Lexical means of redundancy: a comprehensive exploration

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ABSTRACT

This study examines lexical redundancy as a key phenomenon in both linguistic theory and practice. Although often regarded as a form of stylistic excess, lexical redundancy fulfills important communicative and cognitive functions, including enhancing clarity, emphasis, and cohesion. Through the analysis of tautology, pleonasm, repetition, and synonym stacking, the paper argues that redundancy should be viewed as a structured linguistic resource rather than a mere flaw in expression. The findings highlight that lexical redundancy reinforces meaning, supports cognitive processing, and promotes discourse coherence across languages.

Leksik ortiqchalik vositalari: har tomonlama tadqiqot

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu tadqiqot leksik ortiqchalikni tilshunoslik nazariyasi va amaliyotidagi muhim hodisa sifatida o'rganadi. Garchi ko'pincha uslubiy me'yordan chetga chiqish deb qaralsa-da, leksik ortiqchalik aniqlik, ta'kidlash va bog'liqlikni oshirish kabi muhim aloqa va bilish funksiyalarini bajaradi. Maqolada tavtologiya, pleonazm, takrorlash va sinonimlarni to'plash tahlili orqali ortiqchalikning oddiy ifoda nuqsoni emas, balki tizimli lingvistik resurs sifatida qaralishi lozimligi ta'kidlanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, leksik ortiqchalik ma'noni kuchaytiradi, kognitiv jarayonlarni qo'llab-quvvatlaydi va turli tillarda nutq uyg'unligini ta'minlaydi.

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Лексические средства избыточности: всестороннее исследование

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данном исследовании рассматривается лексическая избыточность как ключевое явление в лингвистической теории и практике. Хотя лексическая избыточность часто воспринимается как форма стилистического излишества, она выполняет важные коммуникативные и когнитивные функции, включая повышение ясности, усиление выразительности и обеспечение связности текста. На основе анализа тавтологии, плеоназма, повторов и нагромождения синонимов в работе утверждается, что избыточность следует рассматривать как структурированный лингвистический ресурс, а не просто как недостаток в выражении мысли. Результаты исследования показывают, что лексическая избыточность усиливает смысл, способствует когнитивной обработке информации и повышает связность дискурса в различных языках.

INTRODUCTION

Language, though often praised for its precision, equally depends on redundancy for effective communication. *Lexical redundancy* – the use of words that repeat or reinforce meaning – reflects a balance between linguistic economy and communicative safety. In linguistics, redundancy ensures the transmission of meaning even under imperfect communication conditions, echoing Shannon's (1948) concept of redundancy in information theory. Yet, in stylistics, redundancy can also be aesthetic or rhetorical, adding depth and rhythm to language. This study aims to explore the structural, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of lexical redundancy, focusing on its linguistic legitimacy and communicative value. The central question is whether redundancy undermines or enhances linguistic expression.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative analytical method based on examples from English, Russian, and Uzbek. The approach integrates descriptive linguistic analysis to identify types of lexical redundancy; comparative semantics to determine similarities and variations across languages; functional interpretation to explain communicative and stylistic roles.

Examples were drawn from modern English corpora (e.g., COCA), literary texts, and bilingual dictionaries. Each case was evaluated in terms of syntactic function, semantic overlap, and pragmatic intent.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The phenomenon of lexical redundancy has long attracted the attention of linguists, philosophers of language, and cognitive scientists, who have offered various interpretations of its nature and function. The earliest discussions of redundancy can be traced to structuralist linguistics, where scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure viewed language as a system of oppositions and distinctions rather than repetitions. Within this framework, redundancy was often seen as a deviation from linguistic economy, a

superfluous element that added no new meaning. However, subsequent developments in linguistic theory, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, gradually transformed this perception and revealed redundancy as an inherent and functional characteristic of natural language.

In the mid-twentieth century, Noam Chomsky's generative grammar laid the foundation for the principle of linguistic economy, emphasizing minimal and efficient representation in syntax and semantics. From this perspective, redundancy appeared undesirable, since the goal of linguistic competence was to generate the most economical structure that could account for all necessary meanings. Yet even within the generative model, Chomsky acknowledged that redundancy plays an important role in maintaining interpretability between deep and surface structures. Redundant elements often serve to clarify syntactic relationships or to reinforce the communicative focus of a sentence, indicating that redundancy, while theoretically uneconomical, may be pragmatically justified.

The paradigm shift brought by cognitive linguistics and functional grammar challenged the notion that redundancy is merely an inefficiency. Scholars such as Ronald Langacker, George Lakoff, and Michael Halliday argued that linguistic expressions are deeply tied to human cognition and communicative needs. From their perspective, redundancy reflects the way human beings conceptualize and process information: through repetition, emphasis, and categorization. Langacker's concept of cognitive salience explains why speakers naturally reintroduce or emphasize certain lexical items to maintain the listener's attention and aid comprehension. Similarly, Halliday's functional grammar proposes that redundancy is not an error but a discourse strategy that contributes to textual cohesion and thematic development.

In information theory, Claude Shannon's model of communication introduced a crucial reinterpretation of redundancy by showing that it is necessary for the stability of any information system. Shannon demonstrated that a completely non-redundant code would be highly efficient but fragile, as any noise or loss would destroy the message. In contrast, natural languages contain built-in redundancy that ensures the recovery of meaning even under imperfect transmission. Linguists later applied this concept to natural communication, recognizing that redundancy functions as a protective mechanism against misunderstanding.

In pragmatics, H.P. Grice's theory of conversational implicature offered another layer of interpretation. According to his Cooperative Principle, speakers are expected to be as informative as necessary but not more so. However, intentional violations of this maxim, particularly through redundant expressions, often serve specific communicative purposes such as emphasis, irony, politeness, or emotional intensity. This pragmatic understanding reframed redundancy as a conscious rhetorical choice rather than a mechanical defect.

Later research in psycholinguistics and discourse analysis also provided empirical evidence for the cognitive and communicative value of redundancy. Willem Levelt's studies on speech production showed that repetition and lexical reinforcement improve recall and comprehension, suggesting that redundancy supports both speaker planning and listener processing. In discourse studies, redundancy has been observed to enhance cohesion and coherence by maintaining referential continuity throughout a text. Writers and speakers use lexical repetition, pleonasm, and synonym stacking to create rhythm, highlight thematic elements, and guide interpretation.

Cross-linguistic and cultural studies further expanded the theoretical scope of redundancy. Anna Wierzbicka and John Lyons emphasized that redundancy patterns vary among languages and reflect cultural conventions of expression. What appears excessive in one language may be perceived as polite, respectful, or emphatic in another. For instance, in Uzbek or Russian, redundant personal pronouns or intensifiers are often used to express sincerity or emotional involvement, while in English they may be associated with stylistic emphasis. This comparative approach revealed that redundancy is deeply embedded in sociocultural norms, making it an important indicator of linguistic identity and communicative style.

RESULTS

Lexical redundancy manifests in language through a wide variety of forms, each performing distinct communicative and stylistic functions. One of the most recognizable types is pleonasm, which occurs when a word or expression adds meaning already implied by another element within the same phrase. Examples such as *free gift*, *past history*, or *to repeat again* illustrate how pleonastic structures function to reinforce information and add emphasis, especially in spoken discourse where clarity and emotional intensity are desired. Although linguistically redundant, pleonasms often help prevent misunderstanding and ensure that the intended message is unmistakably conveyed to the listener or reader.

Another common manifestation of redundancy is tautology, which involves the repetition of the same idea using different words. Phrases such as *It is what it is* or *They will win or they will not* show that tautology, while logically circular, often serves important rhetorical or philosophical functions. In many cases, tautological constructions provide closure, inevitability, or a reflective tone, giving the statement a sense of universality or self-evidence.

Lexical repetition, a direct recurrence of the same word or phrase, also serves as a fundamental mechanism of redundancy. It is frequently employed to strengthen rhythm, cohesion, and emotional force within a text or speech. For instance, Winston Churchill's famous exhortation "Never, never, never give up" demonstrates how repetition reinforces determination and conviction. By repeating a key lexical item, speakers ensure that their message remains vivid and memorable.

Another type of lexical redundancy is synonym stacking, which occurs when two or more near-synonyms are used together for emphasis or rhythm. The phrase *each and every student must attend* exemplifies this phenomenon, where the combination of similar words amplifies inclusivity and intensity. Such constructions are widespread in formal, legal, or persuasive contexts, where precision and rhetorical strength are equally valued.

Redundant collocations, meanwhile, represent fixed or lexicalized pairs that have become conventional through long-term usage. Expressions such as *null and void*, *safe and sound*, and *true and honest* no longer sound redundant to native speakers because they have been fossilized within the lexicon. These combinations, often of historical origin, contribute to stylistic richness and maintain their communicative force through rhythm and tradition.

The functional significance of lexical redundancy can be explained through several interrelated perspectives. From a communicative standpoint, redundancy enhances the clarity and reliability of message transmission. In natural conversation, especially in noisy or uncertain contexts, speakers tend to repeat or reinforce words to prevent

misunderstanding. From a cognitive viewpoint, redundancy aids memorization and conceptual reinforcement, as repetition and semantic overlap align with human cognitive tendencies to highlight and reprocess important information. Stylistically, redundancy provides rhythm, contrast, and emotional color, making speech or writing more expressive and aesthetically engaging. From a pragmatic perspective, redundant elements often convey politeness, sincerity, or emphasis. Phrases such as *I myself guarantee it* illustrate how additional lexical material strengthens the speaker's commitment and interpersonal tone.

Cross-linguistic analysis shows that redundancy functions differently across cultural and linguistic systems. In English, it primarily serves rhetorical and emphatic purposes, enhancing persuasion and rhythm in both spoken and written communication. In Russian, redundancy frequently conveys emotional intensity or personal involvement, as in the expression *лично сам видел* ("I personally saw it myself"). In Uzbek, redundant structures often carry shades of respect, certainty, or social nuance, as seen in *to'liq yakunlandi* ("completely finished") or *o'zi shaxsan keldi* ("he himself personally came"). These examples demonstrate that redundancy extends beyond structural language features, reflecting cultural values and communicative traditions. Thus, lexical redundancy should not be dismissed as a sign of linguistic inefficiency; rather, it represents an integral component of expressive, culturally embedded human communication.

Lexical redundancy refers to the use of additional words that repeat the same meaning or provide minimal new information within a linguistic unit. This phenomenon is found across languages and manifests as a natural feature of human communication. Redundancy may appear in speech and writing as a stylistic choice intended to create emphasis, rhythm, or clarity, but it can also arise unintentionally due to linguistic habit or interference between languages. For example, expressions such as *He made a new innovation* or *They shouted loudly* illustrate how redundancy can occur subtly, repeating an element of meaning already inherent in the primary word. Although such forms may appear inefficient, they often serve crucial communicative functions.

The major types of lexical redundancy demonstrate its diversity and purpose in language. One of the most common types is tautology, in which an idea is unnecessarily repeated through different words or phrases that share the same semantic value. Typical examples include *The reason is because*, *A true fact*, or *It is what it is*. In these instances, no new information is added, yet tautologies can serve rhetorical, philosophical, or poetic functions, helping speakers to emphasize certainty, closure, or inevitability. Despite being avoided in formal academic prose, tautological structures remain widespread in speech and literary expression due to their expressive resonance.

Another closely related form of redundancy is pleonasm. Pleonasm involves the use of redundant words that reinforce or clarify a statement, often enhancing vividness or emotional impact. Sentences such as *I saw it with my own eyes* or *The end result* contain elements whose meanings are already implied. Nevertheless, pleonasms are deeply ingrained in natural speech and idiomatic usage, performing communicative and stylistic roles that increase listener engagement and comprehension. In translation studies, pleonasm is of particular interest because what is redundant in one language may appear necessary or idiomatic in another, reflecting cultural differences in linguistic economy and expressivity.

Repetition constitutes another fundamental mechanism of lexical redundancy. It entails the deliberate reuse of words or phrases to achieve emphasis, rhythm, or cohesion. Examples such as *Very, very tired* or *We will fight, we will resist, we will win* show how repetition contributes to rhetorical strength and emotional intensity. Variations of repetition – anaphora, epiphora, and diacope – appear frequently in oratory, religious texts, and poetry, serving mnemonic and persuasive functions. Repetition reinforces meaning, enhances memorability, and structures discourse in a way that reflects both the cognitive patterns of human thought and the aesthetic principles of literary style.

A further manifestation is synonym stacking, or the use of multiple synonymous or near-synonymous expressions in succession to amplify a message or create stylistic richness. Phrases like *She was sad, melancholic, and utterly despondent* or *We searched far and wide, high and low* display how synonym chains add nuance and intensity. This form of redundancy allows writers to express subtle emotional gradations and rhetorical rhythm, though excessive use can lead to verbosity if not managed skillfully. Similarly, binomial expressions and redundant pairs – such as *each and every*, *null and void*, *aid and abet*, or *first and foremost* – represent fossilized forms of redundancy that have become fixed idioms. Many of these pairs originate from legal, religious, or ceremonial discourse, where dual wording once served to ensure precision and inclusivity in multilingual societies.

A more structural form of redundancy appears in expletive constructions, which include expressions like *There is a man waiting outside* or *It is important to remember*. While grammatically correct, these structures introduce additional elements that could be omitted without loss of meaning. They often function to introduce subjects, shift focus, or create a formal tone, illustrating how syntactic redundancy interacts with rhetorical and pragmatic considerations.

The persistence of lexical redundancy across all levels of communication suggests that it fulfills several essential roles. It enhances clarity by ensuring that a message is understood even in suboptimal communicative conditions. It provides emphasis and emotional resonance, drawing attention to key ideas or intensifying meaning. It contributes to stylistic effect, shaping rhythm, tone, and aesthetic beauty in both prose and verse. It also supports learning and memory by reinforcing linguistic structures and concepts, particularly in language acquisition contexts where repetition aids retention.

Redundancy varies in function depending on the communicative context. In informal speech, it often occurs unintentionally and serves as a conversational strategy to maintain fluency or ensure comprehension, as in the phrase *you know, kind of like, really tired*. In literature and poetry, redundancy is employed deliberately to evoke mood and symbolism, as exemplified by Edgar Allan Poe's repeated use of *Nevermore* in *The Raven*. In legal and religious discourse, redundant pairs ensure precision and solemnity, while in advertising and marketing, redundancy increases memorability and persuasive effect, as in the expression *absolutely free gift*.

CONCLUSION

Cultural and linguistic factors also determine how redundancy is perceived and utilized. English tolerates redundancy in literary and rhetorical contexts but tends to discourage it in academic and technical writing. German favors conciseness, while Japanese employs subtle redundancy to maintain politeness and harmony in discourse. Arabic, on the other hand, embraces repetition as a central rhetorical device, particularly in classical and religious texts. These variations highlight that redundancy reflects cultural attitudes toward clarity, politeness, and expression.

Ultimately, lexical redundancy should not be regarded as a linguistic flaw but as evidence of the flexibility and adaptability of human language. It fulfills cognitive, emotional, and social functions that enable speakers and writers to convey nuance, persuasion, and affect. By understanding the different forms and purposes of redundancy – tautology, pleonasm, repetition, synonym stacking, and others – linguists and language users can recognize that the apparent excess of words often serves a deeper communicative purpose. Rather than seeking to eliminate redundancy entirely, effective language practice involves learning how to harness it strategically, acknowledging that in many cases, saying more indeed says it better.

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