4. NATURE OF THE NAMES   <previous - next>

- Specifics
- Generics
- Possible transfer to other objects (false generics)

Generics indicate the nature of the named object: in Mount Everest, mount is the generic part, and Everest is the specific part. When the generic part of the original name no longer matches the named object, we refer to false generics: Bloemfontein in Afrikaans refers to a fountain with flowers (bloemen), but it now is the capital of the Freestate province in South Africa. Rio de Janeiro refers to the river (rio) discovered in January. Instead of a river it now refers to the largest city in Brazil. Tel Aviv refers to the Hill of Spring, instead to the largest city of Israel, etc.

False generics
City names with modified meaning

- Bloemfontein
- Rio de Janeiro
- Blackpool
- Montevideo
- Tel Aviv

Relationship between specific and generic may denote

- Nature
- Property
- Purpose
- Events

- "Vaal River" refers to a river with a greyish tint (vaal in Afrikaans)

- "Stellenbosch" refers to a forest (bosch) that was the property of governor Van der Stel

- "Bloedrivier" refers to a river where a bloody (bloed) battle was waged

- "Natal" refers to a region that was discovered at Christmas (Natal in Portuguese)1498

<previous - next>