

## The Hierarchy of Meaning: Hyponym analysis in Guy de Maupassant's "The Necklace"

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### Abstract

*This research investigates the application of hyponymy in the short story The Necklace by Guy de Maupassant. The lexical relation of hyponymy defines how a specific word contains all the meaning of a broader general term. The research aims to demonstrate how semantic hierarchies create narrative meaning while strengthening symbolism throughout literary texts. The researcher conducts a descriptive qualitative analysis to identify and group 20 hyponymous words into categories such as food, jewelry, places, and professions. The story's interpretation becomes more complex through hyponymic structure, which creates multiple layers of meaning, especially regarding character development, social standing, and the protagonist's transformation.*

**Keywords:** hyponym, semantics, literature, The Necklace, Guy de Maupassant.

### INTRODUCTION

Hyponym is an essential semantic concept in semantic linguistics to establish categories and meaning classification systems. According to Cruse (2000), a hyponym is a lexical relation in which the meaning of a word is part of the meaning of another more general word. For example, 'pearl necklace' is a hyponym of 'jewelry.' The literary application of hyponyms enhances symbolic depth and enhances narrative illustration. The Necklace by Guy de Maupassant is the chosen text because it contains abundant symbolism about social status, materialism and character transformation, which can be analyzed through semantic vocabulary.

### METHOD

This research applies a qualitative-descriptive method through text analysis techniques. The collected data from The Necklace underwent semantic group classification. The research team identified hyponyms through contextual analysis before assigning them to their corresponding superordinate categories. The study draws primary references from Cruse (2000) and Murphy (2010), who developed theories about hyponymy.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

No	Data	Type	Analyze
1.	She saw first of all some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian cross...	Jewelry (bracelets, pearl necklace, Venetian cross)	These are all types of jewelry that fall under the broader object category. Hyponymy is used to show hierarchical structure in vocabulary (Murphy, 2010).
2.	He had awful trouble to get it. Every one	Event (ball)	'Ball' is a formal occasion, making it a hyponym of 'event.' Hyponyms form subclasses within general

	wants to go; it is very select...		categories (Cruse, 2000).
3.	She thought of the silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry...	Furnishing (tapestry)	'Tapestry' is a specific decorative object, hence a hyponym of 'furnishing.' The word hierarchy reflects class inclusion (Murphy, 2010).
4.	...the whispered gallantries... while you are eating the pink flesh of a trout or the wings of a quail.	Food (trout, quail)	'Trout' and 'quail' are specific kinds of food items. Hyponymy is categorized based on edible species (Cruse, 2000).
5.	She washed the dishes, using her rosy nails on the greasy pots and pans.	Kitchenware (pots, pans)	These items are kitchen tools and thus are hyponyms of 'kitchenware.' The semantic hierarchy structures vocabulary meaningfully (Murphy, 2010).
6.	...a superb necklace of diamonds...	Gemstone (diamonds)	'Diamond' is a type of gemstone. It is a hyponym of the general material category 'gemstone' (Cruse, 2000).
7.	She carried the slops down to the street every morning...	Waste (slops)	'Slops' represent a specific type of waste material and are hyponyms of 'waste.' Word classification uses this inclusion (Murphy, 2010).
8.	She dressed plainly because she could not dress well...	Clothing (dress)	'Dress' is a specific type of clothing, which makes it a hyponym of 'clothing' (Cruse, 2000).
9.	He uncovered the soup-tureen and declared with an enchanted air, 'Ah, the good pot-au-feu!'	Food (pot-au-feu)	'Pot-au-feu' is a French meat stew, a specific food item, and thus a hyponym of 'food' (Murphy, 2010).
10.	She tried on the ornaments before the glass...	Furniture (glass/mirror)	'Mirror' is a specific type of furniture accessory, a hyponym of 'furniture' (Cruse, 2000).
11.	Her husband came back about seven o'clock.	Time (seven o'clock)	'Seven o'clock' is a specific time of day and a hyponym of 'time' (Murphy, 2010).
12.	She had a friend, a former school-mate at the convent, who was rich...	Person (friend, school-mate)	'Friend' and 'school-mate' are types of people, hyponyms of 'person' (Cruse, 2000).
13.	He went to Police Headquarters, to the newspaper offices, to offer a reward...	Place (Police Headquarters, newspaper offices)	These are specific places, hyponyms of 'institution' or 'location' (Murphy, 2010).
14.	She sat down near the window, and she thought of that gay evening...	Time/Event (evening)	'Evening' is a part of the day, a hyponym of 'time' or 'event' depending on use (Cruse, 2000).
15.	They dismissed their servant...	Occupation (servant)	'Servant' is a job role or occupation, thus a hyponym of 'occupation' (Murphy, 2010).
16.	She rented a garret under the roof.	Place (garret)	'Garret' is a specific kind of small attic room, a hyponym of 'residence' (Cruse, 2000).
17.	She went to the fruiterer, the grocer, the butcher...	Occupation (fruiterer, grocer, butcher)	These are specific job types and thus hyponyms of the superordinate 'occupation' (Murphy, 2010).
18.	Her husband worked in the evening making a	Occupation (tradesman)	'Tradesman' is a specific occupation and a hyponym of 'worker' or 'occupation' (Cruse, 2000).

	fair copy of some tradesman's accounts...		
19. 1	She danced with intoxication, with passion...	Action (danced)	'Dance' is a specific physical action, a hyponym of 'movement' or 'activity' (Murphy, 2010).
20.	She removed the wraps, which covered her shoulders...	Clothing (wraps)	'Wraps' are specific clothing items and thus hyponyms of 'clothing' (Cruse, 2000).

## CONCLUSION

The hyponym in *The Necklace* serves dual purposes by creating linguistic effects while strengthening both narrative elements and symbolic meanings. The reader understands Mathilde's shift from a dream-filled woman to a reality-weary person through specific words, including pearl necklace, pot-au-feu, and slops. The hierarchical structures in language demonstrate how literature uses complex semantic systems to convey meaning.

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