

Nicknames in Australian Secondary Schools: Insights into Nicknames and Adolescent Views of Self

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Abstract

Although it is widely known that language practices can significantly affect adolescent self-image, research studies on adolescent naming practices are surprisingly scarce. The only study to date on nicknames in Australia was undertaken by Chevalier (2006). Her study provides a comprehensive analysis of morphological and semantic features of names but makes no reference to adolescent language practices and their role in society. Our exploration of initial responses to questionnaire data administered to secondary students in Victoria and Queensland schools considers: (i) common adolescent nicknaming practices and (ii) attitudes of adolescents to nick-names used for others and towards nicknames. We end with suggestions for raising awareness of naming practices to promote cultural and linguistic sensitivity amongst high school students.

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