

Roald Dahl's Lexis:

The BFG has many lexical features that are very similar in nature and style. He uses a very simple, basic and colloquial language throughout the book. His simple descriptive style with colloquial lexis is modern and unpretentious. Dahl strives to create semantic fields with images of death, cannibalism, war and murder in this tale for children. He describes the giants using terms of brutality and death, using their names to describe their eating habits and techniques when eating humans.

'Fleshlumpeater', for example is highly evocative as a compound word for he tears lumps of flesh from his victims. The semantic field and use of imagery in terms of butchery, murder and violence is consistently maintained throughout the novel but it does not have a troubling effect on the child readership.

The purpose of the book is to be read aloud to children, this suggests the development into an oral tradition in families as a piece of children's literature. The BFG is ubiquitous and is read all over England and probably in most English speaking countries around the world. Words from the BFG are used as part of a specific lexis within families. I suggest that such use is phatic and acts as an affirmation of familial identity for children and parents.

In order for Dahl to put emphasis on his characters he uses specific dialects. The BFG speaks with a West Country accent which in turn makes him sound slow.

"Just because I is a giant, you think I is a man-gobbling cannybull!"

His incorrect use of grammar such as 'I is' infers a lack of education. His language is very childlike which enables the child readers to become engrossed in the book and allows them to relate to the BFG. His lexis has developed from the holophrastic stage through to the point where his language resembles the speech of a 5-year old. His sentences share syntax but his grasp of verbs is very similar to theirs. Many aspects of the BFG's dialect are revealed in the coining's which may originate from the West Country.

He uses the word **'human beans'** for human beings and the lexical formation of children is **'chiddlers'**. The humour of the BFG's mispronunciation lies in the idea of the collocation human beans. The BFG's lexis and dialect is phatic to all the giants in the story. So we can construe that they can be identified as a group. In addition, we assume that the other giants are 'cerebrally challenged'. The **'Bloodbottler'** in particular, has a very similar dialect to the BFG except he tends to use more coining's. The bloodbottler is less articulate than the BFG as he reverses phrases and collocations to make them sound cruder but yet simple.

Dahl uses a number of portmanteau words throughout the book. The names of the giants are words blended together to create a feeling of power over the humans. The BFG uses many coining's throughout the book which again suggests his lack of education, such as the word **'babblement'** which means conversation of a meaningless nature. He uses the word **'murderful'** which is a mixture of murder and the suffix 'ful', this again suggests the power of the giants. In contrast to murderful he uses the words **'whopsey whiffling'**. The word whiffling may have been borrowed from Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll. Whiffling suggests movement in both

Jabberwocky and The BFG. However, Dahl uses it for its onomatopoeic qualities and mixes it with 'whopsey' to form an alliterative rhyme. Similarly the word 'scrumdiddleyumptious' which was used in Dahl's previous book 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' also has onomatopoeic qualities. By adding 'diddley' in between 'scrumptious' creates an elongated word with a sing song nature.