

## LINGUOCULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NAMES OF ENGLISH FAIRY TALE CHARACTERS

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**Annotation:** This article explores the linguocultural characteristics of character names in English fairy tales, analyzing their linguistic origins, cultural symbolism, and narrative roles. It examines well-known examples such as “Jack” from “Jack and the Beanstalk,” “Cinderella,” and lesser-known characters like “The Black Bull of Norrway” to reveal how names reflect English societal values, traditions, and linguistic heritage.

**Key words:** fairy tale characters, linguocultural analysis, naming conventions, English folklore, cultural symbolism, linguistic heritage.

English fairy tales are a treasure trove of cultural and linguistic richness, with their characters serving as mirrors to the society from which they emerged. The names of these characters are not arbitrary; they carry deep linguocultural significance, blending linguistic patterns with cultural values and storytelling traditions. This article delves into the characteristics of these names, exploring how they reflect English identity, historical context, and moral frameworks.

One of the most iconic names in English fairy tales is “Jack,” as seen in “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Linguistically, “Jack” is a common English diminutive of “John,” a name rooted in Old English and Norman traditions, meaning “God is gracious.” Culturally, Jack embodies the everyman—a resourceful, brave, and cunning figure who rises from humble beginnings to triumph over adversity. This name’s frequent recurrence across tales like “Jack and the Giant Killer” underscores its role as a cultural archetype, symbolizing the English valorization of individual wit and perseverance. The simplicity of “Jack” also aligns with the oral tradition, making it easily memorable for storytelling.

In contrast, the name “Cinderella” carries a more poetic and symbolic weight. Derived from the French “Cendrillon” (meaning “little cinders”), it was adapted into English fairy tale discourse through Charles Perrault’s influence and later popularized by the Grimm brothers’ adaptations. Linguistically, the name blends the mundane (“cinders,” linked to ash and domestic labor) with a diminutive suffix (“-ella”), suggesting fragility and transformation. Culturally, “Cinderella” reflects English ideals of resilience and moral reward, as the character’s journey from servitude to royalty mirrors societal aspirations for upward mobility and justice. The name itself becomes a narrative device, encapsulating her story in a single word.

Lesser-known characters also reveal intriguing linguocultural traits. In “The Black Bull of Norrway,” the titular “Black Bull” lacks a personal name, instead bearing a descriptive title rooted in Old English and Scots linguistic traditions. “Bull” evokes strength and masculinity, while “black” hints at mystery or danger—qualities tied to the natural world in English folklore. Culturally, this name reflects a reverence for pastoral life and the untamed forces of nature, common in rural English storytelling. The absence of a human name distances the character from ordinary society, emphasizing its mythical role as a transformative figure in the heroine’s quest.

Similarly, “The Fisherman and His Wife” features unnamed protagonists defined by their roles rather than personal names. Linguistically, this convention draws from Old English occupational naming practices (e.g., “Smith,” “Baker”), where identity is tied to societal function. Culturally, the fisherman represents humility and simplicity—values prized in English moral tales—while his wife’s lack of a name underscores her role as a cautionary figure against greed. This anonymity enhances the universality of the tale, allowing listeners to project their own experiences onto the characters.

The linguistic characteristics of these names often incorporate archaic or dialectal elements, enriching their cultural texture. For instance, “Fee-fi-fo-fum” from “Jack and the Beanstalk” is a rhythmic chant with roots in Middle English, reflecting the oral tradition’s reliance on mnemonic devices. Such phrases, paired with Jack’s name, evoke a sense of antiquity and connect the tale to England’s medieval past. Likewise, the use of alliteration in names like “Tom Thumb” employs a poetic device common in Anglo-Saxon literature, enhancing the character’s memorability and linking him to English linguistic heritage.

Symbolism in naming is another key feature. Names like “Red Riding Hood” or “Snow White” are overtly descriptive, using colors and imagery to signify purity, danger, or innocence—themes central to English cultural narratives. “Red” connotes both vitality and vulnerability, while “Snow White” suggests unblemished goodness, aligning with Christian influences in English folklore. These names serve as shorthand for the characters’ moral and narrative arcs, a tradition that simplifies complex ideas for broad audiences.

The cultural significance of these names lies in their ability to encode societal values and historical contexts. “Jack” represents the common man’s potential, a nod to England’s egalitarian undercurrents, while “Cinderella” reflects the transformative power of virtue, resonating with Victorian ideals of self-improvement. Animalistic or role-based names like “Black Bull” or “Fisherman” tie the tales to agrarian roots and moral didacticism, emphasizing lessons over individuality. Together, these naming conventions create a tapestry of English identity, blending linguistic evolution with cultural storytelling.

In conclusion, the names of English fairy tale characters are far more than labels; they are linguocultural artifacts that reveal the interplay of language, tradition, and societal values. Through their simplicity, symbolism, and historical resonance, names like “Jack,” “Cinderella,” and “The Black Bull” illuminate the richness of English folklore. By analyzing these names, we gain insight into how fairy tales preserve linguistic heritage and reflect the collective consciousness of the English people, ensuring their enduring appeal across generations.

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