Fall 11-2017

Names for Non-Student-Athletes

Mealii Enos
mealii.enos@gmail.com

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https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all/251
“Names for Non-Student-Athletes”

Folk Speech

Informant

My name is Mealii Enos and I am twenty years old. I was born and raised in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. I moved to Logan, Utah in the summer of 2016 for my freshman year of college and have lived here since. I am a student-athlete at Utah State University, and I just finished my sophomore season on the women’s soccer team. USU’s soccer team is Division 1, and we play in the Mountain West Conference. I have absolutely loved my experience with Utah State Athletics thus far. I have been playing soccer since I was around ten years old and have been playing competitively since I was around thirteen years old. I am also an undergraduate at USU and double majoring in Special Education and Communicative Disorders.

Context

The first time I was exposed to this folk speech was from our team coach on my official visit to USU as a high school senior. The school holds these campus visits for recruits who are committed to play for the university the next year. She was talking about living arrangements and how myself and the other prospective freshman would be staying with team members who had non-student athlete roommates. I was confused at first, but after repeated use from the coaches and the team, I began to understand the meaning behind this folk speech. I have only observed and heard these words used exclusively from USU student-athletes and staff in casual conversation. It would never be used in a formal setting such as a meeting or an official statement. It is usually used to as an identifying detail in conversation. One of the folk speech words, “Muggle”, is a word stolen from the popular Harry Potter book and movie series. Muggles in this fantasy world are normal people who do not have magic like the witches and wizards. The connotation of the word in this sense would be how non-student-athletes do not have the same skills and abilities that SA’s have.

Text

The words used by student-athletes to identify non-student-athletes are “muggles”, “normies”, and “narps.” Narp stands for “non-athletic regular person.” Here are several examples of how I have used or heard these words used in conversation or how I would use these words in conversation.

“They live with two teammates and a few muggles.”
“You know [name]? Oh, well they’re a muggle you may not have met them before.”

“She’s my favorite muggle.”

“Make friends with the normies ‘cause then they can take notes for you when you miss class.”

“What a narp” or “you look like a narp.”

**Texture**

Each of these words have different connotations and ways in which they are used. “Muggle” is used almost exclusively by the soccer team. It is often used with an endearing tone, especially towards close friends, or when said friends are present in the conversation. Other times, “muggle” is used as a simple explanation. Because SA’s are often together for meals, rehab, and class, it is a tight knit group where everyone knows each other. Sometimes we use this label when talking about someone simply to establish that they are not a SA so there is no way they would have known them previously. Often times, this word is used in a light-hearted and fun, not mean-spirited way. It is a regular word in team vocabulary and is used casually and often.

“Normies” is usually used to reference non-SA’s as a group. I have heard this jargon across multiple sports within USU Athletics. This can have more of a generalizing tone to represent non-SA’s as a whole. In the example of this word, a “Normie” becomes someone you can use to help you out, more of a tool than a person. Because of this, there can sometimes be a negative connotation to this word, that “normies” are people we use to get things rather than genuine friends. This is not the intentional purpose of the word, but oftentimes it comes across that way.

“Narp” is by far the most derogatory jargon for a non SA’s. When someone is referenced as a “narp” they are categorized as ordinary or un-athletic in a way meant to be offensive. I have never heard this used in the presence of a non-SA’s, but it is used among SA’s to make fun of non-SA’s. Sometimes, like in the examples provided, it is used as a teasing insult from one SA to another.

Mealii Enos

Utah State University

Introduction to Folklore/English 2210

Dr. Lynne S. McNeill

Fall 2017