



DRUG NICKNAMING IN WESTERN ALGERIA

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KEY WORDS

*Drug
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ABSTRACT

Illegal drug consumption is a long-run issue with a worldwide apprehension. Drug abusers identify themselves differently to remain far from public appearance and escape court institutions. Nicknaming drugs and their different types and forms constitute one way of drug abusing concealment and disguise. Nicknaming involves a variety of practices that acquire full of positive and/ or negative connotations in society over time. Social practices carry cultural values that shape the nickname giver's perception of the nickname bearer, a fact that can be reflected in the way the nickname is chosen within various fields. Nickname givers are alone responsible for allocating the exclusionary or inclusionary character to the nickname bearer. The present paper seeks to examine and analyse the various nicknames attributed to diverse types of such psychotropic substances by the Algerians with special reference to the west of multilingual and diglossic Algerian speech community. More particularly, how are drugs nicknamed in western Algeria? Which language varieties are involved in such nicknaming? Why are illegal drugs nicknamed at all? The findings at hand assign nicknames to physicality, mannerism, experience and/ or linguistic adjustments. Drug nicknaming nomenclature under study makes up importantly drug consumers' secret language in the present setting.

1. Drug Myth: The Historical Background

Searching for food as one minimal nature-dictated condition for human subsistence is fairly evident. Mankind goes instinctively through tasting substances first to decide for their consumption. Food diversification is the result of this inborn conduct leading also to the accidental discovery of mind and/ or mood-altering plant substances mainly drugs: Out of half million of plant species, around 4,000 are featured by psychoactive¹ properties². Since antiquity, various plants have been spotted as sources of good feeling and relief but in the meanwhile caught stimulating higher human animation and fortitude. Authors make reference to the already-drug consumption by diverse ancient populations who sought to reach this (temporary) state of well-being.

50,000 years ago, according to Gahlinger (2004), it was the case of the Neanderthals conforming to the archeological remains found in the Iraqi Shanider cave. Potter and Orfali (1998) on their part indicate the use of opium in Greece around 2000 B.C and also the existence of the psychoactive effectual flower, *ololiuqui*, among early American Aztecs. They add that while the American politician George Washington engaged hemp for tooth alleviation and the scientist Sigmund Freud handled cocaine, ""Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" and "Hooper's Anodyne, the Infant's Friend" were commonly used by Victorian ladies to calm their babies" (ibid: 5).

Accordingly, the psychoactive property of drugs and their effectual power have since the past times made of such substances specific in their capacity of reshaping attitudes and gaining mythical perceptions. That drug plants hold a spirit possessing a supernatural energy responsible for human mood altering is the essence of drug myth. With this spiritual double-sided character, playing the paradoxical role of serving and hurting human species, mood-modifying substances broadly integrated the domains of religion, chemistry, medicine and daily life as a whole. Drugs are on the one hand evidence of God following classical religious Greek, Egyptian, Chinese and Indian texts: They bear a sacred aspect because they have the power of healing illnesses and solving health complications.

Ancient Indian references illustrate 1,000 hymns in admiration of a psychedelic mushroom type known as soma. Other academic sources raise the question of marijuana as found in the Bible (Gahlinger, 2004). Nevertheless, the drug comes into play with perplexing acts of evil and harm

¹ With a profound impact on the mind

² Reported in Gahlinger(2004)

illustratively encountered in folk names of plants, like for instance, the hallucinogenic flower *Datura* with the appellations, ""devil's weed", "devil's apple", "*yerba del Diablo*"..." (ibid: 7). More rational measures and drug consuming restrictions therefore have been raised nowadays by governmental organisms, medical doctors, chemists and other intellectual foundations in the attempt to exploit benefits of such substances while avoid their eventual effects.

2. What is a Drug?

The concept of drug indicates any, manufactured or natural, substance that has altering effects on one's thinking, feeling or behaviour from a variety of, social, spiritual, religious, chemical, medicinal and/ or other, viewpoints (Edelfield and Moosa, 2012; Coomber et al, 2013). Despite their highly probable positive effects as seen above, most drugs cause illusions (perceptual deformation), delusions (false beliefs), hallucinations (sensory events without a real sensory stimulus), intoxication, emotional responses, disordered thoughts, amplified creativity, and/ or dissociation (mental separation from the surroundings) (Wills, 2005). The adjectival term 'psychotropic' is used alternatively with 'psychoactive' to describe and talk about such effects.

Drugs are identified on the basis of their categorisation which depends on diverse criteria of interest, explain Bennett and Holloway (2005). As regards the pharmacological side for example, the drug can be a stimulant, depressant, analgesic or hallucinogen with accordance to the way it affects the consumer. The first category, like cocaine, activates the central nervous organism and boosts the feeling of wakefulness and euphoria. The depressant (like benzodiazepines) reduces the central nervous system functions to alleviate stress and stimulate sleep. Opium, morphine and heroin are drugs affiliated to the category of analgesics principally used to mitigate pain. Drugs like LSD³ and ecstasy are designated as hallucinogens with a high impact on mind and emotions.

A different drug classification is associated with legislation (ibid). The United Kingdom illustratively has established two acts identifying the legal status of drugs. The Medicines Act 1968 and the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 have diachronically born updating modifications, preserving yet their fundamental rules. Medicines are classified into three categories in the Medicines Act 1968. 'Prescription-only' drugs are given exclusively by the medical doctor/ dentist and uniquely provided by the pharmacist. 'Pharmacy medicines' are still sold only by the pharmacist but without the need for medical prescription. The third class includes 'general sales

³ It stands for Lysergic Acid Diethylamide

list' that is largely allowed at the market level without any medical prescription (e.g. caffeine and tea). As far as the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is concerned, it deposits more restrictions on drug consumption, production, importation and exportation, and regroups mood-altering substances into Class A, Class B or Class C. From the severest to the least severe penalties are imposed following this given class order respectively. Class A comprises drugs like heroin, ecstasy and cocaine; Class B embraces, among others, amphetamines; Class C encompasses temazepam and cannabis (ibid).

As regards the drug consumption methods, they are basically three (Hammersley, 2008). Illegal drugs like cocaine hydrochloride and heroine are injected with the result of deep psychoactive effects subsequently. This intravenous route guarantees a quick passage to blood distribution paving access to the brain. The second method is by mouth. Oral administration is by and large the route of the major number of drugs. However, the latter give their psychotropic effects relatively less quickly compared with the other drug administration methods. Drug use via the airways is the third method which could be through inhalation into the lungs, vaporisation before inhalation (e.g. of hashish (see 8.1), cocaine (see 8.2)), or smoking (e.g. cannabis, heroin).

3. Drug Addiction, Abuse and Crime

Illicit drug-taking upshots ⁴ are several and unavoidable in the case of addiction or abuse. They can appear in the form of 'come down' / 'crash'; the feeling of exhaustion, anxiety and hunger; nosebleeds and perforation of the nose septum; chest pain; lung damage. More particularly, heart attacks can be caused by cocaine; panic attacks and depression are the result of ecstasy consumption, whereas the drug of Artane may lead to blurred vision, dry mouth, nausea, nervousness, agitation, confusion, disturbed behaviour, headache, rapid heartbeat, and/ or weakness. Yet, what is the exact meaning of drug addiction so far? What is the difference between drug addiction and drug abuse? To answer the first question, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2006), as reported in Hammersley (2008: 16), attempts to identify the concept from a biological point of view and defines it as, " ... a complex brain disease". Some of its features are "... drug craving, seeking, and use that can persist even in the face of extremely negative consequences. Drug-seeking may become compulsive in large part as a result of the effects of prolonged drug use on

brain functioning and, thus, on behavio(u)r" (ibid). 'Addiction' results from 'abuse' and tends to be used interchangeably with 'dependence'.

Drug abuse on the other hand encompasses the intake of drugs without medical or legal consultation inciting thus "... psychoactive effects, intoxication or altered body image, and usually despite knowledge of the risks involved" (Wills, 2005: 3). The label drug abuser is more attached than others to some specific milieus, such as parties, prisons, athletic events, and psychiatric hospitalisation (ibid). As for night dance parties for example, they came first into sight in the 80's and entail clubs and/ or raves where youngsters meet to share their so-called culture of 'peace, love, unity and respect' through music, dance and more interestingly here ecstasy, cocaine and cannabis drugs. In prisons, the degree of drug abuse is noticeably alarming worldwide and becoming uncontrollable at the level of security services. Concerning sport, many characters are detected as drug abusers in international spaces and local gymnasias rooms. Moreover, a large public tendency is observed nowadays to strengthen and develop body parts through drug (e.g. stimulant) consumption abusing. Within the domain of psychiatry, the fact that patients suffer mental disorder (e.g. schizophrenias) can push many of them to drug abuse inside and/ or out of hospitals. Apart from drug addiction, another major outcome of drug abuse is drug crime.

A crime is any act which breaches the state laws and causes legislation punishment. If drug abuse can result in drug crime the opposite may also take place, that is drug crime can evoke drug abuse. The way the two parts interlink could be demonstrated in the table below (see also Bennett and Holloway, 2005). This interlink is clearly associated with socio-economic parameters,

Table1: The Interlink between Drug Abuse and Drug Crime

N°	Drug Link	Occurrence
First	Drug abuse leads to crime.	Drug consumers opt for illicit financial resources to buy drugs.
Second	Crime leads to drug abuse.	Consuming drugs motivates criminals.
Third	Drug abuse and crime are both the result of a third variable.	An individual or social problem (e.g. academic failure; parental divorce) can cause both drug mishandling and crime.

⁴ See also Royal College of Psychiatrists and The Royal College of Physicians (2000).

4. Drug Spread in Algeria

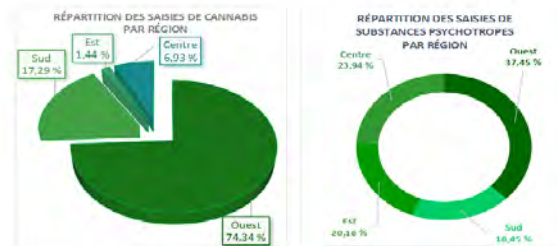
Lying at the crossroads between Africa, Europe and Asia, Algeria has been a key African country of remarkable transit for all types of drugs and their continental distribution. The situation has got bit by bit further complicated in favour of drug spreading among the Algerian ordinary population, in spite of the major endeavours displayed by security forces against illegal drug trafficking. Huge amounts of drug tons are daily seized by the police, customs, gendarmerie and military authorities who also constantly dismantle criminal drug networks; yet, Algeria is still continuously moving from a restricted drug-taking space to a more importantly drug-consuming country. Cities, villages, (primary, middle, high) schools and even universities are all, with no exception, witnessing the presence of psychotropic substances obtained from the Algerian market that is ever more immersed by cannabis, cocaine, heroin, opium, pills⁵, and countless other drugs⁶.

One of the main drug data references in Algeria is the National Office for the fight against Drugs and Drug Addiction (ONLCDT⁷) whose statistics, in fact, demonstrate that we have gone from eight tons of cannabis resin (see 8.1) seized in 2003 to achieve one hundred and nine tons in 2016. In the meanwhile⁸, more than seventy four tons of this substance was seized in 2009 against one hundred fifty seven tons in 2012. In 2013, over two hundred eleven tons of cannabis resin was caught in the country by the agencies in charge of drug traffic. We notice in spite of the bigger quantities of cannabis resin held between 2003 and 2016 that the state intervention succeeded relatively in diminishing the mass seized in 2016. It should on the other hand be mentioned that the quantities of psychotropic pills detained by the security services are perpetual and, too, important. 1072394 tablets in 2016 are recorded against 1175974 tablets in 2013 and against 571138 tablets in 2003. The numbers are visibly between rise and fall according to the same office (ONLCDT).

Regarding the regional drug networking distribution in Algeria, the diagrams⁹ below are provided by the office above to synthesise the results according to the four parts of the country (east, west, centre, south). The diagram (Figure 1) on the left corresponds to drug networking

distribution with regard to cannabis resin¹⁰ while the one on the right has to do with drug networking distribution as for psychotropic substances.

Figure 1: Regional cannabis Resin and Psychotropic Substances Networking Distribution in Algeria, 2016 (source: ONLCDT)



These diagrams confirm that drug traffic is not exclusively the dealing of one part of the country but extends its organism branches to establish several networking spots together with the Algerian centre, west, east and even the least populated area, the country south, for better circulating their goods and facilitating the movement of greater quantities to other countries. Concerning cannabis resin, the west (74.34%) yet majorly ranks first followed by divergent percentages of the south (17.29%), the centre (6.93%) and finally the east (1.44%). The west still holds the first position as for psychotropic substances with 37.45%. The second position (23.94%) however belongs to the centre followed by the east (20.16%) and then the south (18.45%) in the last rank. Probably, the west predominates presently because it relies heavily on Morocco's drug production which is one of the foremost sources of drugs in the world (Chouvy and Afsahi, 2014).

5. Algerian Drug Abusers

Year after year-records corroborate the fact that the number of drug abusing consumers in the country under study is startling. Following the findings arrived at by ONLCDT, Algeria involved more than 37600 drug abusers in 2016, majorly young men who could be (ex)-prisoners, criminals, psychiatric cases or simply ordinary drug addicts. Whatever their socio-economic (privileged or under-privileged background-) situation: (primary, middle, high) school pupils; university students; (non-) workers, they all succumb to the psychoactive temptation. The results obtained by the office in this same year show clearly that cannabis resin is still the most consumed. 226 foreigners have been caught among the population below,

⁵ Alternatively used with tablets

⁶ See 7

⁷ Office National de Lutte Contre la Drogue et la Toxicomanie: https://onlcdt.mjustice.dz/onlcdt_fr/?p=donnees

⁸ Between 2003 and 2016.

⁹ They are supplied in French, as shown, on ONLCDT website. The Arabic version also exists. The English version is under construction.

¹⁰ It indicated as cannabis within the diagram.

- 7392 traffickers and 22352 users of cannabis resin
- 158 traffickers and 37 users of cocaine
- 1 trafficker of crack
- 28 traffickers and 18 users of heroine
- 3898 traffickers and 3718 users of psychotropic substances
- 11 cultivators of cannabis and 1 cultivator of opium

Their age varies as follows: the highest rate of drug abuse embraces the population between 16 and 25 years old with the equivalent of 39.47% (8489) followed by the population between 26 and 35 years old users with 38.18% (8212), then the population being more than 35 years old with the percentage of 19.48% (4189) and finally individuals under 15 years old with 2.87% (617). Concerning sex, 90.11% (19379) are male consumers while 9.89% (2128) are females. 73.41% (15789) of them are single, 23.19% (4987) are married whereas 3.40% (731) are indicated by ONLDCT as others.

Variation in drug abuse is associated on the other hand with the socio-economic circumstances of the individuals involved. 9.02% (1939) refers to the percentage (number) of the schooling population against 35.16% (7563) of workers. The highest percentage (number) corresponds to jobless consumers with nearly 56% (12005). The drug consumption then starts within the schooling environments and extends later to include the professional vocation. School-dismissed youngsters are expected to get more easily depicted to the drug appeal because of psychological emptiness and principally through the acquisition of informal earnings. Although the working age can lead to regular and guaranteed access to the financial resources facilitating drug exposition, workers are expected to be less exposed to drug abuse as they have relatively reached a more psychological stability. We then conclude that the most drug consuming Algerian population in 2016 comprises jobless single male teenagers. All the categories of drug takers broadly speaking nickname drug types.

6. Nicknaming: Definition and Characteristics

Originating from the late 15th century-Middle English, the term *nickname* is a combination of "eke" + "name" with the meaning of *supplementary* or *additional name* (Crystal, 2004; Vanguri (ed), 2016). Nicknames differ from the official names in the sense that they are, rather than at birth, supplied at a later age. Although they make frequently reference to people, other spheres such as places, schools, sport, army, technology (e.g. cars, motorbikes, mobiles, computers) are not dispensed from nicknaming acts (Crystal, 2004; Persson, 2013; Vanguri (ed), 2016; Labeled and Benhattab, 2017).

The practices of nicknaming can reflect the nature of the namer's identity and how he/she identifies and perceives the nickname bearer. They are also associated with such concepts as closeness/affection, distance/remoteness and humour/irony between the two parts, the nickname giver and nickname holder (Crystal, 2004; Taksa, 2012).

Nicknaming on the other hand relates to society in many ways and therefore varies and develops according to the social context (Danesi, 2016). Indonesians, to illustrate, employ nicknames to express politeness whereas the Indians use one nickname at least "as part of a system of affection" (ibid: 175). Despite their secondary naming position, nicknames are also most likely carriers of social meaning that intensifies either positive or negative connotations and are indicators of one's cultural values which can make converge or diverge the two nicknaming parties. Convergence implies affiliation to the same grouping membership but divergence may involve taboo implications. Still in both cases, the nickname giver is seen as the source of social power that attributes to the nickname bearer an inclusionary or exclusionary quality (Persson, 2013).

On the basis of some research literature (Hostetler (1993); Persson, 2013; Danesi, 2016; Labeled and Benhattab, 2017), the motives behind the phenomenon of nicknaming could be combined in the following four elements. *Physicality*: Nicknames could be formed in connection with visible traits or apparent characteristics of the one/thing to be nicknamed. This might link to physical features like weight, height, shape, colour, complexion or other such traits. *Mannerism*: If physicality relates to the external aspects of nickname bearers, mannerism has rather to do with their inner qualities in terms of individual habits, preferences, peculiarities, behaviour or internal components. *Experience*: Experience or individual history rather makes reference to the namers who rely in their nicknaming description on their level of familiarity with the nickname bearer. Their current perception is exposed to their cultural lifestyle and/or ethnic background. *Linguistic Adjustments*: They indicate any alterations that may be supplied to the original naming. Shortening/abbreviating, adding hints, swapping/ changing the position of letters are some key sources of original naming modifications and nicknaming practices.

7. Data Collection and Research Difficulties

Obvious it was, we thought, that collecting our data would not be an easy task if we attempted to approach the drug milieu whose reputation, it goes without saying, is well-known for its adventure, risk, threat and even putting one's life into danger.

It is also needless to mention that the drug population address their surrounding with high caution and vigilance and demonstrate prudence while interacting. This is possibly due to their everyday fear of eventual frustration from their habitual psychoactive substances if their identity as drug traffickers/ dealers, drug abusers, or drug addicts would be revealed. Undertaking the step of interrogating them about their drug nicknames, we again thought, would probably raise their doubt about our current status as a would-be spy, security service or state agent, and this might consequently invoke a hostile tentative reaction from their part. Our interest in the subject of drug nicknaming was our drive behind looking for a more credible method of data collection. We decided finally to get in touch with individuals that we already know and who deny any involvement in drug use. Their curiosity is rather confined to observing acquaintances who consume this substance.

The initial motivation behind the present study on the other side specifically lies in fact in our observation of Algerian youngsters' recurrent daily utterances designating types of drugs, and this is something new compared with speech production of our (the author's) generation at that age. It happened to us to hear such terms at university, in the street, on TV or to single out other drug items when surfing facebook pages or reading newspapers. The objective of the current research is to check the drug nicknaming use, identify more related vocabulary and then analyse the whole resultant list of drug nicknames. Our present research question is whether nicknaming takes place randomly or follows a number of criteria. What are the reasons behind the use of nicknaming? We hypothesie that drugs follow the same path of mobiles (Persson, 2013) and cars (Labeled and Benhattab, 2017) and are nicknamed on the basis of physicality, mannerism, personal experience and linguistic adjustment. Our second hypothesis is that still like mobiles and cars, nicknaming drugs has an inclusionary/ exclusionary trait.

Our informants' group was heterogeneous composed of female and male students, family members, siblings' friends aged between 18 and 35 years old. Since we started collecting data two years ago, the present fieldwork has a qualitative rather than a quantitative character. It was a long-term process during which we did not consider the number of participants but just seized the opportunity whenever it seemed possible to gather and/or verify more drug nicknames. Our method alternated between oral (face-to-face contact) and written (internet/ facebook) elicitation depending obviously on the available means of communication with the informants. The locations were university rooms, houses, streets (oral method), or virtual settings (written method). The west of Algeria where we reside is particularly chosen as the

context of this study. Our main question to the participants was whether they knew any drug types and if they nicknamed them. We, as well, attempted at the same time to detect the causes lying behind this drug re-appellation. Despite their persistent denial of any relationship with drug consumption, the number of recurrent drug nicknames elicited from the informants was, to our surprise, striking and phenomenal.

8. The Results and Discussion

Cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy and the drug tablets Lyrica, Rivotril and Artane are the focal nicknamed drugs supplied by the informants. Some of them are credited more than one nickname in more than one language variety (Standard/ dialectal Arabic, Spanish, French, English). Algeria is a multilingual speech community where more than one language are employed, and diglossic for the reason that its two high and low Arabic varieties are distributed functionally. Whereas Standard Arabic is the high variety with formal purposes, dialectal Arabic is the low and informal variety. Besides, French is employed alternatively with both diglossic varieties. It could functionally fulfill formal roles as it might have informal uses depending on the situation. This alternative use between Standard Arabic and French or dialectal Arabic and French is the phenomenon of code-switching. Drug nicknaming nomenclature is related to what is known as argot or secret language. Nicknames are transcribed below in case they are in Standard Arabic, dialectal or borrowed (adapted to another language) items followed by their italic English glosses. If they are French, English or Spanish switches they are supplied in Latin script.

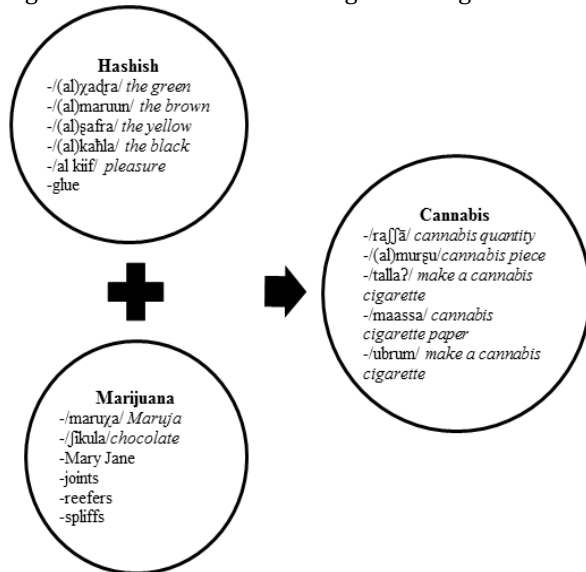
8.1. Cannabis

The substance of *cannabis* is (a) (if not the most) widely consumed drug in the world. The Greeks, the Romans, the Indians and the Arabs got acquainted with the plant in the far-flung past, while this happened to the ancient Chinese around 5000 years ago and the Egyptians in about 1600 BC (Wills, 2005). Regarding composition, three components make up cannabis: hashish, hash oil¹¹ and marijuana are all frequently smoked in mixture with tobacco which stimulates intoxication via cannabis burning. Supplementing extra-appellations to the original name of cannabis and its constituents on the other side is actually universal. Our findings show that the Algerian users of cannabis obey this sociolinguistic trend such that they deviate from the initial cannabis name for the purpose of nicknaming the drug and its ingredients.

¹¹ It is an intense resin remove and the most potent cannabis part. This fluid can hold 60% or extra THC (see note 10) (ibid).

The following figure illustrates this nicknaming (of cannabis, hashish and marijuana) with special reference to the west of Algeria. It is clear that hashish and marijuana enjoy the greatest number of supplementary names.

Figure 2: Cannabis Nicknaming in the Algerian West



As shown, the Algerian drug takers use special lexical forms to talk about the way they smoke *cannabis*. Concretely, they may say /raffaa/ to designate the mass of cannabis rolled into a cigarette or /maassa/ to pinpoint a little piece of paper that forms a cannabis cigarette. /tallaʃ/ or /ubrum/ are the imperative verbal items employed to make a cigarette with a cannabis inner composition. As part of linguistic adjustment, a piece of cannabis is referred to as /(al)muṛṣu/ to say /(al)muṛṣu taʃ/ cannabis. The item /(al)muṛṣu/ is borrowed from French (*morceau*) and used in isolation as a result of abbreviating the expression above (/al)muṛṣu taʃ/ cannabis). In other words, uttering /(al)muṛṣu/ suffices for the hearer in the present context to indicate *a piece of cannabis*.

The first main component of cannabis is *hashish* probably originating at the linguistic level from the Arabic expression /haʃiʃ al kaif/ that could be translated word-for-word into *herb of pleasure*. Through further linguistic adjustments, this expression has been modified, reduced to dialectal /al kiif/ and used as such among the Algerian drug users nowadays. Physically, hashish, including up to 20% THC¹² (ibid), is the cannabis resin as entailed by its English nickname *glue* being also employed in the current Algerian setting. Its configuration fluctuates from a soft to hard form and can be encountered in different colours depending on the regional location it comes from. It is likely to hear

for example among the Algerian youngsters in the west, at least, nicknames based on colours to refer to a particular type of hashish. /(al)ḡaḍra/ *the green*; /(al)maruun/ *the brown*; /(al)ṣafra/ *the yellow*, /(al)kaḥla/ *the black* are adjectives employed as nicknaming nominals. The fact of uttering one of these colours entails that the speaker makes reference to cannabis resin or hashish.

The dried flower heads and little leaves of the plant, with 5% of THC, embody the second important cannabis constituent, *marijuana*, known for its flexible nicknaming interchangeability with cannabis¹³. The term is originally Spanish, scripted many times as *marihuana* in English and has gone through various other nicknaming alterations. Presumably for instance, the word *Marijuana* has been divided into *Mari + Juana* to be used as initials *MJ*, and then the initials are extended to become *Mary Jane* which is also heard among a number of the Algerians under study. The same population conversely tends to adjust *Marijuana* to *Maruja* under the influence of their country's economic policy. This is because Algeria has been for a good while exporting, among other things, the Spanish chocolate with the name *Maruja* which looks like the original name (*Marijuana*) of the psychotropic substance in question. It has become then mechanical to identify /maruḡa/ *Maruja* as the nomination of this chocolate type. Interestingly, another nicknaming has taken place to be directly related to this chocolate to appoint this nickname bearer, marijuana, and designate the latter as /ḡikula/ *chocolate*. As nicknaming is not restricted to Algeria on the other hand, this cannabis part is supplied in the USA¹⁴ with a diverse range of nicknames to say illustratively, joints, reefers or spliffs. The latter are, too, utilised in the Algerian west as switches to talk about the merger of marijuana and tobacco to make a cigarette.

8.2. Cocaine

Usually administered through one of the ways of smoking, inhalation (snorting) or injection, *cocaine* is a drug type derived from the leaves of a plant known as coca. Archeological traces in South America back up its native growth and use thousand years ago in that area. Indian tribes in Colombia, Peru, Chile and Venezuela were accustomed to chewing cocaine plant leaves for evoking gentle stimulation. As time went on, different methods were developed to discover and exploit cocaine effects. It was introduced to the medical world first by the psycho-analysisist Sigmund Freud to treat depression and sexual impotence,

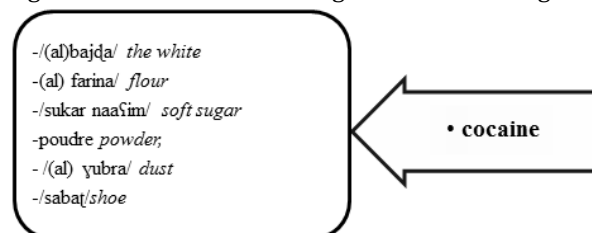
¹² Tetrahydrocannabinol: the most mind-affecting element in the cannabis plant

¹³ Stated differently, the nicknames addressed to both *cannabis* and *marijuana* are interchangeably used

¹⁴ United States of America

before it has been recognised as a significantly positive local anesthetic commonly deposited at the level of throat surgery, ear, and nose. In the late nineteenth century on the other hand, various chemicals were detected to be taken out of the coca plant, mainly cocaine, to be largely part of diverse drinks like Coca Cola (until 1903) (Koob et al, 2014). At the sociolinguistic level, cocaine, as one unity (unlike cannabis), is assigned and enjoys a wide nicknaming range. Figure 3 illustrates,

Figure 3: Cocaine Nicknaming in the West of Algeria



According to the above data, cocaine is nicknamed with regard to its appearance and the nickname giver's personal experience. Actually, this mind-altering substance reaches the market and/ or consumer in the form of a white powder. Cocaine namers rely on the two physicality criteria, shape and colour, so that the resultant nicknames are used interchangeably. Since the colour white is associated specifically with this illegal drug, cocaine is sometimes labelled *the white* which is /-(al)bajda/ in dialectal Arabic. As for the second physical criterion, the powdering form of cocaine looks similar to the form of many things surrounding us. It could be coffee, salt, spice, milk, sand, cement, make-up in their powder state, or it could be any other ground substance. Under this influence, some nickname givers favour the use of the word *poudre* and would keep it in its French version.

Others may, in relation to cocaine shape, think of the dust lifted up in the air as a consequence of car movements, pollution, wind rising, or board chalk that was experienced at school during childhood. Such resemblance has led to the re-nomination of cocaine /-(al) yubra/ *dust* (in dialectal Arabic). The nicknaming can, yet, be under the impact of another setting, the kitchen or bakery for instance, where other powder kinds can inspire drug namers. /-(al) farina/ *flour* is a basic ingredient for making particularly bread which is paramount on the Algerian table at the time of taking breakfast, lunch or dinner. Cocaine for certain drug users is as essential as bread. They show such importance in making the link between the two powders by nicknaming cocaine /-(al) farina/. The latter makes also part of preparing cake together with ground sugar types. One type is /sukar naafim/ *soft sugar* borrowed from Standard Arabic by a number of drug dealers to designate cocaine.

Indicating the quantity to be sold with regard to the present illicit drug, on the other side, often requires discretion. How is it possible to talk about this quantity without referring to the drug straightforwardly? How can one raise the notion of cocaine weight without drawing attention? Out of their everyday life experience, drug nickname givers use their talent to withdraw similarities between mind-altering substances and ordinary objects and these similarities are usually detected by their drug groups only unlike non-drug users who hardly ever observe and count for them (see 9). As a case in point, cocaine is measured by means of a shoe that can also be used to hide a customer's ordered cocaine quantity. The utterance /sabat/ *shoe* is employed to designate this quantity. The similarity is perhaps between the space provided by the shoe and the one required by a given mass of cocaine.

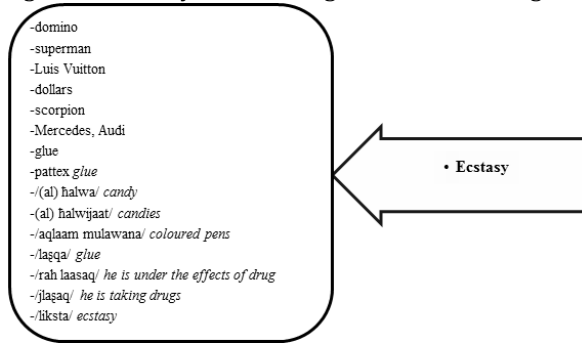
8.3. Ecstasy

Basically developed in 1912 by Merck pharmaceutical company ¹⁵, MDMA (3,4-Methylenedioxyamphetamine) served at the outset the American army during the early fifties before jumping a leap forward to become medically beneficial in the sixties. When it intruded terrifically the seventies' parties (ibid), it was attributed the worldly nickname *ecstasy*. From the late eighties, ecstasy drug entered the marketing sphere with a new altered formulation though. The new composition of this drug contained a far less amount of MDMA added to it an amalgamation of other psychotropic substance types like cocaine, heroin, amphetamine and methamphetamine, caffeine and others (ibid). Even if it could be injected, ecstasy is frequently orally administered in the form of pills.

Regarding ecstasy nicknaming within the Algerian west setting, it is diverse and echoes one of its decisive factors: physicality, mannerism and linguistic adaptation according to data at hand. Figure 4 coalesces the different ecstasy type nicknames that we have been able to gather so far from the location under investigation. As mentioned methodologically, these data were collected randomly, but went later through more watchful examination to classify them following their possible sociolinguistic sources. Obviously, some are nouns supplied in their singular and/ or plural forms, while other items are verbal or adjectival. Still other nicknames might be proper names as demonstrated,

¹⁵ <http://www.drugfreeworld.org>

Figure 4: Ecstasy Nicknaming in the West of Algeria



One exemplary type of ecstasy is produced exclusively in the shape of *domino* gadget in the hope of misleading outsiders not to recognise the ecstasy drug per se and most likely take it for a game object. Other tablet types of ecstasy are manufactured to be provided with different seals. For instance, the seal *S* is provided on the ecstasy pill with reference to the cinema fictional star character *Superman*. Else, the seal could be in an animal shape like *scorpion* to denote perhaps the name of a singer group or it could be the brand of a product such as the brand logos of cars *Mercedes*, *Audi* being ingrained on some ecstasy pills. Yet, the fashion brand of *Luis Vuitton* might be opted for if not the dollar logo. The reason why these varied symbols are combined with this drug will be detailed in Section 9. Suffice to say for the time being that these diverse shapes played a pivotal role in determining the ecstasy nicknaming not only in Algeria but in many places in the world.

On the other part, an ecstasy pill appearance can be taken as a whole to be nominated //(al) *halwa/ candy* in the singular form or in the plural form as //(al) *halwijaat/ candies* to pinpoint more than one pill. This is because all these mood-altering substance pills look so like little candies to the point that they might be easily mistaken among laymen and children. Another distinct way of nicknaming ecstasy is still physical but on the basis of colour. Ecstasy pills in fact are produced in a broad variety of colours to be labelled /aqlaam *mulawana/ coloured pens*. Nicknaming drug users might thus have thought about the existing resemblance between coloured pens they used to utilise during their schooling cycle and the tablets under question.

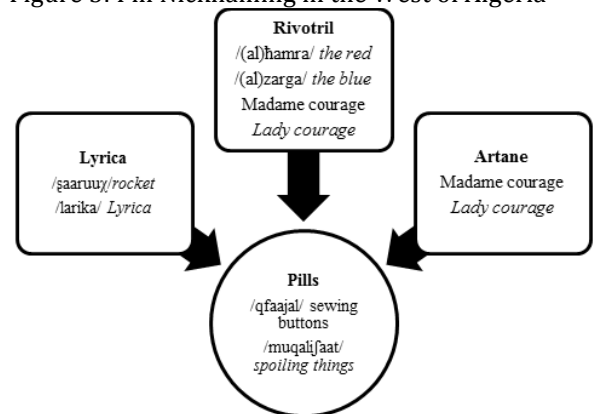
The way the individual acts under the effect of ecstasy and how (s)he sticks to objects and/ or people make it similar to the glue effects. Numerous ecstasy items are in use in attempt to convey the glue mannerism. As an illustration, Arabic dialectal nickname /laşqa/ and French *pattex* share both the same gloss *glue*. The expression /rah laasaq/ suggests the signification of *he is under the effects of drug*. /jlaşaq/ is the equivalent of *he is taking drugs*. In a dissimilar circumstance, some drug traffickers and/ or consumers may find the utterance *ecstasy* difficult to remember or pronounce as said by some

informants. They therefore tend to abbreviate it to the item /liksta/ which is more commonly uttered compared with the term *ecstasy*. This abbreviation could be allotted to the process of linguistic modification.

8.4. Miscellaneous Nicknames

That ecstasy is industrialised to be converted into pills is not an exclusive process to this drug. *Lyrice*, *Rivotril*, *Artane* are further exemplary drug pills that also have born nicknaming. The diagram below assembles the different nicknames assigned to these different pills,

Figure 5: Pill Nicknaming in the West of Algeria



Lyrice, *Rivotril* and *Artane* are manufactured for psychiatric purposes broadly speaking. /qfaajal/ is the plural form of /qafal/ with the denotative meaning of *sewing button* and connotatively means *a pill*. The reason why this nickname is used is that most of the pills are nearly as circular and small as the buttons made for sewing. The effect of the pills over the consumer (even though still temporary) results in relaxation and reconciliation with the self. The psychoactive tablet user feels so well that (s)he thinks he has been spoiled and the source of his spoiling is the pills. (S)He therefore may call them /muqaliʃaat/ *spoiling things*, the plural of /muqaliʃa/ *spoiling thing*. The utterance is basically dialectal but classicised in the sense that it obeys the morphological structure and pronunciation of Standard Arabic.

Lyrice tablets are usually prescribed by medicals for treating cases of nerve damage pain associated with diabetes or spinal cord injury. Far from medical environment however, illegal *Lyrice* users have discovered how profound and more importantly how fast the impact of these pills on the brain. The quickness of *Lyrice* effect has been compared with the one of a rocket by nickname providers who have decided for qualifying the drug as /şaaruuɣ/ *rocket*. In parallel, the item *Lyrice* has undergone at the hand of other drug dealers, and at the pronunciation level, linguistic modifications whereby the vowel sound /a/ has substituted for

the first vowel sound /i/. The result is the new utterance /larika/ as shown in the figure above.

As regards Rivotril with its various external manifestations, its medical prescription serves epilepsy. It could be nicknamed as /(al)ħamra/ *the red* or /(al)zarga/ *the blue* following the given colour state of the drug. Or probably, the two adjectives are employed as colour nominals to depict the outer product packaging rather than the pill itself. Another widespread nickname is also alternatively employed to designate Rivotril: As a result of trying this type of mood-altering substance beyond medical instructions, Rivotril has become famous among pill dealers for making the consumer lose awareness of reality, get rid of fear and then feel audacious. Evidently, (s)he perceives this drug as a supplier of bravery or as (s)he may prefer calling Madame courage *Lady courage*. This inner feature is shared with another tablet drug, namely Artane being legally consumed via psychiatric recommendations to relax muscles under the effect of Parkinson's disease shaking or tremor. Both drugs, Rivotril and Artane, were first used in the military fields before they have reached the medical sector and finally the parallel market.

9. Argot

Given that diversity is a fundamental feature of mankind's nature, and that the humans have always been in the lookout for encoding and decoding meanings behind language use among their species, social groups with common interests have been formed and have built up their own vocabulary to distinguish themselves from others. Drug users are a good example of specific vocabulary developers. In what follows, we will use "argot" and "secret language" alternatively since both are related to social grouping and concealment. Indeed, the term argot, which is originally French, is defined by Swann et al (2004) as a word and phrase listing employed by sub-cultural groups like criminals and street bands for the purpose of secrecy; or in other words, a kind of strategy applied to keep away from outsiders. Argots could experience the process of over-lexicalisation whereby one concept acquires a variety of appellations (ibid).

Cocaine, to illustrate again, is identified under one of the items: /(al) yubra/ *powder*; /(al)baĵda/ *the white*; poudre *powder, dust*; /sukar naařim/ *sugar*; /sabař/ *shoe*; /(al) farina/ *powder*. Besides, argots are characterised by word and meaning manipulations or what we have talked about as linguistic adjustments as indicated earlier. Lyrica is pronounced, by drug addicts, as *larika* (see 8.4) and ecstasy is manipulated and abbreviated to /liksta/ (see 8.3). Word modification involves, as well, Marijuana (Maruja); hashish (/al kiif/) which initially was /ħařif al kařf/ *herb of pleasure*; cannabis (/al)muřřutař/ *cannabis a piece of cannabis*) being

shortened to /(al)muřřu/a *piece* (see 8.1). The question that should be recalled is about the causes beyond argots. Koskensalo (2015) reports that four objectives of a secret language are identified by Honnen (2000: 14): protection of information, defence against dangers, intention of deception, and integration.

It is needless to say that secrecy is highly required by drug organisms to protect their networks principally from security organizations and judicative institutions. To escape the state surveillance, drug gangs attempt to convey information about drugs through their secret language functionally decoded and supposedly comprehensible only among the group membership. They in this way conceal themselves from the executive and legislative counter-actions that are dangerous for their prevalence as the latter may lead to the vanishing of their drug networks. Danger also prevails given that psychoactive substance vocabulary is subjected over time to social diffusion and public use which facilitate the police deciphering of drug argot. In this situation, drug dealers are bound to think about other forms of their identity concealment and change the way they employ their secret language. They, in many ways, remake use of items from daily speech and, through their linguistic manipulations, these items become in their drug services.

Such tactics, for drug namers, allow keeping deceiving the sectors in question by misleading and providing them with false information. They, to say, endeavour to exclude any apparent human danger through language secrecy: "Secret languages... may include invented words, or various transformations of words, designed to obscure meanings from outsiders" (Swann et al, 2004: 273). Drug gangs integrate addicts, dealers, abusers, traffickers and those who support illegal drug consumption on the one hand whereas reject human sources of drug prohibition, whether acquaintances, family or state services. This may explain why drug nicknaming possesses an inclusionary/exclusionary character (see also Persson, 2013; Labeled and Benhattab, 2017). Drug group insiders share solidarity among themselves as many of them survive miserable life conditions.

Consuming illicit substances generates emotions of well-being, empathy, energy and flexibility. It gives access to the consumer to escape reality and forget his/her continuant feeling of social humiliation. Drug use reduces distance between consumers and their surrounding with whom they become, in this state, closer and feel much less remoteness created over unfinished psychological hang-ups. Or, it can be just an act of time-filling up or imitation to be like otherness. Insiders identify and recognise one another via communication and their drug nicknaming. If the latter is misused, the person is mechanically excluded and identified as a

drug gang outsider with whom caution is well-recommended. On the other part, it should be also noted that the purpose of nicknaming drugs could be rather commercial. The fact of using such nicknames as Superman, Mercedes, Audi, Luis Vuitton may be a successful advertisement that can attract fans of media films, cars, fashion before they become loyal clients to ecstasy or other drugs.

10. Conclusion

Algeria is an illustrative prototype of a multilingual diglossic speech community where more than one language such as French, English, Spanish, are employed in parallel with the co-presence of two language varieties of the same language, Arabic, one is high (Standard Arabic) and the other is low (dialectal Arabic). These different languages well manifest in the field of nicknaming, specifically the nicknaming of drugs, the scope of the present study conducted in the west of Algeria. Although drug nicknaming is a worldwide phenomenon, its different manifestations in Algeria could be currently country-specific in many ways. Nicknamed drugs in this study are cannabis and its components, hashish and marijuana, in addition to cocaine, ecstasy, and other drug pills, Lyrica,

Rivotril and Artane. Obviously, the presented list is not complete but still worth exploring.

They are classified under the headings, physicality, mannerism, experience and linguistic adjustments to partially validate our hypothesis. This is because not all the criteria are simultaneously applicable to the same drug type. If physicality and linguistic adjustments apply to *hashish*, mannerism and personal experience do not. The case of *Artane* requires mannerism and personal experience but not physicality or linguistic adjustments. Nicknaming in fact forms part of drug users' secret language which is developed in order to protect drug data from static regulations and legislative establishments and delude such sectors through supplying erroneous clues in the form of mood-altering substance nicknames. Our second hypothesis is corroborated as drug nicknaming policy aims indeed at assimilating all sorts of individuals making use of drugs to fight together against the exclusionary leaders of danger of drug use disappearance. Nicknaming creation is constant and new secret names are in the making following the newness in drug design and drug production, and the need for ensuring drug groups from endangerment.

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