

Unusual Antonyms: Inter-Part-Of-Speech Interaction in English Fictional Discourse

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Abstract

The article focuses on the phenomenon of inter-part-of-speech antonymy and types of inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions typical of the English language and represented in authentic sources, in particular, fiction books of English-speaking writers. The paper analyses cognitive foundation and linguistic sources of the oppositions in question describe their range within each part of speech as well as contextual means of intensifying the oppositional contrast. The authors argue that the traditional point of view, according to which only words belonging to the same part of speech can form antonymic oppositions, is insufficient and claims that inter-part-of-speech antonymy has a semantical and grammatical nature as it is based on the ability of the language to give different categorial form to the same fragments of reality. The results of the research show that practically all works of fiction include inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions, which thus can be treated as a regular language phenomenon. The paper contributes to the theory of parts of speech, giving additional information about their interaction and its cognitive basis. It also enriches the theory of antonymy, proposing a wide approach to antonymic oppositions.

Keywords: Inter-part-of-speech interaction, Antonymy, The Paradigm of Nomination, Lexical Meaning, Grammatical Meaning, Asymmetry of Meaning.

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Introduction

One of the main types of interaction between units of the language is antonymic relations, which stipulates the necessity of investigation of inter-part-of-speech antonymy represented by antonymic oppositions with members, belonging to different parts of speech. According to the traditional point of view, only words belonging to the same part of speech can form antonymic oppositions (Cruse, 1986; Ljung, 1974; Lyons, 1977).

Inter-part-of-speech antonyms have opposite lexical meanings, like systemic antonyms, but different grammatical forms and syntactic functions. It can be explained by the cases of asymmetry of meaning and categorial form of parts of speech when a word has a lexical meaning typical of one part of speech and a grammatical form typical of some other part. The objective character of inter-part-of-speech antonymy is confirmed by the existence of oxymoron, employing the juxtaposition of two normally contradictory words belonging to different parts of speech (Finnegan, 1989).

According to, I.E. Rodicheva (1976), oxymorons are not always necessary for the formation of the antonymic opposition. A number of linguists (Miller, 1990; Murugova, 2018; Repina, *et al.*, 2018; Ryabko, 2016a,b; Zyubina *et al.*, 2017) say that in the fictional discourse words belonging to different parts of speech can also form antonymic oppositions thus overcoming the boundaries of the language system.

We adopt the definition of *discourse* as a semiotic process realized different discursive practices (Ilyin, 2001). We also rely on theoretical principles formulated by Van Dijk (2004), especially his approach to discourse as a process having verbal and non-verbal constituents, i.e. societal, political or cultural context.

Fictional discourse can be defined as an act of producing fiction (Panizza, 2017). The parallel term literary discourse is also used in linguistics (Van Dijk, 2004) and "some works of fiction are literary works, and some are not" (Searle, 1979:

319). However, as the difference between them is rather fuzzy and "nowadays most works of literature are fictional" (*ibid.*), in this paper we shall use the term fictional discourse in the interpretation mentioned above.

Works, devoted to antonymy and antonyms (Kastovsky, 1982; Lehrer and Lehrer, 1982; Ogden, 1932), becomes the main theoretical references in our study. According to the narrow approach, antonymy presupposes gradation, and so only qualitative adjectives can be treated as real antonyms (Lyons, 1995). According to the broad approach, all parts of speech can form antonymic oppositions (Harford and Heasley, 2007). We adopt the latter approach widely spread in linguistics.

According to definitions of parts of speech, they are:

- "classes of words differentiated by their *meaning* and *syntactic functions* in the sentence" (Fennigan, 1989: 1083);
- "belong to a class in that they have the same *grammatical properties* and *structural possibilities* as other members of the class" (Quirk *et al.*, 1982: 25);

The ability of the language to give different categorial content to the same fragments of reality, stipulating the existence of inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions, can be explained with *the lexical paradigm of nomination*. According to M. Blokh (2000), "the unity of notional lexemes finds its essential demonstration in an inter-class system of derivation that can be presented as a formal four-stage series permeated the lexicon ... The general order of classes in the series evidently corresponds to the logic of mental perception of reality, by which a person discriminates, first, objects and their actions, the properties of the former and the latter", as *strength – to strengthen – strong – strongly*.

The article focuses on inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions. The paper aims to give a more detailed analysis of the cognitive foundation of inter-part-of-speech antonymy and to reveal antonymic oppositions typical of each part of speech in the English language

based on their representation in the fictional discourse.

Material and Methods

About 2000 examples extracted from authentic sources (fiction books of English-speaking writers), with the following interpretation of these examples. Examples were analysed with the help of the following methods.

The method of oppositions (Trubetskoy, 1960): Members of such opposition must have in the structures of their meanings a number of common features, that is, the basis of comparison, and a pair of antonymous features, which ensure contrast of meanings. In case of antonymy we deal either with privative oppositions, "when one member is seen as marked by the presence of a feature, which its opposite member lacks", or with equipollent oppositions "the members of which are seen as logically equivalent to each other, contrasted neither gradually nor by a binary feature" (Crystal, 2008: 342).

This method was complemented with *seme (componental) analysis*. Semes, treated in linguistics as minimal (irreducible) components of meaning operating within a specific semantic field (Crystal, 2008). Speaking about semantic structure of word, we deal with hierarchy of semes (Arnold, 1991).

It is necessary to define a categorial lexical seme or *classeme* – "relatively abstract semantic features shared by lexical items belonging to different semantic fields". Among semes it is possible to distinguish a *hyperseme* or a *topical seme* which serves as a name of the semantic field (in our case it is the seme sound). In the process of analysis, we single out our grammatical categorial (part-of-speech) semes, lexical categorial semes (*classemes*), *hyperseme*, and more particular lexical semes.

The *method of contextual analysis*, revealing the contextual means of intensifying the oppositional contrast and helping to prove that oppositions in question are really antonymic ones, was very important for us. In this paper, we adopt the definition of a *context* as a specific part of an utterance (or text) near or

adjacent to a unit which is the focus of attention (Crystal, 2008).

Results and Discussion

The ability of the language to present the same fragment of reality in different categorial form leads to formation of inter-part-of speech antonymic oppositions. Indeed if we deal with two opposite qualities this contrast, existing in objective reality, won't disappear if these qualities will be presented in different categorial form. In other words, we argue that antonyms, as any other words, belong to certain paradigms of nomination, which can be called *antonymous paradigms of nomination* (Boeva, 2001). They can include words with the same root (1) and with different roots (2):

- (1) Belief – to believe – believing – believably; disbelief – to disbelieve – unbelieving – unbelievably
- (2) Despair – to despair – despairing – despairingly; hope – to hope – hopeful – hopefully

Each member of one paradigm has an antonym belonging to the same part of speech in the other one (*despair – hope, to despair – to hope, despairing – hopeful, despairingly – hopefully*). We deal with *horizontal* relations, i.e. antonyms belonging to the same part of speech. *Radial* relations between members belonging to different parts of speech are also possible. For instance, the noun *despair* can form antonymic oppositions with the verb *hope*, adjective *hopeful* and adverb *hopefully*, but not only with the noun *hope*.

The existence of such antonymous paradigms of nomination is one of the most important sources of inter-part-of-speech antonyms. In the examples below the opposition noun – adjective (*smallness – large*) (3) conveys the contrast of small and big sizes, and the opposition verb – adjective (*die – immortal*) (4) conveys the contrast of mortality and immortality:

- (3) Alternatively, perhaps, Dill later thought, the smallness of the gun made the fist look large (Thomas, 1987).

- (4) Only the more complicated organisms *die*. Simple cells are *immortal* (Byatt, 1994).

We conclude that besides *positive* antonymous paradigms of nomination there also exist *negative* ones:

- (5) Fancy – to fancy – fanciful – fancifully; not fancy (no fancy) – not to fancy – not fanciful – not fancifully

Each element of a negative paradigm has a mark of negation and is opposed to a corresponding member of the positive paradigm (*fancy – no fancy, to fancy – not to fancy, fanciful – not fanciful, fancifully – not fancifully*). In this case, we deal with horizontal relations, but radial is also possible (*fanciful – no fancy, fanciful – not to fancy, fanciful – not fancifully*).

The existence of negative antonymous paradigms of nomination also stipulates the formation of inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions. In example (6) the opposition is formed by a noun (*speculator*) and a verb with a mark of negation (*does not speculate*). It conveys the contrast of an action and inaction, intensified by adversative conjunction *but*.

- (6) You are *the speculator*. That may be your way of wisdom. However, Lilly *does not even speculate* (Lawrence, 1977).

The suppletive completions in paradigms of nomination are also a source of inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions. For instance, the English language does not have a noun derived from the adjective *old*, which must be the first element in the corresponding paradigm of nomination. It leads to phrasemic completion *old age* capable of forming inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions with the elements of the paradigm *youth – be young – young* (7). The opposition adjective (*old*) – noun (*youth*) conveys the contrast of ages.

- (7) Somehow in *old age*, he preserved *youth...* (Ustinov, 1993).

The absence of adverbs in incomplete English paradigms of nomination is often compensated by prepositional word-groups, which form

inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions with adverbs in the antonymous paradigm:

- (8) I'm sure if I called Den Kendall, he'd find a senior coed to take you *to classes* and *back* (Segal, 1995).

The important source of completion of the lexical paradigm of nomination is *the paradigm of non-finite forms of the verb*, which always accompanies the basic paradigm of nomination. In example (8), an infinitive (*to sell*) and a noun with a mark of negation (*no sale*) form the opposition, conveying the contrast of action and inaction.

- (9) You are going *to sell* him, sir? – You're damn right, I am. But it's a gift, so *no sale* here in Johannesburg (Smith, 1992).

In oppositions between finite and non-finite forms of the verb and non-finite forms belonging to different classes we deal with *incomplete inter-part-of-speech antonymy*, because each class of non-finite forms with its own lexical-grammatical peculiarities, which distinguish it from finite forms and other classes of non-finite ones, belongs to the whole system of the verb. In example (10) we see the opposition of the finite form of the verb (*tied*) and the infinitive (*to untie*), conveying the contrast of directions of actions; in example (11) – the opposition of the infinitive (*to exclude*) and participle 1 (*including*), conveying the contrast of exclusion and inclusion.

- (10) Then he *tied* her to a tree in the backyard. Many people heard her, but nobody tried *to untie* her (Atwood, 1984).
- (11) At times, their closeness seemed *to exclude* everyone else, *including* their children (Kellerman, 1997).

Contextual inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions consist of words, which do not belong to antonymous paradigms of nomination but have in the structures of their meanings semes typical of members of certain antonymous paradigms. These semes did not belong to the nucleus of their meanings and

actualised only in micro-contexts. Example (12) presents the oppositions of the noun *snow* having the seme 'cold' in the structure of its meaning, and the adjective *hot* and the verb *burn*, having the seme 'warmth'. The oppositions *snow* – *hot* and *snow* – *burn* are formed by analogy with the oppositions of systematic antonyms, belonging to antonymous paradigms of nomination.

- (12) She also developed a fierce hatred for the *snow*... – She longed for the *hot* cracked earth which *burned* her bare feet (Ustinov, 1993).

Opposition a Noun – an Adjective

A noun can form oppositions with different parts of speech. Most often nouns used for the indirect nomination of qualities, i.e. having a categorial lexical seme of quality, form oppositions with adjectives, having the same or different roots with them. The members of these oppositions usually belong to antonymous paradigms of nomination as in example (13).

- (13) He was *healthy* and *healthy* people are embarrassed by *sickness*; she could remember that (Atwood, 1984).

The adjective *healthy* and the noun *sickness* represent in different grammatical forms the contrast of physical states due to antonymous semes 'health'/'sickness' in structures of their meanings. The contrast is intensified by the use of antonyms in interrelated syntactical functions of the subject and the object connected with the same predicate.

The noun, forming the opposition with the adjective, can be a part of a word-group, filling in a missing element in a paradigm of nomination:

- (14) In itself my gesture was *unimportant*, but I suspected it had assumed vast *importance* to them since their world was so constricted (Ustinov, 1993).

The noun *importance* in the word-group *to assume importance*, which completes the verb in the corresponding paradigm of nomination, forms an antonymic opposition with the

adjective *unimportant* due to antonymous semes 'presence'/'absence of a feature'. The contrast is intensified with the help of the adversative conjunction *but*.

Negative paradigms of nomination – a noun can be used independently or in a word-group, which fills in a missing element in a paradigm of nomination or is synonymous to an element of a paradigm expressed by one lexeme:

- (15) Harkin asked for a *no-strike* guarantee in the future, but Easter would not commit. –... no one in the courtroom knew for certain why the jury was *on strike* (Grisham, 1996).

The adjective *no-strike*, derived from the negative syntactical construction, forms an antonymic opposition with the noun *strike* in the word-group *to be on strike*, synonymous to the verb *to strike* in the corresponding paradigm of nomination, conveying the contrast of action or inaction.

Contextual oppositions a noun – an adjective. The contrast of their meanings is based on the actualization of peripheral antonymous semes in structures of these meanings, revealed with the help of definitions in dictionaries and the general sense of the context (16), (17).

- (16) The weather had changed, or perhaps we had finally been dragged free of *the drizzle* that was constant in Hue. Now it was *sunny* and warm... (Theroux, 1975).

The noun *the drizzle* and the adjective *sunny* can be treated as contextual inter-part-of-speech antonyms due to the actualization of antonymous semes 'wetness'/'dryness'. The contrast is intensified with the help of the adverb *now*, which shows the change of the situation.

- (17) ... the night was filled with the odour of *rain* on *dry* earth (Smith, 1992).

The noun *rain* and the adjective *dry* can be treated as contextual inter-part-of-speech antonyms.

Opposition a Noun – a Verb

A noun and a verb are the two opposite ways of categorisation of experience (Kozlova, 1997). However, they can form inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions, realising the contrast of semantics on the level of the semantic structure of the sentence.

Nouns and verbs, forming antonymic oppositions, as well as antonymous nouns and adjectives, belong to antonymous paradigms of nomination:

- (18) I mean it's the traditional *grand finale* to a career, and I've barely *started* (Segal, 1995).

The use in one micro context of the noun *finale* and the verb *start*, having antonymous semes 'end'/'beginning', emphasises the contrast of these meanings, intensifying by the conjunction *and* showing the difference of two situations.

The verb can form an antonymic opposition with a noun belonging to a word-group, which fills in a missing element in a paradigm of nomination or is synonymous to it:

- (19) I had drifted into *sleep* again, and when I *woke* with a start the bed was empty (Durrel, 1991).

The noun *sleep* in the word-group *drift into sleep* and the verb *wake* are antonymous due to antonymous semes 'sleep'/'wake'. The contrast is intensified by a combination of conjunctions *and when* showing the difference between the two situations.

The members of the oppositions in question can belong to negative paradigms of nomination:

- (20) The Queen had never seen him look like that and she *panicked*. He felt *no panic* or pain, although in fact he had suffered a concussion... (Conran, 1982).

The antonymous semes 'excitement'/'calmness', conveying the contrast of emotional states, stipulates the formation of the antonymic opposition *panicked – no panic*.

This contrast is intensified by reversed syntactical parallelism.

Antonymic oppositions with non-finite forms of the verb:

- (21) ... the texture of her skin had altered, losing the *moisture* of youth, *drying out* so that it creased around her eyes... (Smith, 1992).

The members of the opposition *moisture – drying* (noun – participle 1) have antonymous semes 'wetness'/'dryness' in structures of their meanings. Described oppositions can include nouns derived from syntactical constructions:

- (22) Communism is strictly for *the have-nots*, and everyone wants to *have* (Ustinov, 1993).

Contextual oppositions a noun – a finite/non-finite form of the verb:

- (23) Then he put aside his *gravity* and broke out *laughing*... (Carre, 1984).

The noun *gravity* forms the opposition, and the gerund is *laughing* having antonymous semes 'gloom'/'gaiety'. The conjunction intensifies the contrast *and* showing the change of the situation.

Opposition a Noun – an Adverb

Such oppositions contain nouns, belonging to prepositional word-groups, performing the function of adverbial modifiers. These word-groups fill in missing adverbs in paradigms of nomination. The oppositions in question can be divided into several groups, i.e. oppositions reflecting the contrast of:

- directions of movement (24);
- spatial localisation, including localisation in abstract spheres (25);
- temporal localization (26);
- manner or attendant circumstances (27).

- (24) Bare feet stuck into carpet slippers, she shuffled *to the* telephone *booth* at the back of the hall. Then she shuffled *back* again (Conran, 1982).

The opposition conveys the contrast of directions of movement due to antonymous

semes 'forward'/back' in structures of meanings in structures of meanings of the members of the opposition. The contrast is intensified by adverb *then* showing the change of situations.

- (25) *On the surface* she was inanimate, but *beneath*, in the buried jungle of her consciousness, there was the stirring of primitive impulses, and this stirring was agony (Glasgow, 1985)

The opposition conveys the contrast of localisation due to antonymous semes 'exteriority'/ 'interiority'. The adversative preposition intensifies the contrast *but*.

- (26) Moreover, unless you learn to be your own doctor *by the time* you are thirty, you never will *afterwards* (Snow, 1983).

The opposition conveys the contrast of temporal localisation due to antonymous semes 'precedence'/ 'posteriority'. The contrast is intensified by syntactical parallelism.

- (27) They sat *in groups*, and they sat *alone* (Grisham, 1996).

The opposition conveys the contrast of manner of action due to antonymous semes 'individual'/ 'group'. The contrast is intensified by syntactical parallelism.

Opposition a Verb – an Adjective

The formation of this type of oppositions is stipulated by the fact that both a verb and an adjective belong to one onomasiological category of quality. The difference is that a verb expresses a dynamic quality, and an adjective – a static one (Kozlova, 1997).

Antonymous verbs and adjectives belong to complete or incomplete paradigms of nomination:

- (28) He *dried* his *wet* right hand by running it through his dark copper hair... (Thomas, 1987).

The adjective *wet* and the verb *dry* contain in structures of their meanings antonymous semes 'wetness'/ 'dryness', which form the basis of the semantic contrast.

Contextual antonymic oppositions a verb – an adjective:

- (29) Out in the sunshine, he looked *pale* beside her. Miraculous three weeks of fine weather *had tanned* her face, neck and arms... (Tremain, 1994).

The verb *tan* and the adjective *pale* form the opposition, conveying the contrast of colours, due to peripheral antonymous semes 'black'/ 'white' in structures of their meanings.

Non-finite forms of the verb:

- (30) We have tried to talk to the kid, but he has been very *uncooperative*. – ... it is important for the kid *to cooperate* (Grisham, 1993).

The structures of meanings of the members of the opposition an adjective (*uncooperative*) – infinitive (*to cooperate*) contain antonymous semes 'inaction'/ 'action'. The contrast is intensified by syntactical parallelism.

Opposition an Adverb – an Adjective

An adverb belongs to notional parts of speech alongside with a noun, a verb and an adjective. Adverbs can form antonymic oppositions with nouns belonging to word-groups. They can also form oppositions with adjectives which, like adverbs, have a categorial grammatical seme of quality but correlate, in contrast to adverbs, with substantive referents (Blokh, 2000) (31).

- (31) Man is not a *rational* being either; he is *irrationally* controlled by fear (Conran, 1982).

The opposition is formed by the adjective *rational* and the adverb *irrationally*, having antonymous semes 'presence'/ 'absence of a feature'. The contrast is intensified by reversed syntactical parallelism.

Oppositions of Notional and Functional Words

Functional words can also be elements of inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions. It is possible because notional words can have a categorial lexical seme 'relation' in structures of their meanings and such functional words as prepositions possess a categorial grammatical

seme with the same name. The following oppositions are possible.

Opposition a verb – a preposition

The verb and the preposition can belong to one conceptual sphere:

- (32) Haviland doesn't care a damn about what you and I are up *against* or what we *want* (Wilson, 1950).

The preposition *against* forms the opposition and the verb *want* due to antonymous semes 'rejection'/'acceptance' in structures of their meanings. The alternative preposition or intensify the contrast. The fact that preposition and verb belong to the same conceptual sphere, which serves as the basis for comparison of opposition members, can be proved by experimental transformation. In its result, the verb *want* will be opposed not to preposition, but to the same verb in the negative form: "Haviland doesn't care what you and I *don't want* or what we *want*".

Opposition an adverb – a preposition

Among adverbs there exist those of space and time. They are capable of forming antonymous oppositions with prepositions, which express spatial and temporal relations in prepositional phrases. These oppositions can express the contrast of:

- spatial localisation (33);
- temporal localisation (34);

- (33) Ladies and gentlemen: everything that's pictured, painted and advertised *outside*, you will see *within the walls* of this tent... (Sheldon, 1996).

The opposition is formed by the preposition *within* and the adverb *outside* due to antonymous semes 'interiority'/'exteriority' in structures of their meanings. The contrast is intensified by syntactical parallelism.

- (34) She had considerable means, Maman, but I was only made aware if her inheritance *after* our marriage. I was a bit put out that I did not hear about it *before* (Robins, 1978);

The opposition is formed by the preposition *after* and the adverb *before* due to antonymous semes 'precedence'/'posteriority' in structures of their meanings. The contrast is intensified by syntactical parallelism.

Opposition an adjective – a preposition

The contrast of spatial and temporal relations can be also expressed by inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions formed by prepositions and adjectives:

- (35) Clumsily using his left hand, Sandor started cutting the *bottom* wire while Felix worked on the wire *above* it (Conran, 1982).

The opposition is formed by the adjective *bottom* and the preposition *above* due to antonymous semes 'bottom'/'top' in structures of their meanings. The contrast is intensified by the conjunction *while* stressing the difference of two actions.

Oppositions of Functional Words

These oppositions are formed by prepositions and conjunctions sharing the same categorial grammatical seme 'relation'. They convey the contrast of temporal relations due to antonymous semes 'precedence'/'posteriority' in structures of their meanings. This contrast is intensified by syntactical parallelism direct (36) or reversed (37).

- (36) He called me *before* you were married. They were married three months *after* that, in January, on New Year's Day (Steel, 1993).
- (37) I cannot operate a horse *until* I check everything twice. Check every valve, check the pump, check the oxygen. *After* that, I can send a horse to sleep (Francis, 1991).

Conclusion

Practically all works of fiction include inter-part-of speech antonymic oppositions, which can be treated as a regular language phenomenon. Inter-part-of-speech antonymy has a semantic and grammatical nature as it is based on the ability of the language to give

different categorial form to the same fragments of reality. This ability can be explained by the notion of the lexical paradigm of nomination.

Between members of paradigms, two types of relationships are possible: horizontal, uniting antonyms belonging to one part of speech, and radial, uniting words belonging to different parts of speech. Antonymous paradigms can also be negative if each element of the paradigm has a mark of negation and is opposed to a corresponding element of a positive paradigm.

The analysis of sources of inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions allows to reveal inter-part-of-speech antonymic oppositions typical of different parts of speech in the English language and describe their peculiarities.

The results of the study give the opportunity to prove the objective and regular character of inter-part-of-speech antonymy. They contribute to the theory of parts of speech, giving additional information about their interaction and its cognitive basis. They also enrich the theory of antonymy, proposing a wide approach to antonymic oppositions.

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