

A CRITIQUE OF THE 'LINGUISTIC STUDY OF ANTONYMY IN ENGLISH TEXTS'

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The article "A Linguistic Study of Antonymy in English Texts," a collaborative effort by Gao and Zheng (2014) studied antonymy in different English texts such as poetry, dramas, novels, speeches and proverbs. The authors' study of antonymy in English texts can be considered a great contribution to the field of linguistics and literature. Through this article, readers are able to observe the presence of linguistics and its role to convey meaning in various texts. In this paper, the authors presented the significance of their study followed by the definition of antonymy, its classification with examples, and the use of antonymy in specific English texts (Gao & Zheng, 2014). The conclusion drawn by the authors was, "comprehending and investigating antonymy can help the understanding of different texts and the rising of literature flavor" (Gao & Zheng, 2014, p. 234). It can be said that the paper is directed towards language teachers, researchers, and students who are interested in the field of linguistics. In my opinion, the authors' attempt to study the use of antonymy in English texts is successful. There are three reasons why this study is considered a successful attempt in the field of linguistics.

First, the authors presented relevant information to the topic of their study. As we can see, the authors started this article by presenting the significance of antonyms in various fields of language study like literature, language teaching and learning, and lexicography (Endah Tri Priyatni, 2016). Antonyms are regarded as one of the most important semantic relations in linguistics and they are very useful (Gao & Zheng, 2014; Kamariah Yunus, Mahani Mohamad, Bordin Waelateh, 2016 & Rashid *et al.* 2016). The literature review of this paper had two sections, A and B. In Section A, Gao and Zheng explained the concept of antonymy with reference to several renowned scholars like Cruse (1986), Lyons (1977), Egan (1968) and many others who have published some remarkable works in semantics and linguistics. Then, in section B, the authors classified antonyms into 3 main types based on Hu (2001). The three types of antonyms discussed were gradable antonyms, complementary antonyms, and converse antonyms. The authors explained each type with relevant examples which are effective in presenting the intended information. After that, they discussed the focus of the paper which is antonymy in specific English texts. The five different types of texts studied here are poetry,

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dramas, novels, speeches and proverbs. The authors used several examples of antonyms from the popular works of Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Maxwell Anderson, Barack Obama, Martin Luther King and George Herbert, to name a few. Lastly, Gao and Zheng concluded the article by stating the role of antonymy in English texts and recommended the study of antonymy to be furthered into the rhetorical function.

Second, the article is written rather objectively. Gao and Zheng used an objective language to explain antonymy found in English texts. This presents a clear view to the audience about the authors' intended message. Their writing style suits their audience well. In explaining the presence of antonymy in specific English texts, the authors provided prominent examples that are easy to understand and notice by the readers. For instance the authors quoted a line from *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*" (Gao & Zheng, 2014, p. 236). These examples clearly showed the effects Shakespeare intent to achieve via the use of different kinds of antonyms. They said

...the 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 (Gao & Zheng, 2014, p. 236).

Third, the information presented in this article is well supported by theories and examples. As mentioned above, their arguments were accompanied by quotations from scholars. The authors made comparison between the varying claims made by several scholars and established common ground for their study. This can be seen in defining antonymy. The authors compared the definition of antonymy given by Lyons (1977), Cruse (1986), Gross, Derek, Fischer and Miller (1988), Justeson and Katz (1991), and Jackson (1988) to the one provided by Egan (1968) which was adopted and claimed to suit their context better in this study. Besides, in explaining the concepts, the authors did not make any false claims. The information presented does not contradict with the readers' understanding and knowledge of the topic. Instead, it enhances their understanding of the concept. For example, the authors clarified the differences between antonyms and antonymy respectively by stating that antonyms are words of opposite meaning and antonymy is opposite meaning relation between words.

In conclusion, we can say that Gao and Zheng (2014), have successfully studied the use of antonyms in English texts for three reasons. They presented relevant information to the topic of the study, the article is written rather objectively, and the information presented is well supported by theories and examples. These reasons also proved that antonymy certainly helps achieve textual cohesion, reveals the

oppositeness of objects and produces a strong sense of comparison which makes literary works artistically charming and powerfully convincing (Gao & Zheng, 2014).

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