Brand Names in Military English: The Link between Two Worlds

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Outline

• Terminological issues
  – Non-genericized brand names
  – Genericized brand names

• Word formation processes
  – Lexico-semantic
  – Morpho-syntactic

• Brand names in military English
  – Small arms manufacturing
  – Brevity words

• Conclusion
Terminological issues

• “brand names” (Moss 1995, p. 135)
• “trademarks” (Furiassi 2012, p. 97, 2006, p. 199; Merriam-Webster)
• “proprietary names” (OED)
• “proprietary terms” (OCEL)
• “trade names” (OCEL)
• “trade terms” (OED)
• “word marks” (Ephratt 2003, p. 393)
• “proprietary brands” (Oxford-Paravia)
Non-genericized brand names

• “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)

• “[...] a symbol or name used by a maker of a product to distinguish the product from others of its kind.” (Landau 2001, p. 405)
Genericized brand names

• “[...] genericness is the use of the trademark not as a mark but as a descriptive word [...].” (Ephratt 2003, p. 404)

• “Genericness takes place when a trademark loses its specific referential features and is used with a more general reference.” (Furiassi 2006, p. 200)
Word formation processes

• Lexico-semantic
  – Eponyms
  – Toponymy
  – Nicknames
  – Personifications
  – Theronymy

• Morpho-syntactic
  – Initialisms
    • Alphabetisms
    • Acronyms
  – Blends
Eponyms

• “[...] words referring to objects or activities which are named after the person who invented and/or diffused them.” (Furiassi 2006, p. 200)
Toponyms

• “A place-name; a name given to a person or thing marking its place of origin.” (OED)
Nicknames

• “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.” (OED)
Personifications

• “The attribution of human form, nature, or characteristics to something; the representation of a thing or abstraction as a person [...].” (OED)
Theronyms

• “A name – especially a product name – that has been derived from the name of an animal.” (OCEL)
Initialisms

• “[...] 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.” (López Rúa 2006, p. 677)
  – Alphabetisms: pronounced letter-by-letter
  – Acronyms: pronounced as whole words
Blends

• “[...] joining two or more word-forms through simple concatenation or overlap and then shortening at least one of them.” (López Rúa 2006, p. 677)
Brand names in military English

• Non-genericized brand names
  – Small arms manufacturing (North, Hogg 1977)
  – WW1 and WW2 (Bishop 2014a, 2014b)

• Genericized brand names
  – NATO brevity words (JBWP)
  – U.S. military brevity codes (MSBC)
Small arms manufacturing

- Eponym: Colt
- Nickname: bazooka
- Alphabetism: AK
- Acronym: BAR
- Blend: Bren
Eponym: *Colt*

- U.S Pistol Automatic Caliber .45 Model 1911
- Samuel Colt (1905)
- In service until 1990
Nickname: *bazooka*

- Rocket Launcher M1A1 (1942)
- Also known as *stovepipe*
Alphabetism: AK

• AK-47 (Avtomat Kalashnikova)
• Mikhail Kalashnikov (1947)
• Also known as AK (Merriam-Webster; OED)
Acronym: *BAR*

- Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR)
- John Browning (1917)
- In service until 1957
Blend: *Bren*

- Bren Gun L4A2
- Brno (Czech Republic) and Enfield (UK)
- `<br> + <en>`
Brevity words

• Terms used as a type of voice procedure within the NATO armed forces
  – Fast radio communication (Panajotu 2010, p. 165)
  – Attention-seeking device (Fiano, Grimaldi 2017, p. 143)
  – Informative, descriptive, directive

• Mutual intelligibility among ENL and EFL speakers in the military worldwide

• 17 (plausible) genericized brand names, i.e. 2%, out of 896 NATO brevity words (JBWP)
Genericized brand name: ROLEX

- *Rolex™* (wristwatch) - Rolex SA - Geneva (Switzerland)

- “Time change in minutes from a given datum. The term “plus” will indicate later time and the term “minus” will indicate an earlier time.” (JBWP)
Genericized brand name: ZIPPO

- Zippo™ (lighter) - Zippo Manufacturing Co. - Bradford (PA)
- “Alerts units that a missile attack is imminent or in progress.” (JBWP)
- Productivity
Brevity words

• Eponym: FORD
• Toponym: CHAMPAGNE
• Personification: AJAX
• Theronym: MUSTANG
Eponym: FORD

• Henry Ford (1908)
• “Assume intercept guard/watch on band or guard indicated.” (JBWP)
Toponym: CHAMPAGNE

- French (wine) region
- Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)
- “A picture label of three distinct groups with two in front and one behind.” (JBWP)
Personification: AJAX

- Greek hero in Homer’s *Iliad*
- *Ajax™* (cleanser) - Colgate-Palmolive Co. - New York (NY)
- “Landing zone/pick up zone is clear of threats.” (*JBWP*)
Theronym: MUSTANG

• Free-roaming wild horse
• Mustang™ - Ford Motor Co. - Dearborn (MI)
• “An ASUW [anti-surface warfare] weapon-carrying helicopter.” (JBWP)
Conclusion

• Both non-genericized (small arms) and genericized brand names (brevity words) may be used as military terms through “resemanticization” (Paganoni 2007, p. 187)
  – “recontextualization” (Paganoni 2007, p. 187)
  – “specialization” (Lyons 1977, p. 531; Geeraerts 1997, p. 95)
• Introducing widespread and well-known LGP brand names into military terminology provides them with highly-specialized meanings
  – Well-known, follow the KISS principle, easy to pronounce and understand
  – Fit into the widely-accepted conventions of military terminology
• Not only paramount for intra-language communication among ENL speakers but also for inter-language communication among EFL speakers, e.g. international missions

• Constituting a common core of shared terminology within the broader spectrum of English military terms
• Fostering the spread of ELF terminology among the armed forces worldwide
• Becoming part of “brand culture” (Schroeder, Salzer-Mörling 2006, p. 2) or “trademark culture” (Beebe 2008, p. 42) governing the globalized world