

NICKNAMES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN ENGLISH ANTHROPONYM
SYSTEM

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Russian scholars have conducted various research works on English nicknames. For instance, Leonovich defines an English nickname as "a type of anthroponym, i.e., an additional name given to an individual in society based on their spiritual or physical characteristics." English scholars themselves have carried out diverse research on the subject. One of them, the renowned philologist Eric Partridge, defines a "nickname" as "an addition to, or a substitute for, a name." This definition alludes to the primary function of nicknames – identifying a person and complementing their official name.

"Nicknames reflect an individual's social status, their place in society, and how they are perceived by others" [James K. Skipper]. The English scholar Richard T. Antoun emphasizes the structural significance of nicknames, noting that they serve not only to distinguish individuals but also groups, and are a means of identifying persons immediately and unambiguously, thereby preventing confusion. At this point, it is also pertinent to cite the view of Frank Nuessel, a leading contemporary expert in onomastics. The scholar has studied English nicknames comprehensively and systematically. He defines nicknames as "an informal, typically descriptive name given to a person based on a physical characteristic, personality, profession, deed, or other distinctive feature." Another English scholar, Edwin D. Lawson, regards nicknames as an important means of describing a person and has studied their psychological and social aspects. His research is focused on how nicknames contribute to the formation of an individual's identity.

Most researchers conducting studies on informal personal names divide them into derivatives of personal names (informal names derived from given names) and nicknames (Busse 1983; Dickson 1996, and others). However, the researcher Seeman unites all derivatives of personal names, regardless of their formation, under the term "nickname" (Seeman 1983, 240-241). Another English researcher, E. Lawson, applies the term "nickname" only to hypocoristics (Lawson, 1974, 24). Conversely, Margaret Fleming, in her scholarly work, also includes diminutives in the category of nicknames.

Nicknames are not merely identifying labels for individuals; they are also a significant indicator of culture, social relations, group dynamics, and changes within society. By studying them, we gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of human experience. The creation of a nickname depends on the following factors:

- **Referent Artifact** – Reflects information from the sphere of social communication.
 - *Example: Armand Hammer – the renowned industrialist, named in honor of the Socialist Labor Party's "Arm and Hammer."*
- **Real Relate** – A real person (often a historical figure) used as the basis for naming.

- **Imaginary Relate** – A fictional character used as the basis for naming.

The English researcher G. Shankle, within the concept of a nickname, includes descriptive names, sobriquets, or appellatives (Shankle, 1937: 5-6). Accordingly, the stability of this realia in English linguistic culture is refined through the following lexical units: "nomen," "appellation," "sobriquet," "byname," "byword," "hypocorism," and "appellative." The concept of the "nickname" is central to all of these.

Nicknames, formed through various processes, constitute the foundation for the development of the English anthroponymic system. They played a pivotal role in enriching the Old English anthroponymic system, initially serving as supplementary names added to a person's given name and later acting as a catalyst for the formation of surnames. Undoubtedly, it is established that nicknames served as a ready source for the formation of both given names and surnames.

The role of Old English nicknames in language and culture is highly significant, as the motivational principles behind their creation have been preserved across all modern variants of the English language. The study of the original characteristics that shaped nicknames and the determination of the correct approach to their demotivation (i.e., identifying their original meaning) is carried out within the framework of historical analysis.

Nicknames are a living linguistic category and are considered a primary source of English surnames (Superanskaya 1993; 106-111). Y. B. Gusinina divides the historical system of secondary naming into three main stages:

1. The 7th century to the first half of the 11th century marks the emergence of a supplementary naming system in England. By the end of the Old English period, a sufficiently developed system of nicknames had formed, some of which even evolved into hereditary family names.
2. The 11th to 13th centuries correspond to the period of surname formation within English society. By the 13th century, the single-component naming system had completely disappeared.
3. The 14th to 17th centuries are considered the period of development for English surnames. The majority of nicknames existing during this period were incorporated into the composition of surnames.

The use of nicknames is not permanent, whereas surnames, on the contrary, are constant and possess the characteristic of being hereditary, passed down from generation to generation; this is essentially their fundamental difference (Zaytseva 1973; 22). Today, the formation of personal names from surnames is a regularly occurring phenomenon within the fund of English anthroponyms. While the practice of addressing individuals by their surname became noticeable in England in the 19th century, this custom can be encountered among upper-class noble families as early as the 17th-18th centuries. Charlotte Brontë's novel *Shirley* (1849) demonstrates how personal names and surnames were formed from nicknames, and also how ancient nicknames influenced the stock of personal names.

Used literature:

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