

NICKNAMING AS A MORPHOLOGICAL AND LEXICO-SEMANTIC PROCESS: IMPLICATION FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

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Abstract

Many morphological processes and sociolinguistic sources pour words into language. However, nicknaming is one rich source of word creation not often stressed in the discussion of morphological and lexico-semantic processes. This paper looks at the phenomenon of nicknaming and submits that it is a veritable morpho-semantic process. Examples are drawn from two historically related languages: Nigerian Pidgin (NP), on the one hand, and Nigerian English (NE) varieties, on the other hand. Through the observation of linguistic events and library research conducted from 2008 to 2011, this paper shows that many words and lexical meanings pour into NP and NE varieties by the instrumentality of nicknaming. Nigerian nickname things, places and people to praise, understate, overstate, avoid vulgarity and indecency, insult and tease in all the spheres of life. In doing these, they generate new words and meanings.

Keywords: Nicknaming, lexico-semantics, context, pidgin

Introduction

Language enriches its vocabulary through many word-formation processes. Most grammarians say that there are four major ways of generating words in English. These are through inflection, derivation, expansion and morpho-phonemic manipulation (Matthews 1974). Other processes are borrowing, coinages, clipping, blending, acronyms, semantic shift, etc (Atchison 2001; Quirk et al 2003; Crystal 1999). Any new word introduced does come with a new meaning or a modification of the extant meaning of the word. Invariably, new words and meanings are created through any of the aforementioned processes. Apart from

these well-known processes, nicknaming is a rich source of word and meaning creation in Nigerian English varieties and Nigerian Pidgin. However, nicknaming is never or hardly discussed as a morphological process.

Lexico-semantics deals with the study of words and meanings and the relatedness of lexical items in a context or 'cotext'. Words either denote physical and abstract things or connote images in the real and imagined worlds (Yule 1997; Dirk 2010; Akmajian et al 2006). This paper examines nicknaming as a morpho-semantic process in Nigerian English varieties and Nigerian Pidgin.

Nicknaming and Nicknames

Nickname is 'a familiar name sometimes a diminutive, as Tom for Thomas... a descriptive or facetious name given to person, place or thing in derision, affection, or acclaim...' To nickname means 'to give a name, to misname' (*Webster Dictionary* 856). This means that the process of creating shorter forms from longer names is a method of nicknaming: Short forms of longer names are nicknames in away. Jack and Betsy for example are nicknames for John and Elizabeth respectively. However, they are now commonly given as standard independent names (<http://baby name and world connect.com> 1; <http://answers.yahoo.com>1). Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia states that 'a nickname is different in origin and pronunciation from the original name. It is not interchangeable with the term "short for." It can also be the familiar or truncated form of the proper name, which may at times be used strictly for convenience (e.g. "Bobby," "Rob," "Bob" and "Bert" for the name Robert'(1).

Beyond abbreviating a word, nicknaming is a way of describing or characterizing a person, place or thing, that is giving 'an added name to or substituted for the proper name of a person, place, etc, as affection, ridicule or familiarity' (<http://dictionary.reference.com> 1). In this way, many places, persons and things parade extra names different from the original names they were given or for which they are well known in formal and serious situations.

Origin of the Word 'Nickname' in English

Etymologically, nickname originated as an Anglo-Saxon word *ekenname*, *anekenname*. In Anglo-Saxon, *eke* meant *also* or *added*. It later became *neke name* in Middle English and subsequently *nickname* in Modern and Contemporary English (www.word.com/definition/nickname 1). So, nickname means an extra name etymologically.

A nickname is an extra name after an 'original' name, usually casual or informal and coded with a sociolinguistic attitude. The linguistic attitude to nicknaming lies in the manipulation of words and morphological processes to get the nickname itself; for example,

aristo and *collabo* in Nigerian English is got from the back clipping of *aristocratic/aristocracy* and *collaboration* respectively. However, *aristo* is a nickname for some girls who exhibit certain heterosexual behaviour and *collabo* is a truncated nickname for *collaboration* or *partnership* (a duo) in music or the entertainment world.

In the sociolinguistic process, a thing, place or person is given a completely different name from their original name: an additional name may have no morphological or semantic similarity to the original name. For a word or name to be called a nickname, it has to coexist with another well-known name used for the object or referent in a serious or formal setting. Somebody or something must have two names with which they are identified before one of the names can be said to be a nickname. The nickname is usually a later development arising from people's attitude to somebody or something, for example *kain-kain* or *ogogoro* is a popular type of Nigerian gin or alcoholic drink. Its nickname is *Sapele water* or *push-me-I-push-you*.

Osariemen has studied the phenomenon of nicknaming in Nigeria, both in English and Nigerian languages, looking at their motivations, origins and purposes. She concludes that nicknames exist in various fields of life and are used to define, describe and characterize people and entities (2010). Indeed, human motivations for nicknaming are many and varied. Central among them are the intention or desire to praise, insult, caricature, tease and hide offensive, sacrosanct and fearful meanings and images. Nigerians at all levels use nicknames for these purposes in all varieties of Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin as two different but related languages.

Slang, Nicknames and Established Content Words

Nicknames are different from slang words. Slang and nicknames may be similar because a slang word may be a nickname, but a nickname may not be a slang word. Slang words are associated with groups, friends and society. When slang words are used they often cut off non-members of the groups who do not use them. Zuckermann has differentiated slangisms from colloquialisms and lexical words:

“Slang refers to informal (and often transient) lexical items used by a specific social group, for instance teenagers, soldiers, prisoners and thieves. Slang is not the same as colloquial speech, which is informal, relaxed speech used on occasion by any speaker; this might include contractions such as ‘you’re’ ... A colloquialism is a lexical item used in informal speech; whilst the broadest sense of the term colloquialism might include slangisms, its narrow sense does

not. Slangisms are often used in colloquial speech, but not all colloquialisms are slangisms (2011, 1).

Nicknames are general and comprehensible to the community who use the language of the nicknames, unlike slang. For example, the words ‘titrate’ and ‘solidify’ are slang words used by the *Palmwine Drinkers Club* to mean ‘urinate’ and ‘eat food’ respectively. If you do not know them or are not told, you cannot get the meanings. Nicknames are generally used and understood by everyone who understands the language; for example, *Papilo* is Kanu Nwankwo’s nickname, a great Nigerian footballer. Unlike established content words, nicknames and slang could be ephemeral. They come and go or hold out, as the case may be. Some slang and nicknames may even become raised to content words by popular usage. However, nicknaming occurs in all situations, colloquial, formal and casual.

The Concepts of NP and ‘Nigerian English’ (NE)

Pidgin is a linguistic child of languages in contact. According to O’Donnel and Lorretto Todd “a pidgin is an auxiliary language which arises to fulfill certain limited communication needs among people who have no common language” (1991, 42). This definition of pidgin implies that pidgin does not necessarily have to be English-based and it can be seen as an independent but auxiliary language even though it did germinate from a blend of languages in contact, could be English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, African language-based (Elugbe & Omamor 1991). NP is a language that developed from languages and peoples in contact used for effective communication all Nigeria. It is not a variety of English, but it germinated from a combination of English and other Nigerian languages and assumed its own identity.

The terms ‘Nigerian English,’ ‘educated Nigeria English,’ ‘Standard Nigerian English,’ etc have been in currency since pre-Nigeria- independence time. According to Jowitt, ‘it was natural for many Nigerians and many of the expatriates numerous in the schools and universities in 1960s to use the expression ‘Nigeria English’ without feeling any need to apologize” (1991, 30).

Specifically, ‘Nigerian English’ is used here to mean the type of English spoken by Nigerians who are literate from primary school to university level, for the phenomenon of nicknaming is not restricted or peculiar to any level or class. It is universal. Nigerian English refers to the varieties of English used in Nigeria in juxtaposition to Standard British English (SBE) or American English (Am.E). Nigerian linguists usually use several parameters to categorize NE.

Parameters for Categorizing NE

Three major parameters are commonly used to categorize the varieties of English used in Nigeria; namely, regions, formal education and sociolinguistics. In terms of regions, there exist different varieties of English in Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo, Efik, Urhobo, etc. Each regional variety has its linguistic variations, on the one hand, and similarities to the others, on the other hand. With formal education, a number of classifications have been made. Prominent among them are Brosnahan's Ayo Banjo's and Odumuh's varieties I, II, III and IV (Sunday 2010). Banjo (1996) for instance uses grammatical features and educational levels for his classification. Variety I is the lowest, which reflects vulgar errors of grammar and broken structures often used by primary school pupils and those with half-baked formal education. Variety II is an improvement on variety I. This is the variety that secondary school students and school certificate holder use. Variety III is higher standard which is spoken by highly educated people, graduates, teachers, lecturers, etc. He proposes this model for Nigerian English. Lastly, Variety IV equates native English standard spoken by a few people who were born in native English speaking countries or have a parent of English origin and consequently acquire English as their first language (Banjo 1996; Sunday 2010). On the sociolinguistic plane, three levels or *-lects* are often depicted: *basilect*, *mesolect* and *acrolect* (Igene 1992; Ogbulogo 2005). The educated variety III of Banjo, which is also *acrolect* on the sociolinguistic pyramid, is often recommended or preferred as Nigerian standard.

Brosnahan's earlier classification in 1958 lumps NP under NE as variety one (Sunday 2010). But strictly speaking, NP is not a variety of English, although NP shares certain linguistic features and origin with NE (Bamgbose 1971; Banjo 1996). Indeed, a careful analysis of the phonology, morphology, structures and semantics of NP will show that it is not a variety of English. However, NP gets a sizeable proportion of its vocabulary from NE varieties. That NP shares vocabulary with NE does not mean that NP is a variety of English. Both NP and NE are two related languages, but not two varieties of the same language, widely used in Nigeria with NP probably having higher number speakers and more domains of use. As two related Nigerian languages, NP and NE often converge at the level of vocabulary and lexical items. NP words do sometimes find their way into NE vocabulary and vice versa. Hence the two languages have been selected to demonstrate nicknaming as a morphological process.

In NP and in all the varieties of NE: regional, educated and sociolinguistic, nicknaming comes to life as a fertile source of new words and meanings. Nicknaming and nicknames, which come as appellation, acclaim and (re)designation, euphemism and sarcasm,

are rich processes of creating new words and meanings in all the varieties of Nigerian English. We now look at some examples of nicknames in both NP and NE

Main Text

Nicknames as Appellation/ Acclaim and (Re) designation

Nicknames are often given to achieve the positive effect of humour, praising and rebranding. Some examples in NP and NE are given below and indicated accordingly. The ones asterisked are common in both NP and the lower varieties one and two of NE, but NOT in educated varieties three and four of Banjo's classification. Those without asterisk are used in NP and all NE varieties, particularly the informal variety:

***Meshai.** This is a nickname for Nigerian Hausa Fulani people who sell fast foods at night, particularly bread, hot teas and fried eggs. *Meshai* is Hausa for bread now borrowed as metonymy and used to describe those who do the business.

***Molue.** This is a word for luxurious commercial buses painted yellow with black straps that operate in Lagos, a commercial capital of Nigeria. It is borrowed from the Yoruba language of Nigeria

***Tuke-tuke.** In Edo Benin Pidgin, it is used to describe commercial buses of Toyota C20, Mistubishi size. The word is onomatopoeic of its movement and stopping from place to place to drop and pick passengers, *a reduplicated word* from Edo language of the south southern part of Nigeria.

***Round about.** This is a nickname for the intestine of animals served as meat. It normally lies in a dish like a circle reminiscent of a geographical roundabout. The processes of *compounding and semantic shift* have been used, if used in NE, and *borrowing* from English to NP.

***Towel.** This is a word for the viscera, stomach or duodenum of oxen/cows and similar animals which looks and feels like real bathroom towel when prepared and served as meat. It is a *borrowing* from English to NP.

Okada. This is a popular nickname for a motorcycle. Okada is actually the name of a town in Edo State after which a Nigerian millionaire named his airline (*Okada Air*) in the 1980s. With the ubiquitous use of motorcycle for transport, people *borrowed the word from Edo to Nigerian English and other languages in Nigeria*, nicknaming motorbike *Okada* to mean 'land airplane' in the fashion of *Okada Air*: "They have learnt how to use 'Okada,' AK-47..." (Sagay 2011, 9).

***Packet shirt.** This nickname comes from English through *semantic shift and compounding*. *It is a nickname for akpu or fufu*, a cassava dough that looks like pounded yam

usually wrapped with (transparent) cellophane in balls the size of a clenched fist and sold in restaurants and markets.

Santana. This is another nickname for cassava dough. Santana is a brand of Volkswagen car which is regarded as one of the fastest running cars in Nigeria .The smoothness of *fufu* is such that it goes down the throat with ease and speed. This is a *borrowing* from German through *semantic shift*. Santana is often used in consonance with the next nickname.

Six-to-six. This is a *compound coinage* from English. It is also used as a nickname for *fufu*. The idea here is that the cassava dough is a heavy diet, and daily-paid workers are known to eat it in the morning by six o'clock and it will take them till six o'clock in the evening.

***Showboy.** This is a nickname for a mad man, also sometimes used to describe cow hide or skin cooked and cut into chunks as meat. It is a *coinage borrowed* from English vocabulary into NP. The idea is that the mad man is oblivious of his nakedness and shows it all.

***Tear-rubber.** This is a *compound coinage* borrowed from English and used as a nickname for anything brand new, often coming with nylon, polythene or some cover, which must be torn open before used. Tear-rubber is often used in contrast with the next nickname.

Tokunbo. This is a nickname for anything second-hand. It refers to fairly used, particularly imported, second hand clothes, goods and cars: Tokunbo cars, Tokunbo man or wife, and so on. It is *borrowed* from Yoruba language of Nigeria.

***Pepper.** This is an informal nickname for money in NE, especially among the young generation. It is also a metaphoric nickname for an experience that is unpalatable, bad or humiliating; for example, 'I saw *pepper* on that day.' It is a *metaphoric borrowing* from English and a *semantic extension* in that what is peppery is usually unpalatable. The meaning is extended to what is bad and humiliating.

***Master key.** This is a nickname for a smooth operator, a Casanova, or a womanizer well known for wooing and laying ladies with ease. As a master key opens most padlocks, so does a womanizer win many women over and dump them later. He is a heartbreaker. It is a *compound word* with a *semantic extension*.

Maradonna. This is an *eponym* for a social dribbler, a cunning and unpredictable person. It became current in the 1980s when Maradonna of Argentina was famous for his soccer ingenuity and tricks and thereafter, the then Nigerian Head of State and Commander

of the Armed Forces Ibrahim Babaginda was nicknamed Maradona for his cunning and unreliability. Another nickname of his is 'IBB, an *abbreviation* for Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida.' Maradona is an Argentine name for Diego Maradona, world leading footballer of the 1980s.

Obj or OBJ. This is a *clipping or acronym* for Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, an ex-Nigerian Head of State and President. A newspaper headline in Nigeria reads: "Olowu Stool: Obj, Dosunmu, kingmakers, dragged to court" (Adebayo 2011, 13).

Play-boy. This is a *compound word* and nickname for a womanizer, casanova, and heartbreaker; a man who is never serious with relationships. It is used in consonance with *master key*.

Hot-babe. This is a *compound formation* and nickname for a lady or a girl who attracts a lot of attention from men.

Jungle City. This is a *compound* nickname for Ajegunle, an overpopulated and dirty suburb of Lagos the commercial capital of Nigeria. It is where you have 'the good, the bad and the ugly' of life.

Garden City. This is a *compound formation* for Port Harcourt a city in Nigeria. Just as Ajegunle and Port Harcourt have nicknames, all the States of Nigeria and many cities have their nicknames. Lagos, for instance, is *Centre of Excellence* and Enugu is *Coal City*. These nicknames are generated from either the physical environment or the product from the state.

***Ajuwaya or Corper-tion.** These are nicknames for a Nigerian graduate on compulsory one year National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). *Ajuwaya* is a *nativized pronunciation* of the military phrase of English origin usually used to give them command during field training, *As you were!* *Corper-tion* is a coinage incorporating the word, 'corper' and the clipping, 'tion' from the military command, 'attention!'

Allawi. This is a *back-formation* of *allowance*, which is used for monetary reward or pay. It is also used in informal educated Nigerian English.

Khaki men. This is a *compound coinage and metonymy* for the army or soldiers in Nigeria.

***Bling-bling.** This is *reduplication* for jewellery, particularly the shining (exotic or costly) ones.

Ajebo or ajebota/aje-butter. This is a *clipping and blending* of *aje* (a Yoruba word that means *to eat*, or *eater*) and the English word *butter* (pronounced *bota*), meaning literally 'someone who eats butter'; and connotatively someone whose parents are

rich; one who has been so over- pampered with rich care and attention that they become either timid or weak.

Ajepako or ajekpako. This is a *clipping and blending* of *aje* and *kpako*. The later means ‘hardwood, plank, or plywood’. The nickname connotes or denotes the opposite of *ajebota* that is a strong and hardened low class person.

Ebeano. This is a nickname for anything that shows the presence of the government in the state or affluence such as the state-of-the-art buildings, modern roads, rural electrification, and so on. It is a borrowing from Igbo language of Nigeria that means ‘where we are’.

***Tomato Jos.** This is a nickname for a beautiful, shiny and succulent lady. It is a *metaphoric borrowing* from the succulent tomatoes produced in the Middle-belt of Nigeria.

Obstacle. This is a *coinage* and nickname for pieces of meat and fish in a plate of soup. The idea is that the soup is rich. As one eats the bolus of *fufu* (normally with fingers) with soup, one eats it along with pieces of meat and fish

Nicknames as Euphemisms

Euphemism is a figurative method and indirectness strategy where something otherwise harsh, offensive, vulgar, fatal, indecent, sacrosanct, or fearful is stated in the mildest way possible. Below are some examples:

Aristo. This is a *back-formation* from *aristocrat* used for a young girl who dates older men, sometimes their father’s or grandfather’s age, for monetary and materials rewards. These men are nicknamed *sugar daddies*.

Long-leg. This is a *creative compound formation* that denotes” influence”, “undue or questionable influence”; “connection” and “string pulling” in society that can achieve results without delay.

Rain coat. This is a *semantic extension and compound word* for condom, duress. The first time the researcher heard this, a young man walked into a pharmaceutical store and asked to be given a raincoat. He wondered why the young man should be asking for a raincoat in a chemist. But then the chemist attendant quietly gave him the *raincoat!*

This thing, Down under, or down below. These are phrases or *compound words* for someone’s *private part* or reproductive organ. *This thing* is also an insulting phrase used to reduce someone’s worth, or downgrade something: *Look at this thing!*

Headlights. This is a *semantic shift* that is used to refer to female breasts especially the sizable ones.

Blocking. This is a *conversion and euphemism* for students' act or habit of bribing lecturers to pass or get higher marks in higher institution. It is also known as *sorting*. Sorting or blocking is now a euphemism for bribery.

Runs. This is a *conversion* and nickname for any kind of smart or sharp practice or business for money or material gain; short and illegal or questionable activity; also used for girls engaging in sex outside their regular relationships to get money.

***Short time:** This is a *compound coinage* for a *quickie*, quick sex in a place, joint or hotel: 'She took the woman to that hotel for *short time*'. *Quickie* itself is a coinage.

***Donatus.** This is a *borrowing through semantic shift* for sexually loose girl/lady or man; a free sex donor to anyone who asks for it; one who has sex with multiple partners. This nickname is *onomatopoeic* of the word *donate*. (Also in Osariemen 2011).

***Wee-wee.** This is a *reduplication* for urine/urinate for children. It is also used to mean 'Indian hemp': 'I caught them smoking *wee-wee* in the bush'. Indian hemp is also nicknamed *powder*.

Number one and Number two. These are *coinages* that represent urine and faeces respectively.

The idea comes from the positioning of these organs (urethra and anus) in the body. The organ for urination comes before the organ for defecation.

***Chukuli.** This is a *borrowing* from the English language 'chuck' meaning to throw, fling, or catapult. It is also nicknamed *missile*. It is a paper with information written in the tiniest handwriting possible, squeezed and smuggled or thrown into an examination hall to copy from. This is something illegal to do. If a student is caught with *chukuli* s/he is made to face an Examination Malpractice Committee.

***Small house:** This is a *compound conversion* for toilet, latrine.

Lastly, we look at some examples of sarcastic nicknames.

Sarcastic and Derogatory Nicknames

Sarcastic and derogatory nicknames are given to tease, humour, caricature and satirize the bearer, place or object. Below are few examples:

***Congo meat.** The Nigerian soldiers that went for the Congo war of the 60's introduced this eponymous nickname for snail which is by *extension* given to vagina or vulva. There is a connection between the shapes of the outer flesh of a snail and the vulva.

***Ikebe.** This is a name for buttocks used with a sexual connotation especially when they are heavy and distending backward. It is also nicknamed *Bakassi* or *Bakassi Peninsula* which is an eponym that means large and extensive.

Fine boys: *This is a compound coinage* for bad boys, armed robbers, thieves, burglars who rob at night or day time.

Area boys. This is a *compound formation* used to denote young men more or less a nuisance. They are ruffians, hooligans, or rascals who are into the seamy sides of life and are seen in a particular area of the city or town.

Bushmeat or bushmu. This nickname is a derogatory *compound formation* for a girl or lady considered local, cheap or sub-standard: “But to dump every city girl he had dated and gone for a ‘bushmeat’(according to them) was simply unthinkable” (Chidi-Maha 37).

***Groundnut(s).** This nickname is a *converted word and semantic extension* for pimples, particularly the big ones that appear mostly on the face.

Zombie. This is a nickname for a docile person one who is led by the nose and who does anything that he is asked to. It is a derogatory term used by the late musician, Fela Kuti, to ridicule Nigerian soldiers who obey all manner of command.

***Pure water:** This is a *compound formation* and derogatory conversion term for something too common or ubiquitous and so of no high value. It is often used to describe Volkswagen Passat cars and some brand of cars too common and relatively cheap in an area. Pure water is an original name for a brand of water packaged in transparent polythene bags and sold in Nigerian roads and streets. It is the most common and cheapest product one can get anywhere in Nigeria.

***I- better-pass-my-neighbour.** This is a *lexicalized concept or phrase* and nickname for the smallest tiger brand electric power generator which people acquire to give themselves electric power because of the epileptic government electric power supply. Acquiring one gives one an edge over one’s neighbours because your house will be the only one with electricity in the vicinity at that particular time of power outage.

Yellow fever. This is the *compound word* nickname for a Nigerian traffic warden usually dressed in top yellow uniform jacket.

Mr lecturer. This is a creative *compound coinage* and a derogatory nickname for a male lecturer who harasses female students for sex and money. It is popularized by Idris Abdukareem, a Nigerian musician.

Woman wrapper. *This is a compound coinage* nickname for a womanizer; a man who womanizes to a fault; who goes out of his way to please a woman sometimes to his detriment; or a man who is dominated and easily influenced by his wife or mistress.

Aboki. This is an Hausa word meaning ‘a friend’, but often used as a derogatory nickname to describe someone who behaves stupidly, clumsily and sometimes annoyingly in a given situation. For example, someone once crossed the road absent-mindedly and then a taxi driver described him in Nigerian Pidgin as follows: “Abeg, comot for road .You be typical aboki,” meaning: “Please, leave the road, you (are a) typical *aboki* (idiot).

***Short put.** This is a *compound coinage* and *conversion* nickname for the obnoxious habit of excreting in nylon and polythene bags and flinging it away quietly or carelessly because of overcrowding and lack of toilet facilities, which is very common with students in hostels. That is a short and quick way of deposing faeces.

Along-the-road. This is a *conversion* and a phrase used as a nickname for a newborn baby girl. The derogatory coinage sees a girl child as a prostitute that stands on the road waiting for customers. This nickname thrives in societies where women are seen as prostitutes. The nickname is also from an obnoxious parochial idea that a girl child is not a permanent member of the family. She will be married out of the family.

Home-based. This is a *conversion* nickname for an advanced unmarried lady who is not a religious.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the phenomenon of nicknaming as a morpho-semantic process in two related languages used in Nigerian: NP and NE. It has been found that nicknaming, a very common linguistic habit, generate new words and meanings in all the varieties of Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin by using the common processes of word-formation and lexico-semantics. Nigerians use the instrument of nicknaming to avoid committing, or to even deliberately commit, indecency, vulgarity and sacrilege, and also to praise, insult, redefine, characterize, tease people, places and things in the two languages. It is proposed, therefore, that nicknaming be taught henceforth as a major morphological and lexico-semantic process in addition to the other well-known processes. Besides, nicknames should be taught as belonging mainly to informal and colloquial domain of language use, although they do sometimes come into formal and serious usage and then assume the status of well-established content words.

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