



## A Linguistic Study of Antonymy in English Texts

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### ABSTRAK

The purpose of this work is *to investigate antonymy in English literature. The importance of the study is first discussed, followed by an explanation of antonymy and its classification with instances. The paper's main focus is on the usage of antonymy in distinct English texts from a linguistic standpoint, with several examples of antonyms used to illustrate and prove that understanding and investigating antonymy can aid in the comprehension of various texts and the development of literary flavor.*

**Keyword:** *antonymy, antonyms, English text, linguistic study*

### I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant disciplines in linguistics is semantic relations, specifically lexical relations, which include synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and other terms. The semantic relation of antonymy, or oppositeness of meaning, has long been recognized as one of the most essential. Human thinking and language are inextricably linked, and the importance of antonymy in human thought is mirrored in human language. Antonym is discussed in light of these results, as is the locus of the "typicality effect" obtained in previous semantic memory studies. Antonym is a semantic relationship between two speech units whose meaning states the opposite, contradiction, or contrast between one another. More simply, an antonym is a word that is opposite in meaning to another word. Antonyms are also called opposites, for example, "tall" is defined as "not short", "trivial" is said to be "not important. Antonyms are expressions (usually in the form of words, but can also be in the form of phrases or sentences) whose meaning is considered the opposite of the meaning of other expressions. For example, the word good is antonymized with the word bad; big words antonymize with small words; and the word buy is antonymized with the word sell. Antonymy, it has been noted ( Clark 1970; Hale 1971, inter alia ), can be basically defined in terms of minimal difference ( to be refined and further discussed in 2.2 ) In order to be minimally different, two words must share all of their crucial semantic properties but one. If big/little and large/small follow this definition but large/little does not. Then it is not arbitrary that these words are antonymically paired in the way that they are. Murphy and Andrew ( 1993 ) and Cruse ( 1994 ) point out that while the basic size adjectives are similar in sense, they may still differ in register. For example, big and little are about three times more common than large and small in third-grade reading materials (Carroll et al. 1971), while large and small predominate in the wall street journal's prose style.

### II. RESEARCH METHOD



This journal employs a qualitative approach, and the information in this article is based on a review of the literature. The concept of numerous expert opinions was used to assess and combine this journal.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Antonymy helps achieve textual cohesion. It reveals the opposition and the unity of objects in languages. Employing antonyms in English texts correctly reveals the oppositeness of objects and produces a strong sense of comparison.

Therefore, writers are fond of and good at employing antonyms in their literature works, because it makes the works artistically charming and powerfully convincing.

#### A. Antonymy Used in Poetry

Antonyms are widely used in poetry. English poet Alfred Tennyson had the famous lines in his *Ulysses* “Though much is taken, much abides; and though/ We are not now that strength which in the old days/ Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are; One equal-temper of heroic hearts,/ Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will/ To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.” How encouraging it is! Even a man in despair can get the power from the lines. And what makes the lines memorable and powerful is the use of antonyms.

#### B. Antonymy Used in Dramas

Antonymy is also widely used in dramas. It can be seen obviously from the works of William Shakespeare. In *Romeo and Juliet* “My only love sprung from my only hate. Too early seen unknown, and known too late. Prodigious birth of love it is to me, that I must love a loathed” In the quotation, four antonym pairs are there and they constitute the well-known figures of speech in English, oxymoron and paradox. When we read the words at first, we may think them very ridiculous, illogical and raving. However, when we explore the plot of the drama, we can find that the drama uses these antonym pairs and corresponding figures of speech to depict the contradictory mind of Juliet on the occasion. Juliet says this in Act 1 Scene 5 when she finds out who Romeo is. She’s expressing a bunch of information and emotion all at once here—she’s fallen in love with Romeo, but she’s upset that he is a member of the rival family. She saw him first (too early) and fell for him before she found out who he was (too late). Love now seems very strange to her, that she can love someone she’s supposed to hate.

#### C. Antonymy Used in Novels

in the process of writing novels, numerous novelists are very good at employing antonyms. The following is excerpted from *A Tale of Two Cities* written by Charles Dickens. “It was the best times, it was the worst times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of the foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we have nothing before us.” It uses six pairs of antonyms to depict the complicated and dangerous atmosphere before the French revolution. These six antonym pairs are parallel and overwhelming.

#### D. Antonymy Used in Speeches



When antonymy is used in a speech, a clear-cut stand and a clear point of view are easily made. The language has stronger rhythm and helps being persuasive. As a result, many people employ antonymy in their speeches to state their opinions, justify their positions and influence the public opinion. This can be best seen from the speeches of American presidents.

#### E. Antonymy Used in Proverbs

Proverb is a form of language with the presentation of each figure of speech, which is a fixed short verse naturally coming from the usual use of some composition of the language. (Xu, 2009) Proverb is simple; meanwhile, it entertains a thought deeply. When antonyms are used in proverbs, the rhetorical effect of phonological harmony, formal beauty and conciseness are achieved.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Words with opposite meanings are called antonyms. Antonymy, on the other hand, refers to a partnership of opposites. Antonyms are extremely useful for determining the precise meaning of a word and its synonyms. Antonyms allow us to communicate the polar opposite of a notion in a few words, which is often used. Antonymy plays rather important roles in specific English texts, especially in poetry, novels, dramas, speeches and proverbs. The linguistic study of antonymy in English texts helps readers understand and appreciate authors' intention much more easily. Teachers who emphasize the study of antonymy in class will find their students have a higher reading ability.

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