

ATTITUDINAL MEANINGS, TRANSLATIONAL COMMENSURABILITY AND LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores how insights developed within the Appraisal framework (Martin and White) into attitudinal meanings can contribute to some key, long-standing debates within translation studies and contrastive linguistics. It proposes that taxonomies developed within Appraisal for categorising different types of positive and negative assessment provide a useful reference point for exploring how principled accounts of translational commensurability and incommensurability might be developed. Specifically, some methodologies are discussed for developing comparative maps of the systems of attitudinal value which operate in different languages. Some implications for Appraisal theory itself resulting from the exploration of these cross-linguistic comparison issues are discussed. It is proposed that the taxonomies already formulated within the Appraisal literature to deal with attitudinal meaning may need to be extended in delicacy, if they are to be maximally useful in dealing with such issues.

KEY WORDS: appraisal, attitude, translation, contrastive linguistics, translational equivalence, linguistic relativity, insults.

RESUMEN

Este ensayo expone de qué manera puede el sistema de la Valoración (Martin and White) contribuir a los estudios de traducción y de lingüística contrastiva. Las taxonomías desarrolladas dentro de la Valoración en la categorización de los diferentes tipos de valor positivo o negativo ofrecen un punto de referencia importante para el estudio de los principios de la traducción. Se discuten de manera específica algunas metodologías para desarrollar mapas comparativos de los sistemas de valor actitudinal que operan en lenguas diferentes, con las consiguientes implicaciones para la teoría de la Valoración. Se sugiere además que las taxonomías ya establecidas dentro del sistema de la Valoración en el área de los significados actitudinales deben de modificarse para poder ser aplicadas con eficacia en la comparación interlingüística.

PALABRAS CLAVE: valoración, actitud, traducción, lingüística contrastiva, equivalencia en la traducción, relatividad lingüística, insultos.

One of the accomplishments of the Appraisal framework (see Iedema, Feez, and White; White; Martin; Martin and White) has been to direct analysts' attention to that sub-set of meanings by which positive and negative assessments are conveyed in language, the system labelled "Attitude" in the Appraisal literature. Much of the work in Appraisal has been directed to formulating taxonomies of such meanings for the purpose of comparing and contrasting texts in terms of the attitudinal meanings they employ and in what proportions. The purpose of this paper is to consider how this focus on attitudinal meanings might be extended into areas which so far has received only minimal attention from those working with Appraisal, namely the research domains of translation studies and contrastive linguistics. (For some pioneering work on the application of Appraisal to translation issues, see Souza) More specifically, it is concerned with attitudinal meanings in the context of translation and cross-linguistic comparison, and with that perennial question in translation studies of how to provide principled accounts of translational commensurability and incommensurability. Thus the paper takes up issues which arise when attempts are made at translating attitudinal meanings and when comparisons are attempted between the systems of attitudinal *valeur* (sets of related attitudinal meanings) operating in different languages. It is intended that this discussion, while not seeking to offer anything by way of definitive conclusions, will contribute something towards our theoretical wherewithal to address the following types of questions:

- Given a translational pair of texts (a source text and its target text) in a particular interpretative context, can we provide some principled measure of the degree of attitudinal correspondence between related attitudinal terms?
- Are there principled, systematic diagnostics for establishing that an attitudinal meaning in one language has no close agnate in another language?
- Can we, through a study of appropriate translations, map the relationship between the systems of attitudinal *valeur* operating in different languages (either generally or in particular registerial settings)? How similar or different are the attitudinal potentials of the different languages?

The trigger for this paper was a chance encounter with an English translation of a panel from an *Asterix the Gaul* cartoon, along with the original French version of the panel. The two together proved to be rather interesting attitudinally. The panel depicts a street-market scene in the fictional Roman-empire-era Gaulish town of Lutetia. An explanatory insert in the English translation states: "In spite of the fact that traffic is forbidden, the street of Lutetia are noisy. Noisy but cheerful, thanks to the inspired repartee so typical of the Lutetian sense of humour." The scene depicted shows a street crammed with carts, goats, pigs, horses and people. A series of speech balloons emanate from several merchants and their customers, distributed across the panel. Bringing together the French original and the English translation, they ran as follows: Merchant 1—French "Idiot!," English "*Fooll!*," Merchant 2—French "Abrutil!," English "*Idiot!*," Merchant 3— "French "Imbécile!," English "*Half-Wit!*," Merchant 4—French "Crétin!," English "*Moron!*" (Some of the material in the panel not relevant to the current discussion has not been documented here.)

FRENCH ORIGINAL SPEECH BALLOONS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Idiot	<i>Fool</i>
Abruti	<i>Idiot</i>
Imbécile	<i>Half-Wit</i>
Crétin	<i>Moron</i>

Figure 1: French source-text speech balloons with their English target-text translations.

Obviously the assertion that this is evidence of “inspired repartee” is meant ironically. Apparently the citizenry of the fictional Lutetia spend much of their time berating and insulting each other - in appraisal terms, passing very negative Judgements on each other.

What is significant here for the issues being addressed in this paper is that the translator is required to deal with a set of meanings which are very closely related in their meanings, and specifically in their attitudinal meanings. These four pairings (idiot/*fool*, abruti/*idiot*, imbécile/*half-wit* and crétin/*moron*) come from a sub-set of terms which, under the Appraisal framework, would be classified as Judgements of negative Capacity—i.e. the behaviour of human individuals is assessed as indicating a lack of ability or competence.

One point of interest which arises here, relevant to issues of cross-linguistic comparisons of attitudinal potential, is that in both English and French, these terms are drawn from a very much larger set of related terms by which speakers may insult the intelligence of those they address. Thus for example, the *Macquarie Thesaurus of English* lists something in the order of 135 of such terms—for example, *blockhead*, *dill*, *dunce*, *dope*, *dimwit*, *lamebrain*, *nincompoop*, and so on. Such a high level of lexicalisation suggests that this is a domain of meaning making which is highly productive in both languages/cultures. (One is reminded of the observations about the number of terms for snow in the Inuit languages.) It is also significant in this context that, in both languages, there are only a few antonyms of such terms—i.e. only a few terms by which the speaker may address an interlocutor by means of a name which applauds their intelligence. The short list supplied by the *Macquarie Thesaurus of English* includes, for example, *genius*, *mastermind*, *prodigy*, *expert* and *whiz*. This is suggestive that in both languages/cultures there is a much reduced role for praising the intelligence of others versus deprecating it, or at least there is a greater role for insulting over applauding.

It is also relevant to note that in both languages there is an attitudinally interesting set of related terms by which humans are judged negatively for making too great a show of their own intelligence or knowledge, or for regarding their own mental capacities too highly—e.g. the English *smarty-pants*, *smart arse*, *know-it-all* and *clever-dick*. The ultimate assessment here, in terms of the Judgement taxonomy as formulated in the Appraisal framework, is one of negative Propriety. The assessment is similar to that which underlies negative Propriety values conveyed by terms such as *arrogant* or *pompous*. In such cases, the behaviour is assessed as a character flaw, as morally wrong in that it entails socially unacceptable self regard.



What is more central, however, to the concerns of this paper is the question of what is at stake in the choice of one of these terms over another—i.e. *idiot* versus *abruti* versus *imbécile* versus *crétin*, as opposed to *fool* versus *idiot* versus *half-wit* versus *moron*. Even while they might be termed synonyms of negative Capacity, it is reasonable to propose that they do vary in some aspect of their meaning, and specifically their attitudinal meaning, given the dictum that complete synonymy is extremely rare or even non-existent in language (see, for example, Felbaum 23). The question which arises then, is “How?” Just how do they divide up this narrow semantic space? Along which lines of semantic variation are they differentiated? These questions are, of course, of interest to any who would provide a fine-grained account of the attitudinal meaning-making potential of a given language or, in this case, the meanings available in a given language by which speakers/writers may negatively assess an appraised individual’s mental ability or performance. Also, by extension, they will be questions of interest to those who would make comparisons between the attitudinal meaning-making potential of different languages including, of course, translation theorists, since translation is perpetually a process of seeking to map the systems of attitudinal *valeur* operating in the source-text language on to the systems of attitudinal *valeur* operating in the target-text language. (This is, of course, while full translational equivalence can virtually never be achieved. As Catford (49) states, “The SL [source language] and TL [target language] items rarely have the same meanings in the linguistic sense, but they can function in the same situations... SL and TL texts or items are translation equivalents when they are *interchangeable in a given situation*.”

For the translator of the Asterix cartoon panel under discussion, the question, of course, was along what lines of attitudinal variation do the terms *idiot*, *abruti*, *imbécile* and *crétin* vary and by which choice of English terms might this set of relations be most nearly replicated. What makes this panel even more interesting is that the translator appears not to have chosen the most obvious translations of at least some of the source language terms. Thus *fool* is provided as the English translation for the French *idiot* (instead of *idiot*, which a number of bilingual dictionaries indicate is the most obvious choice), *half-wit* is supplied as the English equivalent of the French *imbécile* (instead of what the dictionaries indicate is the more obvious *imbecile*), and the English *moron* is supplied as the equivalent of the French *crétin* (instead of *cretin*). Has the translator just had an off day, or is this suggestive that something more complex is going on in terms of the mapping of the French system of attitudinal *valeur* onto that of English? Perhaps English *idiot* is not the best translation for the French *idiot* when all the semantic nuances are taken into account, and perhaps *fool* is the better choice, or at least an equally appropriate choice?

One possible answer to what is at stake in the translator’s choice of term is that there is, in fact, nothing or very little at stake, at least in the context of this particular cartoon and its translation. The argument to support this would be that here these terms are not just “synonyms” in the usual sense of the term but involve a special case of semantic similarity. Here they act not as attitudinal descriptors but rather as simple terms of abuse. As such, it might be argued that they are largely

delexicalised, i.e. deprived of a large portion of their usual semantic load. As such insults or terms of abuse, the meaning of each term might be paraphrased as simply “I abuse you” or “I call you by an insulting name.”

If this conclusion can be justified, it leads us to another more generally applicable insight into the functionality of attitudinal terms, namely that there is this process of delexicalisation when such otherwise attitudinally fully-charged terms are employed as insults or terms of abuse. The evidence of this panel and its translation suggests this process operates in both French and English, and we might hypothesise that it would operate across other languages as well.

My purpose, however, in this paper is not to critique the translator’s English version of this panel but instead to use it as a trigger for a discussion of the wider issues already outlined. Accordingly, the question remains as to what might be at stake in the choice of one of these terms over another by way of a translation, given the assumption that, even as insults, the terms are still not attitudinally identical. Accordingly, in the following sections I explore some methodologies by which we might provide principled accounts of such parameters of attitudinal variation and hence what is at stake in terms of attitudinal commensurability when the translator, for example, chose the English *fool* as the translation of the original *idiot* over the English *idiot*, or when he/she translated *imbécile* with *half-wit*, and so on. In exploring this question I will develop a detailed discussion of choice the translator made when deciding on *fool* instead of *idiot* by way of attitudinal equivalent for the original French *idiot*. I do this due to the word-length limitations of this paper and because the approaches which will be outlined can be extended to these other cases, since they involve the same principles of word sense discrimination.

Several methodologies present themselves as possibilities for the task just outlined. We might consult general purpose dictionaries or a dictionary devoted specifically to “synonyms” such as *Crabb’s English Synonyms* (Crabb). And since the choice between these two terms is at issue in the context of a translation of the French term *idiot* we might consult a French-English bilingual dictionary. Both of these options have merit and will be considered below. It needs, however, to be said at the outset that the last several decades of work in lexicography and corpus linguistics leads one not to simply accept the pronouncements of such reference texts uncritically. The now extensive literature on lexicography and dictionary making (see, for example, Jackson; Fontenelle; or Svensén) tells us that dictionaries vary in the extent to which they are based on theoretically principled or consistent methodologies of word sense identification and differentiation. Similarly, that literature instructs us that dictionaries are often limited in the extent to which they can reference the full meaning potential of terms or account for the ways in which meanings may vary according to context of use.

Alternatively, other methodologies are provided by some more recent developments in lexicographically-oriented linguistics. One such possible resource is provided by the Princeton University based WordNet project, a computerized (available online) lexical database which organises words and their meanings according to relations of synonymy and hyponymy (see Felbaum). The homepage for the project describes it in the following terms:



WordNet superficially resembles a thesaurus, in that it groups words together based on their meanings. However, there are some important distinctions. First, WordNet interlinks not just word forms—strings of letters—but specific senses of words. As a result, words that are found in close proximity to one another in the network are semantically disambiguated. Second, WordNet labels the semantic relations among words, whereas the groupings of words in a thesaurus does not follow any explicit pattern other than meaning similarity. (<<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>>, 2 Mar. 2012)

Of significance for the concerns of this paper is the assertion by the architects of WordNet that it provides a principled methodology for semantically disambiguating closely related meanings, i.e. “words that are found in close proximity to one another in the network are semantically disambiguated.” Presumably terms such as *idiot*, *fool*, *half-wit* and *moron* would be instances of “words found in close proximity to one another in the network” and accordingly we might hope that WordNet would provide a principled means for identifying how they might differ in terms of the attitudinal meanings they convey.

A further potential methodology is one which employs the resources made available by the ever improving machine (computerised) translation tools—for example those made available free-of-charge online by the Google and the Systran companies (google.com/translate, systranet.com). These machine translation tools have undergone something of a transformation over the past decade or so, as they shifted from a rules-based to a corpus-based technology. The mechanisms now employed are outlined by Google on its website:

When Google Translate generates a translation, it looks for patterns in hundreds of millions of documents to help decide on the best translation for you. By detecting patterns in documents that have already been translated by human translators, Google Translate can make intelligent guesses as to what an appropriate translation should be. This process of seeking patterns in large amounts of text is called “statistical machine translation.” (http://translate.google.com/about/intl/en_ALL/ 9 Mar. 2012)

This means that when determining the translation for a given lexical item (word or phrase), the machine translation software references the co-textual context in which the current term is located and takes into account how such lexical items, in such contexts, were previously translated by multiple human translators (see, for example, Koehn).

Finally we may have recourse to a suitable representative electronic corpus of English texts. By conducting key-words-in-context searches on such a resource we may be able to discover semantically suggestive differences in the collocational contexts in which these terms occur—patterns of difference in the collocational associations of these terms which may support conclusions as to systematic differences in their meanings. Fortunately large corpora such as the Collins “Wordbanks” are available online and come with sophisticated search tools which make it easier to identify semantically significant patterns in the collocational behaviour of terms and to compare and contrast related terms in terms of their collocational behaviour.

In the following, I report findings vis-à-vis the semantic relations between the English *idiot* and *fool* derived by applying all the above methodologies.

Some dictionaries (for example, *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*) present *idiot* and *fool* as synonyms, by which they presumably mean to indicate that they are closely related in meaning and would have a very substantial overlap in the contexts in which they can be used. The machine translation tools support this in that, while they typically offer *idiot* as their first suggestion as the English translation for the French *idiot*, they also offer *fool* as a first alternative. For example:

Input = “tu es un idiot”

MACHINE TRANSLATION TOOL	FIRST SUGGESTION	ADDITIONAL POSSIBILITIES OFFERED
Systran online translator	“you’re an idiot”	“you’re a fool; lunatic, nut”
Google translate	“you’re an idiot”	“you’re a fool”

The bilingual French-English dictionaries (for example, the Larousse online French-English dictionary—www.larousse.com), however, lend some support to the proposition that there is a significant difference between *idiot* and *fool* in that they typically provide the English *idiot* as the translation for the French *idiot* but not the English *fool*.

The definitions provided by the English monolingual dictionaries in some cases suggest that these two terms are essentially identical semantically, while in other cases there are suggestions of significant if subtle semantic differences. A sample of such definitions is provided below. (Definitions have been excluded which relate to the use of *fool* to reference the notion of a *clown* or a *jester*—i.e. someone who intentionally acts in a foolish or ridiculous way in order to amuse or entertain people.)

TABLE 1: DEFINITIONS OF *IDIOT* AND *FOOL*.

DICTIONARY	IDIOT	FOOL
Shorter Oxford English Dictionary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A person so deficient mentally as to be incapable of ordinary reasoning or rational conduct 2. A term of reprobation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One deficient in judgement or sense, a silly person 2. One who has little or no reason or intellect; a weak minded or idiotic person
The Macquarie Dictionary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An utterly foolish or senseless person 2. One hopelessly deficient...in the ordinary mental powers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One who lacks sense; a silly or stupid person 2. A weak minded or idiotic person
Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you call someone an idiot you say you think they have done something very stupid 2. An idiot is a person who is mentally ill or mentally handicapped and who therefore cannot think or behave in the same way as other people; a rather old fashioned or offensive use 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you refer to someone as a fool you mean they have behaved in a very silly or unintelligent way

We see expressed here the view by the dictionary authors that the two words are all but identical in meaning. Thus both the *Shorter Oxford* and the *Macquarie Dictionary* define *fool* as an “idiotic person.” Similarly the *Macquarie Dictionary* defines *idiot* as an “utterly foolish person.” Likewise, the authors of the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* define *idiot* as someone who has done “something very stupid” and a *fool* as someone who has done something “very silly or unintelligent.” The distinction between “stupid” and “unintelligent” would seem to be a very fine one. The alternative view that these terms can be separated semantically is reflected in those definitions where the definition of *idiot* as someone who is “incapable” or “deficient” in their mental powers is distinguished from the definition of *fool* as someone who is lacking in “judgement” or “good sense.” In future I will refer to this as the “intelligence” versus “wisdom” dichotomy.

This distinction is supported by the definitions provided in *Crabb’s English Synonyms*, where *fool* and *idiot* are listed as synonyms but are distinguished in the following terms: “Whoever violates common sense in his actions is a fool; whoever is unable to act according to common sense is an idiot.” (Crabb 359)

The distinction is further supported by the manner in which the two terms are handled in the WordNet lexical database. In WordNet senses are arranged in hierarchies of superordinate terms (hypernyms) and their hyponyms. Where the hyponyms might be considered synonyms, the semantic parameters by which the terms can be separated are explicitly stated. In the database, the hierarchy by which “fool” and “idiot” are defined and distinguished is as follows:

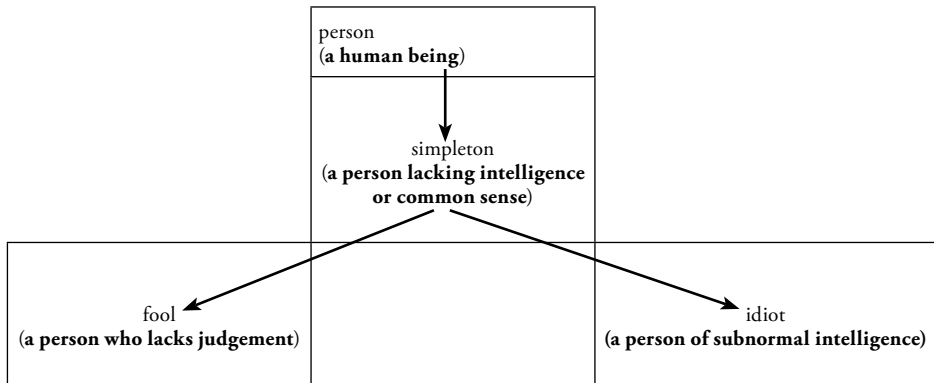


Figure 2: Disambiguation of the «synonyms» *fool* and *idiot* in WordNet.

Something of a consensus, then, does seem to emerge here by which *fool* and *idiot* are held to differ in their attitudinal meanings, at least in some contexts. Of course, the definitional pronouncements of the dictionaries must, as indicated above, be treated as proposals or hypotheses in the sense that it is not in the custom of dictionary makers to provide the reader with information about the linguistic bases for their definitions. (Even while *the Collins Cobuild* dictionary is based on corpus linguistic research, the details of this research are not, of course, offered to

readers.) They are dictionary makers after all, not theoretical lexicographers. The offerings of WordNet are similarly constrained in that it likewise provides nothing by way of linguistic grounds for its definitions and semantic discriminations.

In order to test such hypotheses we need to turn to the final resource outlined above, specifically the Collins Wordbanks corpus (formerly the Cobuild corpus based at the University of Birmingham in the UK), a large-scale representative corpus of English. Fortunately for lexicographers, Wordbanks now comes with sophisticated querying tools which speed up the process of developing the collocation profiles of individual terms (its “Word Sketch” tool) and comparing the collocational profiles of related terms such as *idiot* and *fool* (its “Sketch-diff” tool). The “sketch-diff” tool is particularly relevant for our current concerns in that it enables researchers to quickly discover those collocational patterns which are shared by two terms, and those collocational patterns which are unique to a given term—i.e. occur with one of the terms but not the other. Obviously presence in the same collocations points towards similarity in meaning—the greater the number of collocational patterns shared by terms, then the greater the likelihood that the terms will be interchangeable in these context and the greater the likelihood that the terms will have similar meanings. Similarly, the presence of term-only patterns (e.g. collocations where *idiot* but not *fool* occurs, and vice versa) point to contexts where the terms are not interchangeable and where, accordingly, it is likely they will differ in meaning.

The sketch-diff tool supports the conclusion that *fool* and *idiot* are quite close in meaning in that it reveals that they share a significant number of collocational patterns. Several of these shared collocational patterns are of particular interest in that they lend support to the proposal made earlier in this paper that there is a process of delexicalisation when such items are used as terms of abuse—that is to say, in functioning as insults rather than attitudinal descriptors. The patterns in question are those where both these terms are preceded by an expletive such as “bloody” or “fucking.” For example:

“Where is he, the bloody	idiot	?” Down on the railway tracks. He’s dead
his arm, motioning the thing off. Bloody	idiot	one slip of the hand and there’d be a
Clucking chickens and swearing. “What bloody	idiot	left that crate there?” ‘I did,’ said
told himself, he was being a bigger bloody	idiot	than ever by playing his hunch and I
governor in charge of A Wing. “You bloody	idiot	, Taff” Nothing to do with me, guv
then, you can go. You’ve been a bloody	fool	and a bloody hindrance, but if we looked
told him to stop being a bloody	fool	Mohammed held the torch steady
mother spent a month asking me why the bloody	fool	had to keep smoking -- the only time I
the Napler Biggs story. “He was a bloody	fool	,” he said, and I knew it was going to take
turned on Tom again. “God, Jesus You bloody	fool	You could have had Miriam maimed



A related collocational pattern shared by the two terms is the following: *stupid* + *idiot*; *stupid* + *fool*. For example:

'Rabbit-duck, duck-rabbit, you stupid	idiot	It's philosophy There's more on the back
I don't know what. Selfish, stupid	idiot	'Whatever in heaven's name would Gwen think
is not like Afghanistan. He is a stupid	idiot	And now I am so ashamed, I didn't want
them and then people Just look you stupid	idiot	and stuff like that.
what are they like? Idiots. Stupid	idiot	. Idiots you think. Yeah
sensitive mouth twisted. 'You stupid, daft	fool	!' fumed Beth. 'You should be locked up!'
wanted to shout at him: 'You stupid young	fool	. How dare you wreck your life like this
see it that he behaved like a stupid old	fool	who deserved to be defrocked."
she watched smiling faintly . "You stupid	fool	." he said aloud. It should be obvious
Joyce laughed. "The stupid old	fool	was looking for the Holy Grail.

It can be argued that here, the term is, in a sense, redundant since the negative assessment of mental capacity has already been conveyed by the preceding *stupid*, suggestive that the function of the term (both *idiot* and *fool*) is to convey the insult rather than any additional attitudinal content.

We can say, then, that Wordbanks queries, not surprisingly, support the proposition that *idiot* and *fool* are close in their attitudinal meaning. Additionally they lend some support to the proposal that any semantic differences may be further eroded when the terms are used purely as insults (what the *Oxford Shorter Dictionary* describes as a term of "reprobation"). Equally, however, they also lend support to the proposition that, at least in some contexts, they do differ in meaning. This support comes in the form of a significant number of term-only patterns (i.e. *idiot*-only or *fool*-only patterns). More specifically, these patterns lend some support for the "intelligence versus wisdom" dichotomy—i.e. *idiot* = "lack of mental capacity;" *fool* = "lack of judgement."

Some significant *idiot*-only patterns are exemplified by the following concordance lines.

middle ages gradual replacement of village	idiots	(those 'so simple as to make the baron's...
of fandom. "Everyone is in front of the	idiot	box, watching a ball game," she fumes."
relies very heavily on rote learning; the	idiot	savant calculator is able, perhaps, to
hours a day sitting there like a mindless	idiot	, just making sure cigarettes are chopped
What is Ireland coming to when small-minded	idiots	behave like this? Let's hope the police

As indicated, these are all patterns where fool would not occur, and in all these cases we see that the “lack of mental capacity” and not the “lack of good judgement” meaning applies. Thus, for example, to describe television as an “idiot box” is to suggest that to watch it too much is to degrade one’s mental capacities, not one’s capacity for making sensible judgements.

Some significant *fool*-only patterns are exemplified by the following concordance lines.

make any hasty decisions about going on a	fool's	errand, you'd best first speak to Melissa
road and realized he had been living in a	fool's	paradise. He left home and became a
empire, he singled out spices as a sort of	fool's	gold. However, it was not so much the
'Oh yes, before some poor, deluded	fool	went and killed himself, very possibly.
except I'd proved myself the most gullible	fool	since Adam accepted the apple.
smug, insufferable, deadly incompetent	fools	who run our railways have finally paid

Here we see that the “lack of good judgement” rather than the “lack of mental capacity” applies. Thus a “fool’s errand” is one which is undertaken by someone acting unwisely, not by someone acting of the basis of mental disability. Similarly those living in “fools’ paradises” are those who have abandoned good sense and judgement, not those with a lack of mental ability.

JUDGEMENT (ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR BY REFERENCE TO SOCIAL NORMS).			
Social Sanction	Propriety		
	Veracity		
Social Esteem	Tenacity		
	Capacity	Material (fitness)	
		Mental	Wisdom (<i>fool</i>)
			Intelligence (<i>idiot</i>)
	Normality		

By application of the same methodologies we could then seek to map the parameters of semantic differentiation involved in the meanings of other related terms such as *imbecile*, *moron* and *cretin*. But what those parameters might be must wait for a further study.

It remains now only to consider the original French term *idiot* and how we might go about exploring what is at stake in terms of attitudinal commensurability in the choice between *fool* (the translator’s choice) and *idiot*. This comes down to a series of questions:



- Does French lexicalise/codify the “lack of mental capacity” versus of “lack of good judgement” dichotomy—that is to say does it have two closely related terms which can be semantically differentiated along these lines?
- If so, is French *idiot* one of these terms and is it attitudinally commensurate with English *fool* (wisdom) or with English *idiot* (intelligence)? This is to allow for the possibility that English *idiot* is, in fact, an attitudinal “false friend” of French *idiot*—that is to say, has a different meaning despite orthographic and morphological similarities. Or putting this a slightly different way, does French *idiot*, in at least some contexts, mean “lacking good judgement” (English *fool*) rather than “lacking mental capacity” (English *idiot*)?
- Alternatively, is it the case that French *idiot* typically encompasses both the “lacking good judgement” and the “lacking mental capacity” meanings—that is to say, is it the case that meanings which are discriminated in English via the choice between *idiot* and *fool* are collapsed together in French into the single term *idiot*?

If the latter were the case, then we would have an answer to why the translator of the *Asterix* panel chose *fool* instead of *idiot* as translation for the original idiot. If French *idiot* means both English *idiot* and *fool*, then either choice is equally commensurate attitudinally.

It is not possible, however, to address these questions in this paper. Tellingly in this regard, there is no French corpus resource similar to the Collins Wordbanks corpus, which means conducting this type of corpus-based research into French meanings and systems of attitudinal valeur is considerably more difficult and time consuming. Answers to such questions must await further research.

The purpose of this paper has been to consider how insights into attitudinal meanings derived from the Appraisal framework might contribute to some long-standing issues in translation studies and contrastive linguistics, specifically questions relating to translational commensurability and ultimately to linguistic relativity. The discussion has outlined how we might go about mapping systems of attitudinal valeur for this purpose of cross-linguistic comparison. Even while the analysis was largely confined to a consideration of just two terms in English and one term in French, it nevertheless outlined principles which would have wide application.

Some of the conclusions reached have potential repercussions for Appraisal theory itself. As suggested above, if the Appraisal framework is to account for the semantic distinctions which were relevant for this discussion, it apparently needs to be extended along the lines suggested above. But such extensions are not to be proposed lightly. Questions arise as to the grounds on which these extensions to established categories are being proposed. As they now stand, the categories of the Attitude sub-systems (Affect, Judgement and Appreciation) are rather general. Thus the most delicate categories in the Judgement system are Propriety, Veracity, Tenacity, Capacity and Normality, all of which can be justified as lexicalisations of the modal systems of Obligation, Probability, Inclination, Ability and Usuality (for a discussion of this see Martin and White, in Chapter 2). If we extend this taxonomy so as to provide more delicate sub-categories such as those of “Wisdom” and “Intel-

ligence,” then it seems we move beyond this initial system of categorization by reference to modal systems. Then we need to find other principles for including this new distinction in the taxonomy. In this regard I note that Michael Halliday (personal communication) has suggested that the Attitudinal taxonomies may lie between the generality of grammatical categories and the specificity of lexical categories. Thus to extend the system of Judgement in the direction of more delicacy, as suggested above, may be to over complicate matters, resulting in a taxonomy which straddles both the generality of grammar and specificity of lexis.

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