A Note on Selected Names of Colorado Medical Marijuana Dispensaries

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This article offers information about the names of marijuana dispensaries in Colorado. First, it provides a brief overview of popular cultural references to the drug in film and music. Second, it considers its medical uses. Third, it examines legal issues related to its sale and use. Fourth, it reviews briefly the slang terminology for marijuana. Fifth, it discusses the notion of "dispensary." Sixth, it utilizes an existing database of 424 names for medical marijuana dispensaries in Colorado. Finally, it considers selected linguistic aspects of the names for marijuana dispensaries in Colorado.

KEYWORDS cannabis, dispensaries, law, marijuana, medical marijuana, placenames, slang.

Introduction

Prior to a discussion of selected names for medical marijuana dispensaries in the state of Colorado, it is useful to provide some brief background information on this plant and its active ingredient. Popular culture is replete with allusions to marijuana, especially in film and music. An abundant literature on the medical dimensions of marijuana exists. The research on the legal dimensions of marijuana has increased significantly in the past two decades when states began to allow its sale and possession for medical purposes. *Cannabis* is a flowering plant indigenous to central Asia and the Indian subcontinent, although it is found in most parts of the world (see Figure 1). Cannabis, also known as marijuana, is a psychoactive drug that produces certain physical and psychological effects caused by its principal active ingredient tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

Selected popular cultural allusions

The recreational use of marijuana is well documented in popular culture (film, music etc.). Its use during the 1960s, for example, is depicted in the very successful counter-culture film "Easy Rider" (1969), starring several actors (e.g. Peter Fonda [1940–], Dennis Hopper [1936–2010], and Jack Nicholson [1936–]) who have had successful

FIGURE 1. Flowering cannabis plant.

acting careers. It features popular music of the 1960s (e.g. The Band, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, and Steppenwolf) and counter-cultural characters who use marijuana as a leisure drug. The use of marijuana is viewed as a recreational pursuit designed to engage in an activity that flaunts conventional bourgeois values, while simultaneously allowing the user to achieve a new level of consciousness. Gunasekera et al. (2005, 464) report that an examination of a corpus of the top 200 films reveals that 8% contain allusions to cannabis. Popular music also contains references to marijuana. In a corpus of 279 of the most popular songs in *Billboard* magazine from various genres (rock, R&B, hip-hop, country, and rap), 13.6% contain allusions to marijuana (Primack et al. 2008, 169). A few examples of popular songs with allusions to marijuana include: "Addicted" (Amy Winehouse [1983–2011]), "Rainy Day Women # 12 and 35" (Bob Dylan [1941–]), and "Legalize It" (Peter Tosh [1944–1987]). John Denver's (1943–1997) "Rocky Mountain High" (1972), one of Colorado's two state songs, became briefly controversial when many radio stations stopped playing it because the song reputedly promoted drug use. John Denver subsequently explained that "high" was not a drug reference, but rather an allusion to the area's natural beauty.

Medical use

Marijuana may be used for its medicinal benefits. Currently, 28 states and the District of Columbia in the US allow its use for certain maladies including the reduction of nausea and vomiting for cancer patients while in chemotherapy, as an appetite enhancer for people with HIV/AIDS, chronic pain relief, and as a treatment for muscle spasms (ProCon.org 2017).

Marijuana is a psychoactive drug that may be consumed by smoking, vaporization, in food, or as an extract. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (2016; see also Volkow et al. 2014, 2220) notes that the use of this drug has short and long-term effects. Some of the immediate consequences of its use are the following: altered senses (for example, seeing brighter colors); altered sense of time; changes in mood; impaired body movement;

difficulty with thinking and problem-solving; and impaired memory. Marijuana use also has long-term effects, especially on adolescents, i.e. it may affect brain development. It can also create breathing problems, increased heart rate, temporary hallucinations, temporary paranoia, and enhanced symptoms of patients with schizophrenia. Despite these negative effects, Volkow et al. (2014, 2224) also point out that there are clinical conditions with symptoms that may be relieved with marijuana use (glaucoma, nausea, AIDS-associated anorexia and wasting syndrome, chronic pain, inflammation, multiple sclerosis, and epilepsy).

Legal aspects

In addition to the possible physical and psychological consequences of marijuana use, its use can create legal problems that include significant jail time and fines for sale and possession. At the federal level, cannabis is categorized as a Schedule I drug under the Controlled Substances Act of 1970 (Drug Enforcement Administration 2017). Schedule I drug possession or use entails harsh financial penalties and mandatory incarceration (Drug Enforcement Administration 2017). In October 2009, the Obama administration sent a memo to prosecutors that urged them not to prosecute people who use or distribute medical marijuana in accordance with state law (National Conference of State Legislatures 2017). Subsequently, the US Department of Justice issued an announcement on August 29, 2013 which stated that, even though marijuana continues to be illegal federally, the US government will not pursue legal action so long as there are "strong, state-based enforcement efforts […] and will defer the right to challenge their legalization laws at this time" (Justice News 2013). It should be noted that Donald J. Trump was inaugurated as President of the US on January 20, 2017. One of his early presidential acts was to name Jefferson ("Jeff") Sessions to be the Attorney General of the US, whose appointment was confirmed by the US Senate on February 8, 2017. This could mean that there will be significant changes in the sale and possession of marijuana in the future. Initial reports on Sessions' course of action in this regard indicate that Sessions will follow the practice established by the Obama Administration regarding the medical use of the drug (Fierberg and Barro 2017). Nevertheless, the Trump administration states that it will enforce federal drug laws related to recreational use of the drug (Miller 2017).

Because federal law makes the sale and possession of cannabis illegal even though some states have legalized it, a number of legal matters have arisen. These include the right to trademark brands of the drug (Clancy 2014), the tortuous path to legalization of marijuana (Denning 2015), general issues related to Colorado's legalization of marijuana (DeVeaux and Mostad-Johnson 2015), constitutional questions of the federal-state legal boundaries (Kamin 2012), and legal banking issues (Shu-Acquaye 2016).

Slang designations for cannabis[1]

Certain slang terms are used in the naming of medical marijuana dispensaries. For this reason, some knowledge about this aspect of designations for marijuana is useful. Buddy T. (2017) provides a useful glossary of drug-related slang terms for marijuana. The author categorizes the terms into the following six semantic domains: (1) geographical names, (2) appearance, (3) effects of marijuana, (4) packaging, (5) derivatives of the word

"marijuana," and (6) deceptive names (to hide the drug-related topic of conversation). In the following six sections, selected examples from Buddy T.'s categorizations are reproduced. It should be noted that this is a selected rather than a comprehensive lexicon.

Geographical names

African Bush, *Acapulco Red*, *Canadian Black*, *Chocolate Thai*, *Colombian*, *Hawaiian Homegrown Hay*, *Indian Hemp*, *Kentucky Blue*, *Kona Gold*, *Mexican Red*, *Mexican Green*, *Pakistani Black*, *Panama Red*, *Panama Gold*, *Texas Tea*.

Appearance

Black Bart, *Blue Sage*, *Greens*, *Green Goddess*, *Green Buds*, *Leaf*, *Red Bud*.

Effects of marijuana

Babysitter, *Crying Weed*, *Crazy Weed*, *Giggle Weed*, *Dry High*, *Joy Smoke*, *Jolly Green*, *Laughing Grass*, *Loco Weed*, *Magic Smoke*, *Wacky Weed*.

Packaging

Bale, *Doobie*, *Finger Lid*, *Grass Brownies*, *Loaf*.

Derivatives of the word "marijuana"

Aunt Mary, *Jane*, *M.J.*, *Mary Jane*, *Mary Ann*, *Mary and Johnny*, *Mary*, *Weaver*, *Reefer*, *Rope*, *Tea*, *Weed*.

Deceptive names

Ashes, *Astro Turf*, *Broccoli*, *Colorado Cocktail*, *Flower Tops*, *Haircut*, *Herb*, *Sweet Lucy*, *Yellow Submarine*.

Dispensaries

At the time of writing, medical marijuana is now legal in 28 states (Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and The District of Columbia (ProCon.org 2017)). It should be noted that each jurisdiction has its own regulations concerning the amount of marijuana and a specific qualifying condition for its use. Among the specific ailments are the following: AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, cancer, chronic traumatic encephalopathy, Crohn's disease, epilepsy, fibromyalgia, glaucoma, hepatitis C, inflammatory bowel disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, post-traumatic stress disorder, sickle cell anemia, spinal cord disease, Tourette's syndrome, traumatic

FIGURE 2.   Medical marijuana symbol.

brain injury, and ulcerative colitis. Each state designates which diseases may be treated with marijuana. Figure 2 shows a common symbol for places that sell medical marijuana. It is a Greek cross with the color green in a white circle surrounded by a green border to suggest the botanical origin of the drug (Figure 2). Seven states now permit the sale of recreational marijuana (Alaska, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and The District of Columbia (LiveScience 2017)).

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines a dispensary as "1. An office in a hospital, school, or other institution from which medical supplies are dispensed. 2. A public institution that dispenses medicine or medical aid" (Morris 1979, 379). Colorado voted in favor of the use of medical marijuana on November 7, 2000. Subsequently, the state allowed use of recreational marijuana on November 6, 2012 with the passage of Colorado Amendment 64. Many of Colorado's marijuana retail outlets began as medical marijuana outlets.

Calhoun (2017), a 1977 cofounder of Westword, Denver's News and Arts Weekly, provides a matrix with three columns of words that will generate potential names of marijuana dispensaries according to the following formula reproduced here:

> Just pick one descriptive from column A, one noun from column B, and one vague but respectable-sounding label from column C (feel free to add an article or two) to come up with one of 27,000 unique combinations of herbiage verbiage.

Using her matrix makes it easy to generate dispensary names with one choice from each column. Here are five examples: "Green Management Clinic," "Rocky Mountain Leaf Pharmacy," "Organic Wellness Apothecary," "Mile High Weed Shoppe," "420²Nature Dispensary," and "Alternative Bud Connection."

Dispensary names

Styler (2013c) produced a corpus of extant medical marijuana dispensary names (Styler 2013a) in Colorado to determine frequency of occurrence of the words on his list (Styler 2013b). The 20 most frequent lexical items in the names of medical marijuana dispensaries (Styler 2013b) are shown in Table 1.

Styler (2013c) also created a word cloud based on his analysis of the frequency of occurrence of the common terms in Colorado medical dispensaries (Figure 3). The size of the typeface indicates the frequency of occurrence of specific lexical items. It should

TABLE 1
FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE OF 20 TOP LEXICAL ITEMS (REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION)

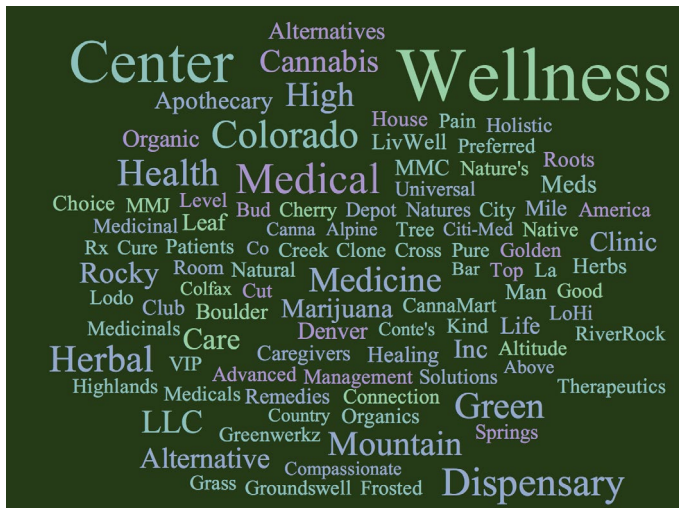| Lexical Item	Frequency of Occurrence
1. "wellness"	65
2. "the"	51
3. "center"	47
4. "medical"	30
5. "dispensary"	25
6. "Colorado"	24
7. "herbal"	22
8. "health"	22
9. "green"	21
10. "of"	20
11. "medicine"	20
12. "mountain"	19
13. "high"	18
14. "llc" (= "limited liability company")	17
15. "cannabis"	16
16. "rocky"	14
17. "care"	14
18. "alternative"	13
19. "clinic"	11
20. "marijuana"	10

FIGURE 3. Word cloud of lexical items in a corpus of 424 names for Colorado medical marijuana dispensaries (reproduced with permission).

be noted that Styler (2013c) created a database of dispensary names entitled "The Corpus of Colorado Medical Marijuana Dispensary Names" (Styler 2013a). He also produced a website entitled "The Corpus of Colorado Medical Marijuana Dispensary Names Frequency Table" (Styler 2013b).

Selected observations on marijuana dispensary names in Colorado

Styler's (2013a) original corpus of designations for marijuana dispensaries contains 424 entries. However, there is some duplication in his list because it derives from two separate lists. Nevertheless, an interpretation of lexical items in the frequency list (Styler 2013b) reveals several interesting linguistic usages. First, there is an effort to suggest medicinal legitimacy through the use of words like "wellness" (65),[3] "medical" (30), "dispensary" (250), "health" (22), "medicine" (20), "clinic" (11), "apothecary" (9), "'healing" (6), "remedies" (5), "patients" (5), and "pharmacy" (2). Second, there are references to "naturalness" through the use of vocabulary items such as "herbal" (22), "green" (21), "organic" (8), "herbs" (8), "roots" (5), "natural" (5), "nature's" (4), "pure" (3), "farms" (2), "earth" (2), "plants" (1), "horticultural" (1), "farm" (1), and "botanic" (1). Third, a selected review of common slang terms related to marijuana appears in this list ("bud" (1), "dank" (2), "grass" (4), "ganja" (1), "green" (21), "herb" (1), "kronic" (1), "jane" (2), "j" (2), "leaf" (7), "mj" (2), "maryjanes" (1), "pot" (1), "reefer" (1), "silver" (1), and "tea" (2)). Their inclusion in the names of marijuana dispensaries suggests that users will recognize these code words and will know that the vendor sells the drug. Fourth, there are references to the state ("Colorado" (24)) or cities in the state ("Berkeley" (1), "Denver" (7), "Durango" (1), "Glendale" (1), "Lakewood" (1), and "Littleton" (1)) as well as to its terrain and flora ("desert" (1), "evergreen" (1), "hills" (1), "highlands" (3), "mile" (6), "mountain" (19), "mountainside" (1), "peak" (1), "platte" (1), "ridge" (1), "riverside" (1), "rocky" (14), "Rockies" (2), "timberline" (2), "treeline" (2), and "valley" (1)). Finally, Styler (2013c) makes the apt observation that the acronym for several of the marijuana dispensaries is THC, which is the abbreviation for the active ingredient in marijuana, namely, tetrahydrocannabinol. He gives as examples "**T**he **H**erbal **C**enter," "**T**ender **H**ealing **C**are," and "**T**otal **H**ealth **C**oncepts." The designations for marijuana dispensaries thus allude to wellness, naturalness, slang terms for the drug, and Colorado's terrain, as well as the language play involved in dispensary names whose acronym is "THC" (= tetrahydrocannabinol).

Concluding remarks

This article provides an overview of the designations for marijuana dispensaries in the state of Colorado (derived from Styler's 2013a database), where medical marijuana (2000) and recreational marijuana (2012) have been legalized. It also discusses popular cultural references to the drug, as well as the medical and legal issues related to the use of marijuana in that state. The slang lexicon for the drug shows that these terms refer to geography, appearance, effects, packaging, derivative names, and deceptive names. Subsequently, there is a discussion of the names of Colorado's marijuana dispensaries based on Styler's (2013a, b, c) groundbreaking work in this area. Because of Colorado's progressive legislation related to the possession and consumption of marijuana, this state has received a great deal of media attention. Many of the issues related to marijuana use in the state of Colorado will continue to be debated because of the disparity between state and federal law. Onomasticians may wish to replicate Styler's (2013a, b, c) study of the names of marijuana dispensaries in Colorado to determine if there have been changes in the names and number of such outlets. This could provide an indication of the success of these enterprises. Furthermore, it will also be useful to see the potential

effects of the new US Attorney General "Jeff" Sessions' initial pledge to prosecute states in which recreational marijuana has been legalized.

Notes

[1.] The late University of Louisville Professor of Linguistics David W. Maurer (1906–1981) taught at that institution from 1937 to 1972. His major area of research was in sociolinguistics with a specialty in the argot of the underworld. In a special issue of *American Speech* dedicated to William Maurer, Willis Russell and Mary Gray Porter (1982), in their regular feature "Among the New Words," discuss Maurer's contributions to our knowledge of the terminology for marijuana and its alternate form marihuana [*sic*]. Maurer also published two important studies on underworld drug terminology (Maurer 1981a, b). Many of the terms in those studies remain in use today.

[2.] 420 (pronounced "four-twenty") is a reference to the time of day (am/pm) when cannabis is used. It is also a reference to the date "April 20," and it is the day when people meet to use and consume cannabis.

[3.] The numbers in parentheses refer to the frequency of occurrence of the lexical item in Styler's (2013b) frequency list.

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