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Pleonasm in Noun Phrases: A Cognitive Linguistic Investigation of English and Romanian NPs

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Table of Contents

List of abbreviations:

CL – Cognitive Linguistics

CP – Cognitive Pragmatics

CxG – Construction Grammar

COCA – Corpus of Contemporary American English

CoRoLa – Corpus of Contemporary Romanian Language

NP – noun phrase

X – social media platform formerly known as Twitter

List of tables and figures:

"My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
What day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time;
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad…"
(Polonius in Hamlet: A2, S2, L86-92)

1. Introduction

The English language appears to abound in pleonastic constructions, exemplified by noun phrases (henceforth NPs) such as *past experience*, *future prediction*, and *free gift*, among numerous other attributive constructions, including the widely used *global pandemic* that gained prominence during the COVID-19 health crisis. While these pleonastic noun phrases are regarded as grammatically acceptable and frequently overlooked in common usage, their Romanian counterparts *experiență trecută*, *prezicere viitoare*, *cadou gratuit*, and *pandemie globală* are viewed as ungrammatical and reflective of poor stylistic choices. Moreover, pleonastic constructions in Romanian are consistently identified in grammar texts as grammatical errors that should be either avoided or corrected (Uritescu 2006, Grosu 2003, Dodon 2019). Despite being considered stylistically undesirable, further examination has led to a better understanding of the frequency and function of pleonasms in language. This thesis takes position that all utterances, including pleonastic ones, fulfil a distinct function and communicate meaning.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The primary objective of this thesis is to investigate the acceptability of pleonastic noun phrases (NPs) in English and Romanian. The thesis posits that Romanian speakers perceive the aforementioned structures as ungrammatical due to the encoding of redundant information on two distinct levels (Lehmann 2005): the morphological level, manifested through hypercharacterisation (e.g., double comparative marking in English, *more easier,* double plural marking in Romanian, *snacksuri*), and the semantic level, expressed through pleonasm (e.g., *the exact same*, *past history*, *global pandemic*). Moreover, tautology at the syntactic level can express redundant information through a doublet like *null and void* in English and its Romanian counterpart, *nul și neavenit*. However, English pleonastic constructions are more readily accepted than those in Romanian, as English exhibits less hypercharacterisation at the morphological level compared to Romanian (double plural marking, pleonastic diminution, pleonastic

adjectival gradation). Although pleonasms may seem redundant from a strictly denotative perspective, a cognitive-pragmatic analysis demonstrates that they can fulfil significant communicative roles through their connotative meanings and influence on cognitive processing. Touching upon pleonastic NPs that have been constructionalised due to frequent usage (e.g., *safe haven*), this thesis analyses the communicative functions of pleonasms from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective.

1.2. Research hypotheses

The literature on pleonasm and tautology has grown in recent years. Nonetheless, pleonastic noun phrases have not garnered significant attention, particularly from a Cognitive Linguistic standpoint. Based on the stance that pleonastic NPs are intentional form-meaning constructions that fulfil various cognitive-pragmatic functions, this thesis is exploratory in nature and attempts to explicate hypotheses related to pleonastic NPs and draw parallels and conclusions from cognitive and constructionist approaches. Therefore, three key hypotheses emerge towards the examination of pleonastic NPs, which will be detailed in Section 7.

Firstly, I hypothesise that there is a link between language proficiency and grammaticality judgments and thus, acceptability of pleonasms. Secondly, I speculate that semantic transparency, among factors like frequency and conventionalisation, influence acceptability ratings by means of entrenchment, which enables faster and more efficient language processing, as cognitive structures become more deeply embedded and easily retrievable from the mental lexicon of language users. Thirdly, in the case of L2 English, metalinguistic awareness is inversely proportional to the retention of pleonasms in L1, in translation. The thesis will look at the internal structure of pleonastic constructions, focusing particularly on patterns such as <ADJ N> where the adjective semantically overlaps with the noun, touching on the syntactic and semantic relationships within pleonastic constructions.

1.3. Research methodology

This thesis examines pleonastic noun phrases (NPs) through two lenses of Cognitive Linguistics:[1] Construction Grammar (CxG) and Cognitive Pragmatics (CP), employing

[1] A usage-based approach is preferred over other grammars, such as Generative Grammar, since cognitivists examine how linguistic structures emerge from actual language use, reflecting real-world communication patterns (Tomasello 2003).

corpus-based analyses and grammaticality judgements for Part II, and a mixed-method approach for a case study in Part III. Regarding the analyses in Part II, four pragmatic discourse functions of pleonastic constructions will be analysed (emphatic, rhematic, clarifying, and phatic) to evaluate listener inferencing and the cognitive motivations behind the use of pleonastic constructions despite their apparent redundancy. Factors such as increased salience and reduced cognitive load are hypothesized to play a major role in pleonasm selection and usage. Additionally, I will examine Romanian and English pleonastic NPs in context to investigate whether their redundancy is motivated, thus confirming or refuting their acceptability.

The small-scale empirical research in Part III examines the acceptability of pleonastic NPs through a survey administered to 60 respondents, namely Romanian L1 speakers with L2 English. The survey includes two 5-point Likert scales (70 items), rating the grammaticality of pleonasms in English and Romanian, as well as ten open-ended translation queries from English into Romanian, eliciting information about pleonastic NP usage or perception. For the case study, data analysis incorporates quantitative descriptive statistics such as median and frequency distribution of responses for each point on the Likert scale, and a qualitative evaluation focused on identifying patterns, trends, and preference in the usage and understanding of pleonastic NPs among respondents. This dual approach, detailed in section 7, aims to provide focused insights into the usage of pleonastic NPs in both languages.

1.4. Data selection

For the corpus-based analyses in Part II, I will rely on authentic language data (Langacker 2008) that is accessible online, whether reflecting informal style or carefully constructed structures. For English pleonasms, authentic language data is sourced primarily from the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), a valuable source for pleonastic structures, but also from online corpora such as the iWeb, containing 14 billion words, COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) with 520 million words, various blogs, and Google Books. All the pleonastic structures and examples in Romanian used in this paper have been collected by cross-referencing various Romanian dictionaries and style

guides,[2] notably Dascălu's *Dictionary of Pleonasms* (2008), and the *Reference Corpus of the Contemporary Romanian Language* (henceforth, CoRoLa). For detailed analysis, pleonasms in Romanian will be translated, and a rough gloss will be provided to facilitate understanding.

1.5. Paper structure

The paper is structured into three main parts, focusing on theoretical framework, analyses of pragmatic discourse functions, and empirical research. Part I, *Theoretical considerations*, begins with a comprehensive literature review, exploring various cognitive linguistic frameworks on constructions (CxG), entrenchment, salience, linguistic redundancy (Section 2), and the NP (Section 3) to set the foundation for the two analyses of English and Romanian pleonastic constructions. Part II, *Analysis of pleonastic constructions*, analyses pleonastic NPs in English (Section 4) along with their cognitive-pragmatic functions. Romanian pleonastic NPs (Section 5) are categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic types, examining their occurrence and acceptability in both languages. Part II concludes with a summary of the chapter (Section 6).

Part III, *Empirical study*, presents the research methodology (Section 7), along with data collection, three research hypotheses, and the study design for a survey conducted on 60 respondents to assess the acceptability of pleonastic NPs among speakers of English and Romanian. The results are discussed in Section 8, firstly by validating the research hypotheses and then by describing the findings and implications concerning the acceptability and usage of pleonastic NPs. The thesis ends with a discussion (Section 9) on the matter of pleonastic NPs in English and Romanian and conclusion (Section 10), including research limitations and possible avenues for future research, followed by references (Section 11) and appendices (Section 12).

[2] There are style guides and dictionaries particularly for pleonasms and tautology. I referred to Graur (1976), Avram (1996a, 1996b), Angelescu (1998), Rădulescu (2002), and Uritescu (2006) to compile the list of pleonasms used in this paper.

PART I. Theoretical considerations

2. Literature review

2.1. Constructionist approaches

In *Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language* (2006), Goldberg introduces symbolic form-meaning pairings as fundamental units of language that associate a particular linguistic form with a specific meaning or function. These pairings can exist at various levels of linguistic structure, from individual words to complex grammatical patterns:

> Any linguistic pattern is recognized as a construction as long as some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist. In addition, patterns are stored as constructions even if they are fully predictable as long as they occur with sufficient frequency. (Goldberg 2006: 5 in Goldberg 2009: 94)

An individual word, such as *freedom*, can be analysed in terms of its phonological and orthographic form (/ˈfriːdəm/) and semantic meaning (the state of being unrestricted). Additionally, types of form-meaning pairings include compound nouns (*greenhouse, smartphone*), idiomatic noun phrases (*red herring, a wild goose chase, a needle in the haystack, a storm in a teacup, a drop in the bucket, the elephant in the room, an uphill battle, a blessing in disguise, a diamond in the rough*) exhibiting complete or partial compositionality,[3] constructional patterns like the <Adj N> (*round circle, happy child*), complex noun phrases <N of N> like head-complement constructions, partitives, pseudo-partitives (Keizer 2010: 109) (*piece of cake, cup of coffee, labour of love, can of worms, bone of contention*), and partially schematic constructions[4] such as the <the Xer, the Yer> (*the sooner, the better).* Goldberg (2006: 220) suggests that all constructions[5] can be placed on a lexicon-syntax continuum. In all cases of form-meaning pairings, both the form and the meaning are learnt and stored holistically, together as a unit (Goldberg 2009:

[3] Compositionality refers to how "the meaning of expressions can be reconstructed from the meanings of their individual elements and their syntactic relationship to one another" (Bussmann 1996: 942).
[4] Partially schematic constructions are also known as 'covariational conditionals', where a part of the form is fixed and part is variable (Goldberg 2009).
[5] Fried (2015: 980) distinguishes between 'constructs' (concrete realizations in utterances) and 'constructions' (generalizations based on utterances). This paper will refer to both by means of the term 'constructions'.

94), based on actual language use and frequency rather than being derived purely from abstract rules. This holistic view is informed by Goldberg's (2003: 219) statement that "the totality of our knowledge of language is captured by a network of constructions: a construct-i-con", an "association network shaped by language use" (Hilpert 2014: 1). As certain constructions are used more frequently, they become more entrenched (*safe haven*, *null and void*) and are pragmatically and functionally motivated. Pleonastic constructions exhibit varying degrees of compositionality and analysability, ranging from fully compositional to idiomatic (Goldberg 2009). Some pleonasms are more semantically transparent than others, with some NPs being easily decomposed into constituent parts and other NPs having meanings that are not directly derivable from their components.

Ungerer and Hartmann (2023: 7) illustrate how "speakers routinely prefer certain frequent expressions over less frequent alternatives, even when the words they contain have similar meanings and they are both sanctioned by the same abstract construction". Conventionalised expressions serve communicative functions, motivating their retention and spread as it has been noted regarding binominal constructions such as *a hell of a N* (Aarts 1998; Keizer 2010), *of*-constructions like *a picture of me* (Keizer 2010: 62), pseudo-partitive constructions like *a number of people* (Keizer 2010: 109) or a *period of time*, or the contrastive readings of the noun phrases like *a friend of mine* versus *my friend* versus *the best of friends*. Certain constructions become more conventional than others due to simpler structures and higher word frequency (Goldberg 2009: 98f). In addition, "memory for individual instances decays over time, while generalizations that are reinforced grow in strength" (Goldberg 2009: 99). Generalisations allow for efficient processing of frequent patterns while still maintaining the flexibility to generate novel utterances.

Goldberg and other linguistics within CxG argue for a language repository summing all known constructions, as "generalisations at a fairly high level of abstraction" (Hilpert 2014: 70), including pleonastic constructions. One can analyse and account for the presence of pleonastic constructions, not their absence, because "the construction is a rich and detailed representation of speakers' experience with attributive adjectives" (Hilpert 2014: 70). Acceptability and grammaticality judgements (Schütze 2016) are usage-based, that is, "created through experience with language and continuously influenced by experience with language" (Bybee 2010 in Hilpert 2014: 67). Arguably, the felicitous usage of pleonastic adjectives indicates that there already are pleonastic constructions

present in the speaker's construct-i-con. Goldberg (2009: 105) posits that the primary objective of language acquisition is to achieve communicative competence, "to understand and to be understood: to comprehend and produce language". Learners are motivated to predict meaning from given lexical and grammatical input, which aids in understanding, and to choose appropriate linguistic elements to convey the desired message and to establish robust form-meaning connections. Thus, language acquisition is fundamentally shaped by the practical demands of achieving mutual understanding in real-world contexts, to know "who did what to whom" (Goldberg 2009: 105), and certain constructions are more adept than others at conveying meaning and event interpretation (Goldberg 2009: 106).

2.2. Entrenchment

According to various works on entrenchment[6] by Schmid (2007, 2010, 2012, 2017), pleonastic constructions have become accepted as idiomatic since these are likely deeply entrenched in the minds of speakers through high frequency,[7] despite being semantically redundant (Schmid 2007: 129), requiring less conscious effort to form and utilize, making mental operations faster and more efficient (Stefanowitsch and Flach in Schmid 2017). Idiomatic uses include attributive noun phrases like *past experience, advance warning*, and *basic fundamentals*. The entrenchment of frequently used collocations allows them to be processed as single units, overriding potential objections to their redundancy. An interesting point made by Shannon and Weaver (1949, cited in Bara 2010) is that "[t]he more improbable the message is (in the sense that the less the receiver is expecting it), the greater the information it will contain […] the more the message contains predictable and expected information, the less information it contains" (Bara 2010: 10). Analogously, the more ubiquitous, predictable, and expected the pleonastic NP, the less information it contains (for instance, *safe haven*). Since *safe haven* is already cognitively salient and easily activated as a unit, pleonastic variants **secure haven* or **safe and sound haven* are

[6] Entrenchment refers to the extent to which a cognitive structure becomes ingrained and effortlessly accessible in both its production and use, "the degree to which the formation and activation of a cognitive unit is routinised and automated" (Schmid 2007: 118-119), and plays a role in the emergence, sanctioning, and blocking of linguistic units (Schmid 2007: 122-123).

[7] Constructions with high type frequency (occurring with many different words) are more likely to become entrenched as general patterns, while those with high token frequency (individual instances occurring often) may become entrenched as specific unit (Schmid 2017). The assumption is that entrenchment varies depending on their level of schematicity (how phonologically specified they are) and complexity (their internal structure). See Bybee and Hopper (2001) for an ampler discussion on possible motivations.

blocked, despite the fact that *safe, secure,* and *safe and sound* are synonymic. For this reason, it is safe to say that native speakers of English may not notice the redundancy (as discussed in Section 9) since the NP no longer surprises the hearer.[8] Due to constructionalisation, pleonastic structures become unremarkable and unnoticeable for native speakers of English (*past experience*, *resulting effect*, *unexpected surprise*). To test this assumption that these pleonastic structures have become unremarkable, the English NPs *safe haven, past experience* and *unexpected surprise* and the Romanian counterparts *refugiu sigur, experiență trecută* and *surpriză neașteptată* are included in the case study in Part III to assess the perceived redundancy of the six NPs.

2.3. Salience and meaning activation

Individuals aim to maximize the effectiveness of their communication while minimizing the cognitive resources required to process and understand the information; as noted by Huang, "[i]n human cognition, there is a tendency for communicators to achieve as many cognitive effects as possible for as little processing effort as possible" (Huang in Schmid 2012: 28). Even the comprehensibility of a message can significantly affect attitude change, with easier-to-understand messages being more persuasive due to reduced processing effort or cognitive load[9] (Carpenter and Boster 2013). In a study conducted on Polish philology students, Małocha-Krupa (2004: 116) found that "many pleonasms are firmly anchored in memory and can be recalled automatically. In 52 out of 59 cases, the subjects completed the sentences with the expected pleonastic phrases", which corroborates Giora's view that "less salient meanings are slow, while salient meanings are accessed rapidly" (Giora 2003: 7). Entrenched expressions become cognitively salient and are activated rapidly, requiring minimal metalinguistic reflection.[10]

Giora's Graded Salience Hypothesis[11] proposes that salient meanings are processed automatically, regardless of contextual information, even in the presence of a highly

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[8] Suppose we change the form and create pleonastic NPs synonymous to *safe haven*, such as *secure shelter* and *safe refuge*, the hearer may wonder whether there are shelters or places of refuge that are not intrinsically safe.

[9] Also known as 'mental effort', it is "a multi-dimensional construct representing the load imposed on the working memory during performance of a cognitive task" (Chen et al. 2016: 4)

[10] Also known as 'metalinguistic reflection', it is defined as "the consciousness and sensitivity that an individual develops against the characteristics and use of his own language" (Demir and Okur 2022: 668).

[11] There is quantitative data supporting the Graded Salience Hypothesis: when encountering ambiguous words, the more salient meaning is accessed faster, even if it is contextually inappropriate as observed in a study by Giora et al. (2012) on young adults diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome.

constraining context "due to conventionality, frequency, familiarity, or prototypicality" (Giora 2003: 10). Salience can be measured through (i) quantitative measurements of frequency and probability to determine the likelihood of a word or phrase being used in a particular context, (ii) reaction times concerning (less) salient meanings, through (iii) qualitative ratings of familiarity by which speakers evaluate meanings and constructions, and by (iv) prompting participants to complete word fragments with the first word that comes to mind. These tests can be applied to pleonastic NPs to understand how pleonastic elements are activated and selected during writing or speech. A study by Łyda and Warchał (2013) found that high-frequency pleonastic constructions are retained in translation more often due to salience and when speed in simultaneous translation is required (2013: 92). In the case study presented in Part III, (iii) qualitative ratings of familiarity and perceived grammaticality are discussed regarding pleonastic constructions (see Section 8).

2.4. The Gricean lens for linguistic redundancy

Redundancy[12] is the repetition of linguistic information, occurring at different levels,[13] from morphology to discourse, which is "language above the level of the sentence" (Deignan in Schmid 2012: 438). The traditional-descriptive grammar defines pleonasm as a type of redundancy that restates the signified through different signifiers; it is a repetition of meaning in certain syntactic environments (Avram 1987: 225). All natural languages are highly redundant (Millward [1989] in Millward and Hayes 2012), yet our mental lexicon[14] attempts to process language effectively and use it in a relevant manner (Halle 1971). In other words, "redundancy is essential to all languages in order to counteract the effects of potential ambiguity" (Millward and Hayes 2012: 7) but at the same time speakers attempt to be clear and concise while using minimal effort. Zipf's Principle of Least Effort (Zipf 1949) can be applied as an explanation why wordiness or convoluted phrases are undesirable. This principle of economy is bidirectional: it applies

[12] Most prescriptive and descriptive grammarians concur that redundancy is "a negative quality of language" (Wit and Gillette 1999: 1), a sign of "bad style" (Lehmann 2005: 5; Evans and Evans 1957: 372).
[13] Hypercharacterisation, tautology, and pleonasm are types of redundancy at different semantic relations. The distinguishing feature between tautology and pleonasm is that the former exhibits full synonymy (semantic relation of synonymy), while the latter implies [some] synonymy (semantic relation of implication) (Lehmann 2005: 2-4).
[14] 'Mental lexicon', or how words are systematically organized and stored in the mind. The mental lexicon contains patterns and regularities that underlie people's knowledge and (even irregular) use of words. There are more types of lexical entries for one word, such as meaning, form, morphology, phonology. Plag (2003, 2006) gives a full account of language productivity with regards to the mental lexicon.

from a speaker-oriented and hearer-oriented perspective. The speaker should use the appropriate quantity of information, that can be retrieved easily from the speaker's mental lexicon, to convey the message clearly and facilitate the hearer's understanding. In this manner, the speaker minimises the hearer's effort in comprehension[15] and in storing that information in the hearer's memory, since "the mental lexicon of one speaker is never completely identical to any other speaker's mental lexicon" (Plag 2003: 46).

The question is whether the speaker and the hearer are purposefully cooperating, intentionally adhering to Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975). The Cooperative Principle posits that participants in a conversation should contribute as required, at the appropriate time, by the accepted purpose of the talk exchange (Grice 1975). Grice further elaborated on this concept by introducing four maxims: Quantity (be informative), Quality (be truthful), Relation (be relevant), and Manner (be clear and orderly) (Grice 1975: 45). However, speakers may deviate from these maxims in two distinct ways: flouting and violating. The first phenomenon, flouting, occurs when a speaker deliberately and openly fails to observe a maxim with the intention of generating an implicature (which is often the case for pleonasm, see Part II), often to convey additional meaning. Violating involves a speaker unintentionally failing to observe it, typically due to a lack of communicative competence or other factors.[16] If we think of Grice's maxim of quantity in terms of units of information, then receiving less or more units of information than necessary means that the speaker is flouting the Quantity maxim: "S must make his contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange and not more" (Grice 1975: 45). If the hearer receives the requisite information but in a long-winded or confusing manner, then the maxim of manner is either flouted (intentional use of pleonasms for specific functions) or violated (unintentional use of pleonasms that does not add meaning) since Grice instructs speakers to be brief and "avoid unnecessary prolixity" (1975: 46).

Assuming it meets the Cooperative Principle, pleonasm flouts Grice's Quantity maxim (Saryazdi et al. 2022; Lehmann 2005: 9) since redundancy offers too much information

[15] Giora opines that language comprehension and production are influenced by our most entrenched structures, which are easily accessible in our mental lexicon: "salient meanings and senses of words and fixed expressions shape our linguistic behaviour" (2003: 9).
[16] Violation is involved in the case of infelicitous uses of pleonasms, whereby no cognitive-pragmatic functions motivate the use of the pleonasm.

(overspecification) especially in the case of visual context,[17] when modifiers describe nouns in terms of colour, shape, size, pattern (*white snow*, *round circle*, *little baby*, etc.). However, communication oftentimes requires "semantic elaboration" (Kemper and Harden 1999, cited in Saryazdi et al. 2022), which can be accomplished through referential overspecification,[18] which has proven that it does not impede hearer's understanding especially in physical environments "[where] the speaker's primary goal is to direct the listener's attention toward some visually co-present referent" (Tourtouri et al. 2021: 2). In visual environments like *Please pass me that red cup over there* (even if there is one red cup among other coloured cups), redundancy allows referential interpretation "by narrowing attention to intended referents" (Saryazdi et al. 2022). In contrast, traditional views imply that redundancy impairs comprehension due to innate human behaviour to simplify speech[19] (Jaeger 2010).

Proper or felicitous interaction is referred to as "extraction of information" (Bara 2010: 6). A felicitous use of a pleonastic NP is the successful extraction of information: firstly, that the speaker uses the pleonastic NP purposefully and correctly, and secondly, that the hearer understands the information and its implications. Conversely, an infelicitous use refers to pleonasms being employed incorrectly or unwittingly, hindering the communication between the interlocutors. Moreover, an infelicitous use may occur due to a "truly 'egocentric' speaker who [is] insensitive to the hearer's perspective" (Rubio-Fernández 2016: 2), in which case the egocentric speaker violates the Cooperative Principle. According to Rubio-Fernández (2016: 2), the speaker would not bother to specify the intended information in case of ambiguity but "produce a bare definite description and leave it up to the hearer to ask for more information or make a guess". To sum up, clear communication is characterized by requisite and distinctive information.

[17] The assumption is that overspecified concrete NPs are more redundant than overspecified abstract NPs. See Tarenskeen et al. (2015) for ampler discussion on overspecification of colour, size, and pattern.
[18] Such semantic elaboration, although redundant, is useful for clarification or more efficient information recall in cases such as 'elderspeak', which is a modified speech pattern often adopted by younger individuals or caregivers when interacting with elderly persons, presumably with the intention of enhancing communication effectiveness (Kemper and Harden 1999).
[19] Based on the fact that "language and language use are organized to be efficient", which explains the use of contractions, reduced constituents, and adjunct omissions in speech (Jaeger 2010: 23-24).

2.5. Cognitive Pragmatics and pleonasms

Cognitive Pragmatics (henceforth CP) is a discipline that endeavours to identify the psychological mechanisms underlying human communication, scalar implicatures,[20] and the pragmatic and functional motivations in everyday speech (Grice 1975; Sperber and Wilson 1986, 1995; Wilson and Sperber 1981, Carston 1991; Horn 1984, 2005; Levinson 2000, Arts et al. 2011). In the 1970s, CP was influenced by Grice's inferential model of communication, theory which argues that comprehension involves the recognition of communicative intentions and motivations that far exceed the conventional meanings of utterances, therefore necessitating inferential processes to bridge the gap between speaker motivation and hearer comprehension (Mazzone 2018). Since the 1980s, Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 2002) has developed into a theoretical framework within CP. Relevance theory posits that comprehension is driven by the search for relevance, defined as the maximisation of cognitive effects[21] and the minimisation of cognitive effort.[22] Bara (2010) defines CP as "the study of the mental states of people who are engaged in communication", wherein "individual motivations, beliefs, goals, desires, and intentions" ought to be examined before all else (2010: 2). Pleonastic NPs operate similarly to scalar implicatures by creating meaningful contrasts through marked and unmarked forms, while their interpretation remains mainly context-dependent (Taylor in Schmid 2012), thus aligning closely with the Relevance Theory approach.

Communication is also "intrinsically qualitative, in the sense that it is based on the subjective significance a message bears for the receiver" (Bara 2010: 10). Bara (2010) argues that the mental states of people engaged in communication are expressed through the following assumptions: firstly, "a mental representation must be constructed of the event that is taking place which is shared by both interlocutors" (2010: 3) and secondly, that the speaker and hearer "must make explicit their own conscious intention to take part in the interaction" (2010: 4), which implies both consciousness and intentionality.[23]

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[20] Scalar implicatures are pragmatic inference mechanisms, where using a weaker term on an informativeness scale implies the negation of stronger alternatives.

[21] Cognitive effects are defined as the development of new conclusions or the strengthening of existing assumptions.

[22] Cognitive effort refers to the mental processing required to interpret an utterance, to access and retrieve relevant information from memory, to construct and evaluate hypotheses about the speaker's intended meaning, and to integrate new information with existing knowledge.

[23] 'Consciousness' refers to the desire for cooperation, that the speaker and hearer communicate, while 'intentionality' stresses that the speaker and hearer must have the intention to communicate along with the awareness that communicative interactions are taking place.

Therefore, pleonastic noun phrases can be analysed through a cognitive-pragmatic lens to highlight speaker motivations. Expounding on Bara's theory, Schmid (2012) proposes that CP is "a hybrid [between two approaches to the study of language] that epitomises adhocness, slipperiness and vagueness" (Schmid 2012: 4). Schmid argues that CP should further address cognitive-pragmatic aspects, roles, and functions and "construal of meaning-in-context" through "figurative, idiomatic, ironic, humorous, and other non-literal uses of language" (Brône in Schmid 2012: 463).

2.6. Cognitive-pragmatic functions of pleonasm

Lehmann (2005: 2) proposes that pleonasm is "the accumulation of partly synonymous expressions", a rhetorical figure, wherein one of the two (or more) constituents in a dependency relation[24] is redundant and may be omitted. There are three types of pleonasm: morphemic (e.g., affixes), semantic (e.g., semantic properties), and syntactic (e.g., hypercharacterisation, double negation, double affirmation, overinflection, etc.). Semantic pleonasms can be further categorised into (i) overlapping pleonasms and (ii) wordy pleonasms. An overlapping pleonasm consists of a phrase, wherein one word's semantic component is subsumed or implied by the other (for instance, *little baby*). Wordy pleonasms are constituents which logically add nothing to the meaning (*We are driving down south*). The 'focal component' denotes the shared semantic component in pleonastic expressions (Lehmann 2005: 3). Modifiers are syntactically and semantically optional, and their felicitous use fulfils cognitive-pragmatic functions.

Based on Lehmann's analysis, four principal functions of pleonasm in linguistic structures are delineated,[25] namely emphatic, rhematic, clarifying, and phatic. The emphatic function serves to lend prominence to the focal component of an utterance, often through intensifiers or redundant modifiers, and is particularly salient in cases where the speaker aims to insist upon a specific semantic element, such as *completely deaf, diametrically opposed*, *exactly the same, these very eyes* (Lehmann 2005: 9). Adjective

[24] Cruse agrees with this view, and notes that "pleonastic relation between two elements occurs when one of them seems redundant and appears not to add any semantic information not already given by the other element" (Cruse 2000: 23).

[25] A more detailed classification is provided by Małocha-Krupa (2004), who outlines seven functions of pragmatic redundancy: stylistic, pragmatic-persuasive, idiolectal, etiquette, rhetoric, impressive-intensifying, and expressive.

phrases such as <Adj_1-ly Adj_2> are highly evaluative and are intended for intensification[26] (Taboada et al. 2024: 3); these "doubly adjectival constructions" underwent processes of grammaticalization (Bolinger 1972: 18). The rhematic function operates at the level of information structure, allowing the focal component to receive explicit rhematic status within the utterance (Lehmann 2005: 9), and it is achieved by distinguishing each component separately to enhance its informational salience: *specific examples* instead of *clear examples*. Other examples proposed by Lehmann (2005: 10) include *little baby, original source, potentially capable*. The clarifying (or safety) function is evident in situations where the speaker aims to guarantee the unambiguous transmission of the focal component, the head, which should be made evident in loanwords or in contexts where semantic precision is of the utmost importance: *handwritten manuscript, collaborate together, circulated around,* and *Rio Grande river*. Finally, the phatic function reflects a tendency to avoid bare words standing in isolation by adding semantically redundant elements that serve primarily to maintain linguistic contact or fulfil stylistic preferences, such as *past experience, resulting effect,* or *unexpected surprise*. Phatic pleonasms seem to undergo a process of their own, of either pragmaticalization[27] or lexicalization[28] as these pleonastic structures become unremarkable and unnoticeable for native speakers of English. Lehmann argues that as pleonastic constructions become more conventionalized, they tend to evolve along a continuum from more semantically and pragmatically motivated (emphatic) to more grammatically motivated (concord) functions. Such a progression correlates with a decrease in the contrastive potential of the modifier and an increase in the automaticity of the construction, potentially leading to grammaticalization processes. In addition, Lehmann (2005: 9) proposes a scale concerning the strength of speaker motivation when employing pleonastic structures: emphatic pleonasm (strongest motivation > rhematic pleonasm > clarifying pleonasm > phatic pleonasm (weakest motivation).

[26] As an umbrella term, "intensification generally refers to the ability of some modifiers to place the modified word on a relative scale of either gradability ('more or less') or appropriateness ('truly or not')" according to Taboada et al. (2024: 4).
[27] In Aijmer's view pragmaticalization involves "the speaker's attitude to the hearer" (1997: 2).
[28] Lexicalization is "the process that turns free syntactic groups or ad-hoc-formations into lexical units by adding a specific semantic component" (Wischer 2000: 358).

2.7. Contextual redundancies

Fabiszak (2012: 139) argues that "the interpretation of utterances requires inferencing on the part of the hearer so that they can understand both the speaker's intention and the speaker's meaning". According to Wit and Gillette (1999: 4), encyclopaedic knowledge ought to be shared between speaker and hearer: "contextual redundancy [which includes pleonasms] involves the judgment of the speaker concerning the receptor's background". In other words, if the speaker assumes that the hearer may be unfamiliar with a particular topic, the speaker might try to incorporate pleonasms to clarify any ambiguity. Wit and Gillette (1999) propose four types of contextual redundancies: (i) "identical or synonymous repetition", (ii) "isolating, salient repetition", (iii) "contrasting repetition" and (iv) "distinguishing, differentiating repetition" (Wit and Gillette 1999: 9-11). An isolating repetition consists of at least two words, whereby the modifier implies a distinctive feature of the head, for example *free gift*. A contrasting repetition consists of at least two words, which emphasize an opposition of any kind mostly by use of additional stress, for instance *the salty sea* vs. *the blue sea*. A distinguishing repetition consists of at least two words, whereby one is ambiguous in meaning, for instance *Chai tea* (discussed in 4.3.). Wit and Gillette's categorization of pleonasms is not necessarily problematic, but it does raise questions regarding their pragmatic functions. Section 4 proposes a categorization of pleonasms based on pragmatic functions, hopefully bringing clarity to and insight in the topic of pleonasms.

3. The Noun Phrase

The English NP can be analysed as a bare noun, as a modifier-head structure, or a noun taking arguments. In a standard modifier-head structure, the noun serves as head and it can be modified by dependents, which precede and/or follow it (Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston and Pullum 2002). As a logical structure, there is a dependency relation within the NP between the head and its modifiers, namely that they "stand in a relation of recursive modification or subcategorization", namely that *a* is modified by *b* which is modified by *c,* and so on (Halliday 1994 in Ghesquière 2014: 16). The Epithet is a modifier with "some quality of the subset" (Halliday 1994: 184) and is twofold: (i) interpersonal, giving insight into the speaker's attitude regarding the N, where subjective adjectives (*beautiful, splendid, foolish*) are speaker-oriented and affective (*unexpected surprise*), and (ii) experiential adjectives referring to "referent-description" belonging to

non-VALUE classes (*round circle*), according to Adamson 2000: 45). Both types of Epithets apply to pleonastic NPs.

The consensus among linguists is that the more leftward the element in the NP structure, the more subjective it is (Dixon 1982, Halliday 1994, Ghesquière 2014, Quirk et al. 1972). Conversely, the closer the element to the head it modifies, the more objective the element is. Regarding premodification, this polarity between the subjective[29] and the objective[30] has been discussed by Quirk et al. (1972: 924-925). In addition, subjective adjectives express "more ephemeral properties, temporally restricted" whereas objective adjectives express "more permanent properties" (Halliday 1985, cited in Athanasiadou 2006: 220). I assume that the more objective the pleonastic element, the more blatant the pleonasm, supposing that the speaker motivation for employing subjective modifiers is precisely to emphasize and even hyperbolise[31] a specific trait of the head. In the CxG framework, hyperbolic language is a mark of "linguistic extravagance" (Ungerer and Hartmann 2020: 34) meant to provoke a reaction or bring the speaker in the focus of attention. Since pleonastic constructions also emphasize (some even hyperbolise) content, we might propose that certain pleonasms produce the same effect of linguistic extravagance.

The inherent qualities and features of an adjective do not determine the classification of the adjective as subjective or objective, but by how the adjective is used and perceived in context. The notion of inherence of properties was first introduced by Whorf (1956: 93), expounded by Dixon (1982: 25-30), and then detailed by Huddleston (1984: 227-271). Dixon's Scale of Inherence (1982) posits a fixed order of properties[32] in a constituent from least to most objective: VALUE > DIMENSION > PHYSICAL PROPERTY > SPEED > HUMAN PROPENSITY > AGE > COLOUR, which are not arbitrary but reflect fundamental cognitive categories of human perception and categorization. Adamson proposes that the VALUE adjectives underwent a process of grammaticalization, in the sense that descriptive adjectives developed into affective adjectives, which in turn were grammaticalized as

[29] The subjective "is a matter of opinion, imposed on the head by the observer, not visually observed and only subjectively assessible" (Quirk et al. 1972: 924-925).
[30] The objective is the "visually observable, objectively recognizable or assessable" (Quirk et al. 1972: 924-925).
[31] Carston and Wearing (2015: 80) give a full account of the hyperbolic utterance, the "overt and blatant exaggeration of some property or characteristic" understood by both the speaker and the hearer as an overstatement, and its functions, such as emphasis and evaluation.
[32] Dixon also discusses gradability of DIMENSION and VALUE. By repeating or paraphrasing a gradable property, speakers can amplify the inherent quality being described. For example, *a tiny little mouse*, with both modifiers conveying DIMENSION, creates an emphatic effect on the perception of smallness.

intensifiers, thus losing semantic weight (Adamson 2000: 44-55). Adamson's analysis is relevant to this paper since it may be applied to pleonastic NPs to account for the acceptability of emphatic pleonasms. Based on Adamson's analysis, the assumption of this paper is that the more inherent the overspecified features, especially SIZE, AGE and COLOUR, the stronger the pleonasm: e.g., *white snow, little baby*.

Dirven (1999) discusses cognitive principles of saliency and proximity, and corroborates what has been evidenced so far, namely that adjectives deemed objective are closer to the noun. Dirven (1999: 58) uses the label 'descriptive adjectives' as an equivalent to DIMENSION, PHYSICAL PROPERTY, AGE, and COLOUR. I suppose that because descriptive adjectives are more graphic, they tend to enhance the pleonastic nature of the NP. In other words, *white snow* is perceived as more pleonastic than *potential hazard*, for instance, because the former is easier to picture than the latter. In addition, it is a simpler, more salient natural occurrence. Descriptive adjectives add to the richness and specificity of NPs, making the nouns more vivid and easier to visualize. It is safe to say that users' salient take on *white snow* is that of the myriads of white snowflakes and frozen precipitation. In other words, I propose that *white snow* is inherently more pleonastic than *soft snow*, even though *snow* is both [+white] and [+soft]. Moreover, *#cold snow*[33] is less acceptable than *?white snow*, as *warm snow* or *hot snow* are untrue and illogical.

Additionally, there is information extraction from "natural meaning", namely inferences[34] made from events occurring in the natural world (Grice 1975). For instance, *sea,* and *rain* in themselves do not communicate anything, but the speaker and hearer infer, make assumptions,[35] and attribute qualitative information (Bara 2010: 10) such as PHYSICAL PROPERTY, SIZE, COLOUR, and so on. Thus, *deep sea, wide sea, blue sea, salty sea* and *heavy rain, cold rain, wet rain* are all qualitative choices[36] made by the speaker who observes the natural world and describes it with intention: *heavy, light, cold, drizzling, chilly, dense,* etc. Given that the physical environment is a shared ground between the

[33] Coldness is implied in another definition of *snow*: "atmospheric water vapour frozen into ice crystals and falling in light white flakes or lying on the ground as a white layer" (Lexico 2019: s.v. *snow*).
[34] In CP, Marco Mazzone (2023), iterating on Gricean theory, remarks that "comprehension is essentially an inferential process, through which the addressee reconstructs the communicative intention behind the speaker's use of a certain utterance in context" (2023: 1).
[35] Rubio-Fernandez (2016) touches on speaker motivation, hearer inference, and their cooperation: "In other words, since speakers and hearers rely on the same perceptual mechanisms, a cooperative speaker is entitled to assume that anything that is perceptually salient to him will also be salient for his interlocutor when they share a physical environment" (Rubio-Fernandez 2016: 2-3).
[36] The qualitative choices are not few; there are 6,266 "adj.ALL + rain" instances on COCA (2024).

speaker and the hearer in face-to-face communication (Clark and Marshall 1981), the salient details for the speaker (e.g., the temperature of the sea, the colour of a cup) will typically be salient for the hearer as well. Moreover, the details should reduce the listening effort[37] of the hearer. Most importantly, a Gricean speaker is entitled to assume that much when producing a referential expression (Rubio-Fernandez 2016: 2).

[37] 'Listening effort' is understood as "the mental exertion required to attend to and understand an auditory message" (McGarrigle et al. 2014: 2),

PART II. Analysis of pleonastic constructions

4. English pleonastic NPs

English pleonastic NPs exhibit various forms and functions within language use, contributing to emphasis, contrast, clarity, and stylistic expression in communication. This section examines different types of pleonastic NPs in English, discussing their semantic, pragmatic, and cognitive aspects.

4.1. Emphatic pleonasms

Semantic pleonasms do not necessarily hinder comprehension or violate grammatical rules. Nevertheless, a set of tests can evaluate the acceptability of pleonastic constructions by dissecting the constituents or altering the context. One test, the stress test, isolates emphatic pleonasms from the rest (Lehmann 2005: 5), for instance "*exact* replica" (see 10), "a *totally* unnecessary war" (see 13). Emphatic pleonasms in NPs have the strongest speaker motivation and serve a rhetorical function by reinforcing meaning through redundancy, though their use should be judicious.

1) Around a year ago the WHO declared #COVID19 a **global pandemic**. (X 2021)

The NP *global pandemic* has 31.6 million verbatim results indexed on Google compared to *global epidemic*, the non-pleonastic variant, with just 1.37 million search results. The noun *pandemic* already contains the meaning of a disease outbreak that is worldwide in scope, so adding *global* as a modifier is semantically redundant: "Basic English acknowledges that a pandemic is an epidemic of global extent. It's thus repetitious to use the two together" (Chagema 2020). The NP *global pandemic* and its Romanian counterpart, *pandemie globală*, were included in the case study discussed in Part III.

2) **These** joyful **eyes**–weep not with **these eyes**–for we write with **these very eyes**; **These eyes** that are like fresh-water springs, and we affirm with **these very eyes**. (Abbas 2002: 88)

Example (2) contains multiple instances of pleonastic repetition of *these eyes* and *these very eyes*, in a rather hypnotic fashion. The emphasis lies on the eyes as central motif in the passage and are compared to *fresh-water springs* positively. Moreover, the pleonasm was employed deliberately as a poetic device, serving a stylistic purpose in creating emphasis and rhythm.

3) You saw with **your <u>own</u> eyes** how much he's changed (Cambridge Dictionary: s.v. *see something with your own eyes*)

For emphasis, (3) *with your own eyes*[38] reinforces the personal, direct nature of the observation, and expresses the firsthand experience of witnessing the change. The NP also serves an evaluative function, implying a higher degree of credibility or certainty by stressing personal observation. The NP has been conventionalized as an expression in everyday speech, as it was extracted from the Cambridge Online Dictionary (s.v. idioms). The English NP *with my very own eyes* and its Romanian counterpart, *cu proprii mei ochi,* were included in the case study (see Section 10).

4) When your skin tingles and gets chills in **a boiling hot bath** you know you've got a fever ahead! (X 2018)

Lehmann (2005: 8) introduces "polar extreme enforcement" as a form of intensification that precedes pleonasm on a scale of semantic redundancy, using adverbs and adjectives that emphasize the extreme pole of a scalar attribute beyond its default value, such as *boiling hot* or *bitterly cold.*[39] According to Taboada et al., these scalar intensifiers "have strict collocational restrictions" and have been "magnified" (Taboada et al 2024: 6), which is a process in which "a basic lexical function selects specific lexical modifiers depending on the head word" (Mel'cuk 2012 in Taboada et al 2024: 6). For instance, *bitterly* collocates with *cold* and not *cool*; similarly, *boiling* collocates with *hot* not *warm*, with each polar extreme requiring a specific modifier in order to further emphasize it. These restrictions are not only logical but may also lead to entrenchment. To explain, Mel'cuk (2012) 'magnifies' rain as *heavy rain*, using the formula MAGN(rain), but *wind* is magnified as *strong,* not *heavy*, through MAGN(wind). Therefore, we argue that scalar attributes are likely constructionalised; therefore, the pleonasm is not flagrant. In example (4), *boiling hot* serves multiple cognitive and pragmatic purposes. Cognitively, the phrase reinforces the concept of extreme heat, creating a stronger mental image of the bath's

[38] The expression with my own eyes was analysed from a Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG) perspective by Portero-Muñoz (2022) as an example of a referential subact (a component of communication which refers to an entity in the discourse). The emphatic marking my own eyes on the Referential Subact serves a pragmatic function, allowing Speakers to draw attention to particular referents for rhetorical effect, without changing the basic semantic content of the utterance.

[39] Lehmann (2005) considers extreme poles redundant, although there are arguments in favour of redundant modification. Some modifiers, despite appearing redundant, affect the truth conditions of the statement. For example, in a phrase like *round circle*, while *round* might seem unnecessary (as all circles are round by definition), it could be argued that it serves a restrictive function by emphasizing the perfect roundness of the circle, potentially distinguishing it from imperfect or approximate circles.

temperature. Pragmatically, the pleonastic NP emphasizes the unusual nature of the physical sensations, setting up a stark contrast between the extreme heat and unexpected chills, effectively communicating the likelihood of an impending fever. Since opinions are divided whether intensified polar extremes are pleonastic, *boiling hot* and *bitterly cold* and their Romanian counterparts[40] were included in the case study for further qualitative discussion and evaluation.

Emphasis may occur through simple repetition:

5) The **green, green grass** of home. (Wit and Gillette 1999: 10)

The repetition of *green* in (5) intensifies the quality of greenness, making it more vivid in the listener's mind, implying a positive evaluation of the grass, suggesting lushness and vitality. Furthermore, the repetition conveys emotional attachment to the home and surroundings, which may evoke nostalgia or longing, and is a deliberate stylistic choice used in lyrics and literature to create a stronger mental image and emotional resonance.

6) I had a **blue, blue Christmas**. (Wit and Gillette 1999: 10)

Similar to (5), *blue* heightens the feeling of sadness or melancholy associated with the colour blue (*I am feeling blue*). The repetition might stress the negative emotional state experienced during Christmas, possibly indicating a sense of loneliness or depression during what is normally a joyful time. In contrast, evaluative NPs such as *white Christmas* imply a positive evaluation of the Christmas experience. In most Western contexts, [+whiteness] refers to an idealised version of the holiday season. Furthermore, *white Christmas* typically elicits emotional responses such as nostalgia, joy, or anticipation. In Romanian, although *blue Christmas* is more opaque than its English equivalent, it still retains the meaning of melancholy and sadness: *albastru* (En. "blue") is used in constructions such as *inimă-albastră* (En. "blue-heart") meaning "a sad soul", referring to sadness and grief on the one hand, and plight, fury, and anger on the other hand. Also, *E cam albastră* (En. "It's quite blue") refers to an unpleasant or difficult situation.

7) The **blackest black paint** in the world! **Black** 3.0. (Kickstarter.com 2021)

[40] To express the intensified extreme polarity in Romanian, the constructions were intensified through repetition *fierbinte-fierbinte* meaning 'hot-hot', and *geros de rece* meaning 'frosty-cold'.

Example (7) is clearly marketing copy; the superlative *blackest* combined with the repetition of *black* in the product name emphasizes the extreme nature of the colour, namely the most intense black possible. Besides emphasis, the NP fulfils an evaluative function, suggesting its superiority over other black paints, and a referential function to clearly identify the product and its key feature, ensuring that the audience understands exactly what is being described. Ultimately, the NP fulfils a persuasive function in the context of product marketing, convincing potential buyers of the product's unique selling point through superlative and highly evaluative phrases. In Romanian, the superlative *blackest* is best conveyed as *the most black*: *cea mai neagră vopsea neagră* <Adj-est N Adj> if indefinite, or *vopseaua neagră cea mai neagră* <Det N Adj Adj-est>, thus changing modifying position due to the definite article.

Emphatic pleonasms intensify the Head through inherent properties (Dixon 1982):

8) With the **black darkness** blanketing the whole planet, plants eventually wither and die. (Reddit, 2017)

The colour adjective *black* is redundant as darkness is inherently dark; however, the addition of *black* to *darkness* intensifies the noun, stressing its completeness and severity, thus creating a more vivid mental image. The phrase performs a variety of functions, including emphatic, evaluative (on the negative repercussions), expressive (which conveys a sense of foreboding or dread), referential (identifying extreme darkness), and poetic (through alliteration *black* and *blanketing*). While the pleonasm is noticeable, it is acceptable in descriptive or literary contexts to intensity and create dramatic effect and stronger imagery. The cognitive impact of this pleonasm is particularly effective in scientific or environmental contexts where the author wants to stress the catastrophic effects of the abovementioned hypothetical scenario. However, *black darkness* is not found in Romanian, as it is considered ungrammatical.

9) The look and smell of **a real burning fire** are, to some homeowners, the only way to go. (X 2023)

The pleonastic NP in (9) combines *real* with *burning fire*, where *burning* is redundant as a fire is inherently burning;[41] however, the pleonasm is subtle thanks to the descriptive and marketing use, where appeal to consumer emotions and persuasion are paramount.

[41] The English NP *burning fire* and its Romanian counterpart *foc arzător* were included in the case study in Part III to assess perceived redundancy.

The addition of *real* to *burning fire* distinguishes genuine wood fires from artificial alternatives, serving a referential function to clearly identify traditional wood-burning fires, a distinction necessary in the light of technological advancements (see Section 5.2.6), and implies a positive evaluation, suggesting a superior sensory experience. Nevertheless, the perceived redundancy of *burning fire* and its Romanian counterpart *foc arzător* is explored through the case study conducted in Part III.

10) "Visit us and experience **an exact replica** of the Oval Office and a reproduction of the Cabinet Room, and our two temp exhibits" (X 2019)

In (10), *exact* is redundant as a replica is inherently meant to be an exact copy. While this pleonastic NP is noticeable, it is not flagrant: the addition of the modifier *exact* intensifies the authenticity and precision in product reproduction, implying a high-quality product. The pleonasm serves a referential function so that the hearer understands the replica is a faithful reproduction of the Oval Office. The evaluative adjective *exact* can be used in promotional language for marketing use to create emphasis or highlight key features or characteristics. The same is the case for the Romanian *replică exactă*[42] as it has been used in promotional language[43] for branded products, such as *AirPods replică exactă* and *replică exactă Rolex*, for example.

Adverbs of focus such as *exactly, precisely* (Biber et al. 1999: 521) can be used to modify non-scalar adjectives (e.g., *unique, circular, tremendous, atomic, dead/alive, unanimous*), which are absolute adjectives that cannot be typically modified by degree adverbs or intensifiers unlike gradable adjectives. Absolute adjectives (or non-gradable adjectives), which already express an extreme or absolute state, do not require Degree modifiers in the highest degree or upper scale, lest the construction results in pleonasm. For instance, *completely unique* is pleonastic since *unique* means one of a kind, rendering the Degree modifier unnecessary, but *almost unique* is acceptable and non-pleonastic. Gradable adjectives, on the other hand, can typically be modified by Degree adverbs without creating pleonasm, as they represent varying degrees on a scale, for example, *very special*. Having said that, according to various linguistic investigations, adverbs of degree (e.g.,

[42] Synonymous with *exact replica* is also *exact copy*, which is the preferred NP in Romanian since *replică* primarily means *line/response*.
[43] In e-Commerce, descriptive language is used to help consumers find products through search engines by typing specific keywords. In this case, the English *exact replica* was most likely translated into Romanian with help of automated translation technologies.

deeply in *deeply disturbing*), and adverbs of manner like *entirely, absolutely, perfectly*, *completely*, *totally* (Biber et al. 1999: 553), which are described as "particularisers" by Cougil Alvarez (2003), can also be used to modify and grade absolute adjectives, as seen in (11), (12), (13):

11) "You must be **completely deaf** and a starter in lipreading". (X 2019)

Example (11) employs the adverb *completely*[44] to modify the absolute adjective *deaf* in order to emphasize the totality of deafness, implying a negative assessment of the subject's hearing ability, and strengthening the speaker's argument. While *completely deaf* is a pleonasm, it is conventional use in everyday speech. The NP reinforces the state of absolute hearing loss, creating a stronger mental image for the audience. For this reason, I included *completely deaf* and the Romanian translation *complet surd* in the case study to assess perceived redundancy (see Section 12).

12) "This is a **deeply disturbing insight** into the political attitude of the Coalition". (X 2021)

In (12), the Degree adverb *deeply* modifies *disturbing* serving multiple purposes: the intensifier amplifies the unsettling nature of the insight, it conveys a strong negative assessment of the Coalition's political attitude, it communicates the speaker's emotional response and aims to influence the audience's perception. The use of strong modification such as *disturbing,* along with *horrible, awful, terrible, disgusting, terrifying,* and *worrisome* is commonplace for intensification in political discourse and journalism to stress the severity of a situation.

Certain adjectives undergo a process of grammaticalization, and thus semantic bleaching. From a historical linguistics perspective, Adamson (2000) proposes a pathway of grammaticalization for adjectives. She proposes a category shift in the NP: HUMAN PROPENSITY > PHYSICAL PROPERTY > VALUE > INTENSIFIER, which could be recognised as a cline in grammaticalization: descriptive adjective > affective adjective > intensifier (Adamson 2000: 56). The shift from PHYSICAL PROPERTY to VALUE involves a process of

[44] There is extensive literature on *completely.* Bolinger (1972) discusses the use of intensifiers like *completely* and their role in modifying adjectives and explores how these adverbs can be used to emphasize or strengthen the meaning of adjectives, even when the adjectives are already absolute in nature. In addition, Quirk et al. (1985) classify adverbs like *completely* as Maximisers withing the broader category of Amplifiers. Cinque (1999, 2010) offers a broader view on how adverbs like *completely* function across different languages, providing insights into their universal properties.

subjectivisation[45] (Traugott 1989) "from descriptive to affective meaning" (Adamson 2000: 43). Nevertheless, there are several adjectives with dual function: *good, nice, dirty, bloody, jolly, pretty, lovely* (Adamson 2000: 54). Emphatic pleonasms are good examples of semantic bleaching, wherein descriptive adjectives become intensifiers.

13) "The madness began with **the totally unnecessary war** against Desert Queen Qaddafi" (X 2021)

Example (13) uses the adverb *totally* to modify *unnecessary* to strongly criticize the decision to engage in war and to convince the audience of the war's futility, thus conveying the speaker's emotional stance. *Totally unnecessary* might seem redundant; nevertheless, it is a common form of intensification in political commentary and everyday speech, stressing the speaker's belief of the sheer lack of valid reasons for the war.

Kamoen et al. (2011) make an interesting point about the behaviour of Degree adverbs and gradable adjectives. Contrary to prevailing semantic theories, their study reveals substantial contextual variability in the acceptability of combinations between Degree modifiers (e.g. *almost*, *fully*) and gradable adjectives (Kamoen et al. 2011: 3147). The same adjective-modifier pairing can be deemed acceptable in one context yet unacceptable in another (Kamoen et al. 2011: 3144), challenging the notion that adjectives possess fixed scale structures and comparison standards (cf. Kennedy 2007).[46] This contextual variation was observed across both presumably closed-scale/absolute and open-scale/relative adjective pairs,[47] contradicting expectations that non-default behaviour would primarily manifest in closed-scale adjectives. For instance, the adjective *full* typically considered closed scale, might accept modifiers like *almost* or *completely* in different contexts. If *full* is interpreted as an absolute adjective, modifiers like *completely* or *totally* emphasize the maximal endpoint of the scale (e.g., *The theatre is completely full*), which can be redundant. However, in a relative-scale context, *completely full* can emphasize fullness compared to a prior state. For example, *The theatre is completely full compared to last week's attendance* highlights a contrast. *Almost full* can indicate a degree

[45] Subjectification refers to a "speaker-based meaning, [which] has a very close natural connection to pragmatics, as the concept of 'speaker' is the central feature of any pragmatic aspect of language" (Diewald 2011: 373).
[46] Contextual variability in degree modifier-adjective combinations indicates that adjective scale structures are not fixed but flexible and context-dependent, extending to both open-scale and closed-scale adjectives.
[47] Closed scales possess defined endpoints (e.g., *full*, *empty*) whereas open scales lack definitive maximum or minimum values (e.g., *tall*, *expensive*).

of fullness that falls short of the maximal endpoint of the scale (e.g., *The theatre is almost full*). There is context variability: *almost full* may become redundant if the expectation of near completion is already implied. For example, saying, *The theatre is almost full* when it is visibly near capacity adds little information since the context already suggests proximity to fullness without explicit modification. Furthermore, the research by Kamoen et al (2011) indicates that differentiating between adjectives that consistently allow or disallow modification by degree modifiers is problematic, independent of context.[48] According to the authors, "there is contextual variation because there are contexts in which an adjective and degree modifier combination is judged to be acceptable, even though no real maximum degree reading of the adjective is involved" (Kamoen et al. 2011: 3148).

Extending this theory to pleonastic NPs, prima facie, closed-scale adjectives in the following NPs are redundant: *completely full glass*, *totally empty container* and *absolutely straight line.* Even open-scale adjectives can be redundant if the nouns they modify already imply the information: *very tall skyscraper* since *skyscrapers* are inherently tall, *highly expensive jewellery* as *jewellery* is generally considered costly. Besides emphasis and intensification used by the speakers to convey a stronger degree of property than the bare adjective alone, open-scale modifiers can help differentiate within a category where the base quality is already assumed, eliminating redundancy:

14) Dubai is famous for its skyscrapers. Having said that, the Burj Khalifa stands out as a **very tall skyscraper**, towering over its neighbours at 828 meters. (own example)

In a city known for its extremely high buildings, such as Dubai, the term *skyscraper* might refer to a wide range of tall buildings, where *very tall skyscraper* could be used to distinguish exceptionally tall buildings even among skyscrapers, as presented in (14).

15) At the Christie's auction of royal jewels, even among the collection of expensive pieces, the historic Cullinan Diamond necklace was considered **highly expensive jewellery**, with an estimated value exceeding $50 million. (own example)

Similarly to (14), in a luxury jewellery store or a high-end auction, where all items are considered expensive, *highly expensive jewellery* could be used to differentiate the most

[48] Their findings have significant implications for semantic theory, suggesting that the scale structure and comparison standard of adjectives may be more context-dependent than previously assumed.

valuable pieces, as illustrated in (15). In these two contexts, the modifiers *very* and *highly* serve to emphasize an exceptional degree of the quality in question, even when compared to other items in the same category that are already considered tall or expensive. The same observations can be made in Romanian: (14) *un zgârie-nori foarte înalt* and (15) *bijuterii foarte scumpe*. Other cognitive-pragmatic functions may involve (i) pragmatic signalling, indicating that the speaker considers the degree (*very, highly*) of the quality (*tall, expensive*) to be noteworthy or exceptional, (ii) scalar implicature,[49] inviting the listener to infer that the described entity is at the extreme end of a scale, (iii) subjective evaluation, whereby speakers express their subjective assessment of where an entity falls on a continuous scale, (iv) conversational relevance, so that the utterance becomes more informative or relevant in contexts where simply stating the base quality would be uninformative, and (v) stylistic choice, where speakers employ the modifiers for stylistic or rhetorical choice to create a particular effect in speech or writing.

16) There's a perfectly reasonable explanation as to why so many female meteorologists are wearing **exactly the same dress**. (The Telegraph 2015)

The addition of the focusing adverb *exactly* to *the same dress* in (16) intensifies the concept of sameness, emphasizing the unusual nature of the situation where multiple meteorologists are wearing identical dresses (Molloy 2015). Intensifiers are employed in marketing or journalistic contexts in order to highlight information or draw the audience's attention, making the newsworthiness of the story more intriguing to readers.

17) The UK isn't the centre of the universe. The EU is a **joint cooperation** for political and economic purposes. (X 2019)

In (17), *joint* and *cooperation* are semantically redundant as cooperation inherently involves joint action; however, the redundancy is mild and serves an emphatic function in political discourse, reinforcing the idea of collective action and shared responsibility within the European Union, highlighting the collaborative nature of the organization. The repetition of the concept of 'togetherness' through both *joint* and *cooperation* creates a cognitive reinforcement, strengthening the overall meaning and creating a more vivid mental image of unity, in order to influence the audience's perception of the EU's cohesive structure.

[49] Pleonastic NPs can create scalar implications through feature emphasis, where the marked member (the modifier) triggers scalar interpretations relative to the unmarked member (head).

18) Mug shot of Victor Pena, suspect in kidnapping of Olivia Ambrose, from previous arrest in Rhode Island. Was arrested last July on charges of casino gambling cheating, obtaining money **under false pretence**. (X 2019).

In addition to its emphatic function, (18) *false pretence* has been specialized as a legal term, meaning "an illegal, deliberate misrepresentation of facts, as to obtain title to money or property" (Lexico 2018: s.v. *false pretence*). Divorced from its legal meaning, "under false pretence" can be used pleonastically and infelicitously in a context where the deception is already clearly established:

19) *The mischievous child snuck into the cookie jar **under false pretence**, pretending to be looking for a lost toy in the kitchen. (own example)

The inclusion of *under false pretence* adds no new information to the sentence, making it unwarranted. The meaning would remain unchanged if the NP were removed. Due to its conventionalization in English, *under false pretences* and its Romanian counterpart *sub pretexte false* were included in the case study conducted in Part III.

4.2. Rhematic pleonasms

In CP, linguistic creativity and expressivity relate to the rhematic quality of information. Giora's graded informativeness requirement posits that "a well-structured text starts with the least informative element and gradually adds more informative elements, with the final element corresponding to the most informative one" (Giora 1991 in Schmid 2012: 471-472), meaning that words with high information value (marked members) are distinct from the prototype (the unmarked member), as the former involve novel or divergent information, "considered *least likely* and hence yield effects of *surprise* on the part of readers or hearers" [original emphasis] (Giora 1991: 472). Pleonastic NPs operate on scalar principles by creating marked members distinct from prototypes, introducing novel or divergent information, and by generating surprising effects on the part of the speakers and/or listener. In discourse analysis, markedness refers to the extent to which "a text segment differs from the previously established discourse representation" (Giora 1991: 472-473) while maintaining textual compatibility, meaning that the construction fits the rest of the text.

20) "I love the **salty sea**!" (Wit and Gillette 1999: 10)

In a sentence such as (20), Wit and Gillette (1999) analyse *salty water* with regards to rhematicity. The authors refer to the rhematic pleonasm as having "an isolating, salient feature":

> "the saltiness of the water does not add anything the concept of sea which is salty almost by definition. However, [it] focuses the attention of the receptor on one quality, viz. 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". (ibid: 14)

Concerning rhematic pleonasms, it is not that the focal component lacks sufficient specification, but some modifiers may sound counterintuitive to the hearer whenever the speaker introduces new information. For instance, *red blood* is pleonastic because blood is red in its physical, literal sense. Its rhematic variant *blue blood* refers to aristocrats and high status, where *blood* refers to family ties and lineage.

21) "Blue blood + **red blood** = purple blood. That's a Klingon isn't it?" (X 2011)

Speakers of English are familiar with *blue blood* (royalty) or with both compound nouns *red blood cells* (erythrocytes), and *white blood cells* (leukocytes), yet there are divergent and obscure Internet references about *green blood* (X 2013), *black blood* (X 2013), *silver blood* (X 2011), and *purple blood* (X 2011), which make perfect sense for readers of sci-fi/fantasy novels or fans of role-playing games, but leave the uninitiated confused and expecting clarification, as noted in (21).

Moreover, rhematic pleonasms isolate one salient characteristic of the Head. *Free gift* is a frequent pleonastic NP, and besides its emphatic use, it may have a contrastive reading in contexts such as *Danaan's gift* (22a), *lavish gift* (22b), *expensive gift* (22c), and *generous gift* (22d). Various adjectives, including *free*, may challenge or modify the default interpretation of *gift*. In these examples, I demonstrate how different modifiers create distinct interpretations of *gift*, each deviating from the presumed meaning of a gift as something freely given without expectation. Drawing from Levinson (2000), certain pragmatic inferences become default interpretations unless explicitly cancelled. In the case of *gift*, the default presumption might be that it is freely given and benevolent. However, the examples below (22a–d), although non-pleonastic, show how this presumption of gratuity can be cancelled or modified:

22) a. **Danaan's gift** – beware of Greeks bearing gifts. (X 2019)
b. Truth behind **the lavish gift** Prince William gave to Kate after birth of Louis. (X 2018)
c. Don't expect that giving him **an expensive gift** will elevate your value in his eyes. (COCA 1998)
d. The Merryman Family, long-time supporters of the #Hokies, give **generous gift** to benefit Tech's Strength & Conditioning project. (X 2019)

Free gift contrasts with *Danaan's gift* in (22a), which suggests that not all gifts capture the benevolent nature of the giver. The interpretation of *Danaan's gift*[50] requires cultural knowledge, making the warning more vivid and emphasizing the danger associated with such gifts. Moreover, gift-giving may also be seen as a social norm, stressing that expensive gifts can create a sense of obligation or burden on the receiver to reciprocate or can be used to improve social status, manipulate social relationships or perceptions. Example (22b) suggests social obligation on part of the donor, (22c) indicates that the value of a gift can be perceived as a means to elevate one's status, and (22d) highlights how gifts can be used towards positive action. *Free gift* can be understood through the framework of scalar implicatures, as proposed by Horn (1984), whereby the explicit mention *free* triggers a scalar implicature that positions the item at the extreme end of a COST scale, emphasizing its lack of monetary value to the recipient.

Moreover, *free gift* illustrates how a simple NP can develop rich constructional meaning through usage-based processes, becoming cognitively entrenched despite its apparent redundancy. Firstly, the form-meaning pairing <Adj N> goes beyond the sum of its parts, augmenting the lexical denotations of *free* and *gift* to serve pragmatic and communicative functions like persuasion in marketing or in promotional discourse, as well as in religious texts (*the free gift of salvation*), by emphasizing the no-cost aspect of the offering to make it more appealing to consumers. In additional, *free gift* has become cognitively entrenched as a unit, processed holistically rather than fully compositionally, and the NP was conventionalized as a fixed expression likely due to repeated usage for commercial purposes and advertising sector. In terms of information structure, the prenominal modifier is in closer proximity to the noun (rather than using a prepositional phrase like *gift at no cost*); this fronting contributes to the immediacy and impact of the modifier, especially if the modifier is stressed, e.g., *This is a FREE gift*.

23) a. I finally got **my 'free' gift** because I complained that after paying almost $500 they had some nerve. (X 2018)
b. *He gave me a **free gift** for my birthday. (own example)
c. *The charity provided **free gifts** and donations to the homeless. (own example)

Example (23) showcases the sarcastic use of *free* and the listener can infer that the item was supposed to be complimentary: *They had some nerve not to offer [the complementary*

[50] The original phrase from Virgil's Aeneid is "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes" and it translates to "I fear the Danaans, even when they bring gifts" popularised as "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts".

item]. The use of this pleonasm is a sociolinguistic marker and reflects common marketing language, which the speaker adopts ironically to critique the company's practices. The NP possibly expresses indignation or surprise that something considered free was initially withheld after a substantial payment. Some context-dependent redundancies and ungrammaticality judgements involve contexts where there is no contrast or novel information, but a violation of Grice's maxim of quantity in contexts where there is explicit gratuity, such as (23b) or benevolence (23c).

Similarly, the Romanian counterpart *cadou gratuit* exhibits redundancy, as the noun *cadou* inherently carries the semantic feature [+gratis], as *gratuit* reinforces the prototypical features of *cadou*, emphasizing its core attribute of being given without expectation of payment. The explicit mention of *gratuit* may generate scalar implicatures, positioning the item at the extreme end of a cost scale, thus triggering a pragmatic inference that the item is not just free, but emphatically so, potentially contrasting with other types of gifts or offers. The NP *cadou gratuit* is deemed redundant and awkward in Romanian; however, its acceptability and interpretation vary across registers and genres, especially in marketing discourse and legal contexts. In social contexts, the rhematic use of *gratuit* might interact with face-saving strategies, potentially mitigating the face-threatening act of gift-giving or receiving.

24) "Oh, Chipper, you **sly old fox**, you. Well done, old chap". (X 2012)

Example (24) has undergone reanalysis, and although originally a simile (*as sly as a fox*), the NP *sly fox* can now be analysed as a metaphor. The NP *sly old fox* is comprised of the Modifier$_1$ *sly* [+furtive] [+crafty] [+roguish], Modifier$_2$ *old* [+age][+experience] and the Head *fox* [+clever][+crafty][+good-looking]. When combined, *sly old fox* describes someone who is experienced, cunning, and clever, often in a way that is deceitful or manipulative. The focal component in this sample is [+crafty]; this overlapping pleonasm is not only acceptable, but also desirable and useful since the other features help accrue meaning, and thus painting a more vivid mental picture. The NP *sly fox* was found 36 in COCA in phrases like *what a sly fox*, *you sly fox*, *quite the sly fox*, and the binominal *that sly fox of a man*.

25) a. The **end result** of tireless effort is always beautiful, don't you think? (X 2019)
b. People are so afraid to show **intermediary results** (especially in the context of usability testing). I've accepted a long time ago that everything is an **intermediary result** (X 2018)

Rheme refers to the part of a sentence that provides new or salient information. At first glance, (25a) *end result* appears pleonastic since *result* can be defined as "a desirable or beneficial consequence, outcome, or effect" (Lexico 2019: s.v. *result*), implying finality. By explicitly stating *end result*, the speaker draws attention to the final outcome, contrasting it with potential intermediary stages or incomplete results, as noted in (25b). The Romanian counterpart *rezultat final* does not appear in the CoRoLa, except for other evaluative modifiers, such as *favourable, notable, (very) good, inferior, immediate, positive,* and *definitive* (in the doublet *definitive and incontestable*). To examine perceived redundancy, *end result* and *rezultat final* were included in the case study presented in this paper (Section 12).

26) "I saw this on Reddit, so I don't know **the original source**" (X 2019)

At first glance, *original source* seems redundant, as *source* implies an origin or starting point of information. Example (26) is rhematic in nature since the speaker clearly distinguishes between two kinds of sources: one where the information was replicated (Reddit), and one where the information first originated. To tackle misinformation and fake news, *original source* has been employed more in recent years.[51] In many contexts, especially academic or journalistic writing and news reporting, specifying the *original source* helps establish credibility and allows fact-checking. However, the Romanian counterpart *sursă originală*[52] did not experience the same adoption: there is one instance of *sursă originală* on CoRoLa and another occurrence on the social media platform Threads. For this reason, *original source* and *sursă originală* were included in the case study of this paper (see Part III) so that native speakers of Romanian would rate the acceptability of the two noun phrases.

27) "I have **a good specific example** of the type of work we do with people" (X 2019)

The noun *example* can be defined as "an instance serving for illustration; a representative case" (Lexico 2019: s.v. *example*). Modified by *specific* or *particular*, the NP can be analysed as redundant to a certain extent since *example* already implies specificity.

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[51] Google Ngram Viewer illustrates a dramatic surge in popularity for *original source* from 1980-2022, reaching frequencies double the historical baseline, suggesting a fundamental shift in how information sources are discussed and attributed, likely reflecting heightened emphasis on citation, digital information attribution, and academic integrity in the information-driven world of the 21st century.

[52] In Romanian, *sursă* also refers to *power source*. In the context of e-commerce, *sursă originală* refers exclusively to original (in the sense of *not counterfeit*) power sources and adaptors. Such instances were excluded from search queries on CoRoLa and Google Search Engine.

Drawing from Dixon regarding VALUE adjectives (Dixon 1982: 25, cited in Adamson 2000: 44), two readings can be analysed. Firstly, *good* and *specific* are coordinate adjectives, each independently modifying *example,* conveying that the example is both *good* and *specific* (the example is good, and one of its qualities is that it's specific). Secondly, the example is *good* owing to its specificity, with *specific* having scope over *good* (the example's quality of *good* is directly tied to how specific it is). However, since there is no comma to suggest coordination, the second reading is more probable. While *a specific example* might be slightly redundant, the NP is not entirely pleonastic and can still be useful for adding emphasis or specificity, as shown above in (27). Building on the discussion of scope, *specific example* presents some apparent redundancy, as the noun *example* inherently implies a degree of specificity. As a rhematic pleonasm, *specific example* may implicitly contrast with more general or abstract examples, signalling that this particular example is especially detailed or precise, whereas others are vague or general. In Romanian, *exemplu specific* occurs 24 times while *exemplu concret* (En. 'concrete example') 27 times, the latter being more frequent in everyday speech. The pair *specific example* and *exemplu specific* were included in the case study presented in this thesis (see Part III).

28) I swear he is just **a little baby** in a giant body. (X 2018)

The NP *little baby* is pleonastic since the term *baby* inherently implies smallness, rendering the adjective *little* redundant and unnecessary for conveying the intended meaning. However, read in context, example (28) illustrates tautology, contrasting with *giant body*. The example is rhematic if a specific trait among the constellation of characteristics associated with infancy is highlighted, such as [+little] over the others [+lovable] [+childlike] [+infantile] [+young]. Moreover, the selective emphasis of *little* contributes to the overall rhetorical effect of the statement (*in a giant body*), stressing the perceived immaturity or helplessness of the subject despite his physical stature. Similar to *little baby*, the Romanian counterparts *bebe mic* [little baby], *bebeluș mic* [little baby.DIM] or *bebeluș micuț* [little. DIM baby.DIM] are technically pleonastic; however, the NPs can evoke feelings of tenderness or protectiveness. The pair *little baby–bebeluș mic* was included in the empirical research described in Part III (see Section 5.2.2. *Pleonastic diminution* for a detailed discussion on the use of diminutives in pleonastic NPs).

29) a. Running away from **potential danger** is fearlessness, not cowardice (X 2019)

b. *I'm running now from the potential danger of the rabid dog chasing me. (own example)

In (29), *potential danger* appears pleonastic since danger inherently implies a potential for harm or risk. However, the modifier *potential* creates a marked construction distinct from the unmarked prototype *danger.* With the modifier, there is meaningful contrast with actual, immediate, or realized danger, highlighting the [+unrealized] feature over other inherent features of danger like [+harmful], [+risky] or [+threatening], creating a scalar implicature on the threat realization continuum. The modifier also differentiates between hypothetical and an actual threat and distances the perceiver from the predicament by emphasizing the unrealized nature of the danger. The rhematic use demonstrates clear contextual dependencies; the modifier becomes redundant and ungrammatical when it violates discourse coherence in contexts of immediate peril, such as in (29b). In Romanian, *pericol potențial* is not used in everyday speech; however, *potențial* is used as a clarifying modifier in specialized texts, such as statutes and policies, where precise threat categorization and risk assessment are required. The pleonastic NPs *potential danger* and *pericol potențial* were included in the case study (see Part III).

A good test for rhematic pleonasms would be to add a Modifier that cancels the implicature. A *cute little baby* is both lovable and childlike; a *cute big baby*, although odd, is pervasive in social contexts to express adoration for someone with childlike qualities, therefore sharing the same components [+lovable] [+childlike], but diverges DIMENSION, as noted in the following example: *Yep! That's exactly how I react when he does something. Coz he's such* ***a cute big baby*** (X 2019).

4.3. Clarifying pleonasms

Clarifying pleonasms more or less deal with encyclopaedic knowledge. In other words, the interlocutors may use clarifying pleonasms to ensure the message gets across if the audience has no expertise in general knowledge, (i) biology (*two different species*, where species are different by definition), (ii) morphology (*bound affix*), (iii) foreign languages (*a Chai tea* [Hindi-Urdu]), or (iv) etymology (*handwritten manuscript*, where Latin *manus* is 'hand'; although the manuscript can also be typed and printed). Subject to analysis, *chai* was synonymous with *tea* in its original linguistic context, not a hyponym, making *Chai tea* technically redundant. Once linguistic equivalents (*chai* in Persian, and *tea* in Old Chinese), both words referred to the primary meaning of *tea*, but *chai* has evolved to refer to a specific type of spiced tea beverage (e.g., *Masala chai*) due to

Western marketing efforts to popularize and clarify the product for consumers unfamiliar with the South Asian term and beverage. The Romanian *ceai* (/t͡ʃaɪ/) is a cognate of *chai*, so the counterpart *ceai chai* is pronounced the same; it's safe to say why speakers of Romanian find this NP redundant, confusing even. Due to the similar pronunciation, *ceai ceai* and *ceai chai* should be disambiguated, where *ceai-ceai* could refer to *regular tea* and *ceai Chai* as *Indian tea.* The construction is detailed in Part III, as it was included in the case study. When etymology or retronymy are involved, clarification is often required:

30) a. I write all my novels by hand. I type them up as a third editing process after I read the **handwritten** manuscript (X 2019)
b. Check out Mary Shelley's **original, handwritten manuscript** of Frankenstein, with Percy's edits". (X 2019)
c. #The **ancient handwritten manuscript** was discovered in the ruins. (own example)
d. *Please submit your **handwritten manuscript** typed and double-spaced. (own example)
e. *The **computer-generated handwritten manuscript** was submitted for review. (own example)

The semantic broadening of *manuscript* has necessitated the use of *handwritten* as a modifier in certain contexts for disambiguation. For this reason, example (45) appears as a non-restrictive use of *handwritten*, highlighting the fact that the speaker does most of the work by hand. Even though the information is also encoded in the noun (Latin *manus* and *scribere*), the meaning of *manuscript* has been expanded to mean "a handwritten or typed document, especially a writer's first version of a book before it is published" (Sinclair 1995: s.v. *manuscript*). In contrast to (30a), example (30b) could be emphatic as a marketing ploy ('original, handwritten') to highlight the authenticity or originality of the document. Therefore, *handwritten manuscript* can be appropriate when clarity is needed (30a) or for emphasis (30b), but redundant in academic or literary circles where the original meaning of *manuscript* is well-understood. There are instances of redundant use of *handwritten* in (30c) since ancient manuscripts were handwritten by default, contradictory and ungrammatical use as in (30d), or oxymoronic and nonsensical (30e).

Clarifying pleonasms are prevalent in geographic terms: *Rio Grande River* [Spanish], *Sahara desert* [Arabic], *Mount Fujiyama* [Japanese], *Mount Mongibello* [Sicillian *mon*; Arabic *gebel* for 'mountain' alongside *Mount*, thrice redundant]; *Sierra Madre Mountains* [Spanish *sierra* for 'mountain chain'], *Mount Mont Blanc* [French *mont* for 'mountain'] *Jirisan Mountain* [Korean *san* means 'mountain']. The redundancy observed in these terms often stems from the integration of local languages with more widely used ones,

reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity inherent in the naming of geographic features [53] (Faber 2014) as the conceptualization of landforms is not universally consistent, but rather influenced by cultural factors: the cultural situatedness impacts semantic networks, leading to differences even between closely related language cultures.[54] Furthermore, Faber (2014) posits that the formation of landform categories can be driven by perceptual or cognitive salience, the affordances or constraints they impose on human activities, or conceptual templates and cultural beliefs, which may why some geographic terms may seem redundant or overly specific to outsiders (such as *Mount Mont Blanc, Rio Grande River*), while being perfectly clear and necessary within their cultural context (*terral wind, albufera lagoon, cenote sinkhole, levada canal*).

31) a. Texas National Guard Soldiers assigned to Operation Lone Star's boat operations team patrol the **Rio Grande River** to prevent, deter and interdict transnational criminal activity, human trafficking and illegal immigration. (X 2024)
b. Santa Elena canyon & the **Rio Grande river**. Mexico left, US on the right. (X 2024)

Despite its redundancy, *Rio Grande river* can be seen as necessary in certain contexts, particularly for clarity among audiences unfamiliar with Spanish or the specific geographic feature, as in (31a). In multicultural or multilingual settings, the pleonasm reflects a sociolinguistic phenomenon where languages interact and integrate. In regions like the U.S.-Mexico border, where English and Spanish coexist, such redundancies can emerge from cultural integration. Moreover, *river* is warranted for disambiguation, as there is a *Rio Grande valley*, *Rio Grande trail* and *Rio Grande city* in Texas, Panama, etc. It is worth noting that *river* is omitted in academic texts and authoritative contexts, where requisite general knowledge and precise terminology are presumed.[55] In a descriptive context like a tourist guide or geographical description (31b), there is a contrastive effect

[53] Geographic landforms, in particular, present a unique challenge in terminology due to their intrinsic ties to spatial location, scale-dependence, and delineation within a continuum (Smith and Mark 1999: 247-250).
[54] For instance, according to Faber (2014: 27-28) certain languages may have specific terms for landforms that are perceptually prominent within their cultural context, offer particular affordances, or hold significance within the community's cosmology and belief system: *terral* is a hot dry land-wind specific to the Spanish peninsula, *albufera* is a freshwater coastal lagoon in Valencia used for fishing and rice cultivation, *cenote* is a water-filled limestone sinkhole with religious significance for the Mayans (Faber 2014: 27), and *levada* is an irrigation channel or aqueduct peculiar to Madeira, Portugal.
[55] However, Faber (2014) and León Araúz (2014) examined the dynamics of specialized knowledge representation, employing frame-based approaches to neologisms and terminology, to explain why technical and scientific discourse may employ apparently redundant NPs, yet such pleonasms ensure precise communication of complex concepts. The authors argue that what might appear as pleonastic terminology in specialized fields often serves to activate and reinforce domain-specific conceptual frames.

between *canyon* and *river*, centred on the river's identity as a significant natural boundary between Mexico and the United States. In Romanian, *Rio Grande river* is translated as *Râul cel Mare* or *Marele Râu*; by translating the name into Romanian, *râul* (En. 'river') is not only redundant, but **râul Râul cel Mare* and **râul Marele Râu* are ungrammatical and not found in everyday conversations. The preferred counterpart is the Spanish modified by Romanian, *râul Rio Grande.* In Romanian, maintaining *râul* might be seen as a way to preserve clarity and ensure that the geographic feature is understood as a river, especially in contexts where linguistic precision is valued. The English-Romanian pleonastic pair was included in the case study described in Part III.

Clarifying pleonasms in loanwords are not overtly pleonastic, except when both the interlocutors are bilingual: *the El-Restaurante restaurant* ('the The Restaurant restaurant'), *the La Brea tar pits* ('the *The Tar* tar pits'), *with au jus sauce* ('with *with sauce* sauce'), *please RSVP* ('please respond please), *the Schwarzwald Forest* ('the Black Forest forest'), *the Drakensberg Mountains*" ('the Drake.mountain mountains'), *the Los Angeles Angels* (double pleonasm, En. 'the The Angels Angels'), *the Torpenhow Hill* ('the Hill-hill Hill'), and so on.

L'Homme (2018) proposed a methodology for maintaining the balance between knowledge and lexicon in terminology, based on frame semantics, to analyse underlying knowledge structures (frames) within specialized vocabulary or semantic shifts.[56] Applied to pleonastic NPs, this methodology suggests that apparent redundancy may serve to highlight or reinforce critical elements of domain-specific frames, methodology that is particularly useful for analysing specialized vocabularies in fields such as law, medicine, or technology. For example, in legal language, frames might include concepts like CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS or LEGAL VALIDITY. Once the frames are identified, pleonastic expressions can be mapped to these frames to understand their role within the broader conceptual structure to verify whether these expressions serve to emphasize important concepts, ensure clarity, or provide stylistic effects. Finally, pleonastic

[56] If existing words acquire new meanings, semantic transparency varies depending on how closely the new meaning is related to the original. If the semantic shift is significant, then the meaning can be quite opaque, especially digital terms: *spam* from food to (originally a brand of canned meat vs. unsolicited electronic messages), *catfish* (a person who creates a deceptive online persona to mislead others in virtual relationships), *troll* (a mythical creature, it now commonly refers to a person who posts inflammatory or off-topic messages online), *avatar* (the incarnation of a Hindu deity vs. a digital representation of a user online), or *brick* (now referring to a non-functioning electronic device).

constructions can be evaluated whether they enhance or detract from communicative effectiveness within the domain: in legal documents, phrases like *null and void* serve to reinforce the complete invalidity of a contract. The redundancy ensures that there is no ambiguity about the contract's status, aligning with the frame of LEGAL VALIDITY. In scientific communication, *completely unanimous* may emphasize total agreement among researchers, reinforcing the CONSENSUS frame and ensuring clarity for readers. However, there is no need for clarification in repetitions such as *ATM machine*, where 'M' stands for *machine* (for a detailed discussion, see 5.2.7. *Repetition of the semantic Head*).

As stated above, the main function of clarifying pleonasm is disambiguation where general knowledge is not presumed:

32) a. *Fishermen in Lamu County have been forced to throw away tonnes of **tuna fish** due to lack of market amidst a bountiful season" (X 2019)
b. Speaking of desserts, try the Tuna Fruit Sorbet from our Chefs, **tuna fruit** is more commonly known as Prickly Pear. (X 2012)

At first glance, in (31a) *tuna* appears to disambiguate between FISH and FRUIT. However, the context clears the confusion, as the agents throwing away the tonnes of tuna are *fishermen*; therefore, the clarification is not necessary. Example (32b) illustrates *tuna fruit*, required in multicultural and multilingual contexts where terms may have different meanings or connotations across languages and cultures or where cultural understanding is lacking. Interestingly, the <N N> construction does not occur in Romanian: *tuna fish* translates as *carne de ton* (lit. "meat of tuna"), *file de ton* (En. "tuna steak"), or simply *ton*, but never **ton de pește* (roughly '*fish tuna'). As for *tuna fruit*, the other variant *pară țepoasă* (En. 'pricky pear') is used instead.

The test employed for clarifying pleonasms is quite straight-forward: one must introduce a relative clause (33a-d), an apposition (34a-b) or deixis (35) in order to enhance comprehension:

33) a. Last year I visited Rio Grande, the city, not the river. [apposition]
b. I have been hiking the Fujiyama, a mountain in Japan. [apposition]
34) Could you pass me that tuna—that exotic fruit over there? [deixis]
35) a. My **manuscript**, which is **handwritten**, was approved by my editor. [non-restrictive relative clause]
b. ?Doctors can give you a **reprieve**, which is [only] **temporary**, but cannot cure you. [non-restrictive clause]
c. *This **cooperation**, which is **joint**, will foster unity. [non-restrictive relative clause]

d. *He came to me **under a pretence** that is **false** to try and take my inheritance. [restrictive relative clause]

Examples (33a-b) and (34) are perfectly acceptable; contexts (35a-b) change the pleonasms into emphatic ones, and (35c-d) sound forced and unnatural. It is safe to conclude that clarifying pleonasms containing loanwords are high on the acceptability scale; while some pleonasms become emphatic, others sound ungrammatical.

4.4. Phatic pleonasms

Speakers often incorporate superfluous elements into language due to an inherent need to fill pre-modification spaces (Lehmann 2005). This pre-modification phenomenon is described as equipping a bare noun, verb, or adjective to avoid bare positions, lest the bare word should appear too weak or go unnoticed.[57] Within the framework of CxG, Diessel elaborates on the concept of filler-slot relations, which define the associations between the slots in constructional schemas and specific lexical or phrasal fillers, indicating a structured interaction between form and meaning (Diessel 2023: 16). The phatic pleonasms encompass various intentions and purposes.[58] Wit and Gillette (1999: 15) propose that there are pleonasms "with no clear semantic purpose, but with an intention to shock, to please, to horrify, to move", serving miscellaneous functions categorized under the umbrella of the phatic function or phatic roles.[59] Phatic pleonasms also aim to elicit intense emotional responses, despite lacking semantic content, and depend on redundancy or hyperbolic language to attain their effect: *bloody massacre*, *deadly silence*, or *utter chaos*. In each case, the modifier is implied in the meaning of the noun. Regarding scalar implicatures, *bloody* could imply a degree of violence that exceeds a typical massacre, an especially gruesome event painted vividly in the mind of the hearer, *deadly* stresses the intensity or ominous nature of the silence, *utter* intensifies the chaos, suggesting that it is absolute and beyond normal chaotic conditions. The aim of phatic pleonasms is not to convey information but to provoke an emotional reaction

[57] Lehmann attributes this tendency to a phonological motivation, referring to it as "horror vacui", or fear of emptiness (Lehmann 2005: 7).
[58] Redundant information may also prime hearers, as noted by Diessel "constructions are more easily activated when they are primed by a preceding construction" (Diessel 2023: 29).
[59] Diessel commented on filler-slots and phatic roles (Diessel 2023: 32), that "[m]ost English adjectives occur in both types of constructions, but there are some well-known lexical idiosyncrasies . . . many adjectives are skewed in their frequency distribution. *Long* and *little*, for example, are statistically biased to appear in the attribute construction, whereas *impossible* and *awesome* are biased to occur in copular clauses".

from the listener or reader, corresponding with the phatic function of language, which emphasizes emotional and social engagement over informational substance.[60]

36) Proper **pre planning** prevents piss poor performance. (X 2018)

The phrase *pre planning* in (36) exhibits redundancy, with *pre* and *planning* both denoting preparatory action. This redundancy, while unwarranted, serves a prosodic function through alliteration (seven Ps), enhancing memorability and rhetorical impact. The scalar implicature here suggests a level of thoroughness beyond ordinary planning, emphasizing meticulous foresight as essential for avoiding subpar outcomes. The Romanian counterpart was translated as *pregătire dinainte* (roughly 'afore planning'), where *pregătire* (lit. '*pre*paration') already encodes *pre*, and included in the empirical account in Part III.

37) Seraphina has a unique skill that allows her to know the answer to any question as long as it isn't **a future prediction**. (X 2019)

In (37), *future prediction* is redundant semantically, as prediction inherently involves the future, defined by events that have not yet occurred. *Future prediction*, viewed through the lens of scalar implicature, may indicate a degree of foresight that surpasses standard prognosis, suggesting a more thorough analysis of future events, especially in economic or financial contexts. However, in the context of (37), *future prediction* is a tongue-in-cheek evaluative remark of Seraphina's shortcoming when it comes to foretelling events. The Romanian NP *prezicere viitoare* is less acceptable than its English counterpart, and has only two occurrences online, namely in the search engine marketing descriptions of tarot cards dealing with fortune telling. The two NPs were included in the case study as exemplars of phatic pleonasms (see Section 10).

38) If I ever become rich I want to buy a mansion somewhere secluded with high security and turn it into **a safe haven** for women who've experienced severe trauma. (X 2018)

A place of refuge or sanctuary, the term *safe haven* historically referred to a harbour or port that provided shelter for ships from storms. Over time, *safe haven* broadened to express safety and protection for individuals or groups seeking protection from various threats, either physical or metaphorical. Therefore, (38) serves a phatic function by

[60] See Jakobson (1960: 353-357) for a detailed explanation of the six functions of language.

emphasizing emotional reassurance and security for women who experienced trauma. Its Romanian counterpart, *refugiu sigur* has 20 occurrences on CoRoLa, though not used frequently in everyday speech. The pleonastic pair was included in the case study.

Semantic bleaching was discussed briefly in 4.1. Conversely, certain adjectives change in the opposite direction by undergoing a process of pragmaticalization[61] or semantic change. Moreover, 'pragmaticalized items' (Diewald 2011: 374) are influenced by "speaker's attitude to the hearer" (Aijmer 1997: 2). A corollary could be that the more interlocutors use a particular pleonasm, the more entrenched it becomes, and perhaps even productive. It also becomes 'routine', and thus acts as a conventionalised, established phrase. *Safe haven* is an exemplar of semantic change such as broadening. The NP broadened into (i) "an investment that would still have most of its value if the stock market crashed" [finance], (ii) "an offshore bank that is considered safer to use or invest in times of economic uncertainty, when domestic banks are more likely to fail" [finance], and (iii) "the period of time (usually in the evening or at night) that broadcasters can broadcast material considered unsuitable for children" [technology] (Sinclair 1995: s.v. *safe haven*).

39) So far he's snapped a lot of the trends we'll be talking about all spring: pastel eyeshadow, **extra-extra accessories**, gorgeous coats, and head-to-toe plaid. (X 2018)

In (39), the NP *extra-extra accessories* serves a phatic function by emphasizing the over-the-top nature of accessories and fashion trends, appealing to the listeners' visual imagination and emotional response. Moreover, the bare noun *accessories* in the string of modified nouns (*pastel eyeshadow, gorgeous coats, head-to-toe plaid*) would have required a modifier as well to fit the <Adj N> enumeration. The Romanian NP *accesorii extra-extra* has a poetic function, and its implied sense of complementariness may be lost on most hearers.

40) a. Who wants to be added? Taking **new recruits**!! (X 2024)
b. Whether you're **a new recruit** to the ranks of the self-employed or a seasoned veteran considering your next move… (X 2019)
c. The Army says they made a $11M promotional deal with The Rock & the UFL which didn't lead to a single **new recruit**. (X 2024)

[61] Detges and Waltereit (2016) define pragmaticalization as "routinization of argumentative moves designed to solve different kinds of communicative problems" (Detges and Waltereit 2016: 653), in which routinization is an "aspect inherent to language use" (Detges and Waltereit 2016: 636).

In (40a), the NP *new recruits* fulfils a phatic function by fostering a sense of community and inclusivity. From a filler-slot perspective, *Taking recruits!!* would have been too bare to express the excitement for that specific opportunity. The statement is not mainly informative but seeks to create and sustain social bonds within that particular group setting. Moreover, the casual tone and exclamation marks stress the social connection, encouraging participation and cultivating an inviting environment for prospective new members. In a marketing context, *new* and the exclamation marks help create urgency in a "call to action".[62] In (40b), the *new recruit* contrasts with *seasoned veteran*, also fulfilling a rhematic function. In (40c), *new recruit* serves an emphatic function and hints at the goal of the costly deal, with *single* emphasizing the ineffectiveness of the PR campaign. Since the proposition implies that the deal didn't attract any additional recruits, the phatic addition of *new* is thus motivated, for without the filled slot, the reading of the sentence could mean that the PR campaign did not attract any recruits at all, whether new or existing, as noted in (40c). The Romanian NP *recrut nou* has only one occurrence in the CoRoLa; however, *cel mai nou recruit*, i.e., *the newest recruit*, is more frequent and acceptable as it singles out a particular individual from its group.

41) Join our CEO Craig Menear as he delivers lunch to **a senior veteran** on Atlanta's Westside (X 2017)

The NP *senior veteran* in (38) fulfils a phatic function by enhancing emotional engagement with the audience. The pleonasm is subtle: the modifier *senior* acknowledges both age and rank in addition to *veteran*, which already implies experience and, often, advanced age. The scalar implicature suggests a heightened level of respect and care, implying that the CEO's action is particularly praiseworthy due to the recipient's rank and status. Interestingly, the Romanian NP *veteran senior* does not occur in the CoRoLa or in everyday speech, as *veteran* only collocates with *de război* (En. 'of war'), rendering *veteran de război* partly pleonastic, as *veterans* may also refer to individuals who have gained experience over decades of work in one institution alone.

42) Really gave my all out there today and I'm stoked on my performance, I guess the result was just **an added bonus**. (X 2019)

[62] A *call to action* is a marketing directive that prompts immediate audience response, often using compelling language (particularly nouns and adjectives) and imperative verbs to encourage specific behaviours, e.g., purchasing intent, customer loyalty, etc.

Added bonus in (42) is a classic case of pleonasm, as a bonus is, by definition, something additional. The Gricean maxim of manner is flouted, with the redundancy used to stress the speaker's emotional state, persuade individuals within a marketing or sales context. However, its overuse can dilute its impact and can lead to consumer scepticism. In (42), the implicature suggests that the performance itself was the primary goal, with any recognition being genuinely unexpected. In Romanian, *bonus adăugat* is not used in everyday speech, except when used as a past participle,[63] and there are no occurrences of the NP *bonus adăugat* in the CoRoLa. The two pleonastic NPs were included in the case study presented in this thesis to test whether Romanian respondents perceive the two NPs differently in terms of redundancy.

43) BBC Breakfast's Dan Walker reveals 'unfortunate' news about **future plans**: Dan Walker took to social media to share some sad news about his **future scheduling**, and how work commitments have clashed. (X 2019)

In (43), *future plans* and *future scheduling* both contain redundancies, as plans and scheduling inherently relate to future events. These pleonasms serve a phatic function, filling the prenominal position, emphasizing the forward-looking nature of the news. The repetition of *future* across both phrases creates cohesion and stresses the temporal aspect.

44) We must learn from our **past history** or we are doomed to repeat it (X 2019)

Past history is a clear pleonasm, irrespective of context, as history refers to past events by definition. The redundancy in (44) serves an emphatic function, stressing the importance of historical knowledge; the conventional implicature here is that the lessons from history are particularly crucial and that ignoring them has severe consequences. The pleonastic NP flouts the Gricean maxim of quantity by providing more information than necessary. In Romanian, *istorie trecută* is entirely pleonastic. If in English, *past history* can theoretically contrast *future history* (e.g., subgenre of speculative fiction), the Romanian NP is not used in everyday speech. For this reason, the two NPs were included in the case study (see Part III).

45) a. **Unconfirmed rumour** that Kirsty Coventry has quit government. Would be a bitter loss but would be making the same decision if I was in hers or any Zimbabwean ministers shoes. (X 2019)
b. An unconfirmed rumour is circulating online. (own example)

[63] The modifier is in postnominal position in Romanian; not to be confused with Bolinger's (1967) argument that postnominal position (*added bonus* vs. *bonus added*) is aimed at expressing transitory properties.

c. #Have you heard the unconfirmed rumour about John? (own example)
d. *Your Honor, I present this unconfirmed rumour as conclusive evidence of the defendant's guilt. (own example)

Admittedly, rumours can be unconfirmed. The subtle pleonasm *unconfirmed rumour* in (45) emphasizes its speculative nature, as rumours are inherently unconfirmed information. Both generalised conversational implicatures such as (45b) that are more loosely context-bound than particular conversational implicatures like (45c) include redundancy. A rumour can also be *false, persistent, latest, wild, hot, nasty, ugly, big, silly, widespread*, as found in context taken from COCA. Context variability indicates that *unconfirmed rumour* may be acceptable on social media or in casual conversation but surely problematic in formal or professional settings. The acceptability of the NP depends on the required level of precision and factuality: (45d). In this case, the phrase is illogical and unacceptable due to the legal requirement for verified evidence.

46) a. I usually know my schedule six months in advance, but there are always **unexpected surprises**. (The Sunday Times 2010)
b. My, what an **unexpected surprise**! (own example)
c. You call that an **unexpected surprise**? (own example)
d. She was horrified by the **unexpected surprise** on her graduation day. (own example)
e. *He threw an **unexpected surprise** [party] for his girlfriend. (own example)

Unexpected primarily denotes events or outcomes that deviate from predictions, while *surprise* encompasses both the unforeseen nature of an event and the emotional response it elicits. Both terms share the quality of being unanticipated, but *surprise* also carries a stronger connotation of emotional impact or reaction. To illustrate, in (46a), the use of *unexpected* emphasizes the possibility of uncertainty and lack of control despite proper planning. In addition, *unexpected surprise* may be used phatically (46b), ironically (46c), or factually (46d) to express emphasis or contrast. However, contexts which overstate the implicature through the NP without fulfilling other functions pose a semantic problem, as observed in (46e), where the semantic properties [–planned] [–foreseen] [–anticipated] are simply overstated without contrasting features, rendering the phrase unidiomatic and ungrammatical. More appropriate phrasings would be: *He threw a surprise for his girlfriend* or *He did something unexpected for his girlfriend.* The exemplar *unexpected surprise* and its Romanian counterpart was included in the case study.

47) It was obvious from day 1 that the Irish border would create a massive problem, and why we even contemplated holding the referendum without **forward planning** is beyond me! (X 2019)

Forward planning inherently involves looking ahead, emphasizing the fact that the lack of preparation was a great oversight. The use of *even contemplated* further reinforces the criticism of the decision-making process, implying a lack of due diligence. *Forward planning* is similar to *pre planning*.

48) Doctors can give you a **temporary reprieve**, but they cannot save you from physical death. (X 2019)

In (48), *temporary reprieve* is pleonastic as a reprieve is typically temporary by nature. The modifier *temporary* through its semantic properties [+duration], [–permanence], [+finiteness] implies a state that will eventually end or change. A *reprieve* is a delay or suspension of a punishment or unpleasant situation, bearing common semantic properties [+relief], [+delay], [–permanence] with *temporary*, implying a temporary negative state that is being alleviated. The degree of semantic overlap intensifies the impermanent nature of the reprieve. As for its scalar implicature, *temporary* may imply that the reprieve is shorter or more limited than assumed from *reprieve* alone. In Romanian, *amânare temporară* is ungrammatical and not used in everyday speech, with zero instances online or in CoRoLa. The two NPs were included in the case study (see Part III).

49) A must watch. You can pick up the **basic fundamentals** of Calculus in 3 Hours. (X 2024)

In (49), the NP *basic fundamentals* is a clear case of pleonasm, as fundamentals are basic principles by definition, and it fulfils a phatic function. The implicature is literal, indicating that the material is especially appropriate for novices or individuals apprehensive about calculus.

A good way of distinguishing the phatic pleonasms is to attempt to stress them and to find this cannot be done successfully (Lehmann 2005). Since adjectives are associated with either a noun phrase (e.g., *a free gift*) or a copular clause (e.g., *the gift is free*), predication can reveal whether the phatic pleonasms are acceptable:

50) That recruit is new.
51) The rumour is unconfirmed.
52) ?This haven is safe.
53) ?The veteran is (a) senior.
54) *The history is past.
55) *The fundamentals are basic.
56) *The bonus is added.
57) *The planning is forward.
58) *The prediction is future.

Example (50-51) are acceptable, (52) is pertinent if and only in a context where other havens happened to be unsafe, (53) is ambiguous since we are unsure if *senior* refers to age or hierarchy, and (54-58) are ungrammatical. I conclude that phatic pleonasms which pass the predication test tend to be rhematic, focusing on one salient feature instead.

5. Pleonastic constructions in Romanian

Constructions that might not be pleonastic in English are pleonastic in Romanian due to their morphology. This section investigates the form and occurrence of pleonastic NPs in Romanian as most exhibit redundancy irrespective of context.

5.1. Intrinsic pleonasms

On a formal level, intrinsic pleonasms are context-independent pleonasms marked by hypercharacterisation (Lehmann 2005) occurring at the structural level of the word. For instance, the prefix co- in *copărtaş* (lit. *copartaker, En. *partaker*), *copartener* (lit. *copartner, En. *partner*), *coasociat* (lit. *coassociate, En. *associate*) marks the redundancy since *partaker*, *partner*, and *associate* already share the meaning of 'together, with, jointly' (Latin com-) and 'equal' (Latin pār), which are thus encoded twice (CoRoLa 2014). The more transparent the morphemes or the units, the more blatant the pleonasm. The following NPs are intrinsically pleonastic: *ultrararism, arhiplin, *ouălele, comicsuri, dropsuri*. Firstly, *ultrarisim* (lit. *ultra-very-rare, En. *ultra-rare*) already means 'very rare' as it is borrowed from the French *rarissime* (Hristea 2003); on top of the fact that *rarisim* (En. *very rare*) is an intensification of *rar* (En. *rare*). However, if the speaker or hearer are not familiar with French, then the redundancy may go unnoticed. The prefixes *ultra*, *super, hiper, arhi* and the English counterparts 'ultra', 'super', 'hyper', and 'arch' display an intensifying function (Ghesquiere 2017: 58), particularly in informal speech (Napoli and Ravetto 2017: 328). Pleonasms serving an intensifying purpose (e.g., *arhiplin,* lit. *arch-full, En. *chockful)* are thus not as blatant as other intrinsic pleonasms. A truly unacceptable pleonasm is the Romanian **unghie încarnată în carne* (ingrown fingernail), where *în carne* means 'in the flesh' and *incarnată* 'incarnate', agreeing with *unghie* 'fingernail' in gender and number. Phonetically alone, the pleonasm is painful to hear as a native Romanian.

5.1.1. Double plural marking

The double marking of plural is redundant both in Romanian and English. Owing to various linguistic phenomena, namely language mixing, borrowing, and code switching

(Bancu 2013: 178), Romanian plural morphology[64] was influenced by English plurals in some cases of recent neologisms. If a certain plural becomes conventionalized as a singular unit, then it can be further pluralized, according to Alexiadou (2024: 19), who argues that *-s* is no longer a plural marker but has been lexicalized; phenomenon noted in Romanian *jeans* and *jeanşi* (Dragomirescu 2005) and also observable in Russian: *jeans* and *jeansy* (Acquaviva 2008). The English *candelabras, sixpences, *bacterias, *paparazzis,* and *dices* exhibit double plural marking, rendering them pleonastic. For example, *paparazzi* is the plural of *paparazzo*, although English speakers might be unaware that the suffix *-i* forms the plural in Italian, which could explain the double plural. Similarly, Latin loanwords *candelabras* and **bacterias* follow the same pattern (*-um* is the singular form and *-a* forms the plural); *sixpences* (singular *penny,* plural *pence*) and *dices* (singular *die,* plural *dice*) are also pleonastic. Having said this, intrinsic pleonasms are not as frequent as extrinsic pleonasms since hypercharacterisation occurs less frequently than tautology, due to the productive nature of language (Plag 2006: 550).

5.1.2. Pleonastic adjectival gradation

This type of adjectival gradation is reminiscent of hypercharacterisation in that expressions like *superbestial, supermişto, ultrararisim* are formed with the aid of 'augmentative morphemes' (Costa 2017, cited in Napoli and Ravetto 2017: 359), namely *super-, mega-,* and *ultra-,* which are used to intensify (ibid) through intonation, to augment (Fleischer and Barz 1995: 230), and to tax (Erben 2000: 83), namely to subjectively evaluate the object from the speaker perspective. This pleonastic use of augmentatives fulfils the pragmatic function of fictionality (Costa in Napoli and Ravetto 2017: 357) as stated by Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi: "like diminutives, augmentatives indicate the speaker's fictive approach, that is, his transition from the real world to an imaginary world. The speaker suspends the norms of the real world and makes the norm of his evaluation glide upwards" (1994: 440). Moreover, these pleonastic adjectives are used in specific communication situations, especially colloquially and in child-centred speech.[65] Comparative (*bigger*), superlative (*the biggest*), and implicit superlative (*huge,*

[64] Backus (1999: 98) explains that "plurals are established lexical units for the speakers who use them. This means they are chunks […]: they are lexical units that consist of more than one morpheme".
[65] Plag (2006: 549) posits that language productivity is influenced by the utility of the new words generated with the help of "affixes like *mega-, giga-, mini-* or *-nik*", and that societal developments and demands outside linguistic systems require the emergence of "certain words and morphological elements desirable to use and therefore productive" (Plag 2006: 550).

gigantic) forms of non-gradable adjectives are pleonastic:[66] *cea mai super* (lit. 'the most super'), *superbestial* (lit. '*superbeastly', i.e. slang for 'very awesome') or *cel mai bestial* (lit. 'the most beastly', i.e. 'the most awesome'), *supermișto* (slang equivalent of *far out*), *cel mai străvechi* ('the most ancient') or *foarte străvechi* ('very ancient'), *mai superior* ('more superior') or *foarte superior* ('very superior'), *cel mai optim* ('the most optimal') or *foarte optim* (lit. '*very optimal'), *extrem de admirabil* (lit. 'extremely admirable').

5.2. Extrinsic pleonasms

Extrinsic pleonasms, or context-dependent pleonasms, are classified as grammatical or lexical. Extrinsic pleonasms are reminiscent of tautology, occurring within the phrase. The redundant elements may be (i) linearly close,[67] such as *a colabora împreună* (lit. '*to collaborate together') or (ii) far apart: *a colabora mult timp împreună* (lit. '*to collaborate a lot of time together'). Dascălu (2008) distinguishes between tolerable and intolerable instances of grammatical pleonasms in Romanian. The category of **tolerable pleonasms** encompasses phenomena such as double negation, clitic doubling of syntactic arguments (Subject, Direct Object, and Indirect Object), and constructionalised collocations that have gained acceptability through frequent usage, such as *mediu înconjurător* (lit. 'surrounding environment'), and *ieşi afară* (lit. 'go.out outside'). Conversely, **intolerable pleonasms** are characterized by three primary criteria: (i) the proximal co-occurrence of synonymous terms (e.g., *mijloace mass-media*, lit. *mass-media media), (ii) the presence of terms with excessive semantic overlap (e.g., *contact direct nemijlocit*, lit. '*unmediated direct contact'), and (iii) the expression of self-evident meanings (e.g., *s-a sinucis singur*, lit. *[he himself] killed himself [by himself/alone]*). These redundancies may be warranted depending on the context. The tolerable/intolerable dichotomy acknowledges that certain pleonastic constructions in Romanian have been assimilated into standard usage, whereas others are still perceived as stylistic or grammatical errors.

5.2.1. Pleonastic number

The tautological construction is another type of grammatical pleonasm, prevalent in Romanian among classifiers and numerals. The collective classifiers *pereche* ('pair') *and cuplu* ('couple') are frequently used informally in Romanian in phrases such as such *o*

[66] See Marchis and Alexiadiou 2009 for ampler discussion on Romanian superlative.
[67] pleonasms whose terms occur in close proximity, usually within the VP.

pereche de doi bătrâni (lit. 'a pair of two elders') and *un cuplu de doi italieni* (lit. 'a couple of two Italians'). Other pleonastic structures prevalent in everyday use (CoRoLa 2020) include quantifiers, notably distributive determiners such as *ambele* ('both') used in pleonastic constructions like *ambele două probleme* (lit. 'both two problems'), nouns like *o bicicletă cu două roți* (lit. 'a bicycle with two wheels'), *suma de un million* (lit. '?the sum of a million'), *un procent de zece la sută* (lit. '*a percent of ten per cent'), and adverbs functioning as modifiers, such as *aproximativ vreo douăzeci* (lit. '*approximately some twenty', meaning 'around maybe twenty'), *cam vreo zece* (lit. '*around some ten', meaning 'about ten'). A frequent grammatical pleonasm is the pattern <*a number of* + [cardinal number] Noun>: *un număr de cinci meri* (lit. 'a number of five apple trees'), **a number of three, *a number of seven witnesses, *a number of five people,* etc instead of omitting *a number*. The <*a number of*> construction is used correctly only in the absence of the cardinal number, namely *a number of witnesses*, *a number of people*.

5.2.2. Pleonastic diminution

A significant part of pleonastic NPs in Romanian is due to redundant modification of already diminutive nouns: *căsuță mică* 'small small house' or *căsuță micuță* 'tiny small house'. In both NPs, the word 'house' undergoes diminution through suffixation, *casă* > *căsuță*; the modifier 'small' retains its sense in the former, whereas in the latter NP it changes to 'tiny'. Diminutives evoke greater emotional impact (Hornoiu 2008: 5): *drăguță* > *drăguțică* (cute), *frumoasă* > *frumușică* (beautiful), *pisic* > *pisicuț* or *pisoi* > *pisoiaș* (kitten), *copil* > *copilaș* (child), *bebe* > *bebeluș* (baby), and have increased in frequency in recent years. Granted, grammar purists will argue that *căsuță mică* is pleonastic; however, the role of diminutives in Romanian, as well as in most Romance languages (Vrabie 2017: 45), extends beyond the indication of smallness. According to Hornoiu (2008: 99), cognitive-pragmatic functions of diminutives include hedging face-threatening acts, softening (59a), expressing politeness (59b), strengthening the speaker-hearer emotional bond through pleasantries (59c) or compliments (59d) (own examples):

59) a. Ai un mic minuțel?
Have a small minute.DIM?
'Do you have a quick minute?'

b. Ce bebeluș micuț!
What baby.DIM small.DIM!
'What a cute little baby!'

c. Vă servesc cu puțină supică?

(Should I) you serve with a little soup.DIM?
'Would you like a little bit of soup?'

d. Ce rochiță drăguță ai!
What dress.DIM cute.DIM have.2SG!
'What a cutesy[68] small dress you have!'

Furthermore, as evidenced in interactional sociolinguistics (Scollon 2001), the use of diminutives in all-female interactions indicate closeness, social bond, and endearment (Hornoiu 2008). Vrabie (2017: 41) comments upon this recent trend of employing diminutives for food, clothes, and daily activities:

> In Romanian, however, the tendency to use diminutives with many common words has been increasingly high in the past years, because people tend to be and act very emotional (sic.) about many things or persons in their surroundings. Terms often encountered, like *berică* (a little beer), used when one goes to the bar and asks for a beer, or *ciorbiță* (small bowl of soup) when one asks the waiter to bring him a bowl of soup, or he / she asks for a *cafeluță* (a small cup of coffee) indicate an affectionate attitude.

Intensified diminutives in Romanian resemble English expressions such as like *teensy-tinsy*, *teensy-tiny* or *a tiny bit*. In Romanian, the same diminution effect is produced through reduplication (see section 5.2.8): *micuță-micuță* [+small, +small] or *micuță-micuțică* [+smaller, +smaller] or *micuțică-micuțică* [+smaller, +smaller] but not **micuțică-micuță* [+smaller, +small]. Moreover, the extensive use of diminutives in Romanian, particularly among women, reflects a cultural preference for expressing emotions overtly, especially through pleonastic constructions that rhyme (Vrabie 2017: 45). Usage-based analyses of pleonastic diminutives in Romanian play different roles: the N.DIM + ADJ.SIZE (without adjectival diminution) has an emphatic role in *căsuță mică* (lit. *small small house*) and the N.DIM + Adj.SIZE.DIM (with adjectival diminution) has a phatic role in *căsuță micuță* (lit. *tiny small house*) seeing how the N and Mod rhyme (*-ță* ending), the preferred variant in all-female conversations or baby talk.

5.2.3. Pleonastic reflexive pronouns

Although redundant, emphatic reflexive pronouns *eu personal, eu însumi.MASC, eu însămi.FEM* and their counterparts *I personally, I myself, he himself, she herself* are acceptable due to their very function: emphasis (Quirk et al. 1985). Emphatic reflexive pronouns may stress speaker opinion (*I personally think that*), speaker's direct

[68] Although *cutesy* is not a diminutive of *cute*, the adjective conveys a sense of excessive or affected cuteness, which matches the tone of the utterance in Romanian.

involvement (*I myself did that*) or the subject's agency (*He himself said that*). Fukuda (1989: 38) asserts that emphatic reflexive pronouns can be eliminated from a sentence without compromising grammaticality (e.g., *He himself hit the ball* can become *He hit the ball*), whereas standard reflexive pronouns cannot be omitted (e.g., *He hit himself* cannot be altered to **He hit*).

60) a. I did that myself.
b. I am tired myself.

In the case of adverbial emphatic reflexives (Storoshenko 2011), (60a) *I did that myself* or (60b) *I am tired myself,* König and Siemund (2000) differentiate between an **exclusive reading**, emphasizing the agency of the doer, and an **inclusive reading** of the emphatic reflexives that conveys shared experience or empathy (2000: 43). Inclusiveness works with semantic types (Dixon 2004: 4) such as VALUE (*good, bad, perfect, awesome, lovely, important*), DIMENSION (*tall, short, big, small*), PHYSICAL PROPERTY (*strong, weak, heavy, light, hot, cold* and corporeal properties such as *well, sick, tired, absent/present, dead/alive*), SPEED (fast, slow, quick), HUMAN PROPENSITY (*happy, sad, smart, kind*), AGE (*old, young*), but not so much COLOUR, since people do not refer to themselves as a particular colour, unless there are specific contexts or it is read as ethnic groups (*white*, *black*, etc.). We will consider the semantic type of COLOUR thanks to its peculiarities:

61) a. I myself am white. (emphasized quality, exclusive)
b. I am white myself. (shared quality, inclusive)
c. I myself am green with envy. (idiomatic use, exclusive)
d. I am green with envy myself. (idiomatic use, inclusive)

Example (61a) can mean *As for me, I am white (Caucasian)*, prompting an exclusive reading, whereas (61b) instantiates an inclusive reading, *I am white, too*. Examples (61c-d) express idiomatic use: (61e) refers to human propensity (*I myself am envious/jealous*) and current mood whereas (61d) expresses a shared quality, eliciting empathy. The pleonastic pair *I myself* and *eu personal* were included in the case study conducted for this dissertation.

5.2.4. Pleonastic doublets and triplets

Doublets and triplets in noun phrases can be considered pleonastic, but their status is complex and context-dependent, as there is a tension between historical usage and contemporary demands for linguistic efficiency (Cao, 2007). Double and triple pleonastic constructions such as *true and correct, null and void, power and authority, legal and*

valid, aided and abetted, cease and desist, will and testament (Espenschied 2010: 164) originated in the historical development of English legal language, where terms from different linguistic origins (Old English, French, and Latin) were combined to ensure clarity across language barriers (Tiesma 1999 as cited in Cao, 2007; Crystal 2004: 156). While these pleonastic constructions may serve certain stylistic or emphatic purposes, their inherent redundancy challenges principles of concise and clear communication (Garner, 2001), namely Grice's Maxim of Manner. Bolinger (1967) posits that although doublets and triplets frequently serve as markers of emphasis within English, they can also introduce redundancy, particularly when synonyms are employed unnecessarily: e.g., the legal phrase *null and void* mean "having no legal force or validity", the doublet *each and every* combines two words that are semantically identical, and *full and complete* convey the idea of wholeness.

62) a. #The report must be **true and correct** in all legal aspects to be accepted.
b. #The contract was **null and void** since it lacked a signature.
c. He held both **power and authority** over the committee.
d. #The document was deemed **legal and valid** by the judge's ruling.
e. They were accused of **aiding and abetting** in the crime.
f. You must **cease and desist** from making those claims immediately.
g. #This **will and testament** ensures my wishes are carried out after my death.

In (62a), the overemphasis of *true and correct* in the context of *in all legal aspects* overstates [+validity]. Overstatements appear in (62b), (62d), and (62g) due to semantic overlapping, whereas in the case of (62c), (62e), and (62f), there are fewer semantic properties in common; for example, *power and authority*. However, Kperogi (2015: 58-59) argues that this co-occurrence of synonymous or semantically similar expressions within a single noun phrase is deliberate and conveys the message emphatically on top historical and stylistic factors. My observation is that, in modern usage, doublets often persist more as a matter of style or legal tradition rather than necessity. This phenomenon is apparent in Romanian as well. In formal or legal settings, these doublets might be considered necessary for precision or emphasis. Nevertheless, doublets and triplets are viewed as hackneyed and superfluous in everyday communication or more concise writing styles.

It is worth mentioning that Romanian is a pro-drop, inflectional language with negative concord. Therefore, grammatical pleonasms (and tautological structures) include multiple negation, use of pronouns and clitics with the Subject, Direct and Indirect Object. Grammatical pleonasms occur by juxtaposing (minimum) two elements. There are (i)

pleonasms with multiple entities coordinated by *and*, such as *aluziile şi insinuările* (lit. 'allusions and insinuations'), *cinstea şi onoarea* (lit. '*honor and honor'), *atenţie şi concentrare* (lit. 'attention and focus'), *colaborare şi cooperare* (lit. 'collaboration and cooperation'), and (ii) pleonasms with multiple attribution coordinated by *and*, namely *încercare grea şi dificilă* (lit. '#hard and difficult trial'), *aspect firesc şi natural* (lit. '*natural and natural aspect'), *loc de reculegere şi de meditaţie* (lit. '#place of recollection and meditation'), *fraze goale şi fără sens* (lit. '*phrases empty and without meaning'), *el însuşi în persoană* (lit. '*he himself in person').

5.2.5. Pleonastic attribution

The predominant pleonasms in Romanian pertain to noun phrases and arise from redundant modification, adjuncts, or partitive constructions (examples from Dascălu 2008):

63) a. şantier în lucru
lit. *construction-site in construction
"under construction"

b. tricicletă cu trei roţi
lit. '*a tricycle with three tyres or *a three-wheeled tricycle
"three-wheeled tricycle"

c. procent la sută
lit. *percentage per cent
"a hundred percentage"

Examples (63a-c) overlap in meaning through the prepositional phrase, such as **tricycle with three tyres*. Samples (64a-e) are clear examples of redundant modification in the case of overlapping pleonasms, found in mass media, politics, and business environments (Dascălu 2008):

64) a. democraţie populară
lit. '*democracy popular'
"popular democracy"[69]

b. alegeri electorale
lit. '*elections electoral'
"elections"

c. conducere managerială
lit. *leadership/management managerial
"management"

[69] Etymologically, Greek *demos* means 'population' or 'people'.

d. schimb reciproc
lit. *exchange mutual
‘mutual exchange’

e. întrajutorare reciprocă
lit. *mutual-help mutual
“mutual aid”

The pleonastic NP *întrajutorare reciprocă* was included in the case study, although the English counterpart *mutual aid* is not inherently pleonastic, unless you impose a new implicature by influence of Romanian pleonasms (see Section 12 *Results*).

Pseudo-partitives and *of*-constructions are still pleonastic (65a–d), although pervasive in everyday speech. The pleonastic pair *o perioadă de vreme* and *a period of time* were included in the survey (Part III).

65) a. #un timp de vreme (used mostly poetically)
lit. *a time of time
“a period of time”

b. o perioadă de timp
lit. a period of time
“a period of time”

c. *tentativă de încercare
lit. *a tentative of attempt or lit. *an attempt of trial
“trial attempt”

d. ?perspective de viitor
lit. *perspectives of future
‘future prospects’

Definite plural partitives (66a–c) are the least pleonastic, as they are used to refer to an exact amount or number of something within a larger set. They are non-pleonastic when counting the *pair*, but somewhat pleonastic when *pair* is singular.

66) a. o pereche de pijamale / două perechi de pijamale
lit. ‘a pair of pyjamas’ / ‘two pairs of pyjamas’

b. o pereche de ochelari / două perechi de ochelari
lit. ‘a pair of glasses’ / ‘two pairs of glasses’

c. o pereche de pantaloni / două perechi de pantaloni
lit. ‘a pair of pants’ / ‘two pairs of pants’

5.2.6. Retronymy

Retronyms are employed due to the communicative needs engendered by cultural or technological advancement. A retronym is a prenominal modifier employed to differentiate the original referent from a subsequent one, where the definition was

previously unambiguous but now requires disambiguation or clarification (examples from Horn 1993: 51, counterparts mine) such as *biological mother*[70] and *whole milk.*[71] In Romanian, popular retronyms include *vitrină de sticlă* 'glass window', *fotografie alb-negru* 'black-and-white photograph' (vs. *fotografie color* 'colour photograph'), *lapte integral* 'whole milk' (vs. *lapte degresat* 'skim milk'). We may conclude that the function of retronyms is clarification through contrastive focus. The pair *glass window* and *vitrină de sticlă* were included in the case study described in Part III to observe whether native Romanian respondents evaluate the English NP more favourably than its Romanian counterpart.

5.2.7. Repetition of the semantic Head

Another kind of redundancy deals with the repetition of the semantic component of the Head in an abbreviated NP, yet it is "not a matter of synonymy, but of literal repetition" (Lehmann 2005: 9). This 'abbreviation elaboration' occurs in Germanic languages like English and German, and in Romance languages like Italian and Romanian: *HIV virus* [Human Immunodeficiency Virus], *ICU unit* [Intensive Care Unit], *SEO optimization* [Search Engine Optimization], *PIN number* [Private Identification Number]. In each example, the last element of the abbreviation is repeated, e.g., **Portable Document Format format*. There are some lesser-known examples from more technical domains: "UPC code" [Universal Product Code], "CMS system" [Content Management System], and "SAM missile" [Surface-to-Air Missile].

In the case of abbreviations, there is little cross-linguistic variation, meaning that the English variants are adapted into Romanian, such as *virusul HIV* [the HIV virus], *optimizare SEO* [SEO optimization], *memorie RAM* [RAM memory], *format PDF* [PDF format]. However, Romance languages are head-initial; therefore, the head *memorie* is not as close in proximity to the postnominal modifier *RAM* (where M stands for *memorie*) as it is the case in English, which is head final, where *RAM memory* is **Random-Access Memory memory*. Repetition does not need to occur in close proximity, for instance *please RSVP* [Répondez S'il Vous Plaît: lit. *reply, please*] and *laser light* [Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation], whose translated variants are also found in Romanian (CoRoLa 2014: s.v. *lumina laser)*:

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[70] versus *adoptive/surrogate/foster* mother.
[71] versus *skim/nonfat/lactose-free/soy/almond/oat/half-and-half/calcium-enriched* milk.

67) Atât medicamentul cât și **lumina laser** sunt necesare pentru ca terapia să fie eficace.
lit. 'Both the medicine and the **laser light** are necessary for the therapy to be effective.'

It could be argued that since *laser* is a loanword, the semantic content is rather opaque, which might explain the overuse of the pleonastic variant *lumină laser* 'laser light' (67). The function of the repetition might be to clarify the abbreviations. To test the acceptability of such pleonastic constructions, *HIV virus* and *laser light* were included as exemplars in the case study presented in Part III.

5.2.8. Reduplication

If the main function of repetition within abbreviation elaboration is clarification (either terminology or abbreviations in a different language), then the function of reduplication is intensification through sound imitation in case of reduplicated adjectives (Bonacchi [2017], cited in Napoli and Ravetto 2017: 289-290) and the indication of a full realization of a prototype in case of reduplicated nouns (Grandi [2017], cited in Napoli and Ravetto 2017: 60). Reduplication is a productive mechanism employed to create new words and meanings ('the reduplicant') by repeating the source material ('the base'), be it a morpheme or a word (Bonacchi 2017: 289). In both English and Romanian, reduplication fulfils well-defined lexical functions in contrast to languages such as Japanese where reduplication is employed also grammatically, e.g., to express plurality. Rubino (2013) distinguishes between full reduplication, namely the repetition of an "entire word, word stem (root with one or more affixes), or root", and partial reduplication, "from simple consonant gemination or vowel lengthening to a nearly complete copy of a base" (Rubino 2013 in Dryer and Haspelmath §27).

Examples of full reduplication in Romanian include: *doar-doar* 'in hopes of', *mai-mai* and *gata-gata* 'ready' and 'nearly', *murmur* 'murmur', *țurțur* 'icicle'. In contrast to morpheme reduplication, the reduplication of whole words like *gata-gata* (68) and *mai-mai* (69) can be pleonastic, since the base source material *gata* and *mai* already express immediacy of action:

68) A fost **gata-gata** să mă lovească.
[S/he] was ready-ready to hit me.
'S/he nearly hit me" or "S/he was ready to hit me.'
69) Era **mai-mai** să răstoarne mașina din neatenție.
[S/he] was nearly-nearly to overturn the car from carelessness.
'S/he nearly overturned the car out of carelessness.'

Examples of full reduplication[72] in English are *mama* 'mother', *tata* 'father', *mama, papa, goody-goody* (a self-righteous person), *so-so, hush-hush* (secret), and most baby-talk *bye-bye, night-night, boo-boo.* As for partial reduplication,[73] Ghomeshi et al. (2004: 309-310) finely distinguish between (i) 'baby-talk' reduplication (*choo-choo*), (ii) deprecative reduplications (*table-shmable, fancy-schmancy*), and (iii) intensive reduplication (*You are a SICK-sick-SICK-sick MAN*). Moreover, one noteworthy aspect of reduplication is that of contrastive focus as discussed in the seminal paper better known as the "SALAD-salad Paper" by Ghomeshi et al. 2004, discussed by Campbell-Taylor (2016: 10) as well. The reduplicant is in small caps.

70) a. I'll make the **tuna salad**, and you make the **SALAD–salad**. (Ghomeshi et al. 2004: 308, example 1a)
b. Is he **French** or **FRENCH-French?** (ibid, example 1c)
c. She was over the legal limits of sobriety, but still functioning; she wasn't **DRUNK-drunk.** (Horn 1993: 49, example 10b)
d. No, what I wanted was a **DRINK-drink.** (Horn 1993: 48, example 9)

In (70a), it clearly indicates the prototype, the green salad as opposed to other salads, implying a contrastive focus like so *'it was a x x= it was a real x, and not a y'* (Bonacchi 2017: 297), and (70b) could be interpreted as *Is he [Canadian] French or FRENCH-French [from France].* Contrastive focus,[74] thus, centres "the denotation of the reduplicated element on a more sharply delimited, more specialized, range" (Ghomeshi et al. 2004: 308). Example (70c) is self-explanatory, namely that for one to be drunk, one must exhibit some kind of drunken behaviour. In (70d), the prototypical drink is surely an alcoholic one, i.e. *No, what I wanted was alcohol, not Coca-Cola.* Contrastive focus firstly restricts the replicant to "the most prototypical, most extreme, or most contextually salient case or range of cases" and secondly "contrasts this sense with less prototypical, less extreme, or less contextually salient cases" (Ghomeshi et al. 2004: 343). This view is in line with Giora's contextual salience and meaning activation, explaining how pleonastic elements

[72] Full reduplication is also known as exact combination. Constituents which cannot occur elsewhere are called pseudo-morphemes, such as *bla-bla(-bla)* and *yada-yada-yada*.
[73] According to Arnold (1986: 130), there are two types of partial reduplication: ablaut (*zigzag, bric-a-brac)* and rhyme combinations (*tiptop, clippity-cloppity, talmeș-balmeș* 'mingle-mangle'*)*. The former refers to a change in form by shifting a vowel, usually the first vowel, the base, is a high vowel, and the second vowel, the reduplicated ablaut variant a low one. Rhyme combinations are more frequent than ablaut combinations, and they express playful nursery words, baby-talk, disorder, trickery, and sounds due to the "effect of rhythm, rhyme and sound suggestiveness" (Arnold 1986: 130).
[74] In Italian, an utterance such as *era un amore AMORE* 'it was a LOVE love' (Bonacchi 2017: 297) could be interpreted as 'it was real love, not a fling'. Wierzbicka (1991: 265) insists that nominal reduplication enforces the validity of the message conveyed, e.g. *lână lână* 'wool wool' is, in fact, genuine wool.

are interpreted in context, with certain meanings being activated or suppressed based on contextual cues: "activate only the contextually compatible sense of the word, while shutting out the contextually incompatible one" (Giora 2003: 8).

In Romanian, the reduplication of adjectives designates speaker's attitude to the referent and such reduplication is often accompanied by gestures, facial expressions, and suprasegmental features ('embodied communication') in addition to its contrastive focus. Take, for instance, *repede, REPEDE* 'quickly, quickly' and *frumoasă, FRUMOASĂ* 'beautiful, beautiful':

71) Mama … era sigur acasă și **repede, REPEDE** se ițea la balcon. (CoRoLa 2017)
'The mother … was definitely at home and **quickly QUICKLY** peeped from the balcony.'
72) Te-ai făcut **frumoasă, FRUMOASĂ**, draga mea. (CoRoLa 2017)
'You've become **beautiful BEAUTIFUL**, my dear.'

In (71), *repede, REPEDE* 'quickly quickly' implies the speaker's disapproval and annoyance at the Agent's action, who is peeping from the balcony, with a contrastive focus of morbid curiosity rather than a swift motion towards the balcony. In (72), the utterance implies that the speaker is surprised or fascinated by the hearer's beauty in addition to the contrastive focus, namely that she is gorgeous, not just beautiful. Moreover, the reduplication of *frumoasă* implies some innuendo, like the reduplication of *bună, BUNĂ* 'good, good' [third person singular, feminine], usually accompanied by eyebrow-raising (Horn 1993: 50). In Romanian, calling a woman *bună, BUNĂ* has sexual overtones. Similarly, there is the Italian *è bella BELLA* '[she] is beautiful beautiful' (Bonacchi 2017: 293). Bonacchi argues that the reduplication of adjectives is legitimate, that it is not a simple repetition (even if it were for intensification), since an alternative expression would change the meaning: *un amore grande grande* 'a big big love' versus *un amore grandissimo* 'a very big love, an infinite love' (Bonacchi 2017: 297), wherein the reduplicated adjective *grande grande* 'big big' expresses the speaker's sincere feelings. The notion of rhematic or contrastive focus is relevant to this thesis and will be discussed with regards to pleonasm.

Reduplication should not be confused with tautonyms.[75]

[75] A tautonym is a scientific designation of a species in which both elements of the name are spelt identically, such as *Rattus rattus*. The first part of the name indicates the genus, while the second part specifies the epithet according to the International Code of Botanical or Zoological Nomenclature.

6. Summary

The analysis of pleonastic NPs in thus thesis is two-fold. Section 4 dealt with English pleonastic NPs, classified according to their functional categories (emphatic, rhematic, clarifying, and phatic), each serving distinct rhetorical, stylistic, pragmatic, and cognitive purposes, along with observations regarding the Romanian counterparts. Emphatic pleonasms (*global pandemic*, *exact replica, completely deaf*) reinforce the meaning of the NP through a redundant modifier to enhance meaning or clarify scalar implicatures. For example, *boiling hot bath* emphasizes heat beyond the norm. Similarly, adverbs like *totally, completely* are used with absolute adjectives (*unique*) for emphasis despite inherent redundancy. Rhematic pleonasms add salience or focus by reiterating expected semantic qualities. Pleonastic NPs like *free gift* shift meaning when used in different contexts, emphasizing contrast or marking particular semantic properties. Clarifying pleonasms reduce ambiguities (*tuna*, *Chai*) and ease comprehension either in specialized contexts or in multicultural or multilingual contexts where knowledge of L2 or L3 is limited. Phatic pleonasms aim to evoke emotional responses (*unconfirmed rumour*, *unexpected surprise*), and are motivated by a preference towards premodification lest nouns remain bare, such as *added bonus* and *pre planning.* Through repeated usage among other factors, certain pleonasms undergo semantic bleaching (*bloody massacre, utter chaos*) or semantic broadening (*safe haven*, *under false pretence*).

Section 5 dealt with Romanian pleonastic NPs, classified according to their form or structure since hypercharacterisation and tautology characterise pleonastic constructions. As for functions, Romanian pleonastic NPs fulfil the same cognitive-pragmatic functions like English pleonasms. However, Romanian pleonasms are more often regarded as ungrammatical at the morphological level due to hypercharacterisation (**copartaker*, **copartner, *ouălele*). Redundancy, though acceptable, occurs at a formal level through double plural marking (*jeanși* 'jeans.PL') for borrowings, adjectival gradation (*ultrararisim* 'ultra.rare.VERY'*, foarte străvechi* 'very ancient') to emphasize and express scalar implicatures beyond assumed boundaries, tautology (*a ieși afară* 'to go.OUT outside'), constructionalised collocations (*mijloace mass-media* '*mass-media media') through repeated usage in journalistic texts, pleonastic number (*o pereche de doi bătrâni*

Tautonyms encompass trinomial designations, exemplified by *Gorilla gorilla gorilla* and *Bison bison bison*. Refer to Ghomeshi et al. (2004: 320) for an in-depth analysis of tautonyms.

‘a pair of two elders’, **ambele două probleme* ‘*both two problems’), pleonastic diminution (*bebeluș micuț* ‘little baby’) to express socially motivated phatic and rhematic meanings, pleonastic reflexive pronouns (*eu personal*, ‘I myself’) for emphatic and inclusive use, pleonastic doublets (*null and void*) for specialized contexts, pleonastic pseudo-partitives and *of*-constructions (*un timp de vreme* ‘a period of time’), retronyms (*vitrină de sticlă* ‘glass window’), pleonastic abbreviation elaboration (*virusul HIV* ‘HIV virus’, *lumină laser* ‘laser light’), and reduplication (*mai-mai* ‘nearly-nearly’, *bună-bună* ‘good-good’ [sexy]).

To conclude, pleonastic constructions in both English and Romanian demonstrate a tension between linguistic economy and communicative enrichment, serving multiple functions, from emphasis, contrast and stylistic, phatic effect to clarification in multicultural or multilingual settings. Due to the fact that the acceptability of pleonasms depends on context, audience, and purpose, Part III presents a case study that investigates the acceptability of 35 pairs of pleonastic NPs in English and Romanian.

PART III. Empirical study

7. Case study methodology

A non-longitudinal (short-duration) case study was conducted on 60 respondents, aimed at investigating how Romanian students of philology perceive and accept linguistic redundancy, pleonasm in particular, in both English (L2) and Romanian (L1). The survey consists of 70 items, using two 5-point Likert scales to rate the grammaticality of pleonasms in English and Romanian, along with ten open-ended translation queries from English into Romanian, which elicit information about pleonastic NP usage or perception. The case study involves a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data collection. The quantitative component (Tasks 1 and 2) enables the measurement of pleonasm acceptability through 5-point Likert scales, which provides frequency distributions and numerical data to test hypotheses about entrenchment, salience, and metalinguistic awareness, while facilitating comparison between English and Romanian pleonastic NPs. The qualitative component (Task 3) captures nuanced explanations through open-ended translation queries, revealing cognitive-pragmatic motivations behind pleonasm usage. Additionally, qualitative tasks provide contextual data about the respondents' linguistic choices: for example, how the evaluation of pleonastic NPs influences their subsequent retention in translation from English into Romanian.

7.1. Data collection

A total of 60 participants volunteered to take part in the survey, due to a strong interest in the topic of linguistic redundancy as the respondents are all students of philology with a degree of interest in linguistics. The nature of the case study required respondents to have upper intermediate and advanced knowledge of English; all respondents had taken a placement test prior to the survey in order to establish their level of English. The average level of the 60 respondents was C1 (28 respondents, 46.66%), followed by C2 (16 respondents, 26.66%), B2 (9 respondents, 15%), A2 (6 respondents, 10%), and B1 (1 respondent, 1.66%). The exploratory questionnaire was administered in October 2024 on two groups of first year students of philology with a double specialization in Romanian and English at the University of Oradea, constituting a specialised homogenous group.

The sample consists of anonymised 60 students: 57 (95%) are aged under 30, and are predominantly women (52 individuals, 86.66%). The control group (ER) is comprised of 27 students (45%) and the experimental group (RE) is comprised of 33 (55%) respondents. The experimental group (RE) were informed about the concept of linguistic redundancy one week prior to the survey to investigate whether explicit metalinguistic awareness influences increased acceptability of pleonasms. The experiment concluded with a feedback session one week later to answer additional questions regarding redundancy and metalinguistic awareness and to allow respondents to give motivations for their choices. Students expressed interest in follow-up studies on linguistic redundancy, which will be discussed in Section 10.

Two non-probability sampling methods were employed through an online questionnaire (see Appendix A): the convenience and the voluntary sampling method were used to maximize respondent participation (McKinley and Rose 2019). Firstly, convenience sampling, which is used primarily in exploratory research, is often targeted at participants belonging to homogenous groups. They are more willing to engage, and the method enables rapid data collection and minimal resources compared to other sampling methods. However, it is not without limitations, as there is limited generalizability and a potential for bias since the respondents belong to a specialized homogenous group and may not represent the population at large. Secondly, in a voluntary response sampling, participants self-select to take part in the research, mostly due to their own interest in the research topic. Through a voluntary response sampling, the questionnaire can be conducted online, and the respondents agree to participate via an invitation link. Owing to their interest in the topic, a voluntary sampling can provide rich, qualitative information, which is a useful strategy when studying a specialized topic or phenomenon, linguistic redundancy in this case. The voluntary response sampling has similar limitations to convenience sampling in that volunteers may not represent the general population and that the results may not apply to the broader population. I argue that non-probability sampling methods work well for the nature of this study, as the "[c]ase study offers strong heuristic properties as well as analytic possibilities for illustrating a phenomenon in very vivid, detailed, and highly contextualized ways from different perspectives" (Duff 2019: 145), requiring homogenous samples. The respondents expressed clear consent at the beginning of the study.

7.2. Research hypotheses

7.2.1. Hypothesis 1

H_1 assumes that as English proficiency increases (L2), the acceptability ratings for English pleonastic constructions decrease, as advanced users are more aware of linguistic redundancy. However, drawing from Adele Goldberg's (2009) constructionist approach, I argue that pleonastic NPs function as constructions with specific form-meaning pairings that serve cognitive-pragmatic functions beyond their constituent parts. The inherent redundancy may actually strengthen the meaning and cognitive processing of the phrase, benefiting the hearer through meaning clarification and expansion due to implicatures (see *free gift* in Section 4.2.). Pleonastic constructions are stored in the language user's construct-i-con through experience, and such constructions are worth analysing as they are not errors of production but are intentional and informed structures motivated by cognitive and communicative goals (see Section 4). The hypothesis is not without critique. Yeung et al. (1997) discuss the redundancy effect on experienced readers, who find that the superfluous information hinders the proficient readers' cognitive process; however, less experienced readers benefit from redundancy (Yeung et al. 1997). That is because the study highlights an expertise-dependent type of processing when it comes to reading, namely the learner's general knowledge and expertise, not the cognitive load in everyday conversation. In addition, listening effort can be reduced with the help of extra or redundant information, according to Rahimi and Sayyadi (2019).[76] H_1, namely that language proficiency level is inversely proportional to the acceptability ratings of English pleonastic constructions, was tested through Task 1.

7.2.2. Hypothesis 2

H_2 proposes that semantic transparency of pleonastic constructions negatively influences their acceptability ratings in L1. Due to semantic transparency (see 2.1.), some NPs are perceived as more redundant than others, allowing degrees of acceptability for pleonasm. For instance, many neologisms and loanwords occur frequently in pleonastic constructions: neologisms in pleonastic NPs (e.g., *digital download*) may be readily

[76] By contrasting the two studies on reading (Yeung et al. 1997) versus listening processing (Rahimi and Sayyadi 2019), I speculate that reading is more hindered by redundancy than listening, especially in the case of phatic pleonasms, as the rhyming effect may be lost on readers but not listeners.

comprehensible due to their compositional nature or contextual familiarity, while other NPs (e.g., *SEO optimization, HIV virus*) might present challenges in interpretation. Similarly, loanwords integrated into pleonastic structures (e.g., *Sharia law, Chai tea, salsa sauce, laser light*) may range from transparent to opaque, depending on various factors.[77] Based on this rationale, H_2 proposes that semantic transparency negatively influences the acceptability of pleonasms. Therefore, since the respondents of this case study are native speakers of Romanian (L1), I assume that Romanian pleonastic NPs will receive lower acceptability ratings than English ones due to perceived semantic transparency, but also due to stronger prescriptive traditions in Romanian.

One potential counterargument could be in relation to the opaque-transparent spectrum of semantic pleonasms. Critics might contend that if a pleonasm seems hard to understand, it is likely because the reader is not familiar with the specific term or context, not because the expression itself is inherently complex or idiomatic. Therefore, to understand an unfamiliar construction, language proficiency is needed instead of additional (redundant) information. Indeed, I acknowledge that metalinguistic awareness influences the analysability of pleonastic structures, as discussed in H_1. Regarding Latinate terminology, speakers of Romanian exhibit more metalinguistic awareness due to the fact that Romanian is a Romance language, the closest to Latin by typology (case system, noun declension, lexical influence, and phonology), which invariably aids the comprehension of Latin morphemes and lexemes. Consider the Latinate noun *manuscript* (*manu* 'by hand' and *scriptus* 'written' from *scribere* 'to write'), for instance. In Romanian, *manuscris scris de mână* (lit. 'manuscript written by hand', *handwritten manuscript*) is more transparent in terms of redundancy owing to the closeness of *mână* to *manus* and *scris* to *scriptus* (see Section 4.3) than *hand* and *written*. Even so, many language learners may encounter difficulties in recognising and understanding pleonastic constructions, irrespective of the NP's compositionality, which warrants an exploration of H_2.

[77] Factors such as (i) context, (ii) word formation methods (compounding, derivation, back-formation, reduplication, blending, clipping, abbreviation) employed in the creation of neologisms, (iii) frequency of use, (iv) the speaker's linguistic background, (v) cultural familiarity, and (vi) degree of assimilation in the target language.

7.2.3. Hypothesis 3

H_3 states that metalinguistic awareness on redundancy is inversely proportional to the retention rate of pleonastic constructions in English-to-Romanian translation. In other words, retention of pleonasms in the target language decreases as metalinguistic awareness of pleonasms increases. However, I propose that, given that certain pleonastic constructions gain acceptance through their frequency of use, conventionalisation, and pragmatic functions, the more a pleonastic NP is used for a certain pragmatic purpose, the more likely it is that the construction becomes entrenched, in which case it is likely to be retained in translation. As a result, certain pleonastic constructions may eventually become idiomatic, rendering native speakers oblivious to the redundancy,[78] while other pleonasms may persist as marginal or entirely unacceptable.[79] As cognitive structures become more entrenched, they require less conscious effort to form and utilise so that mental operations become faster and more efficient (see Section 2.2). This tension whether metalinguistic awareness or entrenchment influences pleonasm retention warrants the testing of H_3.

A potential challenge to the third hypothesis is that critics might argue in favour of prescriptive grammar rules instead of descriptive observations of entrenched constructions. In languages like Romanian (Bogdan 2009), Polish (Hinc 2023), Russian (Kovaleva 2016), Lithuanian (Kasperavičienė 2012), and German (Bloomer 1996), pleonasms are addressed and often considered either grammatical errors or a mark of poor style[80] regardless of their frequency or conventionalisation. Indeed, the prescriptive approach may restrict the acceptance of pleonastic constructions despite their pragmatic functions, indicating that cultural and linguistic attitudes regarding 'correct' language use can supersede actual usage patterns in defining acceptability.[81] However, cognitive

[78] We can argue that in a highly commercial and ad-heavy consumer landscape, the pleonastic *free gift* achieves its marketing and persuasive goals. Its redundancy may thus elude certain shoppers who are concentrated on the salient information and on receiving their free product.
[79] An example of an unacceptable pleonasm despite frequent (mis)use is the Romanian *urcă sus* ('climb up'), which is pleonastic: the verb *climb* already conveys the one-directional upward movement, thus *climbing up* is superfluous and *climbing down* is ungrammatical in Romanian. However, this is not the case in English, where *climb up* is two-directional, accepting the reverse *climb down.*
[80] English style guides do not address pleonasm explicitly, but verbosity and wordiness are discouraged, whereby the general advice is to aim for clarity and effectiveness of writing (Kohl 2007, Peters 2007).
[81] Research by Robbins (2019) has shown that acceptability judgments can be influenced by prescriptive rules (Straaijer 2024): participants in a study were more likely to respond prescriptively when asked to judge sentences as if they were English professors, compared to when they were asked to use their intuitive knowledge or 'gut feeling'.

linguists take a usage-based approach to language (Leclercq 2023: 5), emphasizing that linguistic structures emerge from and are shaped by actual patterns of use (Tomasello 2003), further arguing that prescriptive rules that ignore or contradict common usage patterns are not reflective of how language functions. For this reason, linguistic phenomena such as conventionalisation and entrenchment are considered more significant than prescriptive standards and judgements (Schmid 2007). Prototype theory (Rosch 1975, 1978) posits that categories of 'correct' language use are ambiguous rather than definitive (Portero-Muñoz 2022), suggesting that pleonastic constructions can be more or less prototypical without being intrinsically erroneous.[82] Lastly, the role of cultural attitudes and the cognitive and experiential basis in shaping language use must be considered: linguistic diversity and variation, along with cultural models (D'Andrade and Strauss 1992), should contend with overly rigid notions of correctness in language (Gumperz 1982). As for Romanian, however, I suspect the linguistic attitude towards the correctness of pleonasms leans on the prescriptive, rather than the descriptive, side. Nevertheless, possibly owing to high proficiency levels and by contrasting English to Romanian stylistic norms, advanced learners of English might be more aware that pleonasms are more acceptable in English.

A further counterargument to the third hypothesis is that the acceptability of pleonastic constructions significantly differs among languages.[83] What is deemed acceptable in one language may be regarded as redundant or ungrammatical in another (Demir and Okur 2022). Nevertheless, the cross-linguistic variation counterargument does not negate the relevance of the third hypothesis. ESL learners and translators exhibit heightened awareness of cross-linguistic variation, according to Hinc (2023), who conducted a study on the translation of pleonasms. The findings show that students frequently preserve pleonastic structures in translation, particularly when such structures are prevalent in their native language. In the case of *free gift*, 86.9% of second-year students (without translation experience) and 73.6% of third-year students (with translation experience[84])

[82] A diachronic view of language change indicates that many accepted features of modern languages once originated as errors or non-standard forms which have become conventionalised over time (Bloomer 1996).
[83] It is worth noting that there are languages that are more linguistically redundant. For instance, Turkish exhibits more hypercharacterisation, pleonastic structure and redundancies in morphology than Indo-European languages (Demir and Okur 2022: 671).
[84] The decline in retention among third-year students suggests metalinguistic reflection, indicating an increasing awareness and ability to recognise and prevent pleonasms, although most students retained the pleonastic NP. Demir and Okur (2022: 685) note that cultivating metalinguistic awareness can assist

retained *free gift* as a pleonasm in their translations from English into Polish, *darmowy prezent* (cognate of *present*); although initially unidiomatic in Polish, the increasing exposure to English through media and international communication contributed to the adoption of such a pleonastic construction (Łyda and Warchał 2013). The high frequency of certain pleonasms in English discourse leads to their cognitive entrenchment, deeply rooted in the mental lexicon, thanks to their constant repetition (Goschler and Stefanowitsch 2024).

Moreover, the high retention rate indicates that learners perceive *free gift* as a fixed expression deeply ingrained in their linguistic repertoire, implying that the NP is entrenched in learners' minds even though English is their L2. Such assumption is corroborated by the literature; recognised as "clichés in their own right" (Hinc 2023: 185), English pleonasms are often retained in the target language because "[translators] recognized them as established" (Kasperavičienė 2012: 60), even though "a word for word translation of these structures was possible but uncommon" (Hinc 2023: 185). Similarly, the case study probed the phenomenon of pleonasm retention in translation of English NPs into Romanian to verify the generalisability of studies by Hinc (2023), Łyda and Warchał (2013), and Kasperavičienė (2012).

7.3. Survey design

The survey was created using Google Forms (see Appendix A), and participants were provided with explicit instructions concerning the three tasks. Task 1 (English) and Task 2 (Romanian) deal with pleonastic NPs in isolation. Task 3 is a translation exercise of ten sentences containing English pleonastic NPs. The survey's tasks were derived from Part II (see Table 1), and respondents were invited to express their view of NP acceptability on a 5-point Likert scale (from totally ungrammatical to totally grammatical) and to translate sentences with pleonastic NPs from English into Romanian. Each task was delineated in a distinct section, requiring respondents to complete Task 1 prior to advancing to the subsequent section, thereby obscuring the fact that Task 2 involved Romanian pleonasms as that could have biased their evaluation of English pleonasms in Task 1. The respondents were directed to rate each construction (from 1 to 70) in order

learners in employing language for diverse artistic and literary objectives, including purposeful pleonasm when necessary.

and were reminded that there was no correct or incorrect answer. Consequently, they were advised to rate each construction intuitively, based on their initial reaction, and refrain from altering their responses later in the survey. The survey was designed to take maximum ten minutes for completion so that the time limit would prompt respondents to opt for swift responses motivated by quick reaction times, salience, and lower cognitive load.

The 35 pleonastic NP pairs were chosen to represent all four functions (emphatic, rhematic, clarifying, and phatic) and based on diverse linguistic observations made in Part II: non-VALUE, descriptive pleonasms such as overspecified constructions of the natural world (*pitch black/întuneric beznă* and *burning fire/foc arzător*), ones that also imply COLOUR (*white snow/zăpadă albă*); DIMENSION pleonasms (*little baby/bebeluș mic*) where double redundancy occurs in Romanian (pleonastic diminution); polar extreme enforcement (*boiling hot* and *bitterly cold*) which is conveyed through repetition in Romanian (*fierbinte-fierbinte*) or *of*-constructions (*geros de rece*); open-scale modifiers (*completely deaf/complet surd*); PP pleonastic constructions like *under false pretences, with my very own eyes*, the reflexive *I myself*, partitive *pair of glasses/pereche de ochelari*, the pseudo-partitive *period of time/perioadă de timp*, and constructionalised phrases like *safe haven*.

Moreover, VALUE pleonasms were included for their various implicatures discussed in Section 4 (*specific example, global pandemic, original source, end result, new recruit, resulting effect, added bonus, unexpected surprise, potential danger* and their Romanian counterparts). The clarifying pleonasms had to be relevant and recognisable in both languages, with Latin playing a significant role in semantic transparency (*handwritten manuscript*) as well as other shared Indo-European components (*mount-mont-munte*, *river-rio-râu*), aided by phonetic hints (*ceai Chai*, as both are pronounced the same), highlighting abbreviation elaboration (the more obvious *HIV virus*, and the less obvious *laser light*), or retronymy (*glass window/vitrină de sticlă*). Pleonastic NPs exhibiting hypercharacterisation were included, namely *pre-planning* and *întrajutorare reciprocă* (lit. *mutual mutual-help). The pleonastic NPs are presented in Table 1 by their main cognitive-pragmatic function:

Table 1. English pleonastic NPs and their Romanian counterparts categorised by the four functions (Part II) included in Task 1 and 2.

Type of pleonasm	**English NP**	**Romanian NP**
Emphatic (9 items)	*global pandemic* *pitch black* *burning fire* *boiling hot* *bitterly cold* *under false pretences* *with my very own eyes* *completely deaf* *I myself*	*pandemie globală* *întuneric beznă* *foc arzător* *fierbinte-fierbinte* *geros de rece* *sub pretexte false* *cu proprii mei ochi* *complet surd* *eu personal*
Rhematic (10 items)	*free gift* *white snow* *past experience* *future prediction* *end result* *original source* *little baby* *potential danger* *specific example* *unexpected surprise*	*cadou gratuit* *zăpadă albă* *experiență trecută* *prezicere viitoare* *rezultat final* *sursă originală* *bebeluș mic* *pericol potențial* *exemplu specific* *surpriză neașteptată*
Clarifying (7 items)	*glass window* *handwritten manuscript* *Chai tea* *laser light* *HIV virus* *Rio Grande River* *Mount Mont Blanc*	*vitrină de sticlă* *manuscris de mână* *ceai Chai* *lumină laser* *virusul HIV* *râul Rio Grande* *muntele Mont Blanc*
Phatic (9 items)	*period of time* *pair of glasses* *new recruit* *safe haven* *added bonus* *temporary reprieve* *mutual aid* *pre-planning* *resulting effect*	*perioadă de timp* *pereche de ochelari* *recrut nou* *refugiu sigur* *bonus adăugat* *amânare temporară* *întrajutorare reciprocă* *planificare dinainte* *efect rezultant*

The qualitative component, Task 3, was modelled after Hinc (2023), who quantitatively investigated the extent to which recognition of pleonastic structures increases with language proficiency and translation experience through various translation tests among native speakers of Polish, between Polish, English, and German. The case study conducted for the purpose of this paper investigates only the translation of English NPs into Romanian. The ten sentences were designed to fulfil at least one of the cognitive-pragmatic functions discussed in Part II and to be short so that respondents filled out the survey in under 10 minutes, as listed in Table 2:

Table 2. Task 3: English NPs in context to be translated into Romanian

1. The company offered a **free gift** to all customers who spent over $100 on their website.
2. The **global pandemic** led to temporary travel restrictions.
3. The researcher studied the effects of climate change on sea levels over **a period of time**.
4. The skiers were thrilled to see the **white snow** covering the ski slopes, perfect for a day of skiing.
5. The economist made a future prediction that the economy would recover within the next year.
6. The **end result** of the team's hard work was a trip to Bali.
7. The refugee camp provided a **safe haven** for those fleeing the war-torn country.
8. The community came together to provide **mutual aid** to those affected by the natural disaster.
9. The **unexpected surprise** party thrown by her friends left her speechless.
10. We discussed the importance of **pre planning** to ensure a successful conference.

8. Results

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the quantitative components (Task 1 and Task 2) of this case study, item reliability was tested with the help of the Cronbach alpha coefficient (McKinley and Rose 2019). The coefficient establishes the internal consistency of the items, namely whether the items in the scale are measuring the same construct – in this case, linguistic redundancy. The Cronbach alpha[85] ($\alpha = 0.94726$) falls between 0.7 and 0.95, as recommended by the literature (Hair et al. 2010), indicating excellent internal consistency, concluding that the 5-point Likert scales were consistent and reliable in their evaluation of redundancy and the data were thus valid.

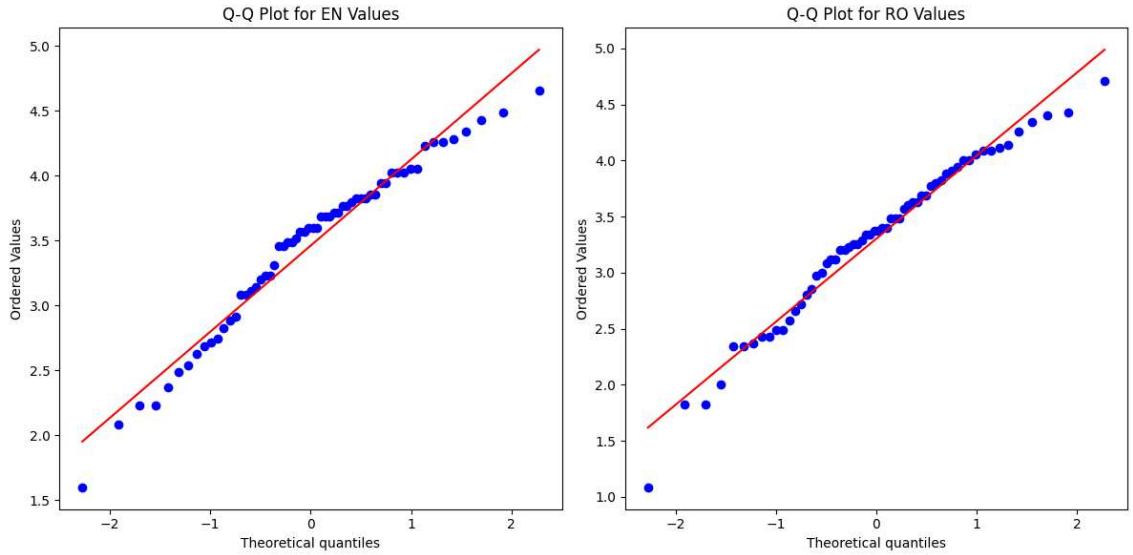
8.1. Task 1

Task 1 was employed for speakers of L2 English to rate the acceptability of pleonastic NPs and assess whether the level of language proficiency motivates or influences perceived redundancy. The assumption is that the higher the English proficiency, the lower the acceptability ratings for English pleonastic constructions, as advanced users are more aware of linguistic redundancy. The data were also normalized per capita[86] and

[85] The Cronbach alpha was calculated based on the mean squares via the ANOVA (Two-Factor Without Replication) test conducted in Excel.
[86] One respondent (level B1) was excluded from the analysis due to underrepresentation.

analysed for Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality[87] (p-values > 0.05) by calculating the mean, median, and standard deviation for both English (p-value = 0.2001) and Romanian (p-value = 0.1897) datasets which resulted in a symmetry, meaning that the data are approximately normally distributed, with slight deviations at the tails, allowing for a Q-Q Plot (see Figure 1) to further analyse whether Level influences English and Romanian values through a one-way ANOVA test.[88]

Figure 1. Q-Q Plot suggests data is normally distributed for both EN and RO values



Hypothesis 1: Language proficiency in L2 English is inversely proportional to acceptability ratings. However, the one-way ANOVA test (F-statistic = 2.0814, p-value = 0.0943) showed that the p-value is greater than the limit of 0.05 for statistical significance, concluding that Level alone does not influence the EN and RO variables. To evaluate the degree of influence, the eta-squared ($\eta^2 > 0.14$) was calculated to establish the effect size and quantify just how much of the variation in EN and RO values is explained by Level. Both EN ($\eta^2_{EN} = 0.2817$) and RO values ($\eta^2_{RO} = 0.2456$) show a large effect size for the Level factor, which indicates that proficiency has the substantial influence of 28.17% (for English) and 24.56% (for Romanian), meaning that Level

[87] The K-S test is used to evaluate whether the EN and RO datasets follow a normal distribution, which is often necessary and expected in language testing scenarios. K-S must be conducted along with Q-Q plots to allow for further validity testing, such as the ANOVA method.

[88] The ANOVA statistical method determines how an independent variable (language proficiency) influences dependent variables such as outcomes and scores (acceptability average for English and Romanian NPs).

influences acceptability by almost a third for English and a quarter for Romanian; however, the η^2 effect size still indicates that there are other influencing factors at play. One observation is that Level has a slightly stronger effect on EN values, which aligns with the assumption outlined in Section 7.1. Based on the ANOVA test, H_1 was rejected. Although H_1 was not statistically significant for validation due to other independent variables, some observations regarding Level can be made.

Table 3. Average acceptability ratings for English and Romanian NPs by Level of proficiency

Level of proficiency	**En Avg. score**	**En Avg. (%)**	**Ro Avg. score**	**Ro Avg. (%)**	**Total Avg.**	**Total Avg. (%)**	**Normalised distribution**
C2	3.3625	67.25%	3.1642	63.28%	3.26335	65.26%	≈ 0.271
C1	3.6377	72.75%	3.452	69.04%	3.54485	70.89%	≈ 0.474
B2	3.4349	68.69%	3.2412	64.82%	3.33805	66.76%	≈ 0.153
A2	3.1809	63.61%	3.1714	63.42%	3.17615	63.52%	≈ 0.102

Data shown in Table 3 highlights that C1 respondents rated English NPs on average as acceptable 3.63 out of 5 (72.75%), and Romanian NPs as 3.45 out of 5 (69.04%); C1 shows the highest scores in the independent variable grouping (A2 to C2). C1 level speakers consistently show the highest acceptance of pleonasms, which could indicate a comfort with language that allows for more flexibility in expression. The second grouping is B2 (3.43 for English and 3.24 for Romanian), which means that the 'sweet spot' for pleonasm acceptability ranges between upper intermediate and advanced. C1 and B2 respondents rate pleonasms more favourably, possibly due to metalinguistic awareness or due to expanded meanings and inferences based on cognitive-pragmatic functions and implicatures. The lower acceptance by C2 (3.36 for English, 3.16 for Romanian NPs) speakers might reflect a more nuanced understanding of language efficiency, namely a more judicious use of pleonasms or might exhibit more prescriptive standards for what acceptability means, as advanced speakers might engage in more critical analysis of language use, some even mirroring English professors (Robbins 2019), leading to stricter judgments on what constitutes 'acceptable' language. Perhaps C2 speakers are more attuned to the appropriateness of pleonasms in different contexts, thus leading to lower overall acceptance.

8.2. Task 2

Task 2 was employed to firstly rate the acceptability of Romanian pleonasms, and secondly to compare perceived redundancy in both English and Romanian, assuming that

Romanian pleonasms would rank lower, on average, in terms of acceptability due to increased semantic transparency. The data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Acceptability of pleonastic NPs by Average Likert score (1–5) and Percentage (%)

Pleonastic NPs in En/Ro	**En. Avg**	**En. (%)**	**Ro. Avg**	**Ro (%)**	**Diff.**	**Diff (%)**
pair of glasses/pereche de ochelari	4.55	91.0%	4.4	88.0%	0.15	3.0%
period of time/perioadă de timp	4.52	90.4%	4.4	88.0%	0.12	2.4%
original source/sursă orginală	4.28	85.6%	4.23	84.6%	0.05	1.0%
potential danger/pericol potențial	4.27	85.4%	3.8	76.0%	0.47	9.4%
specific example/exemplu specific	4.27	85.4%	4.2	84.0%	0.07	1.4%
Rio Grande river/râul Rio Grande	4.08	81.6%	4.48	89.6%	-0.4	-8.0%
completely deaf/complet surd	4.05	81.0%	3.98	79.6%	0.07	1.4%
pitch black/întuneric beznă	3.88	77.6%	3.58	71.6%	0.3	6.0%
Mount Mont Blanc/ muntele Mont Blanc	3.88	77.6%	4.37	87.4%	-0.49	-9.8%
little baby/bebeluș mic	3.87	77.4%	3.17	63.4%	0.7	14.0%
past experience/experință trecută	3.77	75.4%	3.25	65.0%	0.52	10.4%
mutual aid/întrajutorare reciprocă	3.77	75.4%	2.48	49.6%	1.29	25.8%
laser light/lumină laser	3.75	75.0%	3.8	76.0%	-0.05	-1.0%
end result/rezultat final	3.57	71.4%	4.15	83.0%	-0.58	-11.6%
global pandemic/pandemie globală	3.52	70.4%	3.43	68.6%	0.09	1.8%
new recruit/recrut nou	3.52	70.4%	3.07	61.4%	0.45	9.0%
bitterly cold/geros de rece	3.52	70.4%	2.47	49.4%	1.05	21.0%
boiling hot/fierbinte-fierbinte	3.48	69.6%	2.65	53.0%	0.83	16.6%
with my very own eyes/ cu proprii mei ochi	3.48	69.6%	3.95	79.0%	-0.47	-9.4%
free gift/cadou gratuit	3.43	68.6%	2.17	43.4%	1.26	25.2%
unexpected surprise/ surpriză neașteptată	3.32	66.4%	3.18	63.6%	0.14	2.8%
under false pretences/ sub pretexte false	3.3	66.0%	3.8	76.0%	-0.5	-10.0%
safe haven/refugiu sigur	3.25	65.0%	3.03	60.6%	0.22	4.4%
pre planning/pregătire dinainte	3.25	65.0%	2.68	53.6%	0.57	11.4%
HIV virus/virusul HIV	3.13	62.6%	3.77	75.4%	-0.64	-12.8%
temporary reprieve/amânare temporară	3.07	61.4%	3.1	62.0%	-0.03	-0.6%
glass window/vitrină de sticlă	3.02	60.4%	3.32	66.4%	-0.3	-6.0%
resulting effect/efect rezultant	3	60.0%	2.67	53.4%	0.33	6.6%
burning fire/foc arzător	2.98	59.6%	2.45	49.0%	0.53	10.6%

Chai tea/ceai Chai	2.85	57.0%	2.62	52.4%	0.23	4.6%
added bonus/bonus adăugat	2.78	55.6%	3.08	61.6%	-0.3	-6.0%
future prediction/prezicere viitoare	2.72	54.4%	2.25	45.0%	0.47	9.4%
white snow/zăpadă albă	2.68	53.6%	2.58	51.6%	0.1	2.0%
handwritten manuscript/ manuscris de mână	2.22	44.4%	1.85	37.0%	0.37	7.4%
I myself/eu personal	2.17	43.4%	3.2	64.0%	-1.03	-20.6%

Hypothesis 2: Semantic transparency of pleonastic constructions negatively influences their acceptability ratings in L1. All 35 pairs of NPs were sorted in a descending order by the English pleonastic NPs with the highest acceptability (from *pair of glasses/pereche de ochelari*, 91% to *I myself/eu personal*, 43.4%). The data reveals varying degrees of acceptability for pleonastic NPs across the two languages. There is a moderate to high level of acceptance for most expressions in both English and Romanian, with average scores frequently exceeding 3.0 (60%) on the scale. A notable observation is the difference in acceptability between English and Romanian for certain expressions, for instance, *boiling hot* and *bitterly cold*, whose scalar implicatures are well perceived in English, but not in Romanian. As expected, *free gift/cadou gratuit* shows a significantly higher acceptability in English (68.6%) compared to Romanian (43.4%), with a difference of 25.2%. Conversely, *end result/rezultat final* is more acceptable in Romanian (83.0%) than in English (71.4%), with a difference of 11.6%. Based on the data, assumptions can be made regarding the cultural and linguistic factors that influence the acceptability of pleonastic expressions such as *Rio Grande river/râul Rio Grande* and *Mount Mont Blanc/muntele Mont Blanc*, which show higher acceptability in Romanian (89.6% and 87.4% respectively) compared to English (81.6% and 77.6%), presenting a tension between perceived redundancy versus their validity as proper nouns. As for increased acceptability, there is no particular order or preference for the four functions: the hierarchy of speaker motivation proposed by Lehmann (emphatic pleonasm > rhematic pleonasm > clarifying pleonasm > phatic pleonasm) is *not* reflected in these findings (Lehmann 2005: 13-14). On average, English pleonastic NPs (24 out of 35 pleonasms) were rated higher on the acceptability scale than their Romanian counterparts (where 11out of 35 pleonasms were rated more acceptable than their English counterparts) through the lens of L1. H_2 is, thus, validated.

8.3. Task 3

Referring to the items in Table 2 in Section 10, the pleonastic use of (1) *free gift* was retained in 51 responses (85%) rendered as *cadou gratuit* or its variants *cadou gratis* and *cadouri gratis* (plural), and one outlier, *bonuses*. NP (2) *global pandemic* was retained as *pandemie globală* in 47 responses (78.33%) with 13 respondents opting for the bare noun *pandemie*. As for the NP (3) *period of time*, the pleonasm was retained in 55 responses (91.66%) with variations in the prepositional construction or opting for another variant, *durată de timp* ('time duration'), and only five bare nouns. In (4), *white snow* was retained in 39 cases (65%) redundantly as *zăpadă albă*, as the rest opted for the bare noun. As for NP (5) *future prediction*, 29 respondents (48.33%) retained the pleonasm through various expression: *prezicere viitoare, predicție viitoare, previziune viitoare, prezicere de viitor, prezicere în viitor*. In the case of (6) *end result,* it retained its redundancy in 54 responses (90%) as *rezultat final* and 6 responses included the bare noun. The NP (7) *safe haven* retained its modifier *safe* as *sigur* in 50 responses combined with various nouns for *haven* such as *refugiu* ('refuge'), *adăpost* ('shelter'), *cămin* ('home'), *rai* ('heaven'), *spațiu* ('space'), *mediu* ('environment') and *zonă* ('area'). Interestingly, even in creative, outlier responses such as *zonă sigură* or *cămin sigur*, the adjective *sigur* ('safe'), and not its synonyms, was retained in all cases. The other 10 responses included just the bare noun, either *refugiu* ('refuge') or *adăpost* ('shelter'). The NP (8) *mutual aid* retained its pleonastic modification *mutual* or *reciproc* ('reciprocal') in 48 responses (80%), with variations in the translation of *mutual aid* such as *ajutor reciproc* and *ajutor mutual*. In (9) *unexpected surprise*, the modifier was retained in *surpriză neașteptată* in 36 responses (60%), while the rest of the responses show only the bare noun. Last but not least, the NP *pre planning* was translated 51 times (85%) with a pleonastic component *din timp* ('ahead of time'), *dinainte* ('before'), *prealabil* ('advanced'), *în prealabil* ('in advance'), *în avans* ('in advance') and *înainte* ('afore'). Of all pleonastic phrases, *planificare prealabilă* was the preferred choice, used 22 times (36.66%).

Task 3 reveals that, although respondents exhibited metalinguistic awareness by consistently rating the acceptability of pleonasms on the lower end for L1, they nonetheless retained the pleonastic component in translation. For example, *free gift* was rated acceptable in 68.6% cases, and *cadou gratuit* as 43.4% grammatical; however, 51 out of 60 respondents (85%) still retained it in their translations. The results corroborate Hinc's (2023: 191) findings, namely that although students exhibit awareness of

pleonastic constructions (especially if the English pleonastic NPs are present in L1) most of the respondents nevertheless retain the pleonastic component in the translation of pleonastic NPs into L1.[89]

Hypothesis 3: Metalinguistic awareness is inversely proportional to the retention rate of pleonastic constructions in English-to-Romanian translation. The attempt to contrast the control group vs. experimental group to assess metalinguistic awareness by having primed the experimental group towards linguistic redundancy was inconclusive. According to the post-survey feedback session, respondents in both groups showed similar metalinguistic awareness. By Task 2 (Romanian pleonastic NPs), it was evident to all respondents that the constructions were pleonasms owing to their strong background in Romanian as L1. In Romanian secondary education, students are firmly instructed to avoid pleonasms, anacolutha,[90] malapropisms,[91] hypercorrections, and cacophonies. One student responded that although she had an intuition that the English NPs were pleonasms while she was rating the NPs in order, it was undeniable by the time she reached Task 2 that these were indeed pleonasms. In addition, despite metalinguistic awareness on the pleonastic NPs, most students consistently retained the pleonasm in translation, despite rating the NPs lower in terms of acceptability. As for the retention motivation, in the feedback session, another respondent shared that although *free gift* was an obvious pleonasm, due to overexposure in marketing contexts and social media environments (especially in e-Commerce copywriting, sales, and ads), the respondent opted to convey the redundancy in the translation exercise. For these reasons, H_3 was invalidated in this study as there was no clear correlation between metalinguistic awareness (neither between the control and experimental groups, nor in Task 3) and retention of pleonasm.

[89] Kasperavičienė (2012) also points that when translating semantic pleonasms, translators often struggle with maintaining the balance between fidelity to the original text and natural expression in the target language.

[90] Anacolutha are syntactic discontinuities within sentences, where the grammatical structure shifts unexpectedly, creating logical incoherence. Anacolutha can be unintentional errors or intentional rhetorical devices.

[91] A malapropism is the unintentional or deliberate misuse of a word with a similar sound, resulting in a humorous or nonsensical statement.

9. Discussion

The case study corroborated a few assumptions and rejected others. As evidenced in Part II of this thesis, felicitous uses of pleonastic constructions involve cognitive-pragmatic functions (emphatic, rhematic, clarifying, and phatic), which generate pragmatic implicatures, expand meaning, flout Gricean maxims, and are context-appropriate (*Purchase over $100 and get your free gift!*). Infelicitous uses of pleonastic NPs violate Gricean maxims by restating the truth-conditional literal meaning of the proposition (**The charity provided free gifts and donations to the homeless*), often fulfilling no cognitive-pragmatic functions, generating no specific pragmatic inferences. Pleonastic constructions exhibit varying degrees of compositionality and semantic transparency (from fully compositional forms to fully idiomatic), influencing their acceptability and comprehension, especially in Romanian. Frequent usage of certain pleonastic NPs may lead to semantic bleaching (*totally unnecessary war*) and broadening (*safe haven*), becoming constructionalised and entrenched in the mental lexicon of language users. Semantic pleonasms are most often acceptable as the modifier overlaps in semantic properties with the head, aimed at expressing emphasis, contrast, clarification, or a stylistic function (rhyme-motivated filler slots). In contrast, morphological pleonasms exhibiting hypercharacterisation (**bacterias,* **copartener*) or tautology (**unghie încarnată în carne*, 'ingrown fingernail') tend to be perceived as ungrammatical. As for semantic pleonasms, the more objective the modifier closer to the head, the more pleonastic the NP (*white snow* v. *soft snow*), and semantic pleonasms are strongly context-bound; morphological pleonasms, however, are redundant irrespective of context.

For these reasons, Task 1 and Task 2 quantitatively measured pleonastic NPs in English and Romanian in isolation to have respondents rate *prima facie* the acceptability of such NPs on the basis of salience and meaning activation through language proficiency. H_1 was partly rejected as the link between language proficiency and NP acceptability was not statistically significant, as Level influences English and Romanian NPs only to a certain degree (a third and a quarter, respectively) suggesting other factors at play. H_2 was validated, as metalinguistic awareness and semantic transparency influence acceptability in L1: Romanian NPs are consistently rated less acceptable than their English counterparts by speakers of Romanian (L1). Contrary to Lehmann's (2005) argument of hierarchical speaker motivations, there was no strict order or preference concerning cognitive-pragmatic functions in the quantitative evaluations of pleonastic NPs (see Table

4). Task 3 qualitatively evaluated the tendency of respondents to retain the pleonastic component in English to Romanian translations, despite existing metalinguistic awareness. The influence of metalinguistic awareness on pleonasm retention was inconclusive, as respondents motivated the pleonastic retention on the basis of faithfulness to the source language and motivated cognitive-pragmatic meanings, especially due to exposure to pleonastic NPs in marketing contexts and social media.

10. Conclusion

This thesis, *Pleonasm in Noun Phrases: A Cognitive Linguistic Investigation of English and Romanian NPs*, initially developed from the assumption that there must be underlying cognitive-pragmatic phenomena at play influencing the acceptability of pleonasms in English. If pleonasm as a linguistic phenomenon is fundamentally the same in both English and Romanian, what accounts for the markedly negative evaluations of Romanian pleonasms? The prevailing linguistic tradition favours prescriptive rules, thus marking Romanian pleonasms as bad style. Therefore, a scholarly endeavour that explored pleonastic NP contrastively seemed appropriate.

Firstly, pleonasms had to be analysed morphologically, semantically, and pragmatically to see which use cases of pleonasm were felicitous, namely the proper, pragmatically motivated uses that fulfilled communicative functions and generated context-dependent implicatures. English NPs were analysed according to four functions: emphatic, rhematic, clarifying, and phatic. Unacceptable English NPs usually restate truth-conditional literal meanings without fulfilling cognitive-pragmatic functions.

Similarly, the findings are reflected in Romanian pleonasms. The contrastive analysis of cognitive-pragmatic functions of Romanian NPs showed that acceptable pleonasms fulfil communicative functions. Such an analysis, though brief, brings contribution to Romanian linguistics, as there is little specialised literature (Hornoiu 2008) dealing with pleonasm from a pragmatic standpoint. Unacceptable, 'intolerable' pleonasms tend to be morphological in most cases, which are more frequent in Romanian than English, since linguistic redundancy is more apparent in Romanian typology due to inherent hypercharacterisation, namely double plural marking, pleonastic diminution, and pleonastic adjectival gradation. For a summary of Part II, see Section 6.

Secondly, the perception of linguistic redundancy in both English and Romanian was tested with the help of grammaticality judgements based on three hypotheses: there are

links between proficiency level (H1) and semantic transparency (H2) and acceptability of pleonasms, and that metalinguistic awareness (H3) influences the retention of pleonasms in L1. The non-longitudinal case study involved a sample of convenience, 60 voluntary respondents, and employed a mixed-methods approach to analyse the perceptions of L1 Romanian speakers of L2 English on redundancy.

Limitations of the study include its size and breadth, as the case study cannot be generalised to the broader public, and the 70-item Likert scales only measured one dependent variable (linguistic redundancy) and two independent variables, namely language proficiency and metalinguistic awareness, the latter unsuccessfully. Some limitations of the study include a restricted sample size, constraining the generalisability of the findings to broader populations, The focus on Romanian L1 speakers without a control group of native English speakers was another limitation; however, the convenience sampling of Romanian philology students with English as a second language constituted a homogenous group that could provide reliable linguistic judgements regarding the difference in perception of the two sets of pleonasms.

The contributions of the case study are twofold: (i) expanding the literature regarding pleonastic constructions and their evaluation, and (ii) corroborating findings from similar studies on cross-linguistic variation across Indo-European languages (Hinc 2023, Kasperavičienė 2012). Additionally, the thesis addressed gaps in the literature concerning quantitative and qualitative evaluation of pleonasm acceptability contrastively, English vs. Romanian, which, to my knowledge, constitutes the novelty of this case study. Further research could set out (1) to measure salience and meaning activation through open-cloze writing tasks, (2) to evaluate how redundancy hinders comprehension in reading-related tasks compared to listening tasks, (3) to elicit grammaticality judgments on cognitive-pragmatic functions in order to establish consensus on a hierarchy for speaker motivations when employing pleonasms, and (4) a multi-factor analysis of proficiency level, metalinguistic awareness, encyclopaedic knowledge, and entrenchment applied to a larger sampling of convenience. Moreover, future studies could include native English speakers as a control group to compare their acceptability judgments with those of Romanian L2 English speakers in order to provide insights into how native speaker intuitions differ from those of second language learners.

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12. Appendices

12.1. Appendix A: Survey on linguistic redundancy

Question	*Answer*	*Type of answer*
Section 1. Introduction		
Thank you for taking part in this linguistic experiment. This study aims to explore how Romanian native speakers evaluate and interpret various linguistic constructions in English and Romanian. Your intuitions and judgments are invaluable in helping me understand the nuances of grammaticality judgments and acceptability. *You will be presented with a series of tasks related to language use. For each task:* *1) Read the instructions carefully* *2) Provide your immediate response* *3) Avoid changing your initial answer* *Remember, there are no correct or incorrect responses. I am interested in your genuine linguistic intuitions and personal evaluations of the presented constructions.* *The survey is designed to take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. I encourage you to answer quickly and instinctively.* *Your participation is entirely anonymous. All responses will be used solely for research purposes and will be kept strictly confidential.*		
Surname and name	…….	Open-ended short answer (text)
Group	ER/RE	Dichotomous Q
"I am willingly participating in this experiment"	YES/NO	Dichotomous Q
Section 2. Task 1. ENGLISH *Rate the following expressions from 1 to 5, where 1 = completely ungrammatical (*) and 5 = perfectly grammatical (✓).*		
Express your opinion on how incorrect or correct the following expressions are: *1 = totally incorrect (*)* *2 = almost incorrect (??)* *3 = somewhat correct (?)* *4 = almost correct (#)* *5 = perfectly correct (✓)*		
1. free gift 2. glass window 3. global pandemic 4. period of time 5. a pair of glasses 6. white snow 7. pitch black 8. new recruit 9. past experience 10. future prediction	1–5	Closed-ended, 5-Point Likert Scale Q

11. boiling hot 12. bitterly cold 13. end result 14. original source 15. little baby 16. handwritten manuscript 17. Chai tea 18. safe haven 19. added bonus 20. under false pretenses 21. with my very own eyes 22. I myself 23. temporary reprieve 24. potential danger 25. specific example 26. completely deaf 27. burning fire 28. laser light 29. HIV virus 30. mutual aid 31. unexpected surprise 32. resulting effect 33. Rio Grande river 34. Mount Mont Blanc 35. pre planning		
Section 3. Task 2. ROMANIAN *Rate the following expressions from 1 to 5, where 1 = completely ungrammatical (*) and 5 = perfectly grammatical (✓).*		
Express your opinion on how incorrect or correct the following expressions are: *1 = totally incorrect (*)* *2 = almost incorrect (??)* *3 = somewhat correct (?)* *4 = almost correct (#)* *5 = perfectly correct (✓)*		
1. cadou gratuit 2. vitrină de sticlă 3. pandemie globală 4. perioadă de timp 5. pereche de ochelari 6. zăpadă albă 7. întuneric beznă 8. recrut nou 9. experiență trecută 10. prezicere viitoare 11. fierbinte-fierbinte	1–5	Closed-ended, 5-Point Likert Scale Q

12. geros de rece 13. rezultat final 14. sursă originală 15. bebeluș mic 16. manuscris de mână 17. ceai Chai 18. refugiu sigur 19. bonus adăugat 20. sub pretexte false 21. cu proprii mei ochi 22. eu personal 23. amânare temporară 24. pericol potențial 25. exemplu specific 26. complet surd 27. foc arzător 28. lumină laser 29. virusul HIV 30. întrajutorare reciprocă 31. surpriză neașteptată 32. efect rezultant 33. râul Rio Grande 34. muntele Mont Blanc 35. pregătire dinainte		
Section 4. Task 3. TRANSLATION *Translate the following sentences into Romanian.*		
1. The company offered a free gift to all customers who spent over $100 on their website.	…….	Open-ended short answer (text)
2. The global pandemic led to widespread lockdowns and travel restrictions.	…….	
3. The researcher studied the effects of climate change on sea levels over a period of time.	…….	
4. The skiers were thrilled to see the white snow covering the slopes, perfect for a day of skiing.	…….	
5. The economist made a future prediction that the economy would recover within the next year.	…….	
6. The end result of the team's hard work was a championship win.	…….	
7. The refugee camp provided a safe haven for those fleeing the war-torn country.	…….	
8. The community came together to provide mutual aid to those affected by the natural disaster.	…….	
9. The unexpected surprise party thrown by her friends left her speechless and delighted.	…….	
10. We discussed the importance of pre planning to ensure a successful conference.	…….	

12.2. Abstract (English)

English is replete with pleonastic structures such as *past experience*, *future prediction*, *global pandemic*, and *free gift*. These pleonastic noun phrases (NPs) are pervasive yet often unnoticed in everyday language use. In contrast, their Romanian counterparts (*experiență trecută*, *prezicere viitoare*, *pandemie globală*, and *cadou gratuit*) are typically perceived as ungrammatical and indicative of poor stylistic choices (Avram 1996a, 1996b; Uritescu 2006; Dodon 2019). This thesis aims to investigate the acceptability of pleonastic structures by exploring speaker motivations such as cognitive-pragmatic functions, pragmatic inferences and implicatures, and semantic transparency. Methodologically, this study adopts a cognitive linguistic approach, reviewing relevant research in Construction Grammar (CxG) and Cognitive Pragmatics (CP). Firstly, grammaticality judgments on pleonastic NPs are made based on authentic linguistic data sourced from X, the social media platform, and COCA for English, and dictionaries along with the CoRoLa corpus for Romanian. Secondly, a mixed-method case study was conducted on 60 respondents to assess how Romanian L1 speakers rate English and Romanian pleonasms and how pleonastic NPs are translated from English into Romanian, probing links between proficiency levels, metalinguistic awareness, and pleonastic NP acceptability. The findings suggest that Romanian pleonasms rate lower in grammaticality than the English counterparts, and that pleonastic NPs are frequently employed in various contexts based on strong speaker motivations, thus playing a significant role in cognitive processing and pragmatic communication, informing both linguistic theory and practical language usage.

12.3. Abstract (German)

Die englische Sprache ist voll von pleonastischen Strukturen wie past experience, future prediction, global pandemic und free gift. Diese pleonastischen Nominalphrasen (NPs) sind allgegenwärtig, werden aber im alltäglichen Sprachgebrauch oft nicht wahrgenommen. Im Gegensatz dazu werden ihre rumänischen Entsprechungen (experiență trecută, prezicere viitoare, pandemie globală und cadou gratuit) typischerweise als ungrammatisch und als Anzeichen für schlechte stilistische Entscheidungen wahrgenommen (Avram 1996a, 1996b; Uritescu 2006; Dodon 2019). Diese Arbeit zielt darauf ab, die Akzeptabilität pleonastischer Strukturen zu untersuchen, indem sie Sprechermotivationen wie kognitiv-pragmatische Funktionen, pragmatische Inferenzen und Implikaturen sowie semantische Transparenz erforscht. Methodisch verfolgt diese Studie einen kognitiv-linguistischen Ansatz und überprüft relevante Forschungen in der Konstruktionsgrammatik (CxG) und der Kognitiven Pragmatik (CP). Erstens werden Grammatikalitätsurteile über pleonastische NPs auf der Grundlage authentischer sprachlicher Daten gefällt, die aus X, der Social-Media-Plattform, und COCA für Englisch sowie aus Wörterbüchern und dem CoRoLa-Korpus für Rumänisch stammen. Zweitens wurde eine gemischte Fallstudie mit 60 Befragten durchgeführt, um zu bewerten, wie rumänische L1-Sprecher englische und rumänische Pleonasmen einschätzen und wie pleonastische NPs vom Englischen ins Rumänische übersetzt werden, wobei Zusammenhänge zwischen Kompetenzniveaus, metalinguistischem Bewusstsein und der Akzeptabilität pleonastischer NPs untersucht wurden. Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass rumänische Pleonasmen in Bezug auf die Grammatikalität niedriger eingestuft werden als die englischen Entsprechungen und dass pleonastische NPs aufgrund starker Sprechermotivationen häufig in verschiedenen Kontexten verwendet werden und somit eine bedeutende Rolle bei der kognitiven Verarbeitung und pragmatischen Kommunikation spielen, was sowohl die linguistische Theorie als auch den praktischen Sprachgebrauch beeinflusst.