

## **An Investigation of Cognitive Synonymy in the One Piece Live Action**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to describe the use of cognitive synonymy in the One Piece live-action film, focusing on how words with similar meanings are employed to reflect conceptual or mental similarities between expressions. The research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method. The data consisted of dialogues in selected scenes of the One Piece live-action film that contained instances of cognitive synonymy. The sources of data were the film scripts and video content. Techniques used to collect data included observation, documentation, and note-taking of relevant dialogues. Data analysis was carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The findings revealed 56 instances of cognitive synonymy, which were used to convey emotional tone, emphasize meaning, and support natural communication among characters. Each use of cognitive synonymy demonstrated how conceptual relationships between words shaped character interactions, narrative flow, and viewers' understanding. The study also highlighted that cognitive synonymy contributes to meaning variation, aids in character development, and provides valuable insights for English learners to recognize semantic nuances in audiovisual media.

**Keywords:** *Cognitive synonymy; Semantic study; One Piece live-action.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is a fundamental tool for human communication, enabling individuals to express thoughts, emotions, and social identity. Language is not only a medium for daily interactions but also a system of symbols that represent concepts and ideas. Fromkin et al. defines language as a system of vocal symbols composed of sounds, which, although arbitrary, are shared and understood within a community, allowing for communication and self-expression. Without language, humans would be unable to convey their intentions, feelings, or knowledge to others, whether in spoken or written form. Language, therefore, is both a social and cognitive phenomenon that shapes and reflects human thought and interaction (Fromkin et al., 2014).

One of the core areas in linguistic study is semantics, which focuses on meaning as an integral aspect of language alongside phonology and syntax (Hirshorn & Harris, 2022). Semantics investigates how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning, how meanings relate to one another, and how these relationships shape comprehension and communication. Beyond analyzing the lexical content of individual words, semantics considers how meaning emerges within larger linguistic contexts, accounting for factors such as syntactic structure,

speaker intention, and social conventions. From this perspective, semantics functions as a field that bridges formal linguistic analysis with practical language use, exploring how signs represent concepts, knowledge, or real-world phenomena (Eragamreddy, 2024). Kusmana categorizes meaning relations into several types, including synonymy, antonymy, polysemy, homonymy, hyponymy, hypernymy, and redundancy. Among these, synonymy holds particular significance because it demonstrates how multiple lexical items can express related or overlapping meanings, while still allowing for subtle differences in nuance, tone, or style (Umagandhi et al., 2017).

According to Cruse further clarifies that synonymy does not imply perfect equivalence; rather, it reflects a proximity of meaning that is often influenced by context, cultural factors, and the communicative goals of the speaker. By examining these relations, researchers can better understand how meaning is negotiated and represented within language, both in individual expressions and across broader textual or conversational contexts. Synonymy can be further classified into cognitive and contextual types. Cognitive synonyms reflect conceptual or mental equivalence between words, demonstrating how similar ideas can be represented with different linguistic forms. Contextual synonyms, on the other hand, rely on situational or conversational context for their interchangeability. Understanding this distinction is crucial for analyzing language use in spoken and written discourse, as it helps identify how speakers choose words to convey specific meanings, achieve stylistic effects, or reflect character traits (Maghfira & Ariyanti, 2014).

Media, especially films and television series, provide a rich context for examining synonymy. Dialogues in cinematic works often involve complex character interactions, emotional expressions, and nuanced narrative development, making them ideal for studying semantic relations. The *One Piece Live Action* adaptation is a globally recognized work with diverse characters and rich storytelling, offering an excellent dataset for analyzing cognitive synonymy. The dialogues in this adaptation reveal how characters express emotions, emphasize ideas, and convey personality through carefully chosen words. Despite the growing interest in media linguistics, research specifically addressing cognitive synonymy in cinematic dialogue remains limited, particularly in adaptations of popular media such as *One Piece*.

The researcher discovered several previous studies relating. The first study was conducted by Sheilla Orintin Septiria (2022) in her research entitled *A Semantics Analysis of Lexical Relation in English Textbook Grade X by Kemendikbud RI*. This study aimed to describe the types of lexical relations found in the Class X English textbook published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, focusing on hyponymy, synonymy, antonymy, polysemy, homonymy, and meronymy (Septiria, 2022). The second study, conducted by Juwita Yulianto (2020),

was entitled *The Semantical Analysis of Lexical Relation in the Song Lyrics Written by Alan Menken*. This research aimed to identify the types of lexical relations and determine the most dominant type found in selected song lyrics, including *I See the Light*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Whole New World*, and *Speechless* (Yulianto, 2022). The third study was conducted by Setianingrum et al. (2021) and entitled *The Use of Semantic Lexical Relation in Rowling’s Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. This research focused on synonyms, antonyms, and hyponyms in Rowling’s novel (Setianingrum et al., 2021).

While previous studies have generally examined a wide range of lexical relations across various textual contexts, such as textbooks, novels, and song lyrics, they often adopted a broad analytical approach and did not provide a detailed focus on a single type of lexical relation. In contrast, the present study, *Cognitive Synonymy in the One Piece Live Action Film*, specifically focuses on synonymy by analyzing the one type—cognitive synonyms—as defined by Cruse. This study further investigates the role and function of synonymy in shaping dialogue meaning, showing that synonymy serves not only as a stylistic device but also as a meaningful strategy to express emotion, construct character identity, and support narrative cohesion within the unique context of *One Piece Live Action*.

This study, therefore, focuses on the occurrence and function of cognitive synonyms in the dialogues of the main characters in *One Piece Live Action*. By examining these linguistic choices, the research aims to uncover how word selection reflects personality, conveys emotional subtleties, and supports narrative development. Ultimately, this study contributes to the fields of semantics and media linguistics by demonstrating the significance of cognitive synonymy in shaping audience perception, deepening understanding of character identity, and highlighting the intricate relationship between language and thought in cinematic storytelling.

## **METHODS**

### **Subjects of Research**

The subject of this study is the *One Piece* live-action series, which consists of eight episodes directed by Naoyuki Ito and released on August 31, 2023. Produced collaboratively by Tomorrow Studios and Netflix, with scripts written by Matt Owens and Steven Maeda, the series follows the adventures of Monkey D. Luffy, a young man with rubber-like abilities who aspires to become the King of the Pirates. Accompanied by his crew members—Zoro, Nami, Usopp, and Sanji.

### **Instruments**

In this study, the researcher employed documentation as the primary research instrument (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Documentation serves as a tool for

collecting data from existing sources, including records, reports, transcripts, videos, or other written materials, and is particularly suitable for research using an analytical approach (Moleong, 2019). For this research, the documents consisted of film scripts and dialogue transcripts from the One Piece live-action adaptation, which functioned as the main data source. These materials were analyzed to identify the use of contextual synonyms in the characters' dialogues, allowing the researcher to examine patterns of language use and how these linguistic choices contribute to characterization and narrative development within the series.

### Data Collection

In this research, the researcher both collected and analyzed the data to obtain the research findings. The data consist of words and descriptions rather than numbers, specifically focusing on the types of meaning relations in the dialogues of the One Piece live-action adaptation. The data collection involved several techniques: first, listening, in which the researcher observed and paid close attention to the language used in the film, taking notes on significant instances of meaning relations; second, audio and video recording, using prepared devices to capture the film for repeated viewing and more detailed analysis; and third, transcription, in which the dialogues were accurately converted into written text using a prepared template to facilitate systematic analysis of the language data. These combined techniques allowed the researcher to thoroughly examine how contextual synonyms appear and function in character dialogues and how they contribute to narrative and characterization within the series.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research were obtained through qualitative analysis of the main characters' dialogues in One Piece Live Action. A total of 56 cases of cognitive synonymy were identified across several episodes, with representative examples selected to illustrate the patterns and functions of usage. The analysis shows that characters frequently employ words that share conceptual meaning while allowing for subtle differences in nuance, intensity, or emotional weight.

**Table 1.** Cognitive Synonym in the One Piece Live Action (2023)

Data Number	Episode	Dialogue
6	1	Luffy: I'm starving
74	4	Zoro: I'm the best fighter here other than
85	5	Nami: They're stealing our wind
120	6	Sanji: I'm gonna find the All Blue
133	6	Usopp: Speak from the gut

The analysis of the main characters' dialogues in One Piece Live Action reveals the use of cognitive and contextual synonyms to convey meaning, emotion, and character identity. The discussion of selected examples is presented as follows:

**Episode 1 – Luffy: "I'm starving"**

The word starving in this dialogue is categorized as a contextual synonym of hungry, as both terms communicate the need for food. However, their semantic weight differs significantly: hungry indicates a normal or moderate desire to eat, whereas starving expresses an extreme or exaggerated hunger, often used colloquially to convey urgency, impatience, or emotional intensity.

Luffy's choice of starving reflects his impulsive and expressive personality, giving the dialogue a humorous and relatable tone. Beyond merely indicating hunger, the term captures the immediacy of his need, aligning with his energetic and carefree character. This contextual synonymy enhances the vividness of the scene, making the audience more engaged with Luffy's experience and emotions. Additionally, the use of exaggeration here demonstrates how lexical choice contributes to character identity, highlighting Luffy's tendency to express feelings directly and dramatically, which is consistent throughout the series.

**Episode 4 – Zoro: "I'm the best fighter here other than"**

The word fighter serves as a cognitive synonym for warrior or combatant, all referring to individuals skilled in battle. While fighter is a general term that emphasizes physical combat ability, warrior conveys a heroic or traditional image tied to honor and valor, and combatant is more formal, often associated with military or professional contexts. By using fighter, Zoro situates himself as a competent and confident swordsman, while also maintaining a casual tone that aligns with the informal interactions among the crew.

This cognitive synonymy reveals conceptual similarity across these terms while highlighting subtle differences in connotation and social usage. Zoro's lexical choice emphasizes his assertiveness and competitive spirit, reinforcing his character traits and contributing to the narrative by establishing him as a reliable and formidable presence within the group. Moreover, it shows how synonymy can carry both conceptual meaning and social or interpersonal nuance in dialogue.

**Episode 5 – Nami: "They're stealing our wind"**

In this dialogue, wind functions as a cognitive synonym of breeze or air, representing the movement of air but differing in intensity and situational relevance. While wind implies a forceful or directional flow, breeze suggests a gentle movement, and air is the general substance itself. Nami's use of wind reflects her situational awareness as a navigator, conveying a sense of urgency and potential threat in the context of sailing.

The phrase metaphorically connects the literal control of wind to the strategic advantage over the ship, which is crucial in maritime settings. Cognitive synonymy here is not only semantic but also pragmatic, as the word choice enhances tension and alerts the audience to the stakes involved in the narrative. It demonstrates how characters use precise lexical selections to communicate both literal and figurative meanings, supporting storytelling while reinforcing Nami's analytical and proactive personality.

#### **Episode 6 – Sanji: "I'm gonna find the All Blue"**

The phrase All Blue operates as a cognitive synonym for ocean or sea, representing the same conceptual domain of a vast body of water. However, unlike literal terms, All Blue carries symbolic and aspirational meaning, as it refers to a legendary ocean where all fish species coexist. Sanji's lexical choice conveys his personal ambition, dreams, and ideals, while simultaneously connecting the character to a larger narrative of adventure and discovery.

The use of cognitive synonymy here bridges the literal and figurative, allowing the audience to grasp both the physical concept of the sea and its metaphorical significance as a goal or aspiration. This enriches the narrative by providing depth to Sanji's motivation and underscores how synonymy can convey conceptual nuance, emotional resonance, and thematic symbolism within character dialogue.

#### **Episode 6 – Usop: "Speak from the gut"**

The phrase from the gut is a cognitive synonym of sincerely, emphasizing honest and instinctive expression. While sincerely conveys straightforward truthfulness and from the heart emphasizes emotional compassion, from the gut highlights raw, instinctive, and deeply felt emotions. Usop's expression encourages authenticity and emotional honesty, underscoring his role as a supportive and morally aware character.

The choice of words not only conveys the same conceptual meaning but also adds a vivid figurative quality, making the dialogue emotionally engaging. Cognitive synonymy in this context functions as a tool to reinforce the speaker's intent, communicate subtle affective nuances, and strengthen interpersonal dynamics among characters. It illustrates how lexical selection shapes the audience's perception of character motivations and emotional depth, enhancing the expressive power of the dialogue.

### **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this research were obtained through qualitative analysis of the main characters' dialogues in One Piece Live Action. A total of 56 instances of cognitive synonymy were identified across several episodes. Representative examples from key dialogues illustrate how characters use words that share the same conceptual

meaning while allowing for subtle variations in nuance, intensity, or emotional expression. The analysis demonstrates that cognitive synonymy functions not only to convey literal meaning but also to reflect character personality, emotional tone, and narrative context, highlighting its role in enriching dialogue and enhancing audience understanding.

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