homonymy or polysemy can be indicated by intonation in phonic utterances, or italics, bold print, quotation marks, capitalisation etc. in the graphic medium (cf. examples (10) and (34) cited below).

2.7.3 In the case of wordplay in præsentia (see below, 3.5), the repetition of formally identical or nearly identical elements can be sufficient to indicate a playful dimension (e.g. personnalité and personne alitée in (6)).

(6) #qvemf Alban cherchait une personnalité, plutôt qu’une personne alitée. [Alban was seeking a personality rather than a bed-ridden person]  
(Tweet by Mot d’Esprit, 11.12.2010; translation into English EWF)

2.7.4 In wordplay in absentia based on ambiguous linguistic items (homonymy / polysemy; see below, 3.5 and 3.6), the hearer (or reader) is frequently invited to consider an alternative (playful) interpretation of the speaker’s utterance due to the fact that the first (expected / common) reading does not lead to a meaningful / communicatively adequate interpretation. For example, in (7) the food interpretation appears to be implausible in the utterance context of a slogan in the London tube, so that the hearer (reader) should arrive at an interpretation in the sense of ‘Less money. No traffic jam’, which is clearly more plausible for a publicity campaign for public transport (cf. Tanaka 1992: 101).

(7) Less bread. No jam.

2.7.5 Wordplay can also be explicitly indicated by metalinguistic comments (see example (8)).

(8) christ cosmique @jeanisright 11. Nov.  
j’viens de voir un vieux tweet de @plaetha  
Du coup merci beaucoup d’avoir dit que j’avais un beau cou (le jeu de mots c’est cadeau)  
[I have just come across an old tweet by @plaetha  
So (du coup) thanks a lot (beaucoup) for having said that I have a nice neck (beau cou) (the pun is excellent)]  
(twitter message, 11.11.2015; translation into English EWF)
Moreover, wordplay can also be explicitly or implicitly indicated by the text genre / discourse tradition (Koch 1987, 1997; see section 4 below) in which it appears. For example, conundrums (see example (9)) and a series of conundrums (see example (10)) strongly indicate that a pun will follow (exceptions are of course possible).


(10) Monsieur et Madame DALORS ont un fils... Comment s’appelle-t-il? HOMER.
Monsieur et Madame ENVACANCES ont quatre enfants... Comment s’appellent-ils? YVON, AUDE, ANNE, MARC.
Monsieur et Madame POURFAIREDUVELO ont trois fils, comment s’appellent-ils? IVAN, SAM, OTTO.
Monsieur et Madame PLUDEBIÈREDANLEFRIGO ont un fils... Comment s’appelle-t-il? ROGER.
Monsieur et Madame SCOTT ont une fille. Comment s’appelle-t-elle? DEBBY.
[Mr. and Mrs. ... have a son / four children / three sons / a son / a girl. What is his / their / her name? HOMER DALORS → *Oh merde alors!* ‘oh shit’
YVON, AUDE, ANNE, MARC ENVACANCES → *Ils vont au Danemark en vacances*. ‘They are going on holiday to Denmark.’
IVAN, SAM, OTTO, POURFAIREDUVELO → *Il vend sa moto pour faire du vélo*. ‘He sells his motorbike to ride a bike.’
ROGER PLUDEBIÈREDANLEFRIGO → *Ro, j’ai plus de bière dans le frigo* ‘Oh no, I haven’t got any beer left in the fridge.’
DEBBY SCOTT → *des biscottes* ‘rusks’] (translation into English EWF)

The various kinds of hints require different types of linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge and competence (general knowledge, specific contextual
knowledge, lexical meanings, grammatical knowledge, etc.; cf. Winter-Froemel, this volume).

2.7.8 Convergences and divergences between the knowledge of different groups of speakers and hearers may be exploited for in-group humour / wordplay based on complicity / connivence.

3 Technical Aspects of Wordplay: Form and Meaning in Wordplay

3.1 Wordplay is not purely conceptual: Form matters. Wordplay involves manipulating form.

3.2 This is what leads to its alleged untranslatability (which, however, does not necessarily apply in all cases, as the linguistic structures of the source and target language may occasionally match – see e.g. examples (3) and (5) cited above – or can be overcome by various strategies of translation, cf. Delabastita 1997; Henry 2003). Nevertheless, the translation test can serve as a heuristic device to identify wordplay.

3.3 The importance of form and meaning in wordplay is linked to a specific dimension of the utterance: By accenting the utterance itself (or certain elements of it), certain characteristics of the linguistic code – in the sense of a particular language (Saussurean langue) or in the sense of human language in general (Saussurean langage) – are revealed.

3.3.1 Wordplay that juxtaposes formally near-to identical items with different meanings can highlight the “dangers” arising from the arbitrariness of language (a small change on the level of form can make a big change on the level of content). Wordplay that combines series of formally similar items can serve to demonstrate the difficulties that may arise from the limited repertoire of distinguishing units (phonemes) in language, and the speaker’s linguistic mastership (not getting trapped by the formal similarities; cf. tongue twisters like in exam-
ple (11)). Wordplay that is based on remotivations or pseudo-motivations, in contrast, highlights the motivational dimension of language, and it can serve to demonstrate the speaker’s ability of simultaneously exploiting formal and content-based associations of linguistic items (cf. witty remarks containing wordplay). However, the importance of these references to basic characteristics of the linguistic code and of language in general strongly varies for different realisations of wordplay. They are frequently not foregrounded, and they need not be perceived by the speaker and hearer.

(11) She sells sea-shells on the sea-shore.

3.3.2 This dimension of wordplay can be linked to what Jakobson (1960) has labelled the “poetic” and the “metalinguistic” function of communication (cf. Zirker and Winter-Froemel 2015b; Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015c). However, the linguistic knowledge to which the speaker refers in wordplay is not necessarily an explicit theoretical (“expert”) knowledge.

3.3.3 Different ways of referring to the linguistic code and to language can be described with the help of the distinction between epilinguistic knowledge, epilinguistic awareness and metalinguistic knowledge elaborated by Auroux (1994) based on Culioli (1990) (see also Lecolle 2009; Goatley 2012: 10; Hausmann 1974) as well as Leibniz’s distinction of cognitio clara distincta and cognitio clara confusa, where the latter describes a secure knowledge which, however, the speaker is not able to state in systematic terms in an explicit and analytic manner (see Coseriu 1997, 2001 [1968]; Lecolle 2015: 221).

4 I am referring here to Jakobson’s model of communication, which represents a key reference in linguistic and literary research, and the labels provided by him can serve to identify the basic characteristics of wordplay described above. Nevertheless, certain aspects of Jakobson’s model would require critical discussion. Most importantly, concerning the systematisation of the different functions proposed, it can be argued that they do not belong to the same epistemological level (among others, the metalinguistic function could be conceived as a specific subtype of the referential or Bühler’s representational function, with the language being the object in question; cf. Coseriu 2007 [1980]: 85–86; for a general critique of Jakobson’s model cf. Coseriu 2007 [1980]: 76–87; Zirker and Winter-Froemel 2015a: 9; Kabatek 2015: 221–223). For reasons of space, these issues cannot be discussed in further detail here.
3.4 Most typically, wordplay involves establishing surprising associations and juxtapositions of linguistic items at the lexical level (cf. the term wordplay itself, but see 5 below, where other subtypes of wordplay are discussed).

3.4.1 Wordplay can involve two (or more) lexical units (defined as pairs of a certain form and a certain meaning / sense, so that a polysemous lexeme corresponds to several lexical units; cf. Cruse 1986: 49). For example, in (12), wordplay is based on the juxtaposition of lexical unit, reaction ‘response’ and lexical unit, reaction ‘chemical process’:

(12) I’d tell you a chemistry joke but I know I wouldn’t get a reaction.

3.4.2 The units in wordplay can also be morphologically complex. For example, in change s.o.’s mind the wordplay is based on the clash between the compositional interpretation with the literal meaning of change and the conventionalised meaning of the phraseological expression change s.o.’s mind. In example (14), Susan Sontag alludes to Descartes’ expression Cogito ergo sum, substituting the last word by a formally similar item that evokes the idea of a nuclear explosion.

(13) I wasn’t originally going to get a brain transplant, but then I changed my mind.

(14) Cogito ergo boom.
(Sontag 1967: 75; cf. Winter-Froemel 2009: 1431)

3.4.3 From a linguistic perspective, the basic units of wordplay are meaningful units, i.e. lexical units or morphemes. Wordplays based on bounded morphemes are relatively rare, but can be illustrated by example (15) taken from Verena Thaler’s corpus of chat communication (cf. Thaler 2003). In (15), the wordplay refers to the lexical item in ‘hot’ and the negative morpheme in- by alluding to word formations containing this morpheme (we could think here of forms such as inabitabile ‘uninhabitable’, inaccessibile ‘inaccessible’, inammisibile ‘unacceptable’, etc.).
3.4.4 Wordplay can also occur when different linguistic items containing one and the same stem (in one and the same meaning) are combined (inflected forms, word formations, especially conversions, etc.). This pattern can frequently be observed in medieval literature (see example (16)). Similar instances would nowadays not be unanimously classified as wordplay, which can be explained by the fact that the difference in meaning is very small here (narrowing down e.g. to the differences brought about by the grammatical morphemes added to the stem in the inflected verb forms, etc.), and that it is the association of the different (but formally similar or identical) linguistic units – rather than their juxtaposition as in examples (12) and (13) above – which is central here. Ultimately, the controversies about what belongs in the category of wordplay and what does not illustrate its inherent dynamics and its historical and cultural boundedness (cf. section 4 below).

(16) Ir leben, ir tôt sint unser brôt. / sus lebet ir leben, sus lebet ir tôt. / sus lebent si noch und sint doch tot / und ist ir tôt der lebenden brôt) [Their lives, their death are our bread, so lives their life, so lives their death. So they still live today and are yet dead, and their death is the bread of the living.]

3.4.5 Wordplay in a broader sense such as monovocalic texts (see example (17) of a Spanish monovocalic text in A), holorhymes (French vers holorimes, see example (18), where both lines are pronounced exactly in the same way), lipograms (see e.g. the novel La Disparition by Georges Perec, which avoids the letter <e>; cf. Di Blasio 2015), etc., involves the combination of formally similar linguistic units (in the latter case, items not containing the letter <e>), while there is not a juxtaposition of specific linguistic units and their meanings as in examples (12) and (13) above. Contrarily to (16), however, the unifying feature is
sublexical (or submorphological) here. This aspect can be described by referring to the distinction made by German scholars who oppose *Sinnspiel* and *Klangspiel* – playing with sense / wordplay (in a narrow sense) vs. playing with sound / soundplay (cf. among others Grassegger 1985). However, in many cases, the distinction is difficult to make, and some examples can be considered to be intermediate cases. Moreover, in some instances, it is not the sounds that count, but letters or graphemes (cf. the example of Perec’s *La Disparition*). If the category is still labelled soundplay, this term should thus be understood in a sufficiently broad way to include cases of play at the graphic level.

(17) A la mañana, Ana sacaba la sábana blanca ya lavada. La amarraba a la cama, la aplanaba, llamaba a la mamá:
– ¡Mamá, mamá, acá, la cama ya va acabada! [...] [In the morning, Ana used to take out the white bed sheet that was already washed. She fixed it to the bed, flattened it and called her mum:
– Mum, mum, come here, the bed is already made.] (cf. http://www.webmaniacos.com/textos-monovocalicos-con-la-a-y-con-la-e/, accessed 05.04.2016; translation into English EWF)

(18) Étonnamment monotone et lasse
Est ton âme en mon automne, hélas!
[Surprisingly monotonous and exhausted
Is your soul in my autumn, alas!]
(Louise de Vilmorin, *L’Alphabet des aveux*; cited from Bailly 2006; translation into English EWF)

3.4.6 In other examples, the phonic and / or graphic realisation of linguistic units is altered with humorous intentions. The analysis of these examples as cases of wordplay can be considered to be to a certain extent problematic, if there is no association or juxtaposition of different meanings. But exceptions are possible, as illustrated in (19), where the element *boule* can be recognised; this example can thus be analysed as a folk-etymological loanword integration. Moreover, we can frequently observe here an (explicit or implicit) juxtaposition with other possible (especially conventional / more common) spellings, such as Engl. / Fr. bull dog, Fr. / Germ. chic, Engl. / Fr. people, Engl. / Fr. whiskey, Engl. English, Germ. Sensation.
ple, formal criteria alone do not allow us to distinguish between spellings proposed in “serious” debates about the orthographic norm (e.g. in the domain of loanword integration, cf. Winter-Froemel 2011) from ludic distortions of conventional spellings (see the examples cited below).

(19) Fr. bouledogue (← Engl. bulldog)
(cf. PR)

(20) Germ. schick (← Fr. chic)
(cf. Duden)

(21) Fr. pipole (← Engl. people)
(cf. PR)

(22) Fr.ouisqui (← Engl. whisky)
(cf. Queneau 1962)

(23) tu récupères tous les mecs qui parlent anglais. Forcément, les fonctionnaires qui bossent aux renseignements sont un peu légers en langue étrangères et vu que tu es un petit jeune, tu te récupères tous les Ingliche Pipole
[you get all the guys who speak English. Certainly, the state employees who work at the information service are a bit weak with regard to foreign languages, and as you are small young guy, you get yourself all the Ingliche Pipole]

(24) Die Grill ¡Sensación!
(German advertising slogan for a barbecue version of Swabian ravioli offered in the context of the soccer world championship in Brazil in 2014; alteration of Germ. Sensation by introducing the Portuguese grapheme <ç> and – interestingly – Spanish elements as well: <-ión> and <-¡>; cf. Winter-Froemel, this volume)

3.4.7 There are word formations which are coined with humorous intentions and which establish creative and surprising conceptual associations (see exam-
amples (25) and (26); cf. Winter-Froemel, in press). Here again, the principle of association (in this case, conceptual association) is foregrounded. These examples can be considered to be different from the other categories discussed above, as they do not involve a manipulation of form or a juxtaposition of formally similar items with different meanings, and they can be easily translated into other languages. It seems interesting to note that both for the formal variants cited in 3.4.6 and for ludic innovations of the type referred to here, the ludic dimension can get lost in the diachronic evolution of the linguistic items (e.g. Drahtesel is nowadays perceived as clearly less ludic than Eierschaukel), and that the strength of the ludic effect seems generally weaker or more unstable for forms which designate new concepts than for forms which introduce a (near-)synonym for a conventional expression; however, the validity and strength of the latter aspect needs to be determined in further research (cf. Winter-Froemel 2011; Onysko and Winter-Froemel 2011).


(26) Germ. Drahtesel (‘filament donkey’), Stahlross (‘steel steed’), Eierschaukel (‘nuts swing’) for bicycle (cf. Duden)

3.4.8 ‘Distortions’ of pronunciation or spelling (or, formulated in a more neutral way, alternations or retranscriptions) can also involve language contact, i.e. linguistic items from different historical languages, as illustrated by the retranscriptions of French and Italian items based on English grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence rules in examples (27) and (28) (for the notion of grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence rules, cf. Meisenburg 1996). Here, the game proposed to the reader consists in reading the message according to the pronunciation rules of English (which simulates going back to a stage of acquisition of reading competence as in primary school) in order to obtain a phonic realisation which is very close to the French and the Italian “original” message (for some items, this may imply surprising correspondences to existing forms of English: poor,

However, we could ascertain a sort of implicit juxtaposition with respect to the conventional and ‘expected’ expressions Brille and Fahrad in the concrete communicative contexts where the ludic innovations are coined and used.
lay, paw, stare, ray, how to X, etc.). The linguistic items involved here are thus 1) the French / Italian ‘original’ items (in absentia), 2) the (mostly nonsense) words of the utterance and the grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence rules of English, and occasionally 3) existing linguistic items of English.7

(27) Poor lay Zanglay. Ung joor vare meedee ger preelotobüs poor la port Changparay. Eel aytay congplay, praysk. [...] [Pour les Anglais. Un jour vers midi j’ai pris l’autobus pour la porte Champerret. Il était complet, presque. / For the English. One day around noon I took the bus for Porte Champerret. It was full, almost.] (Queneau 1947: 129; translation into English EWF)

(28) Perlee Englaysee. Oon jornow versaw matzodjornow soola peattaphormah pawstareoray dee oon howtoboos da li leenea S veedee oon johvanay dull calloh trop-o-loongo [...] [Per gli Inglesi. Un giorno verso mezzogiorno sulla piattaforma posteriore di un autobus della linea S vidi un giovane del collo troppo lungo. / For the English. One day around noon on the rear platform of a bus serving the line S, I saw a young man with a neck that was too long.] (Queneau [and Eco] 1983: 193; translation into English EWF)

3.4.9 Other instances of wordplay involving different linguistic systems are parodies of foreign languages such as illustrated by what could be labelled ‘translation conundrums’. While the “translations” in (29) and (30) involve clearly identifiable linguistic items – they are based on a playful reinterpretation of a foreign proper name (Mubarak / Garibaldi) in which a pseudo-motivation is created (Mu- → muh ‘sound of a cow’, -barak → Germ. Baracke ‘shack’, with an additional parody of L2 pronunciations or foreigner talk pronunciations omitting the final vowel; gari → Germ. garen ‘cook’, baldi → Germ. bald ‘soon’, the addition of -i can be analysed as a pseudo-suffixation and pseudo-italianisation). By contrast, the conundrum in (31) is based on a combination of items of the German language that evoke the sound of (or better: a stereotypical image of) the Chinese language and are at the same time meaningful with respect to the content of the utterance (lang ‘long’; fing → Germ. Finger ‘finger’; fang → le-

7 The transcription lay Zanglay, where lays Anglay would also have been theoretically possible, moreover shows that Queneau follows a principle of “maximal distortion” in order to maximise the comic effect.
xical stem and imperative of Germ. *fangen* ‘catch’). The “foreign language items” involved here are thus only stereotypical representations of Chinese sounds or of the stereotypical sound of Chinese in general, as perceived by Germans (short words, closed syllables with nasal and / or velar consonants in the coda, high frequency of the vowel [i], etc.).


(30) Was heißt Schnellkochtopf auf Italienisch? – Garibaldi. [What is pressure cooker in English? – Garibaldi.]


3.4.10 Some examples like Bodo Wartke’s *Liebeslied in allen Sprachen* (love song in all languages; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2UBXB4IhZM, accessed 25.04.2016) can be considered to be verbal humour, but to be out of the domain of wordplay proper: here, the verbal humour is based on the juxtaposition of different sounds and languages in the different verses compared to each other, on the choice of expressions which allude to stereotypical representations of foreign languages, speakers and cultures, and on the demonstration of linguistic mastership in the performance of the song by the artist. We could speak here of ludic translations that highlight the divergence of different languages or language-internal varieties (dialects, sociolects etc.; cf. also Que-neau’s *Exercices de style*), and this procedure characterises parody in general (however, this adjacent domain of investigation cannot be discussed in more detail here).

(32) Ich will’s in allen Sprachen für dich singen, auf allen Instrumenten zum Erklingen bringen:
Ich liebe dich.

I want to sing it in every language for you, baby
Play on every instrument to say these words to you.
Believe me it is true, I love you.
Je veux chanter pour toi en toutes les langues,
jouer pour toi de tous les instruments
en disant, mon amour: je t’aime.

In tutte le lingue lo vorrei cantare,
su tutti gli strumenti suonare,
provare l’amore per te, perché ti amo.

Lo tocaría en todos los instrumentos
pues intento decirte lo que siento, sin lamento:
te quiero, muero por tí...

Ik wil het in alle talen met je delen,
op alle instrumenten voor je spelen, kwelen.
Nou weet ik echt: Ik hou van jou.

Sing isch korrekt für disch, weißt du,
in alle Sprache... ey krass, wie heißt du eigentlisch?
Ah, scheisegal [sic]. Isch liebe disch.

In allen Sprochn sing i für di Susi,
auf allen Instrumenten mach i Musi, mei Gspusi,
I mag di ham, mia passn zsamm.
[...]

3.5 Concerning the ways in which the different linguistic items are actualised, we can, for wordplay in the narrow sense (see 5 below), distinguish between wordplay in praesentia (or, following Hausmann 1974, horizontal wordplay), in which the juxtaposed items both appear in the utterance (see examples (33), (34), (35) and (6) cited above), and wordplay in absentia (or vertical wordplay according to Hausmann), where two meanings or interpretations of one and the same element are generated (see examples (36) and (37)8). These two options re-
present basic modalities of wordplay, involving fundamentally different forms of cognitive processing, i.e. of recognizing / decoding wordplay (cf. 2.7).

(33) Tu vas partager ce mille-feuille en trois. Tu donneras deux tiers₁ au tiers₂ monde et tu garderas le troisième pour toi! [You will divide this puff-pastry into three parts. You will give two thirds to the Third World and you will keep the third part for yourself.]
(Devos 1989: 70, italics EWF)
*tiers₃* ‘⅓’, *tiers₂* as part of *tiers monde* ‘Third World’

(34) Pendant les « affaires₁ », les affaires₂ continuent [During the court cases business goes on.]
(title of a book by the journalist Denis Robert 1996; italics EWF)
*affaires₁* ‘court cases’ / *affaires₂* ‘business’

(35) Une exposition sur les limites₁ et leurs limites₂ [An exposition on borders and their limits]
(publicity for an exhibition on borders; italics EWF)
*limite₁* ‘border’ / *limite₂* ‘limit’

(36) Zwei Jäger treffen sich₁/₂. / Two hunters meet₁/₂
(italics EWF)
*sich treffen₁/₂* / *meet₁/₂* ‘come together’ / ‘hit each other’

(37) Des jours sans quotidiens₁/₂ [Days without daily life / a daily newspaper]
(headline in Télérama, 13.02.2013, referring to a strike of newspaper deliverers; italics EWF)
*quotidiens₁/₂* ‘daily life’ / ‘daily newspaper’

3.6 We can distinguish between wordplay involving various expressions of identical form (homonymy, polysemy) or of only similar form (paronymy) (cf. Winter-Froemel 2009).

3.7 For wordplay involving various expressions of identical form, a further distinction between polysemy and homonymy can be made.
3.7.1 Polysemy and homonymy can be defined either by etymological criteria (polysemy resulting from processes of semantic change, i.e. the two expressions have a common origin, and homonymy resulting from processes of sound change [or borrowing], i.e. the two expressions have different etymons and only come to have the same form “by chance”), or by motivational aspects (polysemy involving a semantic / cognitive relation between the two meanings which is still perceived by the speakers, and homonymy involving no such relation; cf. Blank 2001: 103–112). The two definitions often lead to similar classifications, but there are cases where different classifications are obtained, as in the case of Germ. Schimmel ‘mould’ / ‘white horse’, where the two meanings are nowadays considered to be unrelated by most native speakers, although the second meaning has originated from the first via semantic change (cf. EWDS). A similar case is Fr. voler ‘fly’ / ‘steal’, where the two meanings are also etymologically related (cf. DHLF). A wordplay illustrating this constellation is given in example (38), which plays on flower ‘part of a plant’ and flour ‘finest part of the meal’, which is etymologically a polysemy, but the meanings are no longer perceived as being semantically related by average speakers of English (cf. also the divergence of the nowadays conventional spelling for the two items; example cited from Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2010). The opposite configuration (etymological homonymies being reinterpreted as polysemies) can also be observed in wordplay; cf. the traditional label of wordplay based on pseudo-motivation (see below, 3.7.3 and example (2) cited above).

(38) “Can you answer useful questions?” she [the Red Queen] said. “How is bread made?”
“I know that!” Alice cried eagerly. “You take some flour—”
“Well, it isn’t picked at all”, Alice explained: “it’s ground—”
“How many acres of ground?” said the White Queen.
(Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking-Glass, 9.227)

3.7.2 For analyses of wordplay, it seems preferable to privilege the synchronic motivational definition, as it immediately addresses the cognitive motivational dimension of wordplay and respects the usage-based approach chosen (cf. also Gauger 1971, 1976; Lecolle 2015).
3.7.3 At the same time, it is only the combination of both aspects which allows us to distinguish instances of playful remotivation from pseudo-motivation (Käge 1980: 93; Heibert 1993). In both cases, a semantic / associative relation between two units is established or stressed (synchronic motivational aspect). However, in order to distinguish the two types, the etymological criterion must additionally be taken into account: in remotivation, wordplay points to a semantic relation which is diachronically there (and possibly still perceivable from a synchronic perspective, but without being foregrounded, see example (13) cited above; cf. the notion of défigement), whereas in pseudo-motivation, a new (and diachronically “incorrect”) semantic / associative relation is established (see examples (39) and (40)). A third option is wordplay operating a trans-motivation. In this case, the semantic relation between the elements of a compositional expression is interpreted in a new way (cf. Käge 1980: 101–107 and my contribution in Part II of this volume, section 2.3).

(39) *Ness-Café*
(name of a café located at Loch Ness; wordplay on the product name and the proper name *Ness*; example taken from Heibert 1993: 132)

(40) Ein Ladenschild mit einer rätselhaften Form fesselte meinen Blick. Wenn die Zahl Sechs mit ihrem Spiegelbild zusammentreffen würde, könnte eine ähnliche Form entstehen. Als ich die Fremdenführerin fragte, was diese Form bedeute, sagte sie nur, das sei eine Brezel. Ein B-rätsel? Ein schönes Wort. Im Schaufenster sah ich ein Brot, das genau dieselbe rätselhafte Form hatte wie das Ladenschild. Das war also ein Stück B-rätsel. Wahrscheinlich bedeutete diese Form etwas Schönes in der Geheimsprache des Bäckers.
[wordplay on Germ. *Brezel* ’pretzel’ and *B-Rätsel* ‘B-riddle’]
(Yoko Tawada, Rothenburg ob der Tauber: Ein deutsches Rätsel, in: *Talisman* [1996], 29–30)

3.8 In homonymy, we can further distinguish between perfect homonymy (in pronunciation and spelling, with the two items being the same parts of speech), and homonymy in which the two items represent different parts of speech (example (41): *bacon* / *baking* [in US pronunciation], or where we have homophony + heterography (example (38) and *flour* / *flower* in example (41)), or heterophony + homography (example (42)) (cf. Winter-Froemel 2009).
Why did the pig stop sunbathing? He was bacon in the heat.

Les poules couvent souvent au couvent.
[The hens often brood in the convent.]
(exercise from a schoolbook cited in the movie Le Fabuleux Destin d’Amélie Poulain; see Jeunet and Laurant 2003, 5; wordplay on Fr. couvent [kuvã] ‘convent’ and Fr. (ils / elles) couvent [kuv] ‘(they) brood’ (3Pl present tense of the verb couver)

The linguistic items on which a wordplay is based can already be part of the linguistic system (especially in wordplay by remotivation), or they can be created ad hoc (especially in creations of new forms by paronymy, see example (43) below).

Fr. guidenappeur
(< Fr. kidnappeur + guide; example from Queneau 1959)

The linguistic items of a specific wordplay can belong to one or several distinct historical languages. Wordplay involving language contact can be realised in different subtypes; what is common to all of them is the additional reference made to the other language, which thus presupposes additional knowledge by the speaker and hearer (see the contributions in this volume). Again, this may be exploited for in-group humour / excluding third parties.

4 The Textual Embedding, and the Historical and Cultural Boundedness of Wordplay and Verbal Humour

There are specific techniques and traditions of wordplay and verbal humour (cf. Attardo 1994, 2006). These contribute to determining how specific instances of wordplay are produced and decoded. In addition to the techniques concerning wordplay proper (wordplay based on lexical ambiguity, wordplay based on the association of formally similar linguistic units, wordplay based on permutation of sounds / letters / syllables, etc., wordplay based on the omission of specific sounds / letters, wordplay based on specific rhetorical techniques,
etc.) there are traditions of how wordplay may be embedded in different texts and utterance types (e.g. text types and text-specific rules as in conundrums, spoonerisms, contrepèteries, and Schüttelreime). The concept of discourse tradition (Koch 1987, 1997; cf. Kabatek 2015) is a sufficiently large notion which helps us to analyse this historical dimension of wordplay in all its facets.

4.2 We can identify basic techniques of wordplay and ludic language use (e.g. permutation of letters or sounds, omission of certain letters or sounds in a text). These techniques can become conventionalised in traditions which define overall text-types containing wordplay and / or verbal humour (e.g. lipograms, palindromes). More specific traditions can determine how certain forms of wordplay are used within particular text types: e.g. German Schüttelreime contain both realisations of the permutation (see example (44)), whereas French contrepèteries should in contrast not give the solution (see example (45); cf. Rabatel 2015).

(44) Du bist / Buddhist. [You are / a Buddhist.]

(45) Le tailleur est submergé sous les amas de patentes. (solution: sous les appâts de ma tante) [The tailor is overflooded by piles of business tax forms / by the lures of my aunt.]

4.3 These discourse-traditional rules can remain implicit, or be explicitly stated. For example, in the context of the Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle (Oulipo), the authors respect specific constraints (contraintes) which may involve wordplay, as e.g. in the sollicitude, which is defined in its classical form as follows and yields texts such as those cited in (46), playing on the French words camembert, camomille, caoutchouc:

[...] le poème est rimé ; il compte trois vers ; la formule de rimes est : a a a; les deux premiers vers sont des alexandrins ; le dernier vers est trisyllabique ; le dernier vers est une interrogation introduite par « Qu’a » ; l’interrogation du poème porte sur une personne dont le nom n’est pas un nom connu ; il n’est question que d’une seule personne ; le dernier vers est homophone d’un substantif concret ; il n’y a pas de rapport sémantique évident entre les vers et le deuxième terme de l’homophonie.

[... the poem is rhymed; it comprises three verses; the rhyme schema is: a a a; the first two verses are Alexandrines; the final verse is trisyllabic; the final verse is a question introduced by “Qu’a” ‘What is the matter with?; the question of the poem is about a person whose name is not known; it only involves one single person; the final verse is homophonous
with a concrete noun; there is no evident semantic connection between the verses and the second of the homophones.]

(Roubaud and Salon 2014)

(46) 1. Appétit vigoureux, tempérament de fer,
Member languit, Member se meurt – ami si cher,
Qu’a Member?
2. Eh, Momille, bonjour! Comment va la famille?
Le papa? La maman? Tu pleures, jeune fille?
Qu’a Momille?
3. Je viens de rencontrer, allant je ne sais où,
Outchou, le professeur, qui courait comme un fou.
Qu’a Outchou?
[wordplay on Qu’a Member / Momille / Outchou? ‘What is the matter with Member / Momille / Outchou?’ and the French nouns camembert ‘camembert’ / camomile ‘chamomile’ / caoutchouc ‘India rubber’]
(Franc-Nohain 1894; cited from Roubaud and Salon 2014)

4.4 Some types of wordplay function locally and are embedded in utterances / texts which are relatively short and may be defined by the presence of wordplay, as illustrated by conundrums or comedians’ performances. Here we can count the individual realisations of wordplay in the text (see example (47)); most typically, these are instances of wordplay in a narrow sense, see 5.2.1). In other examples, the discourse tradition which defines a specific subtype of wordplay may be textually pervasive, so that the wordplay concerns all of the elements of the utterance, and only one instance of wordplay is counted altogether (see the narration of the story of Pinocchio invented by the Italian author Carlo Collodi in the version by Umberto Eco and his students, which only uses words in p- (example (48)); here we are typically dealing with other subtypes of wordplay in a larger sense, such as soundplay, see 5.2.2; cf. also Perec’s La Disparition).

| Wordplay 1: mignon à croquer ‘sweet to bite into it’, ‘sexually attractive’; wordplay 2: cui-cui ‘sound of a chick’ / cuir ‘boiled’; wordplay 3: allusion to and remotivation of the citation “D’une vieille poule, on fait un meilleur bouillon que d’une autre” attributed to Pierre de Bourdeille Brantôme, who translates an Italian source una galia vecchia fà miglior brodo che un’altra by Que d’une vieille poule on fait un meilleur bouillon que d’une autre [you obtain a better bouillon from an old hen than from any other] (Pierre de Bourdeille Brantôme 1838, Cinquiesme Discours: Des Dames Gallantes, 387–388); wordplay 4: dur à cuire ‘hard to boil’ / ‘hard-boiled’. |
Récemment, je suis entré
dans une auberge pour y dîner et sur la carte,
il y avait marqué: « Poussin rôti ».
Et... j’ai commandé un poussin rôti. J’ai vu arriver un petit poussin...
dans une assiette... Hamm!!!
Je n’en ai fait qu’une bouchée
dans mon gros ventre!
Un petit poussin!
Vous avez déjà vu un petit poussin?
C’est mignon à croquer!
C’est une petite boule jaune...
Ça fait: cui-cui...
Il n’était pas cuit!
Et je n’en ai fait qu’une bouchée
dans mon gros ventre!
Ça aurait été une vieille poule, encore...
Bon!
Une dure à cuire... elle a vécu! [...]  
(Devos 1989: 64)  
[for further explanations see footnote 9]

Povero Pinocchio!  
Povero papa (Peppe), palesemente provato penuria, prende prestito  
polveroso pezzo pino poi, perfettamente preparatolo, pressatolo, pialla  
pialla, progetta prefabbricarne pagliaccetto. Prodigiosamente procrea,  
plasmando plasticamente, piccolo pupo pel pelato, pieghevole platano!  
Perbacco! Pigola, può parlare, passeggiare, percorrere perimetri, pestare  
pavimento, precoce protagonista (però provvisto pallido pensiero), pro-  
penso produrre pasticci. [...]  
(Eco 1995: 16)

4.5 All of these techniques and traditions can be restricted to certain lan-  
guages, cultures, and epochs, and they can be differently analysed according to  
the language communities, cultures, and epochs.

4.6 All of these techniques and traditions are dynamic phenomena, and they  
are subject to linguistic and cultural contact as well as diachronic change.
5 Towards a Working Definition of Wordplay

5.1 The possibilities of defining wordplay have been intensely debated in previous research.

5.1.1 One major controversy concerns the question whether the category should be restricted to instances in which the linguistic units concerned are words (or lexical units / meaningful units / morphemes), or whether other cases that concern smaller or bigger linguistic units (e.g. lipograms) should be included as well. In German research, a distinction is sometimes made between Sprachspiel [language play] (including both groups) and Wortspiel [wordplay] (which is restricted to the former group only). However, as this distinction is not established in international research, the English term wordplay is used here in a broad sense. Based on the previous reflections, we can propose the following working definition of wordplay (in this large sense):

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.

5.1.2 Realisations of wordplay differ with respect to the ways in which these features are developed, and with respect to the relative importance of the features (e.g. some forms of wordplay are more strongly determined by historical discourse traditions than others, the strength of the intended humorous effect may vary and interact with additional functions of specific realisations of wordplay, etc.).

5.2 We can distinguish (at least) three major subtypes of wordplay in a broad sense and define them as follows:

5.2.1 A first major subtype of wordplay associates and / or juxtaposes linguistic units which are identical or very close in their form and have different mean-
ings, basically in the form of homonymy, polysemy or paronymy.\textsuperscript{10} However, the nature of the items, the ways in which they are actualised, the degrees of their formal similarity and the relations between their meanings can vary. This is described by many previous definitions of wordplay, and we can refer to this category as wordplay in a narrow sense. This subtype of wordplay is embedded in utterances / texts which are defined by discourse traditional features, and the occurrences of wordplay are local in the sense that we can identify specific elements in the utterance where wordplay proper takes place. This type of wordplay can highlight the arbitrariness of language (if semantically unrelated, but formally close items are juxtaposed, as it mostly happens in homonymies and paronymies) or emphasise the motivational dimension of language (as in wordplay based on polysemous items as well as in remotivations or pseudo-motivations, e.g. of phraseological units). Wordplay \textit{in praesentia} and wordplay \textit{in absentia} can be considered to be major subcategories of this type of wordplay. Further refinements could be made, e.g. by distinguishing instances of wordplay that imply lexical innovation vs. those that do not (cf. (39) vs. (7)).

\textbf{5.2.2} A second major subtype of wordplay is based on the principle of combining elements selected according to a formal criterion which is defined on a sub-lexical level (i.e. on the phonic or graphic level) and identifies paradigmatically similar items (e.g. words containing an onset in [s-] or [ʃ-] as in the tongue twister cited in (11), or words beginning with [p-] in the case of \textit{Povero Pinocchio}, etc.). We can refer to this subtype of wordplay by using the traditional term of soundplay, but we should bear in mind that the graphic level is to be included here as well. In contrast to wordplay in the narrow sense, soundplay is very often pervasive in the text (e.g. Perec’s \textit{La Disparition}, where the entire novel can be analysed as one case of verbal humour of this type).

\textbf{5.2.3} A third major subtype of wordplay are ludic deformations, where specific elements of existing forms are substituted on a sublexical level. This subtype of wordplay is also mostly local (concerning specific linguistic units within the utterances, but see also examples (27) and (28), where the wordplay is textually pervasive), and it implies a sublexical innovation. This refers to alterations of existing conventional units by substitution of certain functionally similar or

\textsuperscript{10} This definition implies that we are dealing here with meaningful units, i.e. lexical units (which is the most typical case) or morphological units.
equivalent sublexical elements, e.g. substitution of <sh> by <che> in *Ingliche*, see example (23)). Here, the wordplay presents potential alternative realisations of the linguistic items concerned, and we could say that the arbitrariness / conventional character of language is emphasised.\textsuperscript{11}

5.2.4 Ludic reinterpretations introduced by hearers (cf. examples (3) and (4) cited above) share the basic features of wordplay in a narrow sense. In these examples, it is the hearer who introduces a new interpretation with humorous intentions. This type of verbal humour is restricted to instances in which the speaker’s utterance contains a potentially ambiguous item (homonymy or polysemy); at the same time, the alternative interpretation put forward by the hearer is not the straightforward one and should be ruled out under normal (cooperative) circumstances.\textsuperscript{12} It is therefore debatable whether such instances should be considered to be subtypes of wordplay in a broad sense, and this issue should be discussed in further research.

5.2.5 Ludic innovations are based on establishing new semantic / conceptual relations. They function locally within the utterances / texts in which they are embedded. As there are not several meanings or several formally close linguistic items involved here, ludic innovations are fundamentally different from the other categories discussed in 5.2.1–5.2.4.

5.2.6 Another pattern of ludic language use can be labelled ‘ludic translation’. This pattern functions at a textual level, where it is pervasive; the basic procedure followed here consists in substituting, for an original message, a new way of expressing more or less the same content, and thus highlighting different possible ways of expression. Again, this category is fundamentally different from the categories discussed in 5.2.1–5.2.4.

\textsuperscript{11} Wordplay in a narrow sense highlights the arbitrariness of the relations between the linguistic items and the referents, whereas ludic deformations insist on arbitrary agreements made by the speaker communities of specific historical languages. It should be emphasised, however, that the metalinguistic dimension need not be perceived by the speakers using wordplay.

\textsuperscript{12} This distinguishes ludic reinterpretations from reanalysis, where a new interpretation is introduced by the hearer as well, but both interpretations – the “old” interpretation of the speaker and the new interpretation introduced by the hearer – are communicatively adequate and identify the same referent (cf. Detges and Waltereit 2002).
5.2.7 It seems preferable to restrict the term of wordplay in a broad sense to the first three subcategories described above (to which further subcategories may be added). Wordplay is thereby distinguished from verbal humour, which is used as the broadest term covering all of the categories that have previously been discussed. (Sometimes, however, the term wordplay has also been used in this very broad sense in previous research; cf. also Verena Thaler, DF, this volume).

5.2.8 The various categories and subtypes of verbal humour can be summarised as shown in Fig. 1.

5.2.9 There can be combinations and overlaps between the different subtypes, i.e. some examples of wordplay present features of different subtypes. For example, the puns in (10) are based on homonymy like “classical” wordplay in the narrow sense, but also illustrate the basic procedure of ludic deformation by “reinterpreting” more or less stereotypical utterances as combinations of one or several first name(s) and a family name; similarly for (46); for (19), we can observe not only a potentially ludic deformation of the original English spelling, but also a convergence with Fr. boule, which draws this example near to the subtype of ludic innovation; (43) can be analysed as an instance of wordplay in the narrow sense, but could also be seen as a ludic innovation; finally in (44) and (45) we can identify isolated linguistic items on which the wordplay is based – du bist / Buddhist; amas / appâts, patentes / ma tante –, but the basic procedure is sublexical, and in (44) the wordplay is textually pervasive, as the entire utterance is determined by the underlying “rule” (cf. also the Contrepetteries version in Queneau’s Exercices de style; Queneau 1947: 130, and examples (27) and (28), which represent ludic translations by ludic deformation of the linguistic items of the source text).

5.2.10 Otherwise “problematic” cases are types of verbal humour sharing most, but not all of the features mentioned in the definition in 5.1.1. The defining features proposed above permit us to determine the intermediate status of these phenomena. This concerns the examples of “serious wordplay” in (1) and (2) (cf. 2.3). Moreover, we can cite the associations of linguistic items based on one and the same stem in (16), or the alternations in the spelling of (19) to (22), which can be created with or without an intention of producing verbal humour.
The fact that the “wordplayfulness” of these examples cannot be determined based on the linguistic items alone, but requires taking into account their concrete use in speaker-hearer interaction confirms the usage-based approach taken here.

5.3 As wordplay and verbal humour are inherently dynamic phenomena, the previous reflections and definitions are open to further discussion and refinements, integrating specific historical backgrounds and traditions of verbal humour.
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<td>Textual status</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Mostly pervasive</td>
<td>Mostly local</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Pervasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic procedure</td>
<td>Combination / juxtaposition of preexisting (conventional) items and / or creation of new items</td>
<td>Combination of preexisting (conventional) items</td>
<td>Substitution of sublexical elements of conventional items; sub-lexical innovation</td>
<td>Reinterpretation of ambiguous structure by H in a way not intended by S</td>
<td>Combination; lexical innovation</td>
<td>Substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal / functional relation</td>
<td>Homonymy / polysemy / paronymy</td>
<td>Paradigmatic similarity</td>
<td>Functional similarity / equivalence of sublexical units</td>
<td>Homonymy / polysemy</td>
<td>Conceptual association</td>
<td>Textual equivalence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between units involved</td>
<td>Highlighting arbitrariness of language and / or motivational dimension of language</td>
<td>Highlighting formal similarities</td>
<td>Highlighting arbitrariness of language / linguistic convention</td>
<td>Highlighting arbitrariness of language</td>
<td>Highlighting motivational dimension of language</td>
<td>Highlighting divergence of languages and varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further examples</td>
<td>(5), (6), (8)–(10), (12)–(15), (29)–(31), (33)–(43), (46), (47)</td>
<td>(17), (18), (44), (45), (48)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(26), (43)</td>
<td>(27), (28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Major) subcategories and related categories</td>
<td>Wordplay in praesentia / in absentia; wordplay with or without lexical innovation</td>
<td>Tongue twisters, lipograms, palindromes, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cf. parody</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Fig. 1: Subtypes of wordplay in a large sense and verbal humour
6 References

Duden = Duden online. www.duden.de (accessed 22.03.2016).


