The Use of Oxymoron in English and its Significance for Teaching Iraqi EFL Universities Students

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ABSTRACT

Oxymoron in English is a linguistic phenomenon of special importance. This phenomenon appeared in the language for a long time, but it developed strongly from the end of the 15th century. This is a fairly common phenomenon and appears a lot in the language. It is very important to study oxymoron in English and its implications for teaching students majoring in English. Research results will help students better understand English sentence structure and word usage, and help develop creative thinking and flexibility in using language. The research also familiarizes language majors with different rhetorical devices and expressions, strengthen their writing and speaking skills, create an interesting learning environment, raise students' curiosity and interest, and help them absorb knowledge in a positive way. In this article, the author will focus on clarifying oxymoron in English and its application in teaching. To have a solid basis, the author will conduct a survey and evaluate learners to understand its advantages and limitations.

Keywords: *oxymoron; teaching; English-majored students*

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times oxymorons have been used by scientists to create linguistic effects in their works. We can find oxymoron in all the writings of the thinkers in Greece, China, India and etc. However, oxymoron only became popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when it became widely used in literature, art, advertising, and even in common speech. Nowadays, oxymoron has become an important means to create attention and impress in conveying messages. In order to have a scientific, objective view and to apply it to teaching language major students, the author has conducted research on this issue.

In the process of researching and teaching, the author finds that translating foreign language texts in general and English in particular is always a challenge for language major students. Like all other languages, the English language is also regular, and the phenomenon that makes it difficult for learners to approach is the phenomenon of antagonism. To point out the phenomenon in order to help learners approach and grasp the problem conveniently requires elaborate, extensive and systematic research. The task of the research of this article is to clarify the theoretical basis, clarify the oxymoron contents and draw out the meaning for the teaching language major students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to study oxymoron in English and its meaning for teaching students majoring in English, the following research methods can be used: Descriptive method is used to clarify the characteristics. on the structure and semantics of paradoxical phenomena in English. In the process of applying this method, the author uses statistical methods, classification, systematization, and some logical operations such as union and intersection in language description. Using a survey method to collect data from language major students at the University of Khanh Hoa about their opinions about the phenomenon of antagonism and the effectiveness of its use in teaching. Besides, the research on oxymoron was statistically performed by the author with 196 text documents, 06 electronic documents, 04 oral documents in the community. Specifically, noun phrase paraphrasing has 58 text documents and 06 electronic documents; phrasal verbs have 14 text documents; adverbial phrase paradox has 12 text documents; adverbial clause has 104 text documents; The self-contradictory clause has 08 text documents and 02 oral documents. To objectively evaluate the application of the

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phenomenon of paraphrasing, the author applied 08 classes with a total of 180 students. After the experiment was completed, the survey was conducted using a questionnaire and the data was processed using SPSS software.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Oxymoron is a play on words, a high degree of human creativity in the use of language. The process by which people have known to combine two words that appear to be contradictory but when viewed in a specific context it is compatible (Ameringer, T. E. 1921); (Beiranvand, Y., & Mirzai, A. 2023); (Bageshwar, B. R. 2021). Paradox includes three factors: high level of creativity; contradictory appearance; context (Johnson, E. 2019); (Elsässer, J. P. 2023); (Stiglitz, J. E. 2019). The high level of creativity of the paradox shows the talent and style of each individual creator. It is new, attractive and stimulates curiosity for readers and listeners. Oxymoron's contradictory appearance is reflected in the method of using words, the apparent contradiction, but its real meaning lies in the level of allegorical meaning. Contextual elements are raised to demonstrate the use of oxymoron often associated with time, not confinement, specific context. If we separate it from that context, we will not understand, even misunderstand its meaning.

The study of oxymoron has attracted much attention and there have been many different views, but basically these studies are in agreement that Oxymoron is a rhetorical (Rezende, H. D., and ast 2022); (Reinertsen, A. B. 2021); (Głaz, A. 2023). However, some researchers only emphasize the contradiction of paradoxes (Kinsella, J. 2022); (MacKenzie, I. 2019), while others argue that contradictions are just the surface layer of paradoxes, the most important of which is their underlying rationality.

Paradox (propositional paradox) (Brooks, C. 1947); (Keller, J., & Tian, P. 2021); (Naigles, L. R. 2002) is often used in oral and written speech to create literary effect and capture the attention of the reader or listener. However, because of their opposite nature, propositional contradictions are often difficult to understand and use such as about a tenet contrary to received opinion (Scott, R. H. 1979); (Larson, E. 1998); a statement that is contradictory, yet or perhaps opposed to common sense and perhaps is true (Bailey, D. & Koney, K. 1996); a self-contradictory statement that at first seems true (Bray, G. A. 2009); (TASTLE, W. J. 1992); (Braathen, P. 2016); An argument that derives selfcontradictory apparently by valid deductions from acceptable premises (Schwammenthal, E., & Levine, R. A. 2005); A statement which appears self-contradictory or contrary to expectations (Ball, W. W. R., & Coxeter, H. S. 2022). In terms of original meaning, the term paradox was originally understood as a contradiction and an accepted opinion. However, the term was later interpreted as a contradictory argument, contrary to common sense. For example: The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible; People have one thing in common: they are all different.

Self-contradictory paradoxical clause (Ekman, J. 2016); (Babayev, J. 2021) Self-contradictory propositional paradox is a form of propositional paradox, in which a proposition contradicts itself, creating an absurd and incomprehensible sentence. Example: My advice is that you should never take my advice. This means that, if you take my advice and don't listen to my advice at the same time, we are already the best takers of that statement, but if we follow my advice did not listen to my advice, forming an endless loop, the sentence made no sense and could not be solved. The above sentence is affirmative: *my advice* and negative: *never take my advice*.

Random paradox (Stambaugh, L. A. 2011); (McFarland, G. F. 1963) is not a formal grammatical term, and is often used to describe an odd sentence structure or argument that cannot be explained or resolved by common logic. It is just a combination that only contradicts on the surface, does not imply paradoxical meaning, nor creates excitement for readers or listeners.

Literary (Kellman, S. G. 2019); Guillory, J. 2022); Da, N. Z. 2019) (purposive paradox) or opinion oxymora (Musaev, T., Aziz, J., & Mohd, J. 2021) (literary discord) is a linguistic technique in which words or phrases arranged in an unusual way to create an interesting or confusing effect. Literary paradox can be used to create a work of literature that is interesting, interesting, and different. In literary discord, the author may use phrases or words in a particular way, such as inversion, transposition, repetition, pun, or use of visual language to effect. new. For example: *proud humility* (Spenser); *darkness visible* (Milton); *damn with faint praise* (Pope); *expressive silence* (Thomson); *melancholy merriment* (Byron); *falsely true* (Tennyson); *sweet sorrow* (Shakespeare), etc.

Oxymoron can be classified in many different ways, including by topic, type of sentence, form of language use and object of use such as: in art, *baby grand*; in education, *learning by teaching*; in legal, *legally illegal*; in religion, *devilish angel*; science, *burning cold*, etc.

Oxymoron is a special linguistic construct because it produces sayings or phrases that have a different meaning than what the reader or listener would normally hear or read. Paradoxes are created by arranging words or phrases in a way that is different from the usual arrangement. As a result, it is often amusing, confusing, and even humorous. According to the law of prohibition of contradictions, at the same time, in the same particular relationship, it is impossible for two

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statements reflecting two opposing states to be true, but one of them must be false. The word law shows that a certain characteristic, an attribute cannot be both it and itself at the same time, in the same particular relationship.

Contrast and antithesis, though both are linguistic constructs built on the basis of contradictory relationships. However, if contrast is a rhetorical lexicon in which words with opposite tones are in an opposing relationship, capable of evoking images of characters and things. In a complex phenomenon, paradox is a sequence of sentences of opposite meanings, images, and concepts expressed in different units of speech. Contrast is often used to compare and contrast two concepts or ideas. Whereas, antonym creates opposition by using antonyms or antonymous phrases with each other.

In this article, the author focuses on answering two questions as follows: What is oxymoron in English? What does oxymoron in English mean for the teaching of language major students?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Oxymoron in English is a common linguistic phenomenon that has important implications for the understanding and use of this language. Oxymoron occurs when the contrast of two words or phrases creates a new meaning that cannot be inferred from their individual components. For example, "*the pen is mightier than the sword*" means that the power of literary works is stronger than weapons.

The usual phraseological paradox consists of a subcomponent and a central component. The central component plays a decisive role, but the secondary component modifies the central and logical component.

Table 1: structure of phraseological paradox

Noun phrase (NP)	A small town	A small town
verb phrase (VP)	Drive carefully	Drive carefully
Adjective phrase (AP)	Very good	Very good

Table 2: A propositional paradox

NP	VP	AP
adjective >< noun; noun's >< noun; noun >< preposition + noun; noun >< noun	verb >< object; verb >< complement; verb + object >< object complement;	adjective >< adverb; adjective >< adjective

Noun phrase, verb phrase or Adjective phrase are all important grammatical components in English. These clusters are used to describe objects, actions or properties in a more complex and precise way. However, each of these types of phrases has distinct characteristics, which are used in different cases in everyday language. However, NP is most used in English.

A propositional paradox (M) is a contradiction between a minor and a central component connected by a system of words (be, seem…), which is sometimes replaced by commas (,) or (:).

Table 3: Classification of propositional paradoxes

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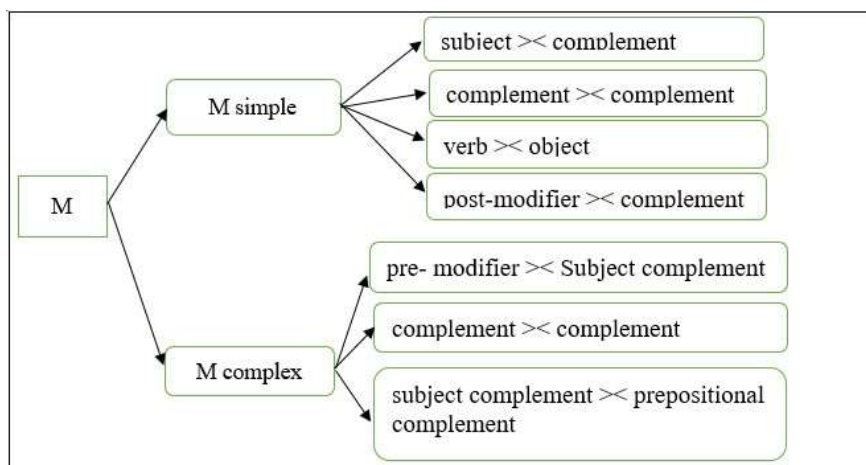
The classification of propositional paradoxes allows us to identify the correct type of propositional paradox used in the sentence. This classification helps us better understand how to use clause inverse and its effect in English communication. On the other hand, it helps learners better understand how to use clause inverse in different cases to avoid confusion or misuse of syntax in the exchange of information in English.

Self-contradictory clause paradox Subject M1 >< Verb M2; Subject M1 >< complement M2; object M1 >< subject M2. These self-contradictory clauses are often used to create humor and challenge the reader or listener to resolve the contradiction in the sentence. However, when used in everyday communication, they can be misleading and make it difficult to convey meaning.

Table 4: Semantic relationship
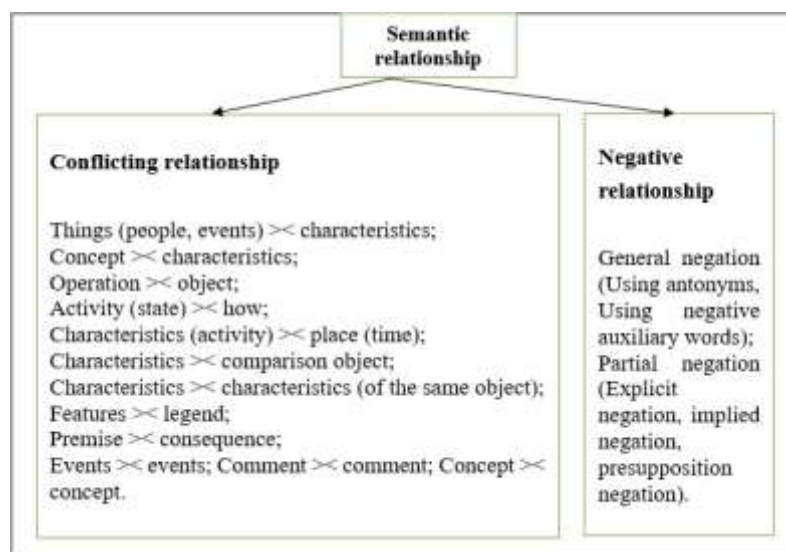
Paradox in functional language styles. In art, paradox is an expression of creative and flexible thinking. Paraphrasing is a technique of writing and expression in the literary arts. When used correctly, paraphrasing can convey deep meaning and create a powerful impact on the reader or listener. Using discord requires creative thinking and flexibility, because it requires ingenuity in arranging linguistic elements such as words, sentence structure and meaning to create a sentence or paragraph. with two-dimensional or multi-dimensional, and sometimes contradictory, meanings. When used correctly, paraphrasing can surprise, challenge, and pique the curiosity of a reader or listener, thereby creating an interesting and unique experience for the user of the inverse. It also helps the author or narrator convey his message in a more subtle and impressive way. Therefore, paradox is considered as an expression of creative and flexible thinking in the art of writing and expression, helping the author or speaker to convey meaning and create a strong effect on the reader or listener. listener. For example, *new classic*. The opposition of *new* and *classic* is expressed explicitly by union to create a complete concept.

The paradox reflects the complex contradictions of life such as: The best way to achieve happiness for oneself is to give happiness to other. To discover these interesting paradoxes requires special deep thinking, but in order to express these thoughts, it is necessary to have the appropriate linguistic form. Paradoxes are the most effective expression in this case because paradoxes themselves are logically contradictory constructs. Besides, paraphrasing also brings laughter, interesting, full of surprises. For instance, *England is the paradise of individuality, eccentricity, heresy, anomalies, hobbies, and humours.* Paradox is used a lot in political writing, especially in speeches for the speaker to present his point of view in order to convince the audience in the most effective way.

APPLYING OXYMORON IN ENGLISH FOR TEACHING LANGUAGE MAJOR STUDENTS

From the study on oxymoron in English above, the author proceeds to apply it to the teaching of language major students in the second year of the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023 with a total of 8 classes in 03 universities with a total of 180 students. The method is applied to build detailed lectures for the subject. Instructors can introduce contrasting pairs of words in English to help language major students better understand these words and use them correctly and naturally.

Use paraphrasing in lectures to help students understand and learn how to use words and sentence structures correctly and logically. Assign students writing exercises using paraphrasing to practice writing skills and to use vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar creatively and flexibly. Create motivational lectures using paraphrases and create combinations of words and images to create artistic effect and capture students' attention. Organize contests and games that use paraphrasing to help students develop language skills and effectively entertain them. Instruct students to analyze the sentence structure of paraphrase sentences to better understand English grammar and sentence structure.

The data collection tool is a questionnaire developed for students. To find out students' perceptions and feedback on the effectiveness of using paradox in English, a survey questionnaire for students was designed. The main part of the questionnaire consisted of 18 questions. The questions are grouped into two groups (clusters): the need and impact of using oxymoron to teach. For each question on a scale of 1 to 5, the higher the number, the higher the agreement: from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Students tick the box corresponding to their level of agreement.

Quantitative data collection took place from September 2022 to January 2023, after the students had completed the first semester of school. Qualitative data collection took place in January, after the quantitative results had been processed and analyzed for initial results. During the collection of questionnaires, the research team briefly checked and prompted to ensure that participants did not miss out on questions in the questionnaire. With a total of 180 votes collected, the objectivity and reliability are ensured. Because the questionnaire was set up mainly in the form of closed-ended questions, the data obtained from these 180 questionnaires were entered and processed on SPSS software version 20. Data were processed to calculate the mean (Mean), standard deviation (SD) and maximum (Max) and minimum (Min).

QUESTIONS	M
Do you know the phenomenon of Oxymoron in English?	4.56
Is it necessary to apply the phenomenon of Oxymoron to your teaching?	4.35
Do you think understanding the phenomenon of antagonism can help students learn better?	4.25
Do you think using paraphrasing can help language majors improve their reading comprehension, grammar and creative thinking skills in English?	4.76
Do you think using paraphrasing can help language majors improve their reading comprehension, grammar and creative thinking skills in English?	4.91

Do you know oxymoron in English? Survey results with average value M=4.56 (according to 5-step scale); Is it necessary to apply oxymoron to your teaching? Result M= 4.35; Do you think understanding the phenomenon of antagonism can help students learn better? Result M= 4.25; Do you think that using paraphrasing can help language major students improve their reading comprehension, grammar and creative thinking skills in English? Result M= 4.74; Are you interested in learning paraphrasing? Result M= 4.91. From the above results, the majority of students believe that this activity is necessary.

CONCLUSION

Oxymoron in English is a special linguistic structure. In terms of form, the paradox has a fairly diverse structure, with many levels such as phrase paradox, propositional paradox, self-contradictory propositional paradox. In terms of semantics, paradox is built on two relationships such as: contradiction relation and negative relation with many different types. When used in art-style texts, paraphrasing shows a profound aesthetic value. When used in political style texts, paradox has a strong impact on a large number of readers and listeners. Paradox is a linguistic construct of high artistic value. They have unusual forms, sometimes making it difficult for readers and listeners, but because of that, they always bring new and interesting things about perception as well as emotion.

Paradox is the most effective tool to express complex contradictions in people's hearts as well as regular paradoxes in life and society.

Oxymoron in English is an expression of flexibility and creativity in thinking. Applying this phenomenon in teaching English to language major students not only helps them improve their language skills, but also helps them develop their ability to think creatively and logically. Using paraphrasing in teaching English helps students understand and remember basic grammar principles more easily, and helps them develop reading comprehension and creativity in using the language. language. However, it should be noted that the use of paraphrasing is not the solution to all problems in teaching English. Instead, the manipulation of this phenomenon needs to be combined with other teaching methods such as focusing on vocabulary, grammar, and communication development.

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