

## Sources of verbal humour in the lexicon: a usage-based perspective

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Lexical items with a ludic potential such as E. *au reservoir*, *bumpology*, *elbow-grease*, F. *coolos*, *flémingite*, *trotte-menu* are well attested in everyday language and in standard lexicographic sources, but they have not been systematically studied in the domain of lexical innovation and language change up to now. First investigations suggest that this domain of the lexicon is characterized by a strong dynamic and that there are different sources from which verbal humour effects may arise (Winter-Froemel 2016; 2018; Moulin 2018). This is also illustrated by the examples given above: whereas E. *elbow-grease* and F. *trotte-menu* are word formations based on unexpected conceptual associations which creatively express a certain concept, E. *au reservoir* and F. *coolos* show ludic deformations of borrowed items (cf. E./F. *au revoir*, F./E. *cool*). E. *bumpology* and F. *flémingite*, in turn, combine native items of everyday language (E. *bump*, F. *flemme* LAZINESS) with items of Latin and Greek origin. Taking this heterogeneity of phenomena as a starting point, the aim of my talk is to analyse the broad range of potential sources of humour in the lexicon and to investigate to what extent the notion of incongruity, which is a well-established concept in humour research (see e.g. the overview in Attardo 1994), can serve to explain the different subtypes of humorous effects and ludic usage of lexical items. The analyses will be based on diverse phenomena, including verbal humour in the contexts of figurative language, language contact and loanword integration. I will propose (re-)interpreting incongruity from a usage-based perspective, stressing the social dimension of meaning and the interactional dimension of communication (see also Kotthoff 1998; Onysko 2016). Moreover, I will argue for a broad approach which allows us to integrate different subtypes of incongruity depending on the semiotic nature of the reference entity, as well as concepts from cognitive semantics and pragmatics such as semantic distance and (in)compatibility, inappropriateness and pragmatic markedness.

### References

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