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UNDERSTANDING PLEONASMS IN SPEECH AND WRITING

РОЗУМІННЯ ПЛЕОНАЗМІВ В УСНІЙ ТА ПИСЕМНІЙ МОВІ

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Abstract. *Language is not only a means of communication, but also a rich, lively and multifaceted communication tool that allows people to convey the most subtle shades of thoughts, emotions, moods and feelings. In this context, stylistic techniques that enrich speech, giving it expressiveness, attract special attention. One of the interesting and at the same time ambiguous phenomena in speech is pleonasm - redundancy in expression, when the same thought is repeated in several words, similar in meaning. At first glance, pleonasms may seem like a linguistic error or a speech defect because they create unnecessary repetitions.*

However, in fact, their role is much deeper than it seems: in fiction, journalism, and oral folklore, they become a powerful stylistic device that helps to express emotion or emphasize important aspects of the expressed thought. This is their unique dual nature: on the one hand, they can indicate linguistic imperfection, and on the other, they can be a powerful stylistic tool. This article aims to explore the nature of pleonasms, their functions in language, and their role in various types of texts. We will consider examples from literature, everyday speech, and the media to understand how pleonasms affect the perception of the text and what stylistic possibilities they open up for the author. Special attention is paid to how pleonasms contribute to the enrichment of the text and why they are sometimes perceived as a speech defect.

Pleonasms occupy a rather interesting and controversial place in the language. On the one hand, they are a natural part of it and often arise from the tendency of speakers to emphasize or clarify meaning, even when it is not necessary, in this case the use of pleonasms may be stylistically justified. On the other hand, excessive use of pleonasms can negatively affect lexical economy, making speech cumbersome and overloaded, then they can carry a negative connotation when it leads to excessive verbosity and makes it difficult to understand the text.

Key words: *pleonasms, redundancy, linguistic error, lexical economy, cumbersome speech.*

Introduction.

The vocabulary of any language is a collection of all words and set phrases used by its speakers to express thoughts, emotions, describe phenomena and objects of the surrounding world. It reflects the historical development, cultural features and social changes, it is constantly updated and enriched. Part of the vocabulary are pleonasms, a linguistic phenomenon that manifests itself in the use of extra words or expressions that add excessive information to the statement without changing its meaning. In other words, a pleonasm occurs when a sentence uses words whose meaning is duplicated or made redundant by the context.



A pleonasm is created by developing and expanding an utterance in such a way that synonyms are added to existing words and expressions. The syntactic relationship between the constituents of the pleonastic expression is quite correct, problems may arise at the semantic level. The most common term associated with a pleonasm is the term "redundancy". Redundancy is defined as an excess of information in communication, which allows to avoid misunderstandings. A message is redundant if and only if it contains elements that contribute nothing to the message. [12, 1008].

We set **an objective** to determine the nature, functions and distribution of pleonasms in language (e.g. in literature, speech, media). To achieve the goal we will determine what is considered a pleonasm, investigate the types of pleonasms, analyze the contexts of use and identify their functions in the language.

Research methods. To study pleonasms, we used qualitative and comparative analysis: we studied specific examples of pleonasms, their functions and contexts, and also compared the use of pleonasms in different genres, styles and languages.

Literature review. The dictionary of English language and culture gives a definition of a pleonasm as the use of more words than needed to express an idea. [12, 1008].

The term "pleonasm" came from ancient stylistics and grammar. Attitudes towards pleonasms have changed in different eras. Quintilian, a Roman rhetorician, the author of *Institutio Oratoria*, considered pleonasm as a rhetorical device involving the use of redundant words or phrases as both a potential stylistic. He recognized that pleonasm could add emphasis or clarity when used thoughtfully, but he generally warned against its overuse, which could detract from clarity. In *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian explained that pleonasm should only be employed to meet specific rhetorical goals, such as intensifying emotion, amplifying a point, or clarifying meaning where a simpler expression might not suffice. However, he also warned that excessive pleonasm might come across as lacking refinement or skill in expression, which could reduce a speaker's persuasiveness and credibility. [6] Like Quintilian, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek historian and critic, discussed pleonasm as part of his larger analysis of style and rhetorical technique. According to him pleonasm could be a device



that might serve a purpose when used judiciously, but he warned against excessive redundancy that could undermine clarity and elegance. [2] Pleonasms as a linguistic phenomenon have been explored in various academic works, though they are often discussed within broader studies on redundancy, stylistics, or rhetorical devices. Joseph M. Williams in *"Style: Toward Clarity and Grace"* focuses on stylistic clarity in writing, discussing pleonasms as a tool to avoid or sometimes embrace in certain context.[13] Madu Bridget Ngozi considers pleonasms as part of the tradition of rhetorical figures, analyzing how they contribute to expression. [5] Pleonasms are often studied in the context of stylistic or rhetorical figures of speech, where redundancy is used intentionally for emphasis, poetic effect, or clarity. Suzanne Purkins admits that some types of redundancy can be tricky to identify, and that's because we tend to speak in expressions in English, so redundant phrases become little package deals, like a true fact. [8]. Mahamadovna, A. S. comes to the conclusion "that a fairly large number of phrases, which in classical stylistics manuals refer to pleonasms, have quite firmly entered the modern language and have become widely used" [7].

Discussion. There is no a clear definition of pleonasm, apart this term linguists use other words like redundancy, wordiness, verbalism. There is no single classification of pleonasms. The concepts of pleonasm and tautology are often interchanged, because there is no clear distinction between them. In this article we accept the definition of pleonasm as the use of more words than re needed to express a meaning, done either unintentionally or for emphasis.

Pleonasms are common in many languages. They are ubiquitous and serve a variety of purposes, including intensifying an expression, adding emphasis, clarifying, or emphasizing a meaning. Some pleonasms are so ingrained in a language that they are accepted as normal expressions. For example, *book in advance, an old tradition, I saw it with my own eyes, спуститись вниз, бронювати заздалегідь, стара традиція, я бачив це на власні очі (Ukr); descendre en bas, réserver à l'avance, une vieille tradition, je l'ai vu de mes propres yeux (Fr.); Gå ner till källaren, Förhandsboka i förväg, en gammal tradition, jag såg det med egna ögon! (Sw.); prenotare in anticipo, una vecchia tradizione, l'ho visto con i miei occhi (It.); zamawiaj*



z wyprzedzeniem, stara tradycja, widziałem to na własne oczy(Pol.) These identical pleonasms found in different languages reflect the universal tendencies of human thinking, cognitive processes and peculiarities of language development. Some pleonasms may be the result of linguistic borrowing or parallel development, especially when languages are in close contact, they can adopt each other's phrases, including pleonastic expressions.

The conducted analysis allows us to classify the types of pleonasms, identify their features and determine their role in various contexts. To do this, we consider lexical, grammatical, semantic and stylistic redundancy using specific examples.

Lexical pleonasms

A lexical pleonasm is an unnecessary repetition of the same idea or information in a sentence, often due to the use of words with redundant meanings. This occurs when a word or expression already implicitly contains information that is repeated by another word. This redundancy is sometimes used to reinforce a point, but it is often considered a stylistic clumsiness.

Examples of lexical pleonasms: *to enter inside, exit out, to play a game, popular folklore, a little dwarf*.

Lexical pleonasms were often used in ancient oratory because they enhanced the emotional impact of speeches and helped to remember the main ideas. In the rhetoric of ancient Greece and Rome, pleonasms were not always considered a drawback. Orators such as Cicero used redundancy to strengthen arguments or add solemnity to their speech. For example, figures of speech such as tautology could be part of a sophisticated oratorical strategy:

Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit! He departed, he withdrew, he strode off, he broke forth.[6]

In medieval texts, pleonasms often arose from the authors' desire to emphasize important elements of the text. Redundancy often became part of artistic aesthetics, for example in descriptions. Religious texts, translations of the Bible, for example, used pleonasms for clarity and to preserve the original meaning.

He opened His mouth and taught them, saying (Matthew 5:2, KJV) [1]



With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps (Judges 15:16, KJV) [1]

Many biblical pleonasms are rooted in Hebrew's literary style, which uses repetition for emphasis since the language lacks superlative forms. They often clarified meaning, especially in oral traditions where repetition helped with memorization and added a rhythmic and artistic quality, making passages more impactful.

Pleonasm in Acronyms: acronym is a creative process in language formation. It is a word formed from the first letters of the words to make up names of something. Pleonasm in acronyms is therefore repetition of a word that is already abbreviated in an acronym. For example, in “*She is infected with HIV virus disease*”, the “V” in “HIV” means “virus”. So, to have the word “virus” again in the sentence is pleonastic. Other examples are *PIN number, ATM machine, SI system*.

Grammatical pleonasms

Grammatical pleonasms are redundant constructions in language that are created by repeating the same meaning with different words or grammatical means within one sentence. Syntax, as a part of grammar, is the arrangement of words and phrases following some set rules to create well-formed sentences in a language. In a syntactic construction, every word or phrase deployed must have an identifiable function and when a word or phrase is engaged more times than is required for the function it performs, it becomes syntactically pleonastic. We can distinguish the following types of syntactic pleonasms: multiple negation, multiple affirmation, and double possession.

Multiple negation is the use of more negators than is necessary to form a negative clause. In the English language, only one negative marker is required to turn an affirmative clause to negative. For example, in “*I can’t see nothing here*”, only *can’t* or *no* is required to turn the sentence negative but, instead, both are used, thus incurring an error of pleonasm.

Multiple affirmation means to reply ‘yes’ or express agreement. Its opposite is negative. For example, in “*I do so believe there’s eleven of them*” [7. p 29] the additional word “*do*” is a multiple affirmation in the sentence.

Strauss shook his head. “No. Porcelain, I do have one set made of ivory.” [3, 52]

Don’t say that...don’t make it any harder. I’m going to go, Jane. [4, 375]



The multiple affirmation *going to go* is unnecessary, and therefore pleonastic.

Semantic pleonasms.

Semantics is the study of linguistic meaning. It examines what meaning is, how words get their meaning, and how the meaning of a complex expression depends on its parts. Semantic pleonasm is more of a question of style and use of grammar. Linguists often call it verbal redundancy to avoid confusion with syntactic pleonasm, a more important phenomenon for theoretical linguistics. It can also take various forms. In many cases of semantic pleonasm, the status of a word as pleonastic depends on the context: *free gift, end result, past history, unexpected surprise, advance warning, basic fundamentals, join together.*

She rode in the ambulance to accompany a mother who was badly injured. Thankfully her young child was saved. [4, 92]

Stylistic pleonasms.

In fiction and journalism, pleonasms are used as a stylistic device to create a certain atmosphere or enhance the imagery of the text.

Stylistics, a branch of applied linguistics, is the study and interpretation of texts of all types, but particularly literary texts, and spoken language with regard to their linguistic and tonal style, where style is the particular variety of language used by different individuals in different situations and settings. Stylistic pleonasms are used for the purpose of amplification, emotional or rhythmic effect, and are often used in artistic language or rhetoric. Example: "I saw it with my own eyes".

What little Jane could see of Daphne's arms were covered by tubes and drips and her tiny bird-like hands were horribly marked by dark black bruises from endless injections. [4, 212]

Taking her cue from her husband, Teri had risen, almost leviated to her feet. [3, 152]

In the narrower sense, a stylistic pleonasm is consciously created by a linguistic subject. It is expressive, it functionally marks the statement, sometimes subtly complements it. In its elementary form a stylistic pleonasm is found in poetry, where its aesthetic role is reduced to emphasizing what is said, the use of formulaic poetics



or to the versification alignment of verses.

Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!

This was the most unkindest cut of all. [10, 207]

Phraseological pleonasm is close to stylistic pleonasm. Such pleonasm is sometimes considered a subtype of stylistic pleonasm. In it, similar words are piled up to emphasize their meaning more strongly. It is also not a linguistic error. Some pleonastic associations are so established that they are not even perceived as two words (for example, *image and opportunity; sadness and grief; misfortune and shame; honor and honesty; fear and trembling; nul and void*.

The old woman was grumbling and mumbling, almost to herself. [8, 4]

In order to understand the role of pleonasms, we tried to classify them by the functions they can perform in speech. This classification will help better appreciate their role in communication and determine whether they are effective or redundant in specific contexts.

Emphatic or reinforcing pleonasms are used to emphasize or strengthen a point for clarity. Although they are often criticized for their redundancy, pleonasms can be used to emphasize an idea or to strengthen expression in an oral or literary style: *the main leitmotif, the highest peak, close proximity. They were surrounded on all sides*.

Emotional coloring. Pleonasms help to convey emotions, emotionally colour statements, for example, *absolutely sure, the most optimal, unexpected surprise, with my own eyes He shouted in a loud voice*.

Rhetorical effect. Sometimes pleonasms occur to explain or clarify meaning, especially in colloquial speech, such as *my own opinion, a new record, memorable souvenir, warn in advance*. Rhetorical pleonasms create a persuasive or dramatic effect: *She looked at them, as if she was only looking for an excuse to start a fight. "What' that meant to mean?" [3, 176]*

We will fight and never surrender, never give up!

He is the one, the only one, who can save us.

The pragmatic function of pleonasms helps to cater to the listener's or reader's context, ensuring clarity or providing reassurance:



Let me repeat again for those who missed it.

Some pleonasms appear in idioms and proverbs. They contribute to the rhythm, making sayings easier to remember and recite.

Over and over again, Safe and sound, Forever and ever, In this day and age.

Speech errors. Unintentional pleonasms result from habits or errors. *Repeat again, return back, future plans* can be either a stylistic device to enhance expressiveness or an error if they do not carry additional semantic load and make the text heavier.

Conclusion.

Pleonasms, or redundant expressions, are a linguistic phenomenon in which the meaning of one unit is duplicated by another. Although pleonasms are considered a stylistic error in strict texts, they are often found in both colloquial speech and literary texts, performing certain functions, namely, amplification, emotionality and emphasis, which are characteristic of literary texts, and the clarification function, which is more common in colloquial speech. Lexical pleonasms are more common in colloquial speech and literature. Grammatical pleonasms are typical of colloquial speech.

So, we can state that pleonasms can be different in nature and function, and they should not always be perceived as linguistic errors. In some cases, they can serve to enrich the speech or strengthen the statement. Some pleonasms are so integrated in every day language that they often go unnoticed, but they can be seen as unnecessary or even verbose. In modern language practice, pleonasms are a sign of language dynamics, where certain excesses become the norm over time. However, in scientific, official and business texts, the presence of pleonasms is usually considered undesirable, because brevity and accuracy of wording are valued here.

Pleonasms are a universal phenomenon is spread among speakers of other languages. The existence of similar pleonasms in different languages can be considered as a reflection of the similarity of cognitive processes, the universality of human nature and general communicative needs. This shows that, despite cultural differences, languages develop along similar ways in the pursuit of expressiveness, and efficiency.



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Анотація. Мова — це не лише засіб комунікації, а й багатий, живий і багатогранний інструмент спілкування, який дозволяє людині передавати найтонші відтінки думок, емоцій, настроїв і почуттів. У цьому контексті особливу увагу привертають стилістичні прийоми, які збагачують мовлення, надаючи йому виразності. Одним із цікавих і водночас неоднозначних явищ у мовленні є плеоназм — надмірність у вираженні, коли одна й та сама думка повторюється кількома словами, схожими за значенням. На перший погляд, плеоназми можуть видаватися мовною помилкою чи недоліком мовлення, адже вони створюють зайві повтори. Проте насправді їх роль набагато глибша, ніж здається: у художній літературі, публіцистиці та усній народній творчості вони стають потужним стилістичним засобом, який допомагає увиразнити емоційність або підкреслити важливі аспекти висловленої думки. У цьому полягає їхня унікальна подвійна природа: з одного боку, вони можуть вказувати на мовну недосконалість, а з іншого — бути потужним інструментом стилістики. Ця стаття має на меті дослідити природу плеоназмів, їх функції в мові, їх роль у різних типах текстів. Ми розглянемо приклади з літератури, побутового мовлення та медіа, щоб зрозуміти, як плеоназми впливають на сприйняття тексту і які стилістичні можливості вони відкривають для автора. Особлива увага приділяється тому, як плеоназми сприяють збагаченню тексту та чому іноді вони сприймаються як недолік мовлення.

Плеоназми займають досить цікаве і суперечливе місце в мові. З одного боку, вони є її природною частиною і часто виникають через прагнення мовців підкреслювати чи уточнювати значення, навіть коли це не потрібно, у цьому випадку використання плеоназмів може бути стилістично виправданим. З іншого боку, надмірне використання плеоназмів може негативно впливати на лексичну економію, роблячи мовлення громіздким і переобтяженим, тоді вони можуть нести негативну конотацію, коли це призводить до надмірної багатослівності та ускладнює розуміння тексту.

Ключові слова: плеоназми, надмірність, мовна помилка, лексична економія, громіздке мовлення.

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