Finding The Data Hyponym and An Analysis of Novel "The Wild Robot by Peter Brown"

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the semantic relationships of hyponyms in Peter Brown's novel, The Wild Robot, focusing on how specific word choices contribute to meaning and categorization within the narrative. With a qualitative approach and based on the theories of Cruse (1986) and Lyons (1995), 20 hyponymic expressions were found in the novel. These expressions were then grouped into semantic fields, including animals, plants, technology, and residences. For example, the words "otter," "berries," and "solar panels" were analyzed for their hierarchical relationship to common words (hypernyms) through Cruse's "kind of" test. The results show that choosing specific vocabulary helps clarify meaning, strengthens worldbuilding, and deepens characterization. Primarily in children's literature, clarity and concreteness of meaning greatly assist the reader's understanding process. In addition to being a linguistic tool, hyponyms act as cognitive devices that help readers organize information in narratives. These findings suggest that the structure of hyponyms enriches themes such as identity, nature, and attachment, thereby enhancing the reading experience. This study contributes to the study of lexical semantics, especially in understanding the role of hyponymy in multimodal narrative texts.

Keywords: Semantics, Lexical Relations, Hyponymy, The Wild Robot

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INTRODUCTION

Semantic analysis is a fundamental branch of linguistics that focuses on the study of meaning. Analysis of meaning, or semantics, is a crucial branch of linguistics that examines how meaning is formed and utilized in language. This study not only examines the meaning of words individually but also the relationships between words that form a network of meaning within the language system. In lexical semantics, understanding relations such as synonymy, antonymy, homonymy, and hyponymy is key to understanding how language structures and conveys information effectively (Cruse, 1986; Saeed, 2016).

One type of lexical relation that attracts attention is hyponymy, which is the relationship between a more specific word (hyponym) and a more general word (hypernym). For example, the word "goose" is a hyponym of "animal," illustrating how the human mind organizes concepts in a structured manner. In communication, using more specific words helps convey information more precisely and contextually (Murphy, 2010; Saeed, 2016).

Hyponymy plays a crucial role in creating a detailed story world in literary works, such as novels. The author uses the hyponymy structure to present clear and specific descriptions, which support the depiction of the theme and emotions of the story. Unlike audiovisual media, novels rely entirely on language to build the reader's imagination, so word choice is crucial (Cruse, 1986; Lyons, 1995).

The Wild Robot novel by Peter Brown (2016) is one example of children's literature rich in appropriate semantics. The story of Roz, a robot stranded on an island who learns to adapt to the natural environment and establish relationships with the animals there, shows many specific word choices. Words such as "otter," "pine tree," "bear," and "cliff" demonstrate how the author employs hyponymy to describe the island's ecosystem and construct a vivid narrative.

This novel is particularly suitable for young readers, thanks to its simple language and rich meaning. Careful word choice helps clarify the story's content and strengthens understanding of the theme. The book achieves profound lexical precision through hyponymy, thereby enhancing the reader's bond with the natural world depicted (Bateman, 2014; Baldry & Thibault, 2006).

Based on the linguistic and literary background, this study will analyze the use of hyponymy in *The Wild Robot* using a lexical-semantic approach. The focus is to identify the hyponymy structure in the narrative and examine how it contributes to the story's development and the delivery of the theme. Thus, this study expands the application of semantic analysis in children's literature rich in multimodality (Jurafsky & Martin, 2023; Cruse, 1986).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies how meaning is formed and understood in the use of language. One of its branches, namely lexical semantics, focuses on how words relate to each other and contribute to meaning in various contexts. Cruse (1986) stated that relationships between words, such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy, play an essential role in forming a structured vocabulary system. These relationships are essential for ensuring effective communication, as emphasized by Saeed (2016), who views them as crucial to constructing coherent and meaningful discourse.

Among these relationships, hyponymy attracts attention because it illustrates the relationship between a more specific word (hyponym) and a more general word (hypernym), for example, "daisy" as a type of "flower." Murphy (2010) explains that hyponymy illustrates how vocabulary is organized

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hierarchically, where more specific words are categorized under general terms. This structure reflects how humans think in grouping concepts, allowing flexibility in conveying information depending on the context.

Using hyponyms in stories or narrative texts helps enrich descriptions and strengthen text cohesion. More specific words than general terms can build a sharper picture and make the story feel more alive. According to Saeed (2016), choosing the right words creates strong images and makes readers more involved. In multimodal texts such as picture books or films, visual elements often support the proper lexical selection, helping readers capture meaning verbally and visually (Bateman, 2014).

Children's literature usually uses concrete and straightforward language to make it easy for young readers to understand. Bateman (2014) states that children's story writers choose vocabulary appropriate to children's cognitive development while introducing new concepts. The use of hyponyms such as "otter," "fern," or "hill" not only clarifies the setting of the story but also encourages young readers to understand the grouping of concepts based on categories, which is essential for their language and thinking development.

Although semantic studies have discussed meaning in multimodal and narrative texts, research highlighting hyponymy in children's texts is still limited. Baldry and Thibault (2006) argue that meaning in multimodal narratives emerges from the combination of language and images, where the accuracy of word choice plays a crucial role. Chandler (2017) adds that careful lexical choice enriches meaning. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by analyzing how hyponymy functions in the narrative structure of *The Wild Robot*.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This study uses a qualitative approach to examine the relationship between the meanings of words based on the theory of hyponymy explained by Cruse (1986) and Lyons (1995). The primary focus of this study is how vocabulary in children's novels is arranged based on the hierarchy of meaning. Hyponymy here refers to the relationship between a more specific word and a more general word, where the more specific word is included in the scope of the meaning of the more general word. For example, the word "gosling" is included in the large category "animal," and "clover" is included in "plant."

The researcher highlighted certain parts of the novel *The Wild Robot* that contain words of the hyponym type, then grouped the words into semantic categories such as animals, residences, transportation, and so on. With the help of Cruse and Lyons' theory, this study explains how words form a semantic structure based on the level of generality of their meaning. To ensure this relationship, Cruse's "kind of" test is also used, namely by seeing whether a word can be included in the framework "X is a kind of Y."

For example, in this novel, characters such as "bear" or "otter" are included in the "animal" group. The author uses these animals to build realistic interactions between the robot (Roz) and its environment. Through this analysis, the study aims to show how vocabulary structures in the story can enrich meaning and shape readers' understanding of the fictional world in the novel.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents an analysis of hyponymy based on twenty selected expressions from Peter Brown's novel *The Wild Robot*. Hyponymy is a lexical-semantic relation in which a specific term (the

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hyponym) is included within the meaning of a more general term (the hypernym), as defined by Cruse (1986). This hierarchical relationship enables the systematic organization of vocabulary, allowing language users to classify words according to levels of specificity and generality. Analyzing these hyponymic structures demonstrates how they contribute to organizing meaning by providing lexical precision and enhancing semantic clarity. This study highlights the vital role of hyponymy in how information is categorized, communicated, and interpreted in written discourse.

NO	DATA	THE TYPE	ANALYSIS
1	"*Brightbill*, you are my son now." Speaker: Roz	Animal	In this utterance, *Brightbill* is called a gosling, a young goose. The lexical item gosling is a hyponym of the more general term animal, as it satisfies Cruse's (1986) "kind of" test: "a gosling is a kind of animal" is a true statement. The use of a specific hyponym here contributes to the semantic precision of the narrative by identifying Brightbill not merely as a living creature but as a particular species at a specific life stage. This choice deepens the emotional and thematic layers of the story by highlighting the interspecies bonding between Roz (a robot) and Brightbill (a gosling). The specificity of the term reinforces the contrast between artificial and natural life forms, which is central to the narrative's exploration of family, identity, and belonging.
2	"I am a *fox*. I do foxy things." Speaker: Fox	Animal	The term fox in this sentence is a clear hyponym of the superordinate category animal. According to Cruse (1986), hyponymy is established when a specific term can be inserted into the frame: "X is a kind of Y," yielding a valid statement—here, "a fox is a kind of animal." The speaker's self-identification with a specific species (fox) adds character voice and sharpens the listener's mental image. This lexical choice emphasizes instinctual behavior (foxy things), aligning the character's identity with commonly associated traits of foxes, such as cunning or agility. Therefore, using a hyponym serves semantic clarity and contributes to character development by evoking cultural connotations embedded within the term.
3	"Hello, *otters*, my name is Roz." Speaker: Roz	Animal	In this sentence, otters are addressed directly. The term otter functions as a hyponym of the broader category of animal and satisfies Cruse's (1986) "kind of" test: "An otter is a kind of animal." Using a specific species name rather than a general term like animals allows for increased semantic specificity and supports the narrative's worldbuilding, wherein different animal species have distinct roles and personalities. This lexical precision fosters a more vivid and relational interaction, marking Roz's engagement with the natural world. By naming the species, the speaker acknowledges their social identity and status within

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			the ecosystem, enhancing the ecological context and character dynamics.
4	"I do not understand you, *bears*," Speaker: Roz	Animal	Bears are large mammals, forming a distinct subclass under "animal." The term bear is a hyponym of the broader category animal, as demonstrated by Cruse's (1986) "kind of" test: "A bear is a kind of animal" yields a genuine and meaningful statement. The speaker's use of a specific term, rather than a generic label, like creatures or animals, sharpens the semantic focus, allowing the listener to visualize a distinct species immediately. This specificity enhances the narrative's descriptive clarity and reflects the speaker's interaction with a particular group, implying that species distinctions carry communicative or behavioral significance in the text. Thus, the hyponym serves both taxonomic precision and narrative realism.
5	The *crab* looked up and immediately showed off his giant claws.	Animal	Crabs are crustaceans, a subgroup of arthropods, which are animals. Crab functions as a hyponym of animal, passing Cruse's (1986) "kind of" test: "A crab is a kind of animal." The term crab provides precise zoological identification, situating the creature within the broader animal kingdom while emphasizing its distinct characteristics, particularly its claws, which are referenced in the sentence. This lexical specificity enhances the vividness and biological accuracy of the description. The narrative achieves semantic precision and sensory detail by employing a hyponym, enriching the worldbuilding by anchoring it in recognizable animal behavior and morphology.
6	*Seagulls* squawked from their cliff nests...	Animal	Seagulls are a hyponym of the general term animal, as it satisfies the "kind of" test: "A seagull is a kind of animal." More specifically, seagulls are a kind of bird, a hyponym of animal, illustrating a nested taxonomic hierarchy. The lexical choice of seagulls allows for a vivid auditory and spatial image. This species' squawking and nesting behavior is characteristic and helps set the scene. According to Cruse (1986), hyponyms provide more detailed and semantically richer information than their superordinate. In this case, using a hyponym grounds the action in a naturalistic and ecologically plausible setting.
7	A *moose* waded through a stream.	Animal	"Moose" is a specific animal species, thus a hyponym of "animal," conforming to Cruse's (1986) definition by passing the "kind of" test: "A moose is a kind of animal." The term provides semantic specificity and ecological context, allowing readers to imagine a large, herbivorous mammal in its natural habitat. By using the specific term moose, the author conveys more than the presence of an animal; size, habitat, and behavior are implied. This hyponym enriches the text by

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			adding narrative precision and evoking a particular biome, reinforcing the environmental and thematic realism of the scene.
8	A flock of *sparrows* turned in perfect unison…	Animal	"Sparrow" is a specific type of bird (animal), making it a hyponym of "animal.". According to Cruse (1986), a hyponym must pass the "kind of" test: "a sparrow is a kind of animal" and "a sparrow is a kind of bird" are both valid and meaningful. This specific lexical choice provides taxonomic clarity and enhances the imagery of the sentence. The collective noun flock paired with sparrows also contributes to a visual and dynamic depiction of coordinated movement in nature. Using a hyponym, the speaker or narrator offers a more vivid and ecologically accurate picture, improving the semantic richness of the narrative and inviting readers into a more immersive sensory experience.
9	Blurry shapes suddenly cut through the robot's vision... *vultures* circling...	Animal	"Vulture" is a specific type of bird (animal), making it a hyponym of "animal" and fulfilling Cruse's (1986) "kind of" test: "a vulture is a kind of animal." The mention of vultures introduces a specific species known for scavenging behavior, which often carries symbolic and thematic weight in literature typically associated with danger, death, or decay. Using this hyponym instead of the superordinate birds or animals, the narrative gains biological specificity and a more profound atmospheric effect. This choice enhances semantic detail and emotional resonance, illustrating how hyponymy can serve aesthetic and thematic functions in addition to classification.
10	"The *Recovery Ship* is here to take me back." Speaker: Roz	Transport/Ship/Vehicle	A recovery ship is a special kind of ship that is used to retrieve something or to provide support. A recovery ship is a kind of ship. While it is a form of technology, it is primarily classified as a type of transport or vehicle. Using Cruse's (1986) "kind of" test, a recovery ship is a kind of ship, confirming the hyponymic relationship. A recovery ship is a specialized vessel designed for retrieval missions or support operations, making it a more specific lexical item within the transportation domain. Its use in this sentence adds technical and narrative precision, highlighting the specialized function of the vehicle in question. In semantic terms, the specificity provided by this hyponym contributes to thematic clarity, particularly in a science fiction or technologically advanced setting, reinforcing both the character's context and the speaker's perspective on technology as a functional extension of mobility.
11	"These *solar panels* will recharge my energy." Speaker: Roz	Technology	"Solar panels" are a specific technology that converts sunlight into energy. The "kind of" test applies: a solar panel is a technology. According to Cruse (1986), hyponymy relies on a taxonomic hierarchy, where the hyponym (solar panels)

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			occupies a lower level than its hypernym (technology). The relationship satisfies Cruse's transitivity criterion: solar panels are a type of energy technology, a subset of the broader category "technology." In the novel, Roz's dependence on solar panels highlights their functional specificity within the hypernym's scope, reinforcing their role as a hyponym.
12	The *robot*'s computer brain booted up.	Technology	"Robot" is a specific type of technology or machine, making it a hyponym of "technology.". Within the framework of lexical semantics, hyponymy refers to the relationship between a more specific term and its broader category (Cruse, 1986). In this case, the word *"robot"* is a hyponym of the broader category *"technology*," as it represents a specific technological innovation designed to perform tasks automatically. While "technology" encompasses a wide range of tools, systems, and machines, "robot" refers to a programmable machine often equipped with sensors, actuators, and decision-making abilities. This relationship helps categorize and structure vocabulary meaningfully, allowing for clear distinctions between general concepts and their specialized forms. In narratives like *The Wild Robot*, using the term "robot" grounds the character within a technological context, contributing to the thematic contrast between artificial intelligence and nature.
13	"Do you require *shelter*?" Speaker: Roz	Habitat/Dwelling	"Shelter" is a specific form of habitat or dwelling. It is a place where living beings can stay. According to Cruse (1986), a hyponym must satisfy the "kind of" test: "A shelter is a kind of dwelling" is a valid and coherent statement. The use of shelter specifies a temporary or protective type of dwelling commonly associated with emergency or environmental conditions. This lexical choice narrows the semantic field, emphasizing the functional and urgent nature of the habitat being referenced. The specificity contributes to the narrative tone, suggesting concern or assistance and ecological clarity, demonstrating how hyponymy can enrich communication by combining conceptual classification with contextual meaning.
14	"Look, that is the thing that destroyed my *dam.*" Speaker: Beaver	Habitat/Dwelling	A "dam" is a specific type of animal dwelling, particularly for beavers. Thus, it is a hyponym of "habitat," particularly within the context of animal-made structures. As Cruse (1986) posits, the "kind of" test confirms this relationship: "A dam is a kind of dwelling," particularly for beavers. The term carries semantic precision and species-specific ecological relevance, as dams are shelters and engineering feats constructed by beavers. The speaker's use of dam rather than a generic term like

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			home provides taxonomic clarity and species identity. In narrative terms, the choice of this hyponym signals a deeper connection between the speaker and their constructed environment, adding emotional weight to the sentence and grounding it in ecological realism.
15	"Let us look for *clovers* by the stream." Speaker: Deer	Plants	According to Cruse (1986) states that hyponymy is a central relation in lexical semantics, structuring vocabulary hierarchies. A hyponym is a word whose meaning is included in a more general term (a superordinate). For example, "rose" is a hyponym of "flower". In this sentence, the word "clovers" is a specific kind of plant. Following Cruse's theory, "clover" is a hyponym because its meaning is included within the broader category of "plants." The "kind of" test applies: a clover is a plant. This clover clearly fits within the category of plants since it grows from the ground, has leaves, and is often found in nature like other plants. It is a straightforward example of a hyponym in the plant category.
16	"I cannot hunt. However, I could gather *berries*." Speaker: Berries	Fruit	"Berries" are a specific type of fruit, making them a hyponym of "fruit.". As defined by Cruse (1986), hyponymy is a lexical-semantic relationship in which a more specific term (hyponym) can be substituted in the sentence frame "X is a kind of Y" to yield a true statement. In this case, "a berry is a kind of fruit" satisfies the "kind of" test. The speaker's use of the more specific term berries over the general term fruit provides concreteness and immediacy to the discourse. It narrows the referential scope and evokes particular types of small, often wild, edible fruits, contributing to a tone of simplicity and survival. The lexical choice highlights the character's role in the ecosystem, distinguishing gathering (a non-violent act) from hunting, and reveals preferences in sustenance that may be shaped by physical ability or moral values. Thus, the hyponym serves semantic precision and supports character development and thematic nuance.
17	"Tell that to *my sisters, my brothers, my real mom*." Speaker: BrightBill	Family	"Sister," "brother," and "mom" are specific types of family members, and they each pass the "kind of" test: a sister is a kind of family member, a brother is a kind of family member, and a mom is a kind of family member. Therefore, all three are hyponyms of the hypernym "family." According to Cruse (1986), a defining feature of hyponymy is that the specific term must satisfy the "kind of" test, e.g., "a sister is a kind of family member," which each of these terms does. Using multiple kinship-specific hyponyms instead of the general hypernym family intensifies the emotional resonance of the utterance. It adds a personal and relational depth that the abstract term family alone might lack. Each

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			hyponym carries distinct social and emotional roles within the family structure, allowing the speaker, Brightbill, to underscore individual relationships and their emotional significance. This linguistic specificity enhances the narrative's psychological realism and gives the audience a clearer understanding of the speaker's social world. Thus, the deployment of hyponymy here conveys semantic clarity and reinforces themes of identity and belonging.
18	"I will register that as a *ten*." Speaker: Roz	Number	"Ten" is a specific number within the general category of numbers. It is a hyponym because it is a member of the set "numbers." According to Cruse (1986), a hyponym is a term that denotes a subclass of a more general class (superordinate). This means that the meaning of the hyponym is included in the meaning of the hypernym. For instance, "ten" is a specific value within the general category "number." In this sentence, "ten" is a particular instance of the broader category "number." It fits Cruse's criteria for hyponymy, as "ten" is one kind of number. Therefore, "ten" is a hyponym of "number." Rather than just a random word, "ten" represents a clear numerical value within the concept of numbers. It makes sense to place it under "number" because it is a universally recognized part of that system.
19	"Stop jamming your tail in your sister's *eye*." Speaker: Pinktail	Part of Body	"Eye" is a specific body part. It fits the inclusion test: an eye is a body part. Cruse (1986) states that hyponymy structures vocabulary hierarchies by grouping specific terms under broader categories. A word is a hyponym when its meaning is entirely included in the definition of a more general term. For example, "eye" is a kind of body part. In this sentence, "eye" refers to a specific body part. According to Cruse's theory, "eye" is a hyponym of "part of the body" because its meaning is contained within that broader category. It is interesting how even something as specific as "eye" fits neatly under the category of body parts. This shows how hyponymy helps us classify language and meaning more systematically, especially in anatomy.
20	"Stop jamming your *tail* in your sister's eye." Speaker: Pinktail	Animal Body	"Tail" is a specific part of an animal's body. It is a hyponym because every tail is a body part, but not every body part is a tail. According to Cruse's (1986) theory, hyponymy relationships help establish a vocabulary hierarchy by placing more specific words below more general terms. The word *"tail"* refers to a particular part of an animal's body in this sentence. Semantically, *"tail"* is a hyponym of the general category *"animal body part"* because its meaning is part of that broader concept. This kind of relationship shows how language speakers organize meaning in their minds. Using the word *"tail"* not only clarifies the

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			meaning of the sentence but also indicates how hyponymy structures can convey information accurately. This classification is essential for linguistic clarity and compelling narrative depiction in texts involving animal characters such as The Wild Robot.

The analysis identified 20 hyponyms in The Wild Robot novel; each carefully used to provide precise and meaningful descriptions of characters, animals, plants, and settings. These hyponyms include specific terms such as "otter," "fox," "berries," "dam," and "tail," which appear throughout the story to create vivid and concrete images. Using specific words rather than general terms like "animal" or "fruit," the author helps readers visualize and connect with the natural environment Roz navigates. These hyponyms organize the narrative world clearly and enrich the storytelling by allowing detailed distinctions. In addition, these specific lexical choices make the story accessible and engaging for young readers, guiding their understanding of Roz's experiences and the forest ecosystem. Overall, using hyponyms in the novel plays a crucial role in shaping a clear, immersive, and educational narrative.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing twenty pairs of hyponyms and hypernyms in the novel *The Wild Robot* reveals a consistent pattern of meaning categorization according to Cruse's semantic theory (1986). Each hyponym, such as "gosling," "fox," or "bear," is under the general category "animal." This shows a hierarchical relationship where the meaning of a more specific word is included in a more general word, but not vice versa.

Cruse's theory emphasizes that hyponymy is not only a relationship of meaning but also a way of thinking to organize knowledge. In this novel, this can be seen in how the main character, Roz, begins to recognize her environment and understand the creatures around her through systematic categorization—for example, by calling Brightbill a "gosling" instead of just a "bird." Using specific words like this provides a stronger biological and emotional nuance.

In addition, the relationship patterns found show the transitional nature between levels of hyponyms—for example, "crab" is included in "crustacean" and then in "animal." This layered structure supports the building of the story's world more realistically and hierarchically while also depicting the development of Roz's understanding of nature. This consistent semantic approach also supports a deeper, more relevant, and more understandable narrative, especially for young readers.

Overall, the hyponymy in *The Wild Robot* helps organize meaning and reinforces the story's themes, such as the interconnectedness of humans, technology, and nature. The selection of appropriate and specific vocabulary supports the formation of a rich world and a narrative that contains educational value.

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