



LEXEMES EXPRESSING THE NEGATIVE QUALITIES OF HEROES IN ENGLISH FAIRY TALES

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the lexical units representing characters with negative qualities in English fairy tales, including their lexico-semantic analysis. Furthermore, it illustrates through examples that fairy tales are one of the most prominent factors in revealing a nation's culture.

Introduction

It's much easier to realize the difference between core concepts like good and evil, justice and injustice through fairy tales. The child psychologist B. Bettelheim stated, "Nothing can be as enriching and satisfying for a child or an adult as folk tales. One can gain more information from them about a person's inner problems and how to properly solve difficulties in any society than from any other story a child can understand" [Bettelheim, 1076. 5]. Tales have a powerful educational quality that they help children differentiate between the good and evil events happening around them. It should be noted that lexemes expressing negative qualities of heroes in English folk tales often fall into categories related to moral, physical, and intellectual failings. These terms are not just descriptive; they shape the reader's perception and establish a clear contrast with traditional heroic virtues.

One of the most important qualities of negative characters is **wickedness** or **cruelty**. In English, the lexeme "**wicked**" which is often found in folk tales, can mean immoral, malicious, bad, or sinful. It can be a synonym for words like "bad, evil, awful and terrible" and is used with various meanings depending on the context. The meaning of the word are as follows: 1) *morally very bad: evil;* 2) *fierce, vicious; b: disposed to or marked by mischief: roguish (does wicked impersonations)* [The Macmillan Dictionary, 2007. 338].

"**Wicked**" is used to convey a sense of evil, harm, or trouble in the below sentence.

"After they were gone says Jack to the **wicked** housekeeper, "Do these fellows ever make you a present?" [Joseph J. More Celtic Fairy Tales, 1894. 16]

Cruelty in English folk tales expresses the mental and emotional states of the characters and means "*cruel behaviour or a cruel action*" [8].

"William would be powerful and strong as the eagle, but feared and hated for **cruelty** and violence, until he ended a wicked life by a bad death." [Briggs K. British folk-tales and legends, 2002. 265]

Ill-natured can be also negative characteristics of heroes. The lexeme “ill-natured” (bad-tempered or mean-spirited) in English folktales is used to describe people with bad character and is interpreted as *“easily annoyed. If an occasion, such as a game, is ill-tempered, people get angry during it”* [9]. This lexeme describes a person with a bad temper who gets angry easily:

*“So he made a present to the captain, the mate, and the rest of Mr. Fitzwarren’s servants; and even to the **ill-natured** old cook”* [Joseph J. English fairy tales, 2005. 111].

Moreover, in English fairy tales, the lexemes **mean** and **miser** are used to describe stingy people. For example, in the tales “The Miser and his wife” and “Jack Hannaford”, a stingy husband is also described. The lexeme **mean** is described as *“cruel, or unkind, angry and violent; not willing to spend money”* [The Macmillan Dictionary, 2007. 933].

In English fairy tales, **greedy** is explained in the Macmillan dictionary as follows: *“wanting to eat or drink more food than you need, wanting more money, things, or power than you need”* [The Macmillan Dictionary, 2007. 659].

*“What must I do, said I, for the sight of that had made me **greedy**”* [Joseph J. More Celtic Fairy Tales, 1894, 70].

Besides, in English tales, the lexeme **insolence** means *“rude and disrespectful behavior”; “rude behaviour that does not show respect”*, that is, rudeness, disrespect [10].

*“Many of the nobility and barons held a secret council in the church of Lauder, where they enlarged upon the evils which Scotland sustained through the **insolence** and corruption of Cochran and his associates”* [Briggs K. British folk-tales and legends, 2002. 18].

Conclusion

In conclusion, English fairy tales often use specific lexemes, that is, words or phrases to describe the negative qualities of their characters, particularly villains. These words help to immediately signal a hero’s undesirable traits and are often simple, direct, and easily understood by a young audience. Furthermore, the lexemes are effective because they are easily understood and create a clear contrast between the villain’s negative qualities and the hero’s positive ones.

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