

PLEONASM IN THE TV SERIES *THE WALKING DEAD*

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Abstract: This study aimed at finding and identifying the types and functions of pleonasm occurred in the TV series *The Walking Dead*. The object of this study was the 10 episodes of *The Walking Dead* from season 7. This is a qualitative descriptive research, since it involves the utterances of characters in the film that need to be summarized and described. The data were collected using the documentation technique. Some steps were taken in the process of collecting and analyzing the data, such as extracting the subtitles, watching the series, converting, printing and reading the subtitles, finding and marking the pleonastic expressions, and identifying the types, the sub-types, and the functions of pleonasm. 165 pleonastic expressions were found in the series. Out of 165.89 (54%) is syntactic pleonasm, and 76 (46%) is semantic pleonasm. A total of 97 (59%) pleonastic expressions function were highly to emphasize or intensify the expressions, which holds the majority.

Keywords: *The Walking Dead*, Types of Pleonasm, Sub-types of pleonasm, Functions of Pleonasm

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan dan mengidentifikasi jenis dan fungsi pleonasm yang terjadi dalam serial TV *The Walking Dead*. Objek penelitian ini adalah 10 episode *The Walking Dead* dari musim 7. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif, karena melibatkan ujaran karakter dalam film yang perlu diringkas dan dijelaskan. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan teknik dokumentasi. Beberapa langkah diambil dalam proses mengumpulkan dan menganalisis data, seperti mengekstraksi subtitle, menonton serial, mengubah, mencetak, dan membaca subtitle, menemukan dan menandai ekspresi pleonastik, dan mengidentifikasi tipe, sub-tipe, dan fungsi pleonasm. 165 ekspresi pleonastik ditemukan dalam serial. Dari 165,89 (54%) adalah pleonasm sintaksis, dan 76 (46%) adalah pleonasm semantik. Sebanyak 97 (59%) fungsi ekspresi pleonastik sangat menekankan atau mengintensifkan ekspresi, yang memegang mayoritas.

Kata kunci: *The Walking Dead*, Tipe Pleonasm, Sub-tipe Pleonasm. Fungsi Pleonasm

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is behavior which utilizes body parts: the vocal apparatus and the auditory system for oral language; the brachial apparatus and the visual system for sign language. Other non-language behaviors utilize these and other body parts too. Such body parts are controlled by none other than the brain for their functions. (Peng, 2005, p.17). This means that naturally all humans

have the ability to use a language to express them and exchange ideas. As long as we are all exposed to others at a certain time, we will naturally be able to speak a language, and that makes language be crucial for humankind to communicate and express ideas or emotions with each other. Without language, people would have difficulty to do such things more freely.

Language can be in written and spoken form, or even a nonverbal language, such as

body language can be useful in certain situation to express thoughts or feelings.

One of the subjects that deal with language is figure of speech or often called figurative language. Abrams (1999, p.96), defines figurative language as a conspicuous departure from what users of language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meanings or effects. It means that figure of speech is a form of words that commonly the opposite of a literal expression. Figures of speech is usually used for clarity, emphasis, rhyme, etc., which makes the language have different meanings than what it is said. Figure of speech can be encountered whether on media or in a conversation. Some types of figure of speech that are very common for most people are irony, hyperbole, personification, simile, and metaphor. Figure of speech can be so much more; it can be a repetition of words to imply more meaning, substitution of words to achieve rhythmicity or a certain style to it, or even wordplay to make it funnier like in a Pun, which is another type of figure of speech. Pleonasm is also one type of figure of speech.

Pleonasm (from Greek *pleonasms* “more, too much”) is the use of more words than what is necessary to express an idea. According to Whatley (2010, p.215), pleonasm is an expression which adds nothing to the sense, in the verbose manner, but it is not always in the verbose style, it is often necessary to alter as well. It means that pleonasm is the use of a word to another word

that can actually stand alone. The addition words or pleonastic words mostly described as unnecessary, although pleonastic expression can be used intentionally to achieve linguistic, poetic and literary effects. Since they are used as a rhetorical repetition, they are useful to strengthen a point of view, an idea or a question. Moreover, they serve as a part of idiomatic language, professional and scholarly writing. Examples of pleonasm can be found in the expression of “*serious danger*, or *free gift*”. From the examples it shows those phrases are redundant from the additional word “*serious*” in “*serious danger*”. The word “*serious*” is not necessary since a dangerous situation is already described that it is serious, and the expression “*free gift*” is also redundant since the word “*gift*” conveys a meaning that it is free.

Pleonasm or pleonastic expressions occur in any types of situation. As long as a language is involved, it occurs in conversations, on printed media such as magazines or newspapers, on literary works, such as novels, films, poetry, and songs. One of the most interesting literary works to do a study on is a film as the majority of people watch TV. On the contrary, other literary works like novels and poetry are read only by a small number of people or group of people.

Film is a type of communication media with visual and sound to tell stories and give information to the audience. People in every part of the world enjoy film mostly as an entertainment. Films are not only entertaining, but they also have an amazing influence to the audience, either from the story or the actors.

Film can be a movie, TV series or even a documentary. Pleonastic expressions can be found in any type of films, a TV series *The Walking Dead* can be an example of that. The series told us a story of groups of people in a difficult living condition after a virus turned people into zombies. A lot of pleonastic expressions can be found in this series, and the series have good numbers of characters with different characteristic and different ways of saying things. Therefore, this series would be an interesting choice for an object of this study.

The problem that appeared in this research is on identifying the pleonastic expressions in the series without missing out at least one pleonastic expression because once the researcher read the subtitle of the series, some pleonastic expressions can look exactly like how a normal expression would be like for example, an expression “*give me a reason why*”. When reading this expression, we might think that it is not a pleonastic expression.

However, the word “*why*” is unnecessary because the word “*reason*” has already described the meaning of “*why*” and if the expression is turned into “*give me a reason*”, it would still have the same semantically function.

Pleonasm is not necessarily considered as a mistake, because pleonasm can be used to give certain semantic functions such as emphasizing an expression, creating poetic effect, etc. Plett (2010, p.624), in Encyclopedia of Rhetoric states that as a rhetorical figure, pleonasm gives an utterance an additional semantic dimension. Other figurative languages, such as irony, metaphor,

or personification occur mostly as intentional; the users know the meaning of words they use. Meanwhile, pleonastic occurrence is mostly accidental; either because of the social background of the users or simply they do not realize what they are saying. The researcher found out that it would be interesting to conduct a study on pleonasms, and therefore, he conducted a research entitled *Pleonasm in The TV Series Walking Dead*.

Figure of speech is an expression given to make an artistic style in meaning or structure of a language. Heinrichs (2007, p.210) states that figures of speech change ordinary language through repetition, substitution, sound, and wordplay. They mess around with words - skipping them, swapping them, and making them sound different.” Scholars of classical Western rhetoric have divided figures of speech that changing the words arrangement in a sentence can be exemplified with a repetition like alliteration - a series of words that begin with the same letter or sound alike. A literary trope is the use of an expression for an artistic effect, for example, an irony, the use of words to convey the opposite of information.

Pleonasm is a phenomenon that occurs at all levels of linguistic analysis and language processing, including discourse, morphology, syntax, and semantics. According to Nida and Taber (2003, p.207), a pleonasm is an expression in which for structural reasons is explicit more than once which is not necessary for communication. A number of linguists have been considering the phenomenon of pleonasms as faulty and unnecessary (Cheney, 2005, p.22). However, pleonasm is globally considered as a

stylistic device, a figure of speech in rhetoric. That makes the pleonasm should not be taken as a fault, because in most of the literature works, it is used to add a poetic and literary effect, also to amplify an idea or expression. But not all examples of pleonasm are used stylistically, there are numerous cases when they are only stiff expressions used in speech or writing as clichés. For instance, *never before, past memories*. Such instances actually can create a few questions like whether they have to be understood as faulty, or whether they have to be avoided in speech and writing. But, in the conversation, those pleonastic expressions can be helpful to make a better understanding against our interlocutors. It makes the expressions clearer and easier for them to see our point of view because sentences are spontaneously created without giving any thought to edit it. It is also in written language, removing words not strictly necessary. Sometimes it makes writing seem awkward, especially when the words from an idiomatic expression are omitted.

2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Method of the Research

Descriptive qualitative method was used in this study. According to Lambert (2012, p.256) the presentation of data from a descriptive qualitative study involves a straight forward descriptive summary of the informational contents of the data that is organized in a logical manner. Descriptive qualitative method was used to describe

characteristics of a phenomenon being studied. Since the data in this study were words, phrases, and sentences, descriptive qualitative was applied.

2.2 Object of the Research

There are many famous TV series today, one of them is *The Walking Dead*. The series is about groups of people living in a world after an identified virus spread across the world. The researcher picked *The Walking Dead* because it contains many different characters and background, which makes it interesting to find pleonastic expressions in the series. There are 115 episodes of 8 seasons already and they are still filming the series. In this study, the researcher chose season 7. There are 16 episodes in season 7 and this study focused on the first 10 episodes of season 7. Utterances from all characters are included, and so are the songs. However, the cursing words are not included in this study.

2.3 The Techniques of Collecting Data

The methods of collecting data in this study were done in several steps. Firstly, the researcher downloaded the English subtitles for each episode of the series from a trusted website that deals with film's subtitles, that is www.subscene.com.

Then, he extracted the subtitles from a compressed file in *.srt* format, which is readable with most video player. The next step was watching the series with subtitles to understand the context and the whole story in the series, followed by converting the subtitles

into a form of document, and printing the subtitles. The final step taken was identifying and marking the pleonastic expressions from the printed subtitles, the types and subtypes of the expressions, and the functions of pleonastic words found in the series.

2.4 The Techniques for Analyzing Data

The analysis of data was done through several stages. Firstly, categorize the type of pleonasms; syntactic pleonasms or semantic pleonasms. The syntactic pleonasms were then categorized into some types, such as multiple negations, multiple affirmations, pleonastic subject pronoun, double possession, multiple quality gradation, or emphatic reflexive pronoun. Then, the semantic pleonasms were grouped into overlap, prolixity, or idiomatic pleonasms using the theory of Farooq Kperogi (2013). Finally, the functions of the pleonastic expressions were determined by using the theory of Dr. Ernst Wit and Dr. Marie Gillette (1999) from The University of Chicago. They divide the functions of people using pleonasms into 6 categories. They are used for enhancing comprehensibility, resolving ambiguity, isolating a feature, contrasting elements, emphasizing or intensifying, and creating poetic effect.

2.5 Types of Pleonasm

There are types of pleonasm. Russel and Cohn (2012, p. 7), and Kperogi (2013) suggest that there are two types of pleonasm, each with its own sub-types.

1.1.1 Syntactic Pleonasm

Syntactic pleonasm occurs when the grammar of a language makes certain function

words optional.

Syntactic pleonasm consists of six types, such as:

- a. **Multiple Negation.** This is a repetition of negative word, for example, in an expression “*Ain't nobody got time for that*”. This example shows a negative word meets with another negative word - the word “*ain't*” and the word “*nobody*”. If two negative words show up in a row, it can cancel out each other that makes it grammatically incorrect. Another example is from an expression “*no, I don't*” which also consists of two negative words, but this expression is correct in a sense of grammar.
- b. **Multiple Affirmation.** This is another repetition of words in an affirmative sentence. Examples of this multiple affirmation are “*Yeah, you're right*”, used to confirm somebody's statement, or “*yes, I did.*” as a reply to a question. These examples show that double affirmation is being used. Although the expressions are grammatically correct, they are still considered as pleonastic expressions.
- c. **Pleonastic Subject Pronoun.** This is a pleonasm that occurs in a sentence where another word is being used to refer to the subject that already occurred in the sentence, for instance: “*Mrs. Hudson, she smells like a flower*”, the pronoun “*she*” is redundant in this example.
- d. **Double Possession.** *This* is the use of double genitive in an expression. For example, in a phrase “*friend of fred's*”, there are an apostrophe (') plus an “s” plus an “of”. Such unneeded additional words

can be avoided by simply said “*fred’s friend*”.

- e. **Multiple Quality Gradation.** It is a repetition of words which states the grade in comparison. For example, “*He is more taller than me*” This example is considered as a pleonastic expression because the use of word “*more*” can be avoided, but it is still commonly used. In another case, certain people would still use an expression “*she is my best best friend*” in an informal situation, but grammatically, it is an incorrect form of expression.
- f. **Emphatic Reflexive Pronoun** is a pleonasm that is used with the words “*myself*”, “*yourself*”, “*himself*”, any words which has a suffix “*self*”. Emphatic reflexive pronouns are perfectly correct expressions that perform a vital function: they put emphasis on pronouns. This pleonasm can be seen in the expressions “*I myself*”, “*You yourself*”, “*He himself*”, etc. This kind of pleonasm is relatively common in the English language.

1.1.2 Semantic Pleonasm

Semantic pleonasm is the optional use of words which can be left out in the stylistic and usage of a language rather than grammar.

The followings are three types of semantic pleonasm.

- a. **Overlap.** This is a pleonastic expression because one semantic component or a word is already classified by the other. An example of this pleonastic expression is

“*We receive a free gift*”. This expression is a pleonasm because the word “*gift*” contains the meaning of *free*, an additional word of “*free*” is unnecessary, therefore it is a pleonasm.

- b. **Prolixity** is an additional word which adds nothing, or nothing relevant to the meaning. An expression “*he entered into the room*”, is an example of prolixity. It shows that the word “*into*” is purely optional, because the expression can still have the same semantical function without the additional word.
- c. **Idiomatic Pleonasm** is a kind of pleonasm that appears in an idiomatic expression such as “*null and void*”, “*down south*”, “*up north*”. This type of pleonasm is widely used and it is just an idiom. In this case, the additional word and the main word have no difference in contextual meaning.

1.2 The Functions of Pleonasm

The function of pleonasm expressions that occur in every linguistic structure needs to be revealed. It is needed to find out why a certain pleonasm expression is used, whether intentionally or not. According to Wit and Gillette (1999, p. 12) there are 6 functions of pleonasm. They are:

- a. **Enhancing comprehensibility.** When we are speaking in a crowded place sometimes our interlocutor do not get what we said, so we try to repeat what we said over and over. This is one of the reasons of pleonasm occurrence in a conversation. In addition, it

occurs when we try to explain something more than necessary, for example “*last summer we went to Rabat, the capital of Morocco*”. This shows that an additional word to describe the other is important for the people to understand what is being said.

- b. **Resolving ambiguity.** This occurs in certain occasions, in the situation where we need to remove any ambiguity by using the excessive words of the same meaning. For example, in the trial, the witnesses are asked to swear “*the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth*”, The use of the word “*the truth*” excessively is needed to remove any ambiguity.
- c. **Isolating a feature.** It is the function that often occurs on a novel or a poem - the kind when the author sometimes focuses on a salient characteristic of an object. In the expression “*I love the salty sea*”, the phrase “*salty sea*” focuses on the attention of the receptor on one quality- the saltiness of the sea rather than others. The sea is wet, deep, wavy, but the receptor’s attention is drawn to the fact that it is salty.
- d. **Contrasting elements** is the function of pleonasm that contrasts the two elements in the expression. It is already indicated how English sometimes uses additional stress to achieve this juxtaposition, for example, in an expression “*I went with Sarah, and not Jessica*” The addition of “*not Jessica*” in the expression is unnecessary. This form of redundancy is not only used to contrast two opposing

elements. Sometimes, it is also used to emphasize or intensify a single element.

- e. **Emphasizing or intensifying** is another function of pleonasm to make the expressions stronger, and easier to understand. It is sometimes based on exaggeration. An example of this is “*It is boiling hot outside*”. It is redundant because of the word “*boiling*” is an exaggeration to emphasize the word “*hot*”.
- f. **Creating poetic effect.** This is the function of pleonasm with no clear semantic purpose, but with an intention to shock, to please, to horrify, to move, etc. Examples of such expressions can often be classified as intensifying or emphasizing as well. An expression of such is “*The green, green grass of home.*” Although one may be in doubt about their poetic nature, in a traditional sense of the word “poetic”, these redundancies do have a primary emotive charge and therefore fall under the term “poetic”. The example shows that this, as well as any other form of redundancy, can operate on the level of a paragraph, rather than on the level of a sentence.

1.3 Short Information of the Object

The Walking Dead is an American horror drama television series developed by Frank Darabont, based on the comic book series of *The Walking Dead* by Robert Kirkman, Tony Moore, and Charlie Adlard.

Andrew Lincoln is the main character in the series. He acts as Sheriff’s deputy Rick Grimes, the guy that awakens from a quite long coma and found that the world is in the edge of

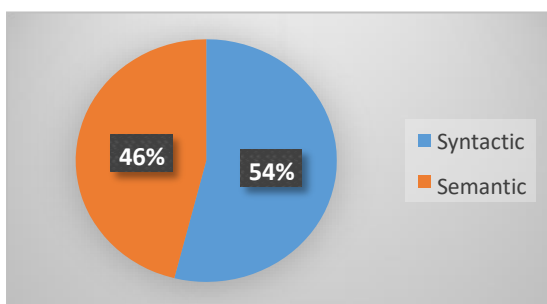
an end and overturned by zombies.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Findings of the Study

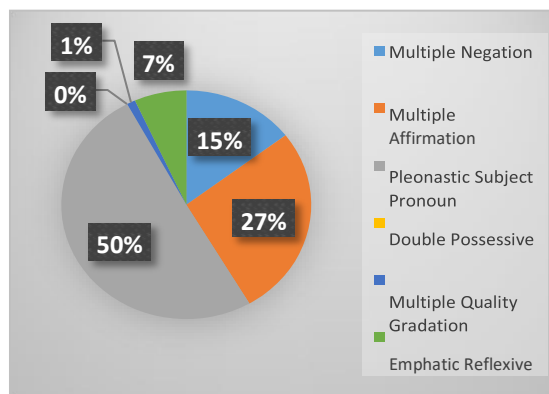
This section describes the findings of pleonastic expressions from a TV Series entitled *The Walking Dead*. There were 165 pleonastic expressions found in the series. Out of 165 expressions, 89 (54%) are syntactic pleonasm and 76 (46%) are semantic pleonasm, as shown on Graph 1.

Graph 1.
Types of Pleonasm

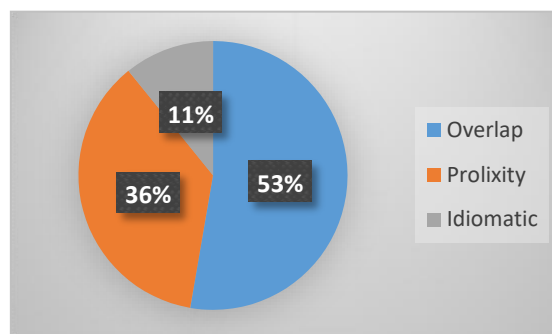


Out of 89 syntactic pleonasm, 13 (15%) belong to multiple negation, 24 expressions (27%) are categorized into multiple affirmation, 45 (50%) are pleonastic subject pronoun. 0 (0%) of double Possessive, 1 (1%) of multiple quality gradation, and 6 (7%) emphatic reflexive pronouns. Graph 2 shows types of syntactic pleonasm.

Graph 2.
Types of Syntactic Pleonasm



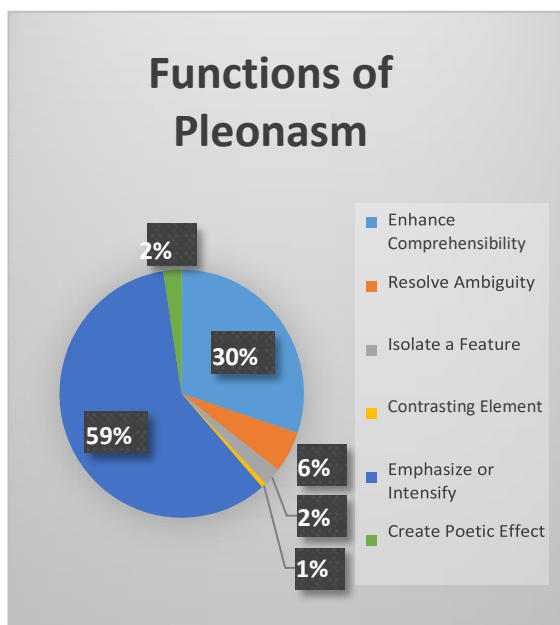
Graph 3.
Types of Semantic Pleonasm



Graph 3 above shows the types of semantic pleonasm that were found in the series. Out of 76 semantic pleonasm, 41 (53%) as overlap, 27 (36%) as proximity, and 8 (11%) were as idiomatic pleonasm.

In terms of functions of pleonasm used in the series, 49 (30%) out of 165 pleonastic expressions are used for enhancing comprehensibility, 8 (5%) for resolving ambiguity, 4 (2%) for isolating a feature, 2 (1%) for contrasting element, 97 (59%) for emphasizing or intensifying, and 5 (3%) for creating poetic effect. Graph 4 below shows the functions of pleonastic expressions used in the series.

Graph 4.
The Functions of Pleonasm



3.2 Interpretation of the Study

Pleonastic expression can occur in many types of literary works, as long as the language is involved. It occurs in novels, poems, or even films. Unlike novels or poems, the language used in the films is in oral form which makes the utterances of characters in the films more natural, just like daily conversations. Therefore, the pleonastic expressions used in the films are more likely an accidental than an intentional, such as in the TV Series *The Walking Dead*.

There are 165 of total pleonastic expressions found in the TV series *The Walking Dead*. Out of 165, the syntactic pleonasm rule the majority by 89 (54%) over the semantic pleonasm, which is 76 (46%). This is led by the highest number

of pleonastic subject pronoun expressions, that is 45 (50%) out of 89. appeared in the series. It can be drawn here that the practical use of pleonastic subject pronoun in actual conversation makes the syntactic pleonasm rule over the semantic pleonasm in the series. An example “*Jon Snow, he is a king in the north*” shows that the use of pleonastic subject pronoun looks natural, but actually it is redundant as *he* is the same person as the subject *Jon Snow*. Meanwhile, the least use of syntactic pleonasm is double possessive, which is 0%. It is simply because the use of double possessive is ungrammatical, and the screenwriter of the series cannot possibly include them in the script. A couple of multiple negations found in the data are also ungrammatical, but even though it is ungrammatical, multiple negations are commonly used in thug neighborhood, which defines Negan and his people in the series.

In terms of the semantical pleonasm, the overlap is the one mostly appeared in the series, that is 41 (53%) out of 76. This is because the overlap can occur accidentally and intentionally in communication. In the example “*get down on the ground*”, a pleonasm occurs by accident as people are not aware of the redundant words they might use while speaking. Meanwhile, in the expression “*I want you to be honest, to tell the truth*”, it is clear that the use of the

expression “*to tell the truth*” in this expression is an overlap and is intentionally used to emphasize the expression *to be honest*. Thus, it can be concluded that the overlaps mostly occur in the series because it is more flexible to use. On the other hand, the type of semantic pleonasm that has small percentage of occurrence in the series is idiomatic pleonasm, which is only 8 (11%) out of 76. It appears to be the least type of pleonasm found because idiomatic expressions might not preferably used in the series. In addition, idiomatic expressions are not all pleonastic.

From the data gathered, the pleonastic words used highly function for emphasizing or intensifying, which is 97 (59%). It is not surprising as the main basic function of pleonasm is to emphasize the expressions. Meanwhile, the lowest function of pleonasms in the series is contrasting elements (1%). This is because the redundant words used in series are unnecessary, for example, in the expression “*I go with the person A, and not the person B*”, the redundancy is clearly seen that if you go with the person A, you cannot possibly go with the person B, thus saying *not going with the person B* is really not necessary.

4. CONCLUSIONS

There are 165 pleonastic expressions found in the series. Out of 165 pleonastic expressions, 89 (54%) belongs to syntactic pleonasm and 76 (46%) is referred to semantic pleonasm. Out of 89 syntactic pleonasms, there are 13 (15%) multiple negation, 24 (27%) multiple affirmation, 45 (50%) pleonastic subject pronoun, 0 (0%) double possessive, 1 (1%) multiple quality gradation, and 6 (5%) emphatic reflexive pronoun. Out of 76 semantic pleonasm, there are 41 (53%) which belong to overlap, 27 (36%) prolixity, and 8 (11%) as idiomatic pleonasms. As for function, the majority of pleonasms used, that is 97 (59%) function as emphasizing or intensifying, followed 50 (30%) as enhancing comprehensibility, 9 (6%) as resolving ambiguity, 4 (2%) as creating poetic effect, 4 (2%) isolating a feature and 1 (1%) as contrasting elements.

Syntactic pleonasm is found to be over the semantic pleonasms as the highest number of pleonastic subject pronoun appears in the conversation in the TV series. This can occur due to the practical use of pleonastic subject pronoun in actual conversation. In terms of the semantic pleonasms, the overlap is the one mostly appear in the series, that is 41 (53%) out of 76. Meanwhile, the use of pleonastic words highly functions for emphasizing or

intensifying the expressions, which are 97 (59%).

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