

BRAND NAMES IN MILITARY ENGLISH The link between two worlds¹

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Abstract – Following a terminological introduction on the much-debated issue of brand names, this article provides a qualitative overview of the use of both non-genericized and genericized brand names in military English. The scope of this study spans from brand names of military hardware – limited to small arms operated in World War I and World War II (North, Hogg 1977; Bishop 2014a, 2014b) – to everyday brand names employed in specialized military coding systems, included in the NATO-approved glossary of brevity words, namely the *Joint Brevity Words Publication (JBWP)*. By means of selected examples, the aim of this article is twofold: on the one hand, it is an attempt to establish a link between the world of war, mostly the armed forces, and the linguistically complex world of brand names; on the other hand, it tries to identify common trends in the use of brand names in military terminology and detect the word formation processes, both lexicosemantic and morpho-syntactic, that lead to their coinage.

Keywords: brand names; brevity words; eponymy; genericness; military terminology.

1. Introduction

Since the late 19th century the defense industry – also known as war industry – has been a major income sector in many countries’ industrial production, making huge contributions to their GDPs. The products made by the defense industry are marketed and sold like many others in the world, although their circle of buyers is much more limited than that of consumer goods, for example cars, PCs or food. As a consequence, even the defense industry has now become part of the “brand culture” (Schroeder, Salzer-Mörling 2006, p. 2) or “trademark culture” (Beebe 2008, p. 42) governing the globalized world.

¹ Carmen Fiano conceived the article and is responsible for section 3, for which she provided the necessary material; Cristiano Furiassi contributed to the overall drafting of the article, revised the methodological implant by interpreting data, is responsible for the linguistic analysis, and drafted section 1, the conclusion and the reference section; Kosztasz Panajotu is responsible for section 2, for which he provided the data included therein.

First of all, it is important to acknowledge that linguistic terminology is not univocal in this yet undeveloped field of research: indeed, “brand names” (Moss 1995, p. 135) are also referred to as “trademarks” (Furiassi 2012, p. 97; *Merriam-Webster*), “proprietary names” (*OED*), “proprietary terms” (*OCEL*), “trade names” (*OCEL*), “trade terms” (*OED*), “word marks” (Ephratt 2003, p. 393) and “proprietary brands” (*Oxford-Paravia*). On the one hand, a non-genericized brand name is “[a] sign or name that is secured by legal registration or (in some cases) by established use, and serves to distinguish one product from similar brands sold by competitors [...]” (*OCEL*) or, in other words, “[...] a symbol or name used by a maker of a product to distinguish the product from others of its kind.” (Landau 2001, p. 405). On the other hand, “genericness” refers to “[...] the use of the trademark not as a mark but as a descriptive word [...]” (Ephratt 2003, p. 404); consequently, a genericized brand name “[...] loses its specific referential features and is used with a more general reference.” (Furiassi 2006, p. 200).

The first part of this article focuses on non-genericized brand names associated with small arms manufactured by defense industries mostly belonging to English-speaking countries. The second part deals with genericized brand names which made their way into military English, where they are used as brevity words in order to make communication faster. Both parts share the intent of identifying common qualitative trends in the use of brand names in military terminology and detecting the word formation processes that lead to their coinage.

2. Non-genericized brand names in small arms manufacturing

Brands and brand names began to appear on a large scale in the early 19th century – as a logical and obvious consequence of the industrial revolution (Wilkof, Burkitt 2005, p. 23). Brand names were aimed at allowing users and consumers alike to identify certain products and differentiate between similar ones made by other producers. As the 19th century witnessed a true revolution in weapon design, due to numerous technical innovations, nearly every European and world power had its own arms industry.

The names of the American Samuel Colt, the Austrian Ferdinand Mannlicher and the German Peter Paul Mauser, who played an important role in weapon design, soon became household names, similarly to those of the American Richard Jordan Gatling or Hiram Stevens Maxim. Although these landmark figures were and may still be hardly known to the general public, the names of many of them, associated with the weapons they invented and

designed, have become popular thanks to a semantic process called eponymy: “[...] eponyms are words referring to objects or activities which are named after the person who invented and/or diffused them.” (Furiassi 2006, p. 200). This phenomenon of naming a weapon after its designer survived many armed conflicts, including two world wars, and is still in practice today.

Alongside eponymy, there is another, also widespread practice that contributed to the global diffusion of small arms, i.e. naming the product after its manufacturer. Since arms manufacturers patented the products they produced, this led to the coinage of – likely the first – brand names in the war industry. Although in many cases the designer’s and the company’s names originally coincided, at a later stage, in the late 19th and early 20th century, a separation process began, so the designers were not the owners of the factories any more, rather just their employees. All in all, neither eponyms nor brand names referring to small arms ever implied genericness since the specificity of each weapon, closely linked to the identity of the maker, was a crucial factor in determining its quality.

However, it must be added that brand names of small arms may not always clearly indicate the origin of their designs. Despite branding, no copyright was in fact fully respected by the designers and/or makers, an issue familiar to weapon manufacturers within the Allied Powers during World War 2. For instance, the 9mm Lanchester submachine gun, designed for RAF and Royal Navy use was a close copy of the German Bergmann MP28. Although it was well-crafted and easy to use, its costliness and long manufacturing time made another weapon, the crude Sten, become the dominant British submachine gun of that era.

The following examples of non-genericized brand names, serving as solid ground to support the qualitative analysis carried out in the first part of this article, are mostly taken from 20th-century small-arms production, as listed in Bishop (2014a, 2014b). The reasons for this choice are the following: first of all, these were the weapons – handguns, submachine guns, rifles and machine guns – produced in the largest quantity and variety before, during and between the two world wars; in addition, they are still used by the armed forces of several nations; finally, they are also known and sometimes even used by civilians.

In general, the word formation processes that lead to the creation of brand names in this specific context are either lexico-semantic, namely eponyms and nicknames, or morpho-syntactic, namely initialisms and blends.

2.1. Eponyms

Prototypically, the Colt Police Positive range of revolvers – best known by the eponym *Colt*, the surname of the inventor, Samuel Colt – began life in 1905 as a development from the earlier range of Pocket Positive revolvers

which had achieved popularity in the United States. Throughout its production life, the gun with a 6-round cylinder magazine was issued in a wide variety of different calibers to suit different roles thanks to its reliability, light weight, and balance in firing.

This was enough to be the basis of another Colt model, the Colt M1911 and its variants, which were not classic revolvers with drum magazines but still proved to be possibly the most famous and successful handguns of all time, in service within the US forces from 1911 to 1990. The Colt M1911 was born after Browning and Colt completely redesigned a previous weapon in a powerful .45 caliber, and the US Army accepted it into service as U.S. Pistol, Automatic, Caliber .45, Model 1911. It is worth mentioning that the official name of this weapon has hardly ever been used in spoken English.

2.2. Nicknames

Despite the attested existence of brand names in arms manufacture, well-known to military personnel and civilians alike, at times small arms were popularized by the nicknames assigned to them. According to the *OED*, a nickname is “[a] (usually familiar or humorous) name which is given to a person, place, etc., as a supposedly appropriate replacement for or addition to the proper name.”

An illustrative example of this phenomenon is the Japanese machine gun Type 92, known among Australian troops who faced its fire in the Pacific theater as *woodpecker*. This weapon entered service in 1932, indicating a shift in the Japanese armed forces from using the 6.5mm Arisaka ammunition to the more powerful 7.7mm cartridge, which rather increased muzzle velocity. The new ammunition required a new feeding mechanism and made the weapon sound different from other Japanese machine guns. This is what the Australians noticed and, because of the onomatopoeic similarity, nicknamed it after the bird.

The shape of a weapon, a significant factor when a nickname is chosen, must also be considered as a source of nicknames. Introduced in 1942, the Rocket Launcher M1A1, the American version of the German Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck antitank rockets, was nothing but a meter-long tube with the projectile inside:² this is why, due to its resemblance to the homonymous

² Although not specifically related to the English language, the brand names of man-portable antitank rockets *Panzerfaust*, literary meaning ‘armor fist’ or ‘tank fist’, and *Panzerschreck*, literary meaning ‘tank fright’, ‘tank’s fright’ or ‘tank’s bane’, developed in Germany during World War 2, are not eponyms but semantically transparent compounds to which positive connotations are associated. The users of those fairly simple, low-cost weapons – both military personnel and civilians – were assured by the very names given to the weapons themselves that they possessed something which was able to destroy huge armored vehicles and main battle

musical instrument, it was nicknamed *bazooka* by the Allied troops. The weapon soon gained another nickname, namely *stovepipe*: as in the previous instance, the origin of the metaphorical nickname was shape, but in this case the association made by the soldiers was different since they might not have been familiar enough with musical instruments.

As a last example of nicknaming, the M3A1 deserves to be mentioned: it entered service in 1942 and earned the title *grease gun* thanks to its crude appearance. Similarly to many other submachine guns used in World War 2, the M3A1 was conceived specifically to meet the requirements of mass production; designed by George Hyde and produced by General Motors, it was capable of firing rounds of different calibers by simple changes of its bolt, barrel and magazine. Thanks to the durability of some of its cheap pressed-steel components, the M3A1 proved to be a totally serviceable weapon.

2.3. Initialisms

In many cases the practice of inserting technical specificities within the name of each weapon developed into a system of abbreviations,³ mostly initialisms, the reason for this being the increasing amount of information users needed in order to identify one particular weapon among the various ones manufactured by the same producer. More specifically, López Rúa (2006, p. 677) defines “initialisms” as “[...] the result of selecting the initial letter, or occasionally the first two letters, of the orthographic words in a phrase and combining them to form a new sequence.”. Within initialisms – depending on how they are pronounced, alphabetisms and acronyms must be differentiated: alphabetisms denote initialisms pronounced as a series of letters of the alphabet, i.e. letter-by-letter, while acronyms denote initialisms pronounced as whole words.⁴

Therefore, besides the designers’ or manufacturers’ names, brand names began to include the caliber, the year in which production started

tanks often moving against them. These brand names provided additional psychological support for the personnel equipped with such military technology. It is worth noticing that this type of naming strategy is rather uncommon in the field of military technology nowadays.

³ In linguistics, “abbreviations” are divided into “simple abbreviations” and “complex abbreviations”, the latter comprising “blends”, “clippings” and “initialisms”, which are further subdivided into “alphabetisms” and “acronyms” (López Rúa 2006, pp. 676-677). Despite the fact that López Rúa (2006, p. 675) includes “abbreviations” in the overarching category of “non-morphological word formation”, “initialisms” and “blends” are considered at the threshold between morphology and syntax, a fact which explains the adoption of the label “morpho-syntactic” in this article.

⁴ The labels “initialisms”, “alphabetisms” and “acronyms” are often misused in linguistic and non-linguistic literature alike as they are interchangeably used as synonyms of “abbreviations” or “shortenings” (López Rúa 2006, p. 677).

and/or the year in which firearms were first used in service. The production year of a weapon is important as the first batches tended (and still tend) to have some glitches and their prices were higher. After initial problems were eliminated, as field trials revealed them, and thanks to mass production methods, the costs decreased.

Despite being first produced in the Soviet Union right after World War 2, the *AK-47*, an alphabetism standing for *Avtomat Kalashnikova*, is still popular even among the English-speaking audience, where it is commonly named *AK* (*Merriam-Webster; OED*). Designed by Mikhail Kalashnikov in 1947, the *AK-47* is likely the best-known and most widely produced and distributed rifle in history. Incredibly successful, the *AK-47* is a simple, gas-operated weapon using a rotating bolt. It has a chromium-plated barrel and high-quality machining. However, the design and production processes were perfected only in 1959, the result being an inexpensive, easy-to-maintain, reliable and durable weapon.

A further instance which proves the productivity of initialisms in coining brand names of small arms is the acronym *BAR*, which stands for *Browning Automatic Rifle*. This acronym is a combination of the developer's surname initial and the initials of the category. It was classed as a rifle but, because of its dimension, it resembled a light machine gun. It was developed by John Browning in 1917 and used in World War 1. Later, it was fitted with a bipod under the name *BAR M1918A1*, and followed by the modified *BAR M1918A2*. The *BAR* was rather heavy, yet it became immensely popular with US servicemen during World War 2 and remained in service until 1957.

2.4. Blends

Blends are obtained by “[...] joining two or more word-forms through simple concatenation or overlap and then shortening at least one of them.” (López Rúa 2006, p. 677). This word formation process, typical of the English language, was exploited in order to coin the small-arms name *Bren*, indeed originating from
 and <en>, the blending of the names of the cities of Brno and Enfield. Brno, now in the Czech Republic, and Enfield, in the United Kingdom, were notorious centers of arms industry as early as World War 1. In the interwar period the *Lehky Kulomet ZB vz30* eventually became the model for the British *Bren* gun. This particular gun had a very smooth action thanks to the long gas cylinder, which slowed the fire rate and reduced the force of recoil, and its rapid-change barrel, which granted extreme accuracy and made it popular with troops. A remarkable proof of the *Bren* gun's quality is that it is still in use in the British Army today, its contemporary name being *Bren Gun L4A2* (in the 7.62mm NATO caliber).

The name *Enfield* is also included in the brand name of a famous series of British submachine guns used mostly in World War 2, the *Sten*

submachine guns, the most numerous – more than two million produced – and having the crude metal construction that was the gun’s visual signature. Its name, *Sten*, a combination of acronymy and blending, comes from the surname initials of the designers, Reginald Shepherd and Harold Turpin, joined with the graphemic sequence <en>, which stands for Enfield. The overall construction of the weapon was almost primitive: the trigger housing was in a pressed steel box and the butt consisted of a simple metal tube and shoulder plate. Due to the fact that it could be easily broken down and concealed, it was the weapon of choice of many Resistance fighters.

3. Genericized brand names as brevity words in the military

Brevity and conciseness have always been paramount in communication among the military. This trend is largely due to the spread of radio communication, which requires the implementation of the KISS, i.e. keep-it-short-and-simple – also known as “keep it simple, stupid” (Dalzell 2009, p. 595) – principle. As an obvious necessity, the KISS principle is taken to its maximum expression in war theaters. Indeed, within the U.S. military, “brevity code words” or “brevity codes” (*MSBC*), known within the NATO as “brevity words” (*JBWP*), are codes used by various military forces as a type of voice procedure; they are designed to make radio communication faster by conveying complex information in the shortest amount of time possible.

The brevity codes used by the U.S. military, as listed in the *Multi-Service Brevity Codes (MSBC)*, and the brevity words used by NATO forces may differ in both number and meaning. More specifically, the NATO-approved *Joint Brevity Words Publication (JBWP)*, considered for this analysis, is an unclassified document which contains the brevity words serving the maritime, land and air forces of all NATO member states in order to ease communication and coordination.

Unsurprisingly, brevity words do not grant any communication security but provide a basis for common understanding among crews in order to minimize radio transmission while executing tactics, with the sole purpose of reducing the time of communication by shortening messages rather than concealing their content (Fiano, Grimaldi 2017, p. 143). Consequently, brevity words, which are informative, descriptive and directive in nature, are used in combat, training or while executing tactics of attack and defense; they provide the basis for common understanding, especially among military personnel involved in multi-service and multinational operations, by achieving faster, better and more effective information delivery.

The aim of brevity words is to be direct and shared by the majority of their users. Most are used within communication in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in order to “[...] help save precious time and reduce chances of miscommunication generated by the incorrect usage by non-native speakers of English [...]” (Panajotu 2010, p. 165), thus keeping the “[...] decision cycle down to minutes [...]” (Er 2012, p. 281), or even seconds.

An interesting phenomenon related to brevity words is the presence, among them, of genericized brand names, usually associated to consumer goods; in greater detail, out of 896 brevity words listed and glossed in the *JBWP*, 17, almost 2%, are in fact plausible genericized brand names, especially if their specialized meanings are possibly related to the original referent of the brand name itself, i.e. AJAX, CADDILAC (a frequent misspelling of *Cadillac*TM), CHAMPAGNE, EDISON, FORD, GEIGER, GREYHOUND, JELLO, MAGNUM, MUSTANG, PACMAN, PELICAN, ROLEX, RONSON, ROVER, WINCHESTER and ZIPPO.⁵ One striking instance is *Zippo*TM, the well-known American-made lighter manufactured by the Zippo Manufacturing Company, based in Bradford (PA). ZIPPO, as a brevity word, means “[a]lerts units that a missile attack is imminent or in progress.” (*JBWP*, p. 82); it is worth mentioning that ZIPPO contains the grapheme <z>, usually associated with speed, and is therefore apt to render communication faster in military contexts. ZIPPO is also productive in compounds: ZIPPO TIGHT means “[i]nhibits all reactions to threats. ZIPPOS should not be called.” (*JBWP*, p. 82); ZIPPO LOOSE means “ZIPPO TIGHT is cancelled.” (*JBWP*, p. 82). The compounds *Zippo jobs*, *Zippo missions* or *Zippo raids*, not included in the *Joint Brevity Words Publication*, had already been used during the Vietnam War to indicate military operations which involved burning down Vietnamese villages – often *Zippo*TM lighters were used to ignite the huts.

Another example of a brevity word that is in fact a genericized brand name is *Rolex*TM (Furiassi, Fiano 2017, p. 163), one of the best-known brands of wristwatches in the world manufactured in Geneva, Switzerland. It is undeniable that *Rolex*TM is short and easy to pronounce – the fact that it ends in <x>, another grapheme often exploited to imply speed, makes it the perfect candidate when fast communication is necessary in order to convey military messages. As a brevity word, ROLEX is related to time; more exactly, ROLEX indicates “[t]ime change in minutes from a given datum. The term “plus” will indicate later time and the term “minus” will indicate an earlier time” (*JBWP*, p. 52) or “[t]ime line adjustment in minutes always referenced

⁵ When used as brevity words, the brand names listed and examined in this article are written in capital letters, in compliance with the spelling conventions adopted in the *Joint Brevity Words Publication* (*JBWP*).

from original preplanned mission execution time. “Plus” means later; “minus” means earlier.” (*MSBC*, p. 32). In other words, ROLEX is an informative order or call which indicates a change of time in minutes with respect to a time agreed upon, as, for example, the beginning or end of a mission, briefing or debriefing. The term PLUS followed by numbers indicates delay; the term MINUS followed by numbers indicates anticipation.

As shown in the following examples, the lexico-semantic processes that lead to the coinage of brand names used as brevity words are categorized into four different types: eponyms, toponyms, personifications and theronyms. All in all, brand names, regardless of their etymology, became fully-fledged military terms when used as brevity words.

3.1. Eponyms

An important category of brevity words is that of eponyms, people “[...] ‘whose name is a synonym for’ something” (*OED*). Within the *Joint Brevity Words Publication*, EDISON, coined after Thomas Edison, who invented the incandescent light bulb in 1879, means “[s]ubmarine turn on upward beamed diver’s lights and/or anchor lights.” (*JBWP*, p. 22). In maritime communications it indicates that a submarine has turned or should turn its underwater lights on and directs the light beam upward, and/or has turned its anchor lights on.

A further eponym, FORD, originated from Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company, now based in Dearborn (MI), is used as a directive with the following meaning: “[a]ssume intercept guard/watch on band or guard indicated.” (*JBWP*, p. 25). This imperative is used as an order to listen to radio communication with the aim of intercepting it by means of electronic warfare units.

Finally, GEIGER is also a recurrent and productive eponym which leads to the coinage of several related compounds: GEIGER CHASE refers to a “[r]adio activity monitoring operation.” (*JBWP*, p. 27), namely an operation carried out to check the level of radioactivity on or over a particular terrain or area; GEIGER SHIP indicates a “[r]adioactivity monitor ship.” (*JBWP*, p. 27) equipped with all the necessary means and assets to accomplish this type of mission; GEIGER SOUR and GEIGER SWEET, that is the term GEIGER collocated with two antonymic adjectives, the former, negatively connoted, meaning “[a]rea contaminated, radioactivity noted.” (*JBWP*, p. 27), the latter, positively connoted, implying “[a]rea uncontaminated. No radioactivity noted.” (*JBWP*, p. 27). Undoubtedly, the term GEIGER is derived from the surname of Hans Geiger, who in 1913 invented and later, in 1928, with the help of Walther Müller, improved the Geiger(-Müller) counter, a tool used for detecting and measuring radioactivity level.

3.2. Toponyms

A toponym is “[a] place-name; a name given to a person or thing marking its place of origin.” (*OED*). Toponyms often undergo a process of “commodification” (Medway, Warnaby 2014, p. 153), thus becoming proper brand names. One of the examples extracted from the *Joint Brevity Words Publication (JBWP)* that best renders this commodification process is CHAMPAGNE, whose etymology is rather transparent to the general audience since it refers to a specific geographical area in France and to the famous sparkling wine produced therein. On the commodification of brand names, Medway, Warnaby (2014, p. 158) state the following:

[c]onventional brand names are protectable through trademarking. Protecting a toponym is more difficult, not least because several places may have the same name. [...] such names are only protectable within the context of an associated product. Thus, the name ‘Champagne’ is not protected when used, for example, as a special edition name for a model of car [...]. The value-adding properties of a place name are not always protectable.

As a military brevity word, CHAMPAGNE refers to “[a] picture label of three distinct GROUPs with two in front and one behind. GROUP names should be NORTH LEAD GROUP and SOUTH LEAD GROUP or WEST LEAD GROUP and EAST LEAD GROUP and TRAIL GROUP.” (*MSBC*, p. 7), a definition which mirrors the one provide in the *JBWP* (p. 12): “[a] picture label of three distinct groups with two in front and one behind. Group names should be quote NORTH LEAD GROUP/SOUTH LEAD GROUP unquote or quote WEST LEAD GROUP/EAST LEAD GROUP unquote and quote TRAIL GROUP unquote.”

Indeed, the term CHAMPAGNE, when used by intercept controllers and pilots in ground/air/ground (G/A/G) communication, indicates maneuvering of three distinct groups of airplanes with two in front and one in trail, whose respective positions correspond to the three vertexes of a triangle: this term, which metaphorically renders the triangular formation, undoubtedly speeds up communication.

3.3. Personifications

As a particular type of metaphor, personification, that is “[t]he attribution of human form, nature, or characteristics to something; the representation of a thing or abstraction as a person [...]” (*OED*), is a device often exploited for creating brand names.

Among brevity words, AJAX, for instance, derived from the mythological Greek hero in Homer’s *Iliad*, also happens to be a brand name: indeed, *Ajax*TM, introduced by New York-based Colgate-Palmolive in 1947,

is a cleanser known to consumers worldwide. As a brevity word, the term AJAX is used to indicate that a “[l]anding zone/pick up zone is clear of threats.” (*JBWP*, p. 3). LZs, or landing zones, and PZs, or pick-up zones, are designated areas suitable for landing aircraft or airborne troops or picking up special forces, commando units or any other friendly troops. Metaphorically, the message conveyed by means of the term AJAX implies that landing zones and pick-up zones are safe and clear as if they had been sanitized using an *Ajax*TM detergent.

3.4. Theronyms

According to the *OCEL*, a theronym is “[a] name – especially a product name – that has been derived from the name of an animal.”. Theronymy is a common word formation process through which brand names are coined. “No other realm affords such vivid expression of symbolic concepts. [...] so preeminent, widespread, and enduring is the habit of symbolizing in terms of animals.” (Lawrence 1993, p. 301).

For example, *Mustang*TM, originally referring to a free-roaming wild horse, is also a legendary FordTM car model. MUSTANG, as a brevity word, indicates “[a]n ASUW [anti-surface warfare] weapon-carrying helicopter.” (*JBWP*, p. 43), that is a helicopter equipped with anti-submarine warfare (ASW) systems, which are widely deployed by naval forces as a means to counter submarines at long ranges.

A further instance of theronymy is *Pelikan*TM – in the German spelling, known to the general audience as the manufacturer of fountain pens and other writing instruments, originally based in Germany but now having its headquarters in Switzerland. In addition, the brand name *Pelican*TM – in the English spelling, is used by an American company, based in Torrance (CA), that designs and manufactures flashlights and cases. PelicanTM products are available to all consumers and are also used in the military industry. Although there may be no apparent link between the military meaning of the brevity word and the consumer products mentioned above, in military terminology PELICAN refers to a “[l]ong range patrol maritime aircraft capable of both search and attack.” (*JBWP*, p. 48). This type of aircraft is also known as reconnaissance aircraft: it is designed to operate for long time spans over water in maritime patrol roles, e.g. anti-submarine, anti-ship and search-and-rescue missions, which are sometimes referred to as maritime reconnaissance.

4. Conclusion

As far as the first part of this article is concerned (Section 2), what may be deduced from the analysis of non-genericized brand names assigned to small arms is that similarities between one weapon and another cannot be guessed on the sole basis of their makers; in fact, it is paramount to check the specifications of each single weapon – included in the initialisms and blends (sometimes a combination of the above) added to the name of the maker – in order to be able to establish such details.

In addition, it seems that the names of various military small arms can be categorized into official, namely brand names proper – followed or not by information-dense initialisms, and unofficial, namely eponyms and nicknames, the latter being used mainly in everyday practice by the military. On the one hand, the official brand names, especially if accompanied by attendant initialisms, contain several pieces of information about the weapon category, caliber and the year of design or commissioning; on the other hand, the unofficial names, mostly nicknames, seem to be affected by extralinguistic factors, such as the shape and sound of the weapon.

As for the second part of the article (Section 3), the genericized brand names included in the analysis derive from “semantic redetermination” (Paganoni 2007, p. 187) – a type of “semantic change” (Lyons 1977a, p. 265) or “semantic shift” (Geeraerts 1997, p. 76) – through a processes of “specialization” (Lyons 1977b, p. 531), “narrowing” (Lyons 1977a, p. 32; Geeraerts 1997, p. 71) or “restriction” (Lyons 1977a, p. 32) of meaning. According to Geeraerts (1997, p. 95), “[t]erminologically, ‘restriction’ and ‘narrowing’ of meaning equal ‘specialization’, and ‘expansion’, ‘extension’, ‘schematization’, and ‘broadening’ of meaning equal ‘generalization’.”. In other words, “resemanticization” occurs via “recontextualization” (Paganoni 2007, p. 187), here shown by introducing widespread and well-known consumer brand names into military terminology and, as a consequence, providing them with highly-specialized meanings.

Undoubtedly, military communication plays a fundamental role both in war time and in peace; the transmission of messages, orders and reports on land, sea and air, such as those that may be exchanged between headquarters, airplanes flying reconnaissance or surveillance missions, and patrolling helicopters, has to be fast in order to meet the needs of military effectiveness in managing information. More importantly, in globalized scenarios, this exchange of information usually takes place among people who share neither a common native language nor a common culture. Therefore, both non-genericized brand names of weapons and genericized brand names used as brevity words are military terms not only preeminent for intra-language communication among native speakers of English but also for inter-language

communication among non-native speakers.

To this extent, brand names seem to constitute a common core of shared and mutually-intelligible terminology within the broader spectrum of English military terms. Their existence is likely to foster the construction of systematic communication and contribute to the spread of English as a lingua franca among the armed forces of countless countries. At present, English seems to be the sole language capable of allowing effecting interaction within the military because of its genuinely global status, a unique feature that has enabled it to develop specialized functions recognized worldwide.

As Lipka (2006, p. 30) highlights, “[i]n order to best fulfill their function, brand names must be short, have positive connotations or emotional colouring and act as an attention-seeking device”. Indeed, by analyzing the role of brand names in military English, it is apparent that they have one significant added value to the safety – though not security – of communication: they are usually well-known, follow the KISS principle, are easy to pronounce and understand – even by non-native speakers of English, thus fitting into the general, widely-accepted conventions of military terminology.

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