



PAPER

SEMANTICS OF LEXEMES EXPRESSING THE POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF HEROES IN ENGLISH FOLK TALES

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Abstract

This article analyzes the lexical units representing characters with positive qualities in English fairy tales, including their structural and semantic analysis. Furthermore, it demonstrates through examples that fairy tales are one of the most important factors in revealing a nation's culture.

Key words: folk tales, lexemes, goodness, folklore, structural-semantic analysis, positive characters, culture.

INTRODUCTION

It should be noted that it's much easier to understand the difference between core concepts like good and evil, justice and injustice, as well as, honesty and dishonesty with the help of fairy tales. By listening to them, children develop positive qualities and try to emulate the good characters after learning to distinguish goodness from badness. The child psychologist B. Bettelheim has offered valuable insights into the important role of fairy tales in children's lives. He 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" [2]. This shows that fairy tales have such a powerful educational quality that they help children differentiate between the good and bad events happening around them.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Fairy tales have been studied by many linguists and folklorists at different times. The dissertation by N. Akimenko on the topic "Linguocultural features of English fairy tale discourse" is dedicated to the study and comprehensive description of English fairy tale discourse as one of the earliest forms of artistic communication reflecting the "ancient" image of the world. The work primarily studies and describes the lexical-syntactic and stylistic

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uniqueness of the category of fabulousness in English fairy tales [1]. L.Epoeva also conducted a comparative linguocultural study of fairy tales. Her research provides a broad analysis of the linguistic and cultural parameters of fairy tales, examining the lexical-semantic features of their language and systematizing the lexical tools used to form the concept of “magic”. Furthermore, the study identifies the genre and stylistic features of English and Russian fairy tales, and analyzes the lexical-semantic tools used to describe the language of the two nations’ fairy tales, identifying lexical and thematic groups that form the concept of “magic” [4]. The dissertation by J.Weeks on the topic “Fairies, fairy tales, and the development of british poetics” is considered one of the most significant academic works in the study of English fairy tales. In this dissertation, the researcher offers insights into the role of fairy tales in the development of English poetics. Vicks primarily seeks answers to the question of how the fairy tale and its dissemination could have been overlooked in the structures of academic disciplines such as British poetry, folklore, and children’s literature [8].

Needless to say, positive characters in English folk tales usually have a few key characteristics. Although they often face difficulties and rely on their positive qualities to overcome them. The lexemes that represent the traits of positive characters in English folk tales reveal their personality and the overall moral essence of these stories. Such lexemes are divided into specific semantic fields and vary depending on which quality of the character they reflect. Below, we will analyze the main characteristics of positive characters in English fairy tales and the lexemes that represent them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the most important qualities of positive heroes is courage or valor. Positive characters often face dangers without fear. They fight against dragons, evil witches, or other malevolent forces. In English fairy tales, the lexeme courage is used to express noble qualities such as bravery. The Macmillan Dictionary defines it as “the ability to do something that you know is right or good, even though it is dangerous, frightening, or very difficult” [7]. The following excerpt from an English fairy tale describes the character’s mental and

emotional state:

“He thought that this wagon must be going to the fine town of London; so he took courage, and asked the waggoner to let him walk with him by the side of the wagon” (“Whittington and his cat”).

Justice and honesty can be also positive characteristics of heroes. They always strive to do what is right and never lie. The heroes fight to protect the rights of others and work to restore justice. In the series of tales about “Robinhood” he is considered an ideal hero who fought for the poor. Robinhood is a legendary English hero. In tales, he is depicted as a very skilled archer and swordsman who steals from the rich and gives to the poor.

“Robin and his men kept not one penny of the treasure they collected from the greedy men. Instead they shared it with all the poorer people they knew – people who had lost everything when greedy Prince John and his men stole it”

The lexeme justice expresses truth, fairness, and is a synonym for the lexeme fairness used in fairy tales. It is explained as “fairness in the way people are dealt with; the system of laws in a country that judges and punishes people; the condition of being morally correct or fair” [11].

“When the father had heard them, he said to the first: “Thou, my son, as I perceive, desirest to live by rapine; I will therefore bequeath thee my possessions in England, because it is a land of peace and justice, and thou canst not rob in it with impunity” (“The sons of the conqueror”).

The lexeme honesty, used in English fairy tales, is defined as “adherence to the facts – sincerity; fairness and straightforwardness of conduct” [12].

In “The Tale of Ivan”, the lexeme is realized in the sense of fairness and straightforwardness of conduct:

The same thing happened at the end of the third year, when the piece of advice was: “Honesty is the best policy”.

Kindness and generosity can be main qualities of heroes. These characters are always ready to help others. They lend a hand to those in difficult situations, even if it puts them at risk. This lexeme conveys meanings such as “the quality or state of being kind; a kind deed: favor; archaic: affection” [13]. This lexeme, which means benevolent, appears in many places throughout English tales:

“Poor Dick hardly knew how to behave himself

for joy. He begged his master to take what part of it he pleased, since he owed it to his kindness” (“Whittington and his cat”).

The lexeme *generous* is common and is defined as “willing to give money, help, kindness, etc., especially more than is usual or expected” [9]. In English, the lexemes *free-handed* and *open-handed* are also used to describe generous and kind people. In the English fairy tale “The Warden of the Marches”, the lexeme *generous*, which represents the quality of being generous and liberal, appears frequently:

“Generous neighbours replaced her in a small farm, but in successive raids she lost so much that by the time her son reached the age of twenty...”

Intelligence and wisdom: They stand out not only for physical strength but also for their wit. In many cases, they use their intelligence to solve complex problems. In English fairy tales, concepts like knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence also represent noble qualities. Wisdom signifies having intelligence, being knowledgeable, and being a sage. In the tale “The Two Pickpockets”, you can find the lexeme *cleverness*, which represents wisdom. The lexeme describes a positive trait in people and is explained as “the ability to understand and learn quickly and easily” [10].

“He was so much taken by her cleverness in robbing him that he suggested that they should go into partnership together.”

In the English tale “The Miller at the Professor’s Examination”, the lexeme *wisdom* is also present. This tale is also known as “The Professor of Signs”:

“Oh! if that’s all,” said the miller, “don’t be low about the matter. Did you never hear that a clown may sometimes teach a scholar wisdom?”

These characteristics depict the positive heroes in English folk tales not just as brave, but also as morally pure, trustworthy, and capable of being an example to others. Through them, values such as kindness, justice, and hard work are instilled in children.

CONCLUSION

All in all, lexemes expressing the positive characteristics of heroes in English folk tales often convey traits like bravery, wisdom, honesty, and kindness. These words are crucial to defining the hero’s moral and ethical standing within the

narrative, setting them apart from villains and other characters. The semantics of these lexemes are deeply rooted in the cultural values and morals of the time, reflecting what was considered admirable and virtuous.

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