

## A Literature Review on Antonym in English

مراجعة الأدب عن الأضداد في اللغة الإنجليزية

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### Abstract

The current article tries to investigate the development of English "antonymy" in the long haul literature in addition to review and trace back the theoretical as well as the practical progress of this phenomenon diachronically. The objective of this paper is to focus on the notion of antonymy and its classification from different perspectives. To achieve its aims , a comparative diagnostic approach is adopted.

The study has yielded that (1) antonymy is approached dichotomously: literally vs. non-literally, lexically vs. semantically, canonically vs. non-canonically and textually vs. contextually, and (2) the classification of this phenomenon is activated by the practices and the theoretical insights of the classifiers; conventional classification is a context-free and form-based relation which holds between oppositional pairs while the more current classification relies on syntax as well as a context-dependent relation that holds between oppositional pairs.

The scope of this phenomenon is currently extended to attribute the opposition between antonyms, counterparts, contrasts, analogs, incompatibles, and the like . Consequently, the study suggests further widespread investigation on the non-canonicity antonymy.

**Keywords:** antonymy, opposition, contronyms, diachrony

## المستخلص

تحاول المقالة الحالية التحقيق في تطور "التناقض" الإنجليزي في الأدبيات طويلة المدى بالإضافة إلى مراجعة وتتبع التقدم النظري والعملية لهذه الظاهرة بشكل غير تاريخي. الهدف من هذه الورقة هو التركيز على مفهوم التناقض وتصنيفه من وجهات نظر مختلفة. لتحقيق أهدافها ، يتم اعتماد نهج التشخيص المقارن.

وقد أسفرت الدراسة عن أن (1) يتم التعامل مع المتضادات بشكل ثنائي: حرفياً مقابل غير حرفياً ، معجمياً مقابل لغوياً ، قانونياً مقابل غير قانوني ونصياً مقابل السياق ، و (2) يتم تنشيط تصنيف هذه الظاهرة من خلال الممارسات والرؤى النظرية للمصنفات ؛ التصنيف التقليدي هو علاقة خالية من السياق وقائمة على الشكل الذي يحمل بين أزواج المعارضة في حين أن التصنيف الأكثر حداثة يعتمد على بناء الجملة وكذلك علاقة تعتمد على السياق الذي يحمل بين أزواج المعارضة

يتم توسيع نطاق هذه الظاهرة حالياً لينسب المعارضة بين المتضادات ، والنظراء ، والتناقضات ، والنظير ، وغير المتوافقين ، وما شابه ذلك.. بناء على ذلك، تقترح الدراسة مزيداً من التحقيق الواسع النطاق حول التناقض غير القانوني

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التضاد ، المعارضة ، المتناقضات ، عدم التزامن

## 1. Introduction

Humans are said to share a general tendency towards organizing their thoughts into binary lexical-semantic oppositions (Lyons 1977). The central aspect of lexical-semantic opposition is technically dubbed antonymy in English.

Previous literature on antonymy in English is extensive and has approximately bridged the gaps between the theoretical and the empirical approaches. Cruse (1976, 1986) and Lyons (1977, 1995) investigated antonymy as a paradigmatic relation, and each introduced his formal classification of it. Both of their classifications are syntax-free, context-free, and form-based. The classes and subclasses developed depend in essence on the theoretical and empirical insights of the classifier, thus giving rise to a conceptual overlapping of antonyms, opposites, and contrasts. Gorgis and Al-Halawachy (2001) undertook a riveting review of western views on antonymy and other terms related to it, such as oppositeness, opposition,

contrast, and incompatibility, locating antonymy under the last as an umbrella term. They also classified types of oppositeness based on Cruse's context-free and syntax-independent approach which is the most adequate for them.

Lexical-semantic opposition aspects in English have remained under the lens of syntax- and context-free paradigmatic approach until Mettinger (1994), Jones (2002), and Davies (2012, 2013) approached such aspects afresh from a context-dependent syntagmatic perspective, conducting a more structural analysis than those of Justeson and Katz (1991) and Fellbaum (1995). The syntagmatic approach has championed the co-occurrence hypothesis since its inception and a multiplicity of typologies have emerged in this regard. Mettinger (1994) logged nine syntactic frames of canonical opposition. Jones (2002) quantified and typified eight discourse functions of canonical antonymy. Davies (2012, 2013) qualified and exemplified another eight of non-canonical opposition. Of these three typologies, Jones's is the most retrievable and the most replicable, being the standard toolkit for analyzing antonyms across languages, including Swedish (Murphy et al. 2009), Japanese (Muehleisen and Isono 2009), Dutch (Lobanova et al. 2010), Serbian (Kostić 2011), Romanian (Gheltofan 2013), Arabic (Hassanein 2013, 2018; AlHedayani 2016), and Chinese (Hsu 2015) .

This study seeks to undertake a literature review of lexical semantic opposition aspects: "*antonymy*" and "*opposition*" in English.<sup>1</sup> It aims to theoretically and empirically survey the development of this interdependent aspect since its inception in the literature. Specific objectives are (a) to overview how this aspect diachronically developed in theory and (b) to overview how this aspect diachronically developed in practice. Typologies and typical cases will also be reviewed and future developments will be foreshadowed.

## 2. Perspectives

Aspects of lexical-semantic opposition in English are tripartite, including a triad of opposite relations: *antonymy*, *opposition (contrast)* and *contronyms (auto-antonymy)*. Murphy & Andrew (1993:302) establish that

antonymy represents an intriguing relation difficult to specify formally. "The word '*antonymy*' (Greek *antí-* 'against,' *ónyma* (=ónoma) 'name') was coined in 1867 by C. J. Smith as an opposite of 'synonymy' and since 1867 numerous attempts have been made to pin down the meaning of antonymy and formulate a workable definition of the term" (Jones 2002:9).

Antonymy is considered to be a subclass of opposites referred to as gradables (Cruse 1976, 1986; Murphy & Andrew 1993; Lyons 1995; Bussmann 1996) and binaries (Murphy 2003; Cruse 2006; Hurford et al. 2007). It is considered lexical (e.g., Cruse 1976, 1986; Lyons 1977, 1995; Murphy and Andrew 1993; Bussmann 1996), and semantic in nature (e.g., Fromkin et al. 2003; Crystal 2008) or both (e.g., Jones 2002; Murphy 2003). Antonymy is sometimes seen in the broadest sense as including all types of lexical oppositions as well as the semantic ones (e.g., Lehrer & Lehrer 1982; Crystal 2008) and sometimes as being opposite of synonymy (e.g., Finch 1998). Fellbaum (1995) points out that antonymy does not occur merely between pairs within similar word class, nevertheless it also occurs across the word class, such as "*loving/hate*", "*love/hates*", "*loved/hatred*", also between pairs that are grammatically compatible, as in "*loves/hates*" and "*loved/hated*" (Jones, 2002:11). According to Davies (2012, 2013), a technical term, which is distinguished from '*antonymy*' and which Murphy (2003) calls '*contrast*', is '*opposition*'. It is used as an umbrella term for all different guises of contrasts, (non)canonical and (con)textual, lexical and semantic (broadly, conceptual).

It is worth noting that contronyms or auto-antonymy is not institutionalized or well researched as the other aspects in English academia. Contronymy occurs when a minimum of two senses of a lexical unit contrast each other semantically (Karaman 2008:173).

### 3. Approaches to antonymy

A literature review of antonymy in English semantics demonstrates similar dyadic approaches to it: lexical vs. semantic, canonical vs. non-canonical and syntax-free vs. syntax-dependent.

### 3.1 *Lexical approach vs. semantic approach*

Jones (2002) points out that, generally, there have been two distinct ways of defining antonymy in English: one is based on lexical criteria; the other one is on semantic criteria. Exponents of the lexical approach mainly include Justeson and Katz (1991) who view antonymy only as a lexical relation between lexemes rather than concepts. They support their view with the argument that 'large/little' and 'big/small' are semantically opposed, but lexically are not considered antonyms. This is further supported by Muehleisen (1997) who argues that these pairs are not true antonyms, because they do not describe the same kind of things and share different collocational profiles. Fellbaum (1995) problematizes this lexical approach by showing that antonymy holds between words within the same form class and across form classes, as in 'love/hatred', and between grammatically compatible words, as in 'loves/hates'. The caveat with the lexical approach is that it does not encompass cases of conceptual contrasts and non-canonical oppositions.

Proponents of the semantic approach comprise mainly Palmer (1981) and Crystal (1985) who view antonymy as a relation of semantic oppositeness. The problem with the semantic approach is that not all semantically opposed words are true antonyms. Native speakers of English would be reluctant to consider a pair like 'tubby/emaciated' as antonyms. According to Storjohann (2010), a synergy of the two approaches would resolve these problems and this is the reason why contemporary semanticists prefer to combine and conflate both approaches into the so-called '*lexical semantic approach*'. Earlier Jones (2002) has illustrated that any definition of antonymy must be lexical and semantic, synergically '*lexicosemantic*' (Storjohann, 2010:5).

### 3.2 *Canonical vs. non-canonical*

The domestic quarrel over whether antonymy is canonical or non-canonical is the product of the friendly clash between the lexical and semantic approaches. Jones (2002:11) says:

"Antonyms need to have '*oppositeness of meaning*' (Jackson, 1988:75), but they also need to have a strong, well-established lexical relationship with one another. Those word pairs which meet both criteria are known as 'prototypical' or 'canonical' antonyms; those word pairs which meet the first criterion but not the second have been dubbed '*peripheral*' or '*non-canonical*' (terminology provided by Cruse (1986:198) and Murphy (1994:4), respectively). These labels essentially refer to those pairs which are lexically enshrined (e.g. hard/soft) and those pairs which are not (e.g. malleable/rigid). Inevitably, the more antonymity a word pair is thought to have, the more linguistic attention it has received; currently favored categories of antonymy tend to be based on prototypical antonyms only".

The so-called '*canonical antonyms*' are conventional opposites that hold together a lexical relation well established and well recognized by the native speakers of the languages in focus, as in '*I do not know whether to laugh or cry*'. The so-called '*non-canonical antonyms*' are unconventional, peripheral opposites that hold together semantic, not lexical, opposition and that would not be considered 'prototypical' antonyms in neutral contexts by the native speakers of the languages in focus, as in '*I do not know whether to play Hamlet or Macbeth*'. Mettinger (1994), Jones (2002), and The Comparative Lexical Relations Group members are the proponents of the canonical approach who champion the role of syntactic frames in signaling canonical antonyms also identifying their discourse functions across Swedish and Japanese by (Murphy et al. 2009) and (Muehleisen and Isono 2009) respectively.

There are also other subsequent studies on the textual functions of antonymy in Dutch, Serbian, Romanian, Classical Arabic, Chinese and Modern Standard Arabic by (Lobanova et al. 2010), (Kostić 2011), (Gheltofan 2013), (Hassanein 2013, 2018), (Hsu 2015), and (AlHedayani 2016) respectively. The non-canonical approach is extremely understudied and only Davies (2012, 2013) has conducted a seminal study on the roles of syntactic frames in triggering non-canonical oppositional pairs in discourse.

### 3.3 *Syntax-free vs. syntax-dependent*

Davies (2012) points out that traditional literature categorizes dichotomously antonymous, rather oppositional, pairs in terms of context-free relations between these pairs. The categorizations are typically built on a syntax-free, form-based approach, and this seems to explain why they are stable and limited in number with fairly consistent presence in the language system. Two traditional classifications are normally accepted as the standard typologies, namely Lyons's (1977) and Cruse's (1986). Lyons (1977) speaks of a larger relation of opposition he calls 'contrast' and divides it into binary and non-binary contrasts. Therein antonymy is classed as a subcategory of contrasts referred to as gradable oppositions (cf. Davies 2012:44). Cruse (1986) adopts approximately the same approach by considering antonymy also as a subtype of opposites (cf. Jones 2002). The categories developed by Cruse (1986) are, as Jones (2002:13-14) states, the most comprehensive, replicating Lyons's terminology but with further complex subclasses—a statement that accords with Gorgis and Al-Halawachy (2001) who regard Cruse's taxonomy as the most adequate. Davies (2012:43-44) argues that prior studies have drawn on sentences including co-occurring opposites that are invented for illustration and exemplification and are not taken from real illustrations of discourse.

The main problem with this approach is that it disregards opposition above word level (phrasal, clausal and sentential) and between lexical and conceptual expressions not seen as conventional antonyms. Contemporary studies have categorized antonyms and oppositions based on a co-occurrence hypothesis (Fellbaum 1995), i.e., within syntactic frameworks ('X and/or Y') in real discourses, examined seminally by Mettinger (1994) but more extensively by Jones (2002) as well as Davies (2012, 2013).

## 4. *The Classification of Antonymy*

Classical or traditional typologies of antonymy in English semantics have all drawn upon form-dependent and context-free criteria of classification. Conversely, modern or contemporary ones have mostly drawn on function-based and context-dependent criteria. Davies (2012, 2013) highlights the dichotomy of context-free and context-dependent

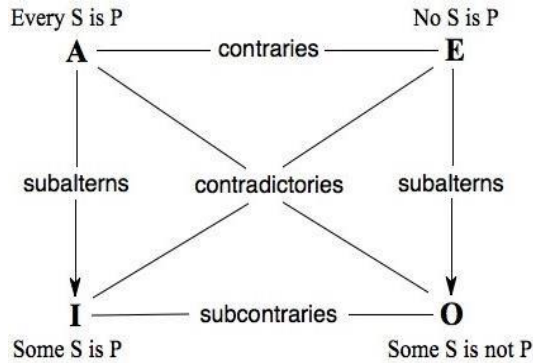
categorizations and literally states that conventional studies tend to classify the types of opposites about a free-context relationship amid the opposites. These studies, except a few ones, have mostly focused on opposite pairs in a syntax-free environment including co-occurring oppositional pairs that are invented for the aim of illustration and classification.

The opposites have inherent and intrinsic oppositions, independent of their usage in actual stretches of discourse, and the result is a limited and stable set of pairs with independent presence in language systems. Contemporary studies swim against the stream and tend to classify oppositions by their co-occurrences in ordinary syntactic frames mentioned in passing by Fellbaum (1995), in more detail by Mettinger (1994), in some detail by Jeffries (1998) and in the most extensive detail by Jones (2002) in his seminal corpus-based study.

#### ***4.1 The Categories of Aristotle***

Correia (2017) indicates that the birth of antonym categorization seems to have implicitly appeared in Aristotle's 'Square of Opposition'. In their survey of the classical and structuralist perspectives on antonymy. Murphy et al. (2009:6) argue that much contemporary thought on antonymy dates back to the categories of propositional opposition developed by Aristotle who devised this diagrammatic representation of universalistic and particularistic affirmations as well as negations and introduced a range of typological terminologies, e.g., contraries and contradictories, that have been adopted in linguistics until today. Correia (2017:2) implies that Aristotle has employed both horizontal and oblique lines to divide opposition into contraries, contradictories, and sub-contraries, but he has ignored vertical lines (A-I and E-O relations), as Figure 1 shows.





*Figure 1: Aristotelian categories of opposition (adapted from Correia 2017:2)*

Contraries feature a category in which contrary statements cannot both be true at the same time. Contradictories feature a category in which one contradictory statement may be true and the other false. Sub-contraries feature a category in which both statements can be true but not false. A fourth category that is hinted at by Aristotle is that of implication in which a universal statement implies a particular one. Table 1 illustrates these categories with examples.

*Table 1: Aristotelian categories of opposition (adapted from Correia 2017:3-9)*

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Category</i>		<i>Definition</i>	<i>Example</i>
AE	Contraries	Universal Affirmative	Every S is P	Every man is wise
AE		Universal Negative	No S is P	No man is wise
IO	Sub-contraries	Particular Affirmative	Some S is P	Some man is wise
IO		Particular Negative	Some S is not P	Some man is not wise
AO	Contradictories	Universal Affirmative	Not every S is P	Not every man is wise
AO		Particular Negative	Some S is not P	Some man is not wise

AI	Implicatives	Universal Affirmative or Negative	Every S is P Some S is P	Every man is wise Some man is wise
EO		Particular affirmative or negative	No S is P Some S is not P	No man is wise Some man is not wise

#### 4.2 The categories of Lyons

Lyons (1977:270-290) classifies opposites according to a context-free relation between the opposite pair members. He distinguishes between binary contrast and non-binary contrast. Binary contrast establishes opposition between single pairs and falls into gradable opposites (antonyms), non-gradable opposites (complementaries), directionals (orthogonal and antipodal), and converses (relationals). Non-binary contrast holds in trinary or multinary (sub) sets of three or more (cycles and series) (scales and ranks). Table 2 sketches and typifies the categories of Lyons.

*Table 2: Lyons's (1977) categories of opposites (adapted from Davies 2012:44)*

Category	Subcategory	Subset	Definition	Examples
Binaries	Gradables		dividing a field into binary extremes	'hot/cold'
	Non-gradables		dividing a field into mutually exclusive parts	'man/woman'
	Directionals	Orthogonal	dividing a field into perpendicular points	'north/west'

		Antipodal	dividing a field into diametrical points	'north/south'
	Converses		dividing a field into mutually relational opposites	'husband/wife'
Non-binaries	Cycles		dividing a field	'spring,
			into cyclically ordered sets	summer, autumn, winter'
	Series	Scales	dividing a field onto serially ordered scales	'warm, hot, boiling, freezing, cold, cool'
	Ranks		dividing a field into serially ordered ranks	'poor, fair, average, good, excellent'

### 4.3 The categories of Cruse

For Cruse (1986), antonymy is also a subtype of opposites, besides complementaries, converses, and reversives (cf. Jones 2002). The traditional categories devised by Cruse (1986) are, as Jones (2002) and Gorgis and Al-Halawachy (2001) state, the most comprehensive and most adequate, replicating Lyons's terminology but creating further complex subclasses.

According to Cruse (1986:198), the essence of complementaries is that they exhaustively divide a semantic domain into two mutually exclusive compartments, so that what does not fall into one of them must necessarily fall into the other, without *'no-man's-hand'*, no neutral region and no possibility of a third term or *'sitting on the fence'* in between. Cruse (2000:168) gives *'complementarity'* a strictly rational definition in that "F(X) entails and is entailed by not-F(Y)", i.e. "not being one entails being the other" (Murphy, 2003:29) and "dividing the domain without remainder" (Griffiths, 2006:28).

Conversive antonyms are relational antonyms by which one yields the same proposition as the other when the arguments are reversed. Cruse (1986:234) distinguishes between direct converses (two arguments) and indirect converses (three arguments). Cruse (1986:226) refers to opposites including such verbs denoting motion or change (concrete/abstract) in opposite directions as reversives that fall into two groups: independent reversives and restitutives. Cruse (2000:171) argues that reversives are all verbs, an argument supported by Murphy (2003:197) who holds that reversible opposition includes the undoing of a state, an action or a quality. Table 3 sums up the Crusian categories.

*Table 3: Cruse's (1986) categories of opposites (adapted from Jones et al. 2012:7)*

<i>Category</i>	<i>subcategory</i>	<i>Subset</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>Opposites I</i>	Complementaries		dividing a domain into exclusive sub-domains	'true/false'
	Antonyms		denoting gradation of some property	'fast/slow'
<i>Opposites II</i>	Directionals	Reversives	denoting change or motion in opposite direction	'fill/empty'
		Restitutives	denoting restitution of a former state	'damage/repair'
	Antipodals		representing two extremes on an axis	'top/bottom'
	Counterparts		reversing irregularity of a uniform shape	'hill/valley'
	Converses	Direct	denoting two argument opposition of a relation	'above/below'
		Indirect	denoting three argument opposition of a relation	'lend/borrow'

	Congruence variants	Incompatible	denoting a non-canonical relation of opposition	'killer/rapist'
	Pseudoopposites		denoting a hypo-hyper type of opposition	'victim/rapist'

#### 4.4 The categories of Mettinger

Mettinger's (1994) pioneering study proves antonymy, rather its broader term 'opposition', to be syntactically receptive to text-based and data-driven classification. Mettinger categorizes the syntactic environments of both relations into nine frames and ascribes a textual function to each frame. Drawing upon genre-specific corpora to identify common syntactic milieus in which his co-occurring opposites (99 of 161) appear, he has been able to allocate a discourse function to each frame, such as frame A, frame B, and so forth. Table 4 tabulates the frames of Mettinger in addition to the functions and instances. It is worthy to mention that the table is adapted from Hassanein (2018:22).

*Table 4: Mettinger's (1994) categories of opposites (adapted from Hassanein 2018:22)*

Key frame	Key function(s)	Key examples
A1: X & Y	(A): simultaneous validity	A clear case of <b>cause</b> and <b>effect</b>
	(B): confrontation	His <b>former</b> and his <b>present</b> wife
A1: X, at the same time Y	(A): simultaneous validity	I was puzzled by the <b>simplicity</b> and at the same time by the <b>complexity</b>
B: neither X nor Y	(A): simultaneous non-validity	The children seem neither <b>old</b> enough nor <b>young</b> enough for it
C: X or Y	(C): (exclusive) choice	Is he deafer or blinder or <b>fatter</b> or <b>thinner</b> ?
D: X or (= "and") Y	(A): simultaneous validity (non-exclusive)	His wife <b>more</b> or <b>less</b> knew about the affair

E1: not X, (but) Y	(B): confrontation	Children aren't a <b>luxury</b> , they're a <b>necessity</b>
	(D): correction (substitution)	She herself didn't feel in the least <b>Sleepy</b> . On the contrary, she felt wide <b>awake</b>
E2: X, not Y	(D): correction (emphasis)	I wish to <b>assist</b> a love-affair—not to <b>hinder</b> it
F: X rather than Y	(E): comparison	Her lips were dry, and <b>hard</b> rather than <b>soft</b>
G: X turns into Y	(F): mutation	We want to turn some of our <b>enemies</b> into <b>friends</b>
H: from X to Y	(H): cumulative validity	Near to it were placed a number of suitcases ranged neatly in order from <b>large</b> to <b>small</b>
I1: X, Y	(A): cumulative validity	He half- <b>smiled</b> , half- <b>sighed</b>
	(B): confrontation	He is in the <b>light</b> , I in the <b>shade</b>
I2: X, Y	(G): reversal	History had been <b>made</b> and <b>unmade</b> at the informal weekend

#### 4.5 The categories of Jones

Jones (2002) has conducted the most pioneering, rather the most comprehensive, corpus-based study of canonical antonyms in English. Using 3000 database sentences from 280-million lexemes driven from the newspaper (*The Independent*), he has preselected 56 canonical antonyms and categorized them into eight (later nine) categories in accordance with the syntactic frames where they co-occur. The product is a dynamic typology of the discourse functions of such antonyms based on forms and functions of these frames (cf. Davies 2012:45). Being methodologically rigorous, Jones's typology has been extensively retrieved and replicated across a variety of datasets and languages as previously mentioned. Table 5 summarizes Jones's categorization, which has been serving as an analytic toolkit for later studies, most notably those conducted by his Comparative Lexical Relations' fellow members group.<sup>4</sup>

Table 5: A summary of Jones's (2002) typology of antonymy (adapted from Hassanein 2018:27)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Ancillary Antonymy	signals another antonymous pair not usually seen contrastively	<i>Form</i> is <b>temporary</b> , <i>class</i> is <b>permanent</b>
Comparative Antonymy	gauges one antonym against another in a comparative context	<b>Reward</b> is more effective than <b>punishment</b>
Coordinated Antonymy	joins two antonyms on a scale either inclusively or exhaustively	Whitehall was yesterday unable to <b>confirm</b> or <b>deny</b> other simulated devolutions
Distinguished Antonymy	makes a metalinguistic distinction between antonyms	One must distinguish between <b>hard</b> and <b>soft</b> drugs.
Extreme Antonymy	draws contrast between extremes of a scale and space in between	No-one can afford to go to law except the <b>very rich</b> and the <b>very poor</b>
Idiomatic Antonymy	pairs antonyms in a proverbial or clichéd set phrase	<b>The long</b> and <b>the short</b> of it is that height counts
Negated Antonymy	negates one antonym in favor of another	However, the citizen pays for services to work <b>well, not badly</b>
Transitional Antonymy	describes a change from one state to another	Her film career similarly has lurched from <b>success</b> to <b>failure</b>

#### 4.6 The categories of Davies

Davies (2012, 2013) has swum against the common stream and approached antonymy afresh under a more general term that he prefers to call 'opposition'. His study proposes a provisional typology of the functions of discourse in the non-canonical oppositions based on the syntactic frames where they co-occur. The typology draws heavily on Jones's corpus-based study of canonical antonyms in similar syntactic environments, but has substantially been revised and refined. These syntactic frames trigger non-canonical oppositions between items that are not considered opposites in neutral contexts but interact in context to contribute binary representations of people and things. Table 6 summarizes Davies's typology with examples.

*Table 6: An overview of Davies's (2012, 2013) typology of opposition (adapted from Hassanein 2018:28)*

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Example</i>
Negated Opposition	expressing preference for one state over another	We are not <b>a colony</b> ; we are <b>an equal and valued part of this nation</b>
Transitional Opposition	transforming from one state to a (non)canonical opposite	British marchers have spurned <b>isolation</b> for <b>solidarity</b> , and <b>fear</b> for <b>fury</b>
Comparative Opposition	measuring X against Y either directly or indirectly	But more important than the fate of <b>Labour</b> is the fate of <b>mankind</b>
Replacive Opposition	expressing an alternative option to that which it is opposed	He predicted his plans would be Published "in <b>weeks</b> rather than <b>months</b> "
Concessive Opposition	creating contrast between two conjoined phrases or clauses	<b>There was plenty of passion</b> but <b>the marchers remained good natured</b>
Explicit Opposition	making an explicit metalinguistic difference between X and Y	The <b>professionally-produced placards</b> . . . contrasted with <b>cobbled-together banners</b>



Parallelism	repeating structures within which specific opposed items are foregrounded	<b>It wasn't a march; it was an invasion</b>
Binarized Option	creating a choice between two mutually exclusive options	Either you are with <b>us</b> or you are with <b>the terrorists</b>

What is insightful about Davies's seminal typology of non-canonical oppositions in discourse is that it opens doors for the ideological repercussions of opposition in discourse and places contrast, canonical (antonymy) and non-canonical (opposition), on an infinite cline from conventional canonicity to unconventional non-canonicity.

## 5. Conclusions

This overview article has sought the development of antonymy in English over time diachronically, tracking and reviewing the theoretical as well as the practical progress of this phenomenon in a given context.

By definition, this phenomenon proves to be rather difficult to define and specify operationally. Working definitions of antonymy seem to overlap and denote a multiplicity of semantically versatile concepts, underpinning a case of polyonymy in reference to this notion. It is better suited to exemplification than definition and to illustration than description (Jones, 2002:10). Thus, finding a consistent definition of antonymy is more problematic than one expects, which may explain why this phenomenon is dichotomously approached, i.e., canonically vs. non-canonically, literally vs. non-literally, lexically vs. semantically, also textually vs. contextually. Either approach cannot dispense with the other and any adequate definition of either notion must be synergic, i.e., acting cooperatively rather than competitively.

As for classification, this phenomenon has been typologically dissected by theorists, notably rhetoricians, tropologists, semanticists, and linguists. It has been classified according to the classifiers' theoretical insights and practices. The traditional typologies of this phenomenon have generally originated according to a context-free and form-based relation between the oppositional pairs. Former studies have mainly drawn on pairs of opposites co-occurring in syntax-free environments in English (Davies, 2012:43). State of the-art studies of opposition in English has drastically shifted the linguistic foci upon oppositeness from syntax- and context-free perspectives to syntax- and context-dependent ones and from canonicity to non-canonicity. Antonymy, the canonical relation of oppositeness across languages, has been dramatically broadened in scope to comprise a variety of conventionally and non-conventionally oppositional configurations. These configurations feature oppositions between antonyms, contrasts, counterparts, incompatibles, analogs, and other related terms. Such oppositions accommodate almost all parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns.

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