



# LINGUOPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH FAIRY TALE “NIX NOUGHT NOTHING”

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## Introduction

Linguopragmatics which is one of the trends of communicative linguistics can be defined as a science studying language factors within the sphere of human activity with an accent on psychological, social and cultural aspects of language functioning. The study of a literary text from the point of view of pragmatics is one of the urgent areas of modern linguistics, because it opens up inexhaustible opportunities for comprehending the totality of linguistic tools that operate at the text level and aimed to the reader [4,].

The purpose of text pragmatics is represented as «study of a language in the context” – social, situational etc., i.e. research of a language as means of communication”[2, p.7]. Arutyunova defines pragmatics in the following way: "pragmatics (from Greek pragma, pragmatos – business, action) – is the research area in semiotics and linguistics, which studies functioning of language signs in the speech" [3].

"Nix Nought Nothing" is a traditional English fairy tale that has its roots in the oral storytelling tradition. This means it has been passed down through generations by word of mouth before being documented. The oral tradition often involves embellishments and variations that reflect the storyteller's era and audience. The story likely originated in a time when folktales were a primary form of entertainment and moral instruction. It features common folktale motifs such as magical beings, quests, and trials. The tale is part of English folklore, which includes a rich tapestry of stories involving supernatural elements, moral lessons, and cultural values. The characters and settings may reflect English countryside life, beliefs, and customs.

Fairy tales often convey moral lessons. In "Nix Nought Nothing," themes of loyalty, bravery, and cleverness are prominent. These reflect the cultural values of the time, emphasizing virtues that were admired in society.

The story may reflect traditional gender roles prevalent in the society when it was told. The male protagonist often undergoes trials and displays bravery, while female characters may embody virtues like kindness and loyalty or serve as magical helpers.

"Nix Nought Nothing" follows the conventions of the fairy tale genre, including a clear distinction between good and evil, the presence of magical elements, and a narrative structure that leads to a resolution or moral conclusion.

Comparing this story with other fairy tales from different cultures can provide insights into common themes and unique cultural variations. For example, motifs of impossible tasks and magical assistance appear in many global folktales. These tales typically feature magical elements, mythical creatures, and enchanted worlds. The presence of a giant, magical transformations, and the ultimate happy ending categorize "Nix Naught Nothing" as a wonder tale.

## Materials and discussion

The tale revolves around a king and queen who are unable to have children. Eventually, they have a son, but in return, the queen must promise to give him to a giant. When the time comes, the giant claims the boy, who is named Nix Naught Nothing because he is to have no name until the giant names him. The boy grows up in the giant's castle and eventually escapes with the help of the giant's daughter. After a series of adventures and challenges, including being transformed into a horse and then back into a human, Nix Naught Nothing is finally reunited with his family and marries the giant's daughter.

Fairy tales often rely on certain pragmatic conventions that help convey meaning, intention, and cultural values. Grice was the first to note this ubiquitous feature of language use and also the first to present a philosophical analysis. He begins by noting that conversations are usually to some degree cooperative enterprises. He then formulates the Cooperative Principle: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" [1, 26].

At a more detailed level, he distinguishes four categories with more specific maxims. The category of Quantity includes two injunctions, one to make your contribution as informative as is required, and the second to make it no more informative than is required. The category of Quality is governed by a supermaxim: "Try to make your contribution one that is true". The category of Relation has a single maxim, "Be relevant", while the final category of Manner has a short "super" maxim "Be perspicuous" which has various submaxims [1, 27].

Here are some key aspects of pragmatics in fairy tales: Grice's Maxims

### 1. Maxim of Quantity

- Provide the right amount of information.
- Example: When the protagonist explains his situation to the giant's daughter, he gives just enough information about his background and predicament to garner her sympathy and assistance. This adherence to the maxim of quantity helps establish trust and cooperation between them.
- Non-example: If the protagonist were to give a lengthy, unnecessary history of his entire life, it would violate the maxim of quantity by providing too much information.

### 2. Maxim of Quality

- Do not provide false information or information that is not supported by evidence.
- Example: When the giant threatens the protagonist, he makes it clear that he will keep his word if certain conditions are not met. The giant's threats are believable and align with the maxim of quality because they are based on his demonstrated power.
- Non-example: If the protagonist had lied about his capabilities or background, it would violate the maxim of quality, making any future negotiations or interactions less credible.

### 3. Maxim of Relation (Relevance)

- Be relevant in the conversation.
- Example: The giant's daughter providing the protagonist with useful advice and tools to escape is directly relevant to his situation, adhering to the maxim of relation.
- Non-example: If a character were to talk about unrelated topics during a crucial escape plan, it would violate the maxim of relation.

### 4. Maxim of Manner

- Avoid ambiguity and obscurity; be clear and orderly.

- Example: The instructions given by the giant's daughter on how to use the tools and tricks to defeat the giant are clear and unambiguous, which aligns with the maxim of manner.
- Non-example: If the instructions had been vague or confusing, it would violate the maxim of manner, leading to potential failure in the protagonist's plan.

### Irony and Sarcasm

- Example: When the giant sarcastically calls the protagonist a "clever lad" after capturing him, it is clear that he does not actually think the protagonist is clever. This use of sarcasm highlights the giant's contempt and the power imbalance between them.
- Example: The giant's daughter might use irony when she comments on the "safety" of living with a giant who eats humans. The implied meaning is the opposite of the literal statement, showcasing the danger she faces.

### Implicit Information

- Example: The protagonist's name, "Nix Naught Nothing," implicitly suggests his initial lack of importance or value. It sets up a narrative arc where he must prove his worth and significance through his actions.
- Example: The loyalty and bravery of the giant's daughter are often implied through her actions rather than explicitly stated. Her willingness to help the protagonist at great personal risk conveys her character traits implicitly.

Analyzing these elements in the context of "Nix Naught Nothing" allows for a deeper understanding of how language functions to convey meaning, character intentions, and cultural values within the story.

Analyzing the speech act "*There is a stable seven miles long and seven miles broad, and it has not been cleaned for seven years, and you must clean it to-morrow, or I will have you for my supper*" [2,26] involves breaking down its components and understanding its function within the context of the story.

### Speech Act Components

1. Locutionary Act: The actual utterance and its apparent meaning.
  - Utterance: "There is a stable seven miles long and seven miles broad, and it has not been cleaned for seven years, and you must clean it to-morrow, or I will have you for my supper."
  - Apparent Meaning: Describing the stable and giving a command with a threat.
2. Illocutionary Act: The intended function of the utterance by the speaker.
  - Function: The giant is issuing a command (directive) with a threat (commissive) to ensure compliance. The giant's intention is to coerce the protagonist into cleaning the stable by using the threat of eating him as leverage.
3. Perlocutionary Act: The effect of the utterance on the listener.
  - Effect: The protagonist is likely to feel fear and urgency, understanding that his survival depends on completing the seemingly impossible task. This could prompt him to seek help or devise a clever plan to clean the stable.

### Analysis Using Grice's Maxims

1. Maxim of Quantity:  
Adherence: The giant provides sufficient detail about the task (size of the stable, duration of neglect) to make the command clear. No unnecessary information is given.
2. Maxim of Quality:  
Adherence: The giant presumably speaks truthfully about the state of the stable and the consequences. The threat is credible given the giant's power and previous behavior in the story.

### 3. Maxim of Relation:

Adherence: The command and the threat are directly relevant to the protagonist's immediate situation. The information provided is pertinent to the task he must undertake.

### 4. Maxim of Manner:

Adherence: The giant's instructions are clear and straightforward, without ambiguity. The task is described in a way that leaves no room for misunderstanding.

### Pragmatic Analysis

#### 1. Contextual Factors:

The giant, as a powerful and menacing figure, uses his authority to impose an impossible task on the protagonist. The cultural context of fairy tales often involves such challenges as a test of the protagonist's wit and resourcefulness.

#### 2. Conversational Implicature:

The giant implies that failure to complete the task will result in death. The protagonist understands that the giant's commands are non-negotiable and must be taken seriously. The underlying implication is that the protagonist needs to find a clever solution or external help to survive.

#### 3. Politeness Strategies:

The giant uses a direct and blunt approach, typical of a higher-power figure in a hierarchical relationship. There is no attempt to soften the command or show politeness, reflecting the power dynamics at play.

#### Irony and Sarcasm

While the giant's speech is not explicitly ironic or sarcastic, the sheer impossibility of the task adds a layer of implicit irony. The giant knows the task is impossible, highlighting his cruelty and the hopelessness of the protagonist's situation.

### Conclusion

By analyzing this speech act, we see how the giant uses language to exert power and control. The combination of a detailed command and a lethal threat effectively communicates the urgency and seriousness of the task, fitting into the broader narrative of the protagonist facing and overcoming impossible challenges through cleverness or external aid. This analysis highlights the intersection of language, power, and survival within the story.

To analyze the contextual factors in which the story "Nix Nought Nothing" is told and understood, we should examine various elements that influence its narrative and reception. These factors include historical, cultural, social, and literary contexts, which shape the story's themes, characters, and plot.

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