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Representing and Redefining Specialised Knowledge: Variety in LSP

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6

Contents

Adequacy, meaning construction and discursive conventions

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The Scholarly Soldier: Distinguishing Features of Online Military Academic Journals

1. The divergence and convergence of soldier and academic

The relation between civilian academia and the military in the United States has been tense for two reasons: firstly, because of a common misconception that the American military community is simply a particular and specialized profession anchored in American personal and communication cultural dimensions, and secondly due to the fact that civilians are uninformed on the workings of the military community but must still depend on it for security (Brick 2015). In truth, the military community is a "specialized society within society as a whole" (Fidell 2016: 2) therefore to be separated from the civilian community although it works for and with it. Such preconceptions are fuelled by the fact that the academics who published on military strategy in the past were civilians because of the 'military man's' being limited by the profession due to its "hierarchy of strategic planning organization and the military discipline of subordination to higher authority […] Even when the military man combines both the opportunity and inclination to write for publication, he finds himself more severely constrained by rules of military security and government policy review" (Ginsburgh 1964: 261).

This led military service members to have less of a say in their own professional matters and hindered the dissemination of expertise among different service branches and institutions. Today, the military discourse community increasingly seeks to turn the tables by appropriating the discourse and instruments of academic genres while sustaining and enforcing military professional ethics and values.

Another significant factor behind these past and present preconceptions, as well as the distinguishing characteristics of this process of re-appropriation, lies in the evident difference between American military and civilian cultural dimensions. It is generally assumed that the American military community acts and interacts in accordance with general American cultural standards. However, the hierarchical nature of the organization and the ever-changing missions and locations and positions that service members need to adapt to have resulted in their creation of a separate culture that is at the service of the nation but follows its own professional and cultural values. This may be explained by using Geert Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions of the United States as "a conceptual framework for analyzing a nation's culture in order to construct an effective inter-cultural communications plan" (Wilbur 2013). Although Hofstede's model started from business organizations, it has gradually been expanded to encompass cultures and it is claimed that "we believe that the fact that organizational cultures can be meaningfully described by a number of practice dimensions is probably universally true. Also, it is likely that such dimensions will generally resemble, and partly overlap, the six described in this chapter" (Hofstede/Hofstede/Minkov 2010: 370). The work often mentions the military community as an organization, and this has led to numerous studies by military scholars that have put this in practice (Hoppa/Gray-Briggs 1999; Febbraro 2008; McKee/Febbraro/Riedel 2008; Wilbur 2013; Hardy 2016). Moreover, the original cultural dimensions have been increased from four to six, namely, power-distance, individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term vs short-term normative orientation, and indulgence vs restraint. The indexes of these cultural dimensions in relation to civilian US culture and their comparison with military culture are described below.

In terms of power distance, the US general culture rates 40[1], indicating that "hierarchy is established for convenience, superiors are

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[1]   The numbers of the cultural dimensions are those of the "country comparison" tool on the *Hofstede Insights* website as they represent the most updated data.

accessible and managers rely on individual employees and teams for their expertise" and that "communication is informal, direct and participative to a degree" (Hofstede Insights website). In contrast, military leaders rely on their team but there is a chain of command based on ranks and responsibility that follow a specific order and determined procedures; this emerges in linguistic and multimodal communicative choices reflecting significant respect and formality towards superiors and the military institution.

As concerns individualism, the United States rates 91, making it "one of the most individualist cultures in the world" (Hofstede Insights website) and this appears to be in stark contrast with the military community. The latter is very tight-knit and aims at ensuring the safety and support of service members and dependants in all stages of their careers. Such support is provided by authorities and other online (Maguire 2015) and offline communities. This results in a significant preference for images of people in groups in the act of helping one another or interacting with each other (Würtz 2005). From a linguistic perspective, this collectivism results in the use of collectivizing pronouns and noun phrases, and in the progression of slogans and mottos from individual- to team-oriented (Tyson 2006).

Uncertainty avoidance rates 46 in the United States, which indicates it sufficient, albeit unremarkable, tolerance for innovation and unforeseen circumstances. In contrast, the US military culture is necessarily characterized by a significantly higher degree of uncertainty avoidance, especially in online communication, due to the fear of sensitive information falling into the hands of potentially threatening subjects. This leads to tight monitoring on the part of authorities, and therefore very direct and concrete lexis, deontic modality and strongly preformulated and standardized workplace communication and genres that reach the point of repetition.

When measuring normative orientation, the number was very low, scoring 26 in American culture, where organizations and businesses generally "measure their performance on a short-term basis" (Hofstede Insights website). Although it is important for all

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This may be found at https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/the-usa/ (last accessed in May 2018).

levels of military professionals to reach their short-term goals, these must be inserted within and adjusted based on long-term goals that are supervised in view of the above-mentioned high degree of uncertainty avoidance and the desire for stability and security.

Finally, the United States reveals itself to be high in indulgence, as it rates 68, meaning that the American population's tendency to control their impulses is not strong. Indulgence in the military, on the other hand, is limited and reflected both in the obligations of military subjects to follow the values and ethos of their branch, and in the difficulty to express themselves freely while representing their profession in general and in the academic context.

As the present study will point out, such differences, which are based on the military's "collectivism, hierarchy, structure, authority and control to deal with the uncertainty of war" (Maguire 2015: 20), are mirrored in military discourse, leading to differences in communication patterns and 'horizons of expectation' (Swales 2016). Nevertheless, there has been a gradual filling of the gap between professionals and civilians in military studies, also thanks to the rise in military students who are enrolled in colleges, universities and online higher education programs (Hinton 2013; Fain 2016), and are therefore familiar with academic writing and reasoning.

In truth, while they appear to be two separate contexts, the military community has much in common with academia:

> the military isn't the only closed-shop monopolistic institution prone to defensive responses, riddled with inefficiencies that aren't often identified as such and even more rarely dealt with. Another is academia. The power structure of academia isn't so centralized as the military – there are lots of colleges and universities. But people in academia have the same vision of themselves as pursuing morally purer undertakings than those outside, protecting their own, and providing the same personal structure as the military […] The military and academia, in many ways, seem to be brothers under the skin. (Fleming 2010: 65)

This is due to the exclusive and excluding nature of both communities in the eyes of the general public; indeed, they convey specialized information through specific professional discourse and are therefore accused of elitism and mental, as well as linguistic, closure. This

traditional tendency to separate members from outsiders is increasingly being addressed to avoid further misunderstanding because the public's mistrust would "undermine military recruitment, retention, funding or otherwise interfere with the mission of the military" (Mehlman 2015: 411).

The present study therefore attempts to debunk such myths by focusing on an intersection between the fields of military and academic discourse, i.e. online military academic journals and their use of multimodal, textual and linguistic means to disseminate professional knowledge and ethics in an open online context. Online military journals seek to foster information sharing and discussions on theories and procedures through the combination of established literature and contemporary reflections based on professional and personal military experience. Military academia could therefore be categorized as a 'folocal' discourse community, i.e. a hybrid community "whose members have a double – and sometimes split – allegiance, as they are confronted by internal and external challenges and pressures" (Swales 2016: 13). Military operations and training are particularly influenced by new forms of information and knowledge transmission due to the constant de-location of re-location of its members. The feedback that is provided from military professionals during combat and in times of peace is of vital importance and must be 'translated' into theoretical knowledge and concrete proposals that are disseminated throughout a worldwide community of geographically dislocated experts and practitioners in more or less scholarly forms and contexts. For this reason, military scholarly journals have embraced online channels of diffusion and intercommunication, also in view of the military's close and historical connection with the Internet (Kaltenbach 2000; Moreno 2006). However, military scholars must also face practical difficulties such as operational security, complexities linked to the divergence between individual and representational opinion in their community, and the persistence of ever-changing knowledge gaps and changes in a variety of crucial matters.

Having underlined the profession's cultural differences, the study will focus on three levels of a selection of online military academic journals: their overall textual and multimedia content;

subgenres concerning legal accountability (legal disclaimers and copyright permissions); and self-presentations and prescriptive regulatory stylistic guidelines in order to verify online military academic journals' adherence – or lack thereof – to standard academic language, discursive framing and to legal requirements. It will also question whether the peculiarities of military communication and culture contribute to enhancing knowledge dissemination within an evolving professional community and an innovative channel of information transmission. The methodology consists in a combination of multimodal and qualitative critical discourse analyses. The dataset consists in the above mentioned self-defining and regulatory sections that may be found in the websites and the issues of joint-oriented and specialized online military journals that are affiliated with military operational and scholarly institutions and centers. The choice of these academic and online subgenres is based on the fact that they are those in which the self-identification and aims of the academic military branch are outlined most clearly and in which the sought-out academic style of writing, publication and dissemination is explicitly presented as a standard according to which submissions are evaluated and reviewed.

2. Aims and scope

After presenting the dataset and methodology in the next section, the study will carry out a multifaceted analysis of online academic military journals with the intent of answering the following research question: *RQ1: How do military academic journals and reviews differ from civilian academic journals from multimodal and text organization perspectives?* This point will be dealt with in Section 4 by considering the peculiarities of military academic journals' textual organization, sections and use of multimodal resources.

Following that, Section 5 will focus on the legal challenges that the military scholar must face by analyzing the journal's legal disclaimers and copyright licences through the second research

question: *RQ2: Compared to the civilian academic community, are there any particular legal or institutional requirements involved in contributing to military academic journals?*

The sixth Section will build upon Hyland's (2010) theory of proximity in the journals' online self-presentations and author/submission guidelines to address the following question: *RQ3: How do military academic journals frame their intent to disseminate specific professional knowledge and guide others to do the same?* The final section will present the study's conclusions on the blending of military and academic discourse in these journals and the impact that they could have on knowledge dissemination and sharing, especially given military studies' reputation of being secretive and exclusive.

3. Dataset and methodology

The study takes into consideration a 10-year period of publications (2008-2018) from a variety of online military academic journals that are affiliated with military colleges and universities. They were chosen from different branches to ensure that all armed forced were represented, except in the case of the American Coast Guard, whose journals are not affiliated to a military college/university, and the National Defense University, which represents a joint force institution focused on national security. The journals all have the explicit intent of gathering, discussing and disseminating knowledge on past and ongoing military operations, as well as developing strategies and technologies. The journals and reviews are almost always recent but despite this – or perhaps precisely because of this – there is evident interest in publications from and about the past as a manner of creating a repertoire representing the institution's academic tradition while promoting present and future research. The dataset is composed as follows:

Name of journal	Armed forces	Affiliation	issues	tokens	types
Air & Space Power Journal (*ASPJ*)	Air Force	Air University	40	2,186,531	47,504
Marine Corps University Journal (*MCUJ*)	Marines	Marine Corps University	12	584,836	29,704
Naval War College Review (*NWCR*):	Navy	Naval War College	35	2,732,705	54,065
Parameters (*PA*)	Army	Army War College	31	1,936,657	44,829
Prism (*PR*)	Joint force (security)	National Defense University	27	2,172,215	46,135

Table 1: Details about the journals in the dataset.

The journals' self-presentations ('About' sections) and other relevant sections of the journals' websites (e.g. author/submission guidelines) were also taken into consideration in order to address *RQ3*.

The study adopted a multifaceted methodological and analytical framework (Bhatia/Gotti 2006; Bhatia 2012) that is typical of applied linguistic research and discourse analysis to underline the variety of semiotic, semantic, and pragmatic levels at which the dissemination of specific knowledge is at work. It started from genre analysis (Swales 1990, 2016; Hyland 2010) due to its suitability for specialized language descriptions (Bhatia 2012), and was integrated with insights from Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1995; Chouliaraki/Fairclough 1999; Schiffrin/Tannen/Hamilton 2001; van Dijk 2003) whose interest in negotiation and (im)balances of power is particularly significant when dealing with a community featuring such distinguishing cultural values that impact on the textual organization, lexical choices and text-external resources of its academic writing.

4. Hybridity and multimodality for knowledge dissemination

In comparison with reviews pertaining to more consolidated academic fields, military academic journals feature a hybrid appearance and structure that unites the specialization of professional academic discourse with the popularizing attractiveness of magazine writing and online language. In this sense and in the dataset, this emerging genre includes some of the most notable and innovative semiotic, participatory strategies and textual subgenre:

- Large, glossy magazine-like images and pictures of locations and groups of people, which hint at the military's communitarianism, as well as official photographs of the authors and the institution's leaders in uniform — alluding to high power distance — and images of machinery and transportation that convey a sense of military efficiency and power.
- Interviews with important professional figures in or in connection with the military community, as well as academic debates in 'commentary' and 'replies' sections, thus confirming high power distance.
- Letter type and font that are typical of popularizing magazines but featuring the footnotes, references and bibliographical information that are typical of academic writing.
- Contests and awards, in some journals, to engage amateur readers and students and encourage them to actively propose starting points for discussions. This insertion, along with other inclusive and participatory strategies, deviates from the military's traditional high power distance and is a result of the influence of popular magazines and online forum discussions.
- Diverse, and sometimes unconventional presence and use of abstracts that do not follow the IMRaD format (Stotesbury 2006) ranging from being full-fledged academic abstracts with a Background-Purpose-Method-Implications structure (*MCUJ*), to a short summary at the beginning of the research article

(*Parameters*) to a one-sentence summary in the table of contents like in a magazine (*NWCR*).

- Significant amount of book reviews and review essays to gather contemporary and past academic literature written about, for and by the military and provide theoretical and historical background to support ongoing military experiments and theories.
- Sections on 'views' and 'reflections on reading' to conclude the issue and provide quotes, sources and encouragement to service members as professionals and individuals, enhancing their education in military knowledge and professional ethics.

The intent of these journals is to convey the impression that knowledge sharing and dissemination in military studies is not as secretive or exclusive as is commonly considered. The fact that this happens in a global online context (Fairclough 2003) which is accessible to new audiences has the additional benefit of fostering civilians' understanding and appreciation of the military community and its traditions and endeavours. This is accomplished by cutting across genres and disciplines (Fairclough 2003; Bhatia 2004) and integrating traditional academic knowledge and writing — as would be expected from a hierarchical and established institution like the military — with popularizing visual, textual and interactive means that co-occur with increasing changes of organizational life in military academia and culture in general. Therefore, the answer to *RQ1: How do military academic journals and reviews differ from civilian academic journals from multimodal and text organization perspectives?* may be seen precisely in such an attempt to go beyond mere hybridization (a tendency which is found in academic writing in general) by not only involving but also encouraging newcomers to the discourse community while providing insight into military practices and culture. In this sense, it differs from civilian academic journals which are generally addressed to members of the discourse community and have no or little interest in engaging outsiders.

5. Distinguishing legal and institutional requirements

The second research question *RQ2: Compared to the civilian academic community, are there any particular legal or institutional requirements involved in contributing to military academic journals?* touches upon a delicate matter for this approach to knowledge sharing within the military community, which is characterized by a strong sense of responsibility and accountability. In fact, despite the ongoing changes mentioned above, military academic texts continue to value clarity and unambiguity, for "military discipline also calls for the development of uniformity in interpreting and reconstructing reality. One of the traits of every military institution is its interest in creating and reproducing its own views and interpretation of the world" (Gouveia 1997: 163). This has led to issues concerning the military scholar's twofold legal accountability as an individual and a member of the military institution in cases in which innovative but diverging ideas, experience and expertise may clash with the need to protect the military community's integrity and credibility. In this sense, the military's varied and ever-changing circumstances and contingencies have thus resulted in its professionals being subjected to legitimate questions, mentioned also by Bhatia (2004), concerning the integrity of genres and their degree of freedom that professional writers have when choosing to bend generic norms and conventions. The attempt to answer the question has led to alternative solutions regarding the discourse and even legal impact of the language and subgenres that are present in online communication, such as disclaimers and copyright permission boilerplates. These constitute the object of analysis of this section, as well as the key to answering *RQ2*, and not only inform but also respond to the divergence of soldier and academic that was expounded in the introduction of the present study and unite military collectivism and the scholar's freedom to express opinions even if they diverge from that of the military. These disclaimers are present in all of the journals but in different positions and formats to make them more or less prominent. Moreover, the disclaimers convey differing levels of freedom to contributors, as may be seen from their comparison:

(1)   The <u>thoughts and opinions expressed</u> in this publication <u>are those of the</u>
       <u>authors</u> and <u>are not necessarily those of</u> the U.S, government, the U.S. Navy
       Department, or the Naval War College. (*NWCR*)

(2)   Articles and reviews published in *Parameters* are <u>unofficial expressions of</u>
       <u>opinion</u>. The <u>views and opinions expressed</u> in *Parameters* <u>are those of the</u>
       <u>authors and are not necessarily those of</u> the Department of the Army, the US
       Army War College, or any other agency of the US government. (*PA*)

(3)   The <u>views expressed</u> in the articles and reviews in this journal <u>are solely those</u>
       <u>of the authors</u>. They <u>do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the</u>
       organizations for which they work […]. (*MCUJ*)

(4)   The <u>opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied</u> within
       <u>are those of the contributors</u> and <u>do not necessarily reflect the views of</u> DOD
       or any other agency of the Federal Government, or any other organization
       associated with this publication. (*PR*)

(5)   The <u>views and opinions expressed or implied</u> in the Journal <u>are those of the</u>
       <u>authors</u> and <u>should not be construed as carrying the official sanction of</u> the
       Department of Defense, Air Force, Air Education and Training Command, Air
       University, or other agencies or departments of the US government. (*ASPJ*)

There are some expressions – such as "are those of the
authors/contributors" – that are present in all disclaimers to clearly
identify the subject of liability in case of inaccurate or controversial
statements. This is especially important in this discipline because the
authors often write about matters that are subject to experimentation
or trials and therefore may change after the article's publication. Such
distance is enforced by the use of *solely* in example (3), which comes
from the *Marine Corps University Journal*, a recent publication that
focuses on 'contemporary issues' that may present a high degree of
uncertainty. Another recurring word is *(not) necessarily*, a hedging
expression used to mitigate the rest of the disclaimer and underline
that it is just as possible for the writer to be representing the armed
service's causes and interests through their research, confirming what
has been observed by Gouveia (1997: 170), i.e. that the use of this
adverb entails a degree of modalization that concedes that these texts
may not express the view of the Army and the Ministry of Defence,

The verb *reflect* in the *Marine Corps University Journal* and *Prism* highlights the indirect relation between the journals' content and the editors' awareness of the shifting nature of their publications and of the need to place full responsibility on but also trust in the authors, thus favoring innovation over the repetition of consolidated values.

The divergences in the disclaimers are perhaps more significant: for instance, the most innovative journal in terms of its structure and modification of traditional elements of academic writing, the *Navy War College Review,* mentions "thoughts and opinions", which are vague but open to interpretation and informal compared to the term "views", which is more commonly used in the disclaimers. The "conclusions and recommendations" mentioned in *Prism* recall relevant sections of academic research papers; in fact this journal and the *Air & Space Power Journal* are the most cautious, for they specify not only "expressed" but also "implied" opinions, thus encompassing any pragmatic content of the article. The *Air & Space Power Journal* further enforces the legal tone of its disclaimer by using the passive form (Gotti 2005; Garzone/Salvi 2007) in "should not be construed" and referring to an "official sanction". This reminds readers that there is a hierarchy and an authority behind the journal and therefore upholds military high power distance. An overall cross-examination of multimodal and legal content sheds light on a preliminary correspondence between the innovative use of the former and a more flexible disclaimer (which is always present for legal purposes) and vice versa. Such a finding confirms that there is a diverse degree of hybridity within the genre of online military academic journals and a range between those in favour of open change and those that seek to consolidate and disseminate professional knowledge and values in a more controlled manner.

A similar discursive analysis may be carried out on the journals' licenses and permissions in relation to their use and references to other sources. These may be positioned either in the editorial section of the journal or, in the case of the *Air & Space Power Journal*, at the beginning of every article:

(6)   This article <u>may be reproduced in whole or in part</u> without permission. If it is
        reproduced, the *Air and Space Power Journal* <u>requests a courtesy line</u>. (*ASPJ*)

(7)   To obtain permission to reproduce material bearing a copyright notice, or to reproduce any material for commercial purposes, contact the editor for each use. Material not bearing a copyright notice <u>may be freely reproduced</u> for academic or other non-commercial use; however, <u>it is requested</u> that the author and *Naval War College Review* <u>be credited and that the editor be informed</u>. (*NWCR*)

(8)   <u>Document sources as footnotes. Indicate all quoted material by quotation marks or indentation</u>. Reduce the number of footnotes to the minimum consistent <u>with honest acknowledgement of indebtedness</u>, consolidating notes where possible. (*Parameters*)

(9)   This is the authoritative, official U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) edition of *PRISM*. Any copyrighted portions of this journal <u>may not be reproduced or extracted without permission of the copyright proprietors</u>. *PRISM* <u>should be acknowledged</u> whenever material is quoted from or based on its content. (*Prism*)

The examples range from the most flexible and open to the most traditional and formal in terms of register, coercive force and deontic modality. In fact, example (6) uses the modal *may*, which has the least predictive and obligatory force, in combination with a "request for a courtesy line" rather than a requirement or obligation, implying a high degree of politeness and negative face preservation. The passive form in examples (7) and (9), on the contrary, are associated with legal English and the impersonal status of an authoritative subject that must be addressed, therefore representing high power distance. Example (8) is particularly interesting, in that it presents a series of imperative tenses that recall instructions not only in written regulations but also in military language. Furthermore, the expression "honest acknowledgement and indebtedness" recalls that military law "aims to maintain order and discipline within its boundaries, including adherence to a host of requirements and prohibitions that have no counterpart in civilian society" (Fidell 2016: 2) by connecting values of integrity, obedience and honesty to both military ethics and military legal regulations. Finally, example (9) can be considered as the most traditional and forceful by clearly establishing that the present edition is "authoritative" and "official", thereby endowing the journal with a

certain legal and representative quality. It then specifies, as opposed to the other journals, that certain portions may be copyrighted and are therefore subjected to obligations towards another legal subject, i.e. "copyright proprietors", and reiterates that the journal is to be mentioned through a coercive '*should* + passive' construction.

The analysis of these two academic and legal subgenres, i.e. disclaimers and permission boilerplates, therefore seems to confirm the initial premises of the present study, i.e. that the previously mentioned emerging hybridity within military academic discourse reflects the ongoing changes in military culture from being very traditional, and its academic and/or popularized discursive counterpart.

6. Creation and dissemination of common knowledge

The final issue that points to the fact that military academic journals represent an emerging and innovative genre concerns their evolution in ways in which members of this 'folocal' discourse community are directly addressed and engaged. In fact, while the conveyed knowledge is also open to civilians, the journals exclusively appeal to members of the community because military scholars have finally acquired power over their own academic discourse and "[s]oldiers instinctively trust their fellow service members in ways that they do not trust civilians, however well-intended, primarily because soldiers know that their comrades-in-arms understand their unique problems and will not lead them astray" (Dunlap 2003: 488). The choice of the research article genre is emblematic in this sense, as it is the most prominent form of academic discourse and knowledge exchange.

From a linguistic and discursive perspective, such a need to involve other members of the military discourse community including students and amateurs is conveyed through interpersonality and various forms of proximity (Hyland 2010, 2015). For instance, proximity membership is implicated in the journals' frequent and explicit encouragements to send in contributions in their online self-

presentations, which entails 'making an identity claim' (Hyland 2015: 36) and may be interpreted as a form of 'reader engagement' (Turnbull 2013: 24):

(10)   It [the review] serves as a <u>forum for discussion</u> of public policy matters of interest to the maritime services. The candid views of the authors are presented <u>for the professional education of the readers</u>. Articles are drawn from a wide variety of sources <u>to inform, stimulate, and challenge readers, and to serve as a catalyst for new ideas</u>. (*NWCR* Self-presentation)

(11)   *Parameters* welcomes unsolicited article submissions. Manuscripts should reflect <u>mature thought on topics of current interest to senior Army officers and the defense community</u>. Our focus is on the art and science of land warfare, national and international security affairs, military strategy, senior leadership, ethics, and military history with contemporary relevance. (*PA* Submission guidelines)

(12)   The *Air & Space Power Journal* (ISSN 1554-2505), Air Force Recurring Publication 10-1, published quarterly, is the professional journal of the United States Air Force. It is designed to serve as an <u>open forum for the presentation and stimulation of innovative thinking</u> on military doctrine, strategy, force structure, readiness, and other matters of national defense. (*ASPJ* About section)

(13)   Established in 2008, Marine Corps University Press (MCUP) recognizes the importance of an <u>open dialogue between scholars, policy makers, analysts, and military leaders and of crossing civilian-military boundaries to advance knowledge and solve problems</u>. To that end, MCUP launched the *Marine Corps University Journal* (MCU Journal) in 2010 to provide a <u>forum for interdisciplinary discussion of national security and international relations issues</u>. (*MCUJ* Self-presentation)

(14)   *PRISM* is a <u>security studies journal</u> chartered to <u>inform members of U.S. Federal Agencies, Allies, and other partners</u> on complex and integrated national security operations; reconstruction and nation building; relevant policy and strategy; lessons learned; and developments in training and education to <u>transform America's security and development apparatus to meet tomorrow's challenges better while promoting freedom today</u>. (Prism Self-presentation)

Another fundamental aspect reflecting the hybridity of online military academic journals consists in their instructions in relation to what is

considered appropriate or acceptable academic writing in the military. They are also significant because they represent an open identification and presentation of the evolving rules of military academic discourse and the group's norms. In fact, as opposed to submission guidelines in other disciplines, which focus on topic, structure and relevance, these instructions also indicate the specific writing style that a scholar must adopt in order to conform to the needs and expectations of the journal and to the image it wishes to project within and outside of the military community. However, as opposed to what is commonly expected from a specialized journal, the submission guidelines do not request – or even desire – the language of the article to make extensive use of the discipline's specialized jargon or abbreviations; on the other hand though, they also oppose pure academic writing, with its long and complex syntactic and discursive structures:

(15a)   We value <u>clarity and direct, lively writing; avoid military jargon and dull prose</u>. Longer, specialized papers should be converted to an article written for generalist readers before submission. (*PA* Submission guidelines)

(15b)   <u>Write clearly and simply. Clarity, directness, and economy of expression</u> are the main traits of professional writing, and they should never be sacrificed in a misguided effort to appear scholarly. <u>Avoid especially Pentagonese and bureaucratic jargon</u>. Humdrum dullness of style is not synonymous with learnedness; <u>readers appreciate writing that is lively and engaging</u>. (*PA* Author guide)

(16)   Authors are encouraged to use <u>clear, persuasive prose and avoid the use of technical or military jargon and hackneyed phrases</u>. (*PR* Submission guidelines)

(17)   <u>Keep the title short, and avoid irony</u> when developing your title (search engines do not understand semantics—yet). […] Use <u>short, precise, simple keywords</u> that facilitate Internet searches, and <u>avoid jargon or highly specialized terms</u> that only a few people might use in a search. (*ASPJ* Author Guide)

The excerpts above demonstrate that more than one of the journals advocate for a hybrid style that unites the directness of military discourse with the planned, argumentative construction of academic writing. In examples (15a), (15b) and (16), the goal is to make the

content of the journal more approachable and interesting for editors and readers, while the *Air & Space Power Journal* adds the more practical component of making it easier to find in an online search. In fact, the journals are in search of papers that are relevant to and innovative for an extensive and diverse online community. Therefore, the use of excessively specialized and incomprehensible jargon and language would prevent knowledge from being spread and – as a result – would possibly cause the refusal of submitted papers. Another manner of guiding readers' expectations is to clearly delimit the journal's fields and topics like in the previous examples (11), (12) and (14). Moreover, the words *clear*, *direct*, *lively* and *engaging* implicate that the writers' views, opinions and thoughts must be worded in a secure and straightforward manner and therefore with very limited hedging because it introduces vagueness or lack of absolute commitment in evaluative research writing (Hyland 1994; Crompton 1997). Rather, the scholars base their arguments on solid facts, data and personal experience in order to truly foster an 'open forum' by presenting feasible and concrete proposals and promoting values within a community that is strongly traditional but also able to adapt to a changing world.

The answer to *RQ3: How do military academic journals frame their intent to disseminate specific professional knowledge and guide others to do the same?* is therefore twofold: on the one hand, military academic journals, perhaps even more so than their civilian counterparts due to their perceived necessity to enhance knowledge sharing and the (academic) discourse community, openly encourages submissions. In order to better do so on the other hand, they propose clear stylistic guidelines that reflect the military community and the genre's need for clarity even to the point of openly refusing the linguistic style that characterizes general academic language.

7. Concluding remarks

By means of a multifaceted inquiry into its various communicative levels, the present analysis has been able to confirm that in military journals

> both the writers and the readers […] are actually producing orderly or accountable worlds on the basis of shared common-sense procedures that are specific to the military institution. We would argue then, echoing Fairclough (cf. 1992: 72), that in so producing their worlds, writers and readers' practices are shaped by institutional structures, relations of power and the nature of the discursive practice they are engaged in. (Gouveia 1997: 170-171)

While much remains to be studied, since both military discourse and its online academic genres are understudied, some preliminary conclusions and starting points for future research may nevertheless be drawn.

As far as *RQ1* is concerned, i.e. *"How do military academic journals and reviews differ from civilian academic journals from multimodal and text organization perspectives?"*, the multimodal analysis of the journals has highlighted a range of hybrid structures that feature elements that are typical of both academic reviews and popularized magazines (e.g. *Military Times, Army Magazine, U.S. Veterans Magazine, Army Recognition, National Defense*), as well as the modification of determined standard components of academic reviews (e.g., journal covers, images, abstracts).

RQ2 "Compared to the civilian academic community, are there any particular legal or institutional requirements involved in contributing to military academic journals?" addressed a specific issue that is relevant for an online genre whose regulation is still characterized by a certain degree of flexibility and vagueness, i.e., authors' and journals' liability. The discursive analysis of disclaimers and licences has led to the conclusion that there are legal requirements for these scholars because of the shifting nature of their academic discourse and media of transmission.

The answer to *RQ3: "How do military academic journals frame their intent to disseminate specific professional knowledge and guide others to do the same?"* may be found both in the explicit encouragement to contribute to these 'open forums' through interpersonal discursive strategies and proximity, and in the promotion of a hybrid specialized language blending military and academic discourse characterized by specialized lexis and the discursive clarity of opinions and proposals.

Thus, military academic journals represent a productive way for the military to re-appropriate and control the academic discourse of their community according to their cultural roles and communication patterns. Furthermore, the emerging and evolving online versions of military academic journals allow the military community to popularize and disseminate their ideology and projects within the community and among non-military audiences. Such an evolution is significant, for it reflects ongoing changes within American military culture and specialized, as well as academic, online discourse in general.

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