Pleonasm and hypercharacterisation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hypercharacterization[1] (German *Übercharakterisierung*) may be introduced per ostensionem: it is visible in expressions such as those of the second column of Table 1.

Table 1. Stock examples of hypercharacterisation

Language	Hypercharacterised	Basic	Surplus element
German	*der einzigste* 'the most only'	*der einzige* 'the only'	superlative suffix *-st*
Old English	*children*, *brethren*	*childer*, *brether*	plural suffix *-en*

While it is easy, with the help of such examples, to understand the term and get a feeling for the concept 'hypercharacterization', a precise definition is not so easy. The concept has, in fact, never been formally defined. Most of the time it has been taken for granted, and often it has been explicitly equated with neighbouring concepts. The concepts against which it must be delimited include pleonasm, tautology, redundancy, reinforcement and hypercorrection. Some of these are well established in certain scientific disciplines, others are no clearer than hypercharacterisation itself. I will therefore

1. start by defining pleonasm and delimiting it against neighbouring concepts;
2. articulate the concept by reviewing a set of suggestive cases;
3. define hypercharacterisation as a specific kind of pleonasm;
4. describe a set of cases of hypercharacterization within the framework outlined so far;
5. draw some conclusions which are of relevance for linguistic theory.

Since this procedure is not entirely deductive, but instead both based on an intuitive understanding of the concept of hypercharacterization and inspired by a variety of data, the definition resulting from it will be open to discussion and further refinement.

Pleonasm and hypercharacterisation are absolutely pervasive at different levels of style and at all the levels of the linguistic system, from discourse down to inflectional morphology and even to phonology.[2] Moreover, pleonasm has obvious rhetorical and poetic functions which would deserve a study of its own. In this paper, the approach is purely linguistic: the structure and linguistic (communicative, semantic, grammatical) function of hypercharacterised expressions in syntax and morphology will be studied.

From among the concepts akin to hypercharacterization in its semantic field, 'hypercorrection' must be separated out. **Hypercorrection** is the use of an expression X, in an attempt to speak correctly, in a context C where the norm forbids it, the background being that X does not occur at all in unconstrained colloquial speech, but is required by the norm in certain contexts other than C. Hypercorrection is frequent in situations where the speaker feels it would be important to conform to the norm, for instance in language acquisition. A typical example is *Whom shall I say was calling?* Hypercorrection has nothing to do with the topic under study here.

2. PLEONASM

2.1. Definition

The most general concept in our domain is **redundancy**. A message is redundant iff it contains such elements which contribute nothing to the information not already conveyed by the rest of the message. Repeating an utterance is redundant, and much of grammatical agreement, as in German *eine alte Eule* (INDEF:F.SG old:F.SG owl.F.SG) as compared to English *an old owl*, is redundant.

However, a simple information-theoretical conception of redundancy does not lead us very far in the analysis of linguistic structure. In particular, a simple-minded conception of redundancy where 'redundant' implies 'superfluous' and therefore 'useless' would be inadequate. Redundancy fulfills functions at all levels of communication and grammatical structure. At the highest level (which is well recognised in information theory, too), redundancy ensures understanding even under difficult communication conditions. At the level of communicative intentions, it may be employed to overwhelm or impress the receiver. Redundancy may have poetic functions in the sense of Jakobson's (1960) projection of paradigmatic relations onto the syntagmatic axis. And last but not the least, the combination of partly or wholly synonymous elements may fulfill various grammatical functions, as we shall see in section 3.1. Thus, 'redundant' does not by any means entail 'functionless'.

The concepts of **pleonasm** and **tautology** have been current in rhetoric, linguistics and philosophy since antiquity. At the beginning, we can exclude the logical approach and with it the meaning of the term *tautology* in propositional logic, where it refers to a proposition that is always true independently of the truth values of its constituents, as e.g. *It will rain or it will not rain*. In rhetoric and linguistics, the two terms have been treated as interchangeable and been variously delimited against each other with about equal frequency. The following properties have usually played a criterial role:

- Tautology and pleonasm are kinds of redundancy.
- Both terms are used as nomina acti, referring to linguistic acts (specifically to rhetorical figures),[3] and as nomina patientis, referring to expressions resulting from such acts.
- Both of them refer to complex expressions some of whose constituents bear some semantic similarity.
- Traditionally, the constituents in question are words or phrases.
- In the typical case, the similarity in question obtains between just two constituents.
- In the clearest and extreme case, one constituent is synonymous with the other. That case is called tautology.
- In less extreme cases, the meaning of one constituent entails the meaning of the other without being identical to it. 'Pleonasm' may either be restricted to this relationship or be used as a cover term for both kinds of semantic relation.

Tautology may be illustrated by the examples in E1:

E1. a. each and every, null and void, useless and unnecessary

　　 b. German *plötzlich und unerwartet* 'sudden and unexpected'

　　 c. business is business, enough is enough

Apart from their semantic properties, many collocations like those of E1 also have poetic qualities, to be seen in such features as alliteration and meter. Such expressions may in fact even be motivated to some extent by the analogical model of binomials like *kith and kin*.

Pleonasm will here be used to include tautology as a special case. In general, a pleonastic expression contains constituents—typically two—one of which implies—technically: entails—the other. Thus, the meaning of the latter constituent is part of the meaning of the former. For instance, the meaning of *return* is roughly 'go back'. *Return back* is pleonastic because the meaning of *back* is included in, or implied by, the meaning of *return*. This shared semantic component in pleonastic expressions will be called the **focal component**.

We will drop the traditional implicit presupposition that the expressions in question are words or phrases in order to be able to apply these concepts at the morphological level. **Hypercharacterization** will be defined in section 2.2.3 as pleonasm at the level of grammar.[4] **Repetition** may be regarded as a special kind of tautology where the relation between the elements involved in the process is (type-)identity. We will have occasion to come back to it in section 2.5 At this point, the relation between the concepts introduced so far may be visualised as in S1:

S1. *Conceptual field of pleonasm*
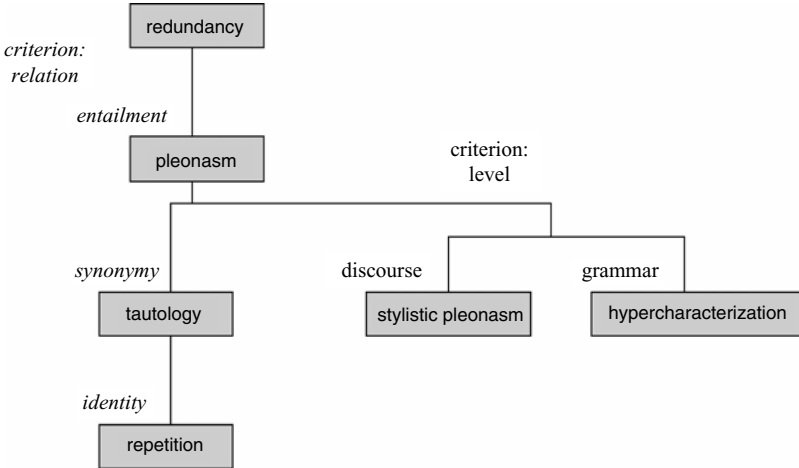
We may now refine the definition of pleonasm:

An expression $E_1 + E_2 \ldots E_n$, is **pleonastic** iff it contains a meaning component F that is included in the meaning of more than one E_i.

Typically, F is the intension of one E_i and properly included in the intension of $E_{j \neq i}$; and $E_1 + E_2 \ldots E_n$, reduces to a binary construction $E_1 + E_2$.

The notion of a component Q being properly included in a meaning P can be explicated as semantic entailment: P (x) entails Q (x). This formula would directly fit such examples as *Essential* (x) → *wesentlich* (x), but would not apply in a straightforward way to others such as *return* (x) → *back* (x). We will therefore assume that the pleonastic character of an expression $E_1 + E_2$ is tested by an implication $E_1 → E_1 + E_2$. For instance, *return* (x) → *return back* (x), and *example* (x) → *specific example* (x).

Now for any construction $E_1 + E_2$, the entailment $E_1 → E_1 + E_2$ is unusual and defines its pleonastic character, while the reverse entailment $E_1 + E_2 → E_1$ is always valid provided the construction $E_1 + E_2$ is at all semantically compositional. Now $((p → q) \, \& \, (q → p)) ↔ (p ↔ q)$. In other words, what we have is **synonymy** of a pleonastic construction with one of its members. In this light, the difference between a pleonastic and a tautological construction consists in the fact that in a pleonastic construction, one member is synonymous with the construction, while in a tautological construction, each member is synonymous with the construction.

In ancient rhetoric, the hyperonym for pleonasm is *adiectio*, i.e. the addition of linguistic material. Its opposite is *detractio*, the suppression of linguistic

material,[5] which we may translate by **pregnancy** (conciseness). The publicity slogan in E2 is a relatively recent example:

E2.　　Deutschlands meiste Kreditkarte
Germ 'Germany's most [common] credit card'

As we shall see below, pleonasm and hypercharacterisation are of interest to the grammarian because they may be at the origin of new grammatical structure. Pregnancy is the opposite in this respect, too: in order to be viable, it must rely on established linguistic structure and exploit it to the utmost. Pregnancy will not occupy us further here.

　　　Finally, a methodological remark must be made. In section 2, many examples of pleonastic expressions are adduced without individual analysis. Some of them have both pleonastic and plain uses. For instance, *repeat* means 'do something for the *n*th time, with *n* > 1'. Therefore, the literal meaning of *repeat again* is 'do something for the *n*th time, with *n* > 2'. If the expression is used in this sense, it is not pleonastic. Purists will restrict their use of it to this sense. However, it suffices to observe actual speech (or to do an internet search) in order to become aware that most uses of *repeat again* actually mean 'do something for the second time', being thus included in the meaning of *repeat*. Consequently, while it may be observed that several of the examples below are not necessarily pleonastic, this does not invalidate the point that they do have pleonastic uses; and that is all that is necessary for the argument.

2.2. Structural types of pleonastic constructions

Since pleonasm is a purely semantic (or stylistic/rhetorical) concept, it implies very little about the structure of pleonastic expressions. These are therefore structurally quite heterogeneous. At least the following criteria are useful in their classification.

2.2.1. Grammatical level of the pleonastic construction

The principal distinction here is between

- a syntactic construction, as in *resulting effect*,
- and a word (form), as in German *bestmöglichst* 'best (most) possible'.

Of course, different syntactic levels may be distinguished, if necessary; for instance, *see with one's eyes* is a verbal, *resulting effect* is a nominal. There could, in principle, be pleonastic sentences, too, like *this whale is a mammal*; but they probably occur chiefly as examples of analytic sentences in logic books.

2.2.2. Nature of the elements expressing the focal component

The criterion of section 2.2.1 may be applied again to the focal component of a pleonastic expression itself. Stepping down the hierarchy of grammatical levels, it may be expressed by

- a syntagma, as in *fly <u>through the air</u>*,
- a word (form), as in *return <u>back</u>*,
- a stem, as in German *Eich<u>baum</u>* 'oak tree',
- a derivational morpheme, as in German *Reform<u>ierung</u>* 'reform',
- an inflectional morpheme, as in *spaghetti<u>s</u>*.

In the prototypical pleonastic construction, the focal component is expressed twice, once by a **dedicated unit** (underlined in the above examples) whose meaning is exhausted by the focal component, once as part of the meaning of another unit. It is, however, not excluded that the focal component is represented by a dedicated unit more than once. For instance, in OE *children*, plural is expressed by each of the suffixes *-(e)r* and *-en*. Consequently, this parameter may be applied separately to each of the occurrences of the focal component, leading by itself to a cross-classification of pleonastic constructions. At the morphological level, naturally tautologies of derivational and of inflectional morphemes are of special interest.

2.2.3. Relation between elements containing the focal component

Given that the dedicated unit and the unit including the focal component are members of a construction, they are in some structural relation. At the higher levels of grammar, this will be one of the generic syntactic relations of

- sociation, as in German *mit Fug und Recht* 'with full right',
- government, as in *dream a dream*,
- modification, as in *return back*.

In a **sociative** pleonastic construction, the two related elements are generally synonymous. The construction is then a tautology, as in E1. In a **governing** construction, the dependent is by definition selected by the head. The meaning of the latter then includes a selection restriction that embodies a hyperonym of the dependent. For instance, the meaning of *mow* includes as a selection restriction a component that represents (an area covered by) a uniform collection of plants of a certain shape, which is a hyperonym to such nouns as *lawn*. This is also true for such cognate object constructions as *dream a horrible dream*, *sleep a restful sleep*. Governing constructions, cognate or otherwise, are generally not regarded

as pleonastic,[6] probably because the verbal selection restriction is unavoidable. There is, however, an extreme variant of the cognate object construction where the object is not further specified: In Korean, verbal concepts such as 'sleep' and 'dream' are obligatorily rendered by a cognate object construction of the form 'sleep a sleep', 'dream a dream' (S.-R. Ryu p.c.). As far as the semantic relation between the two units is concerned, it seems to be a matter of definition whether it should be regarded as pleonastic or tautological.

The core of pleonastic constructions is constituted by **modificative** construc- tions. Typical examples have one of the following syntactic structures[7]:

- a nominal consisting of a head noun containing, and an adjective attribute expressing, the focal component, as in *original source*, *free gift*; German *die wesentlichen Essentials* 'the substantial essentials';
- a verbal consisting of a verb containing, and an adverbial expressing, the focal component, as in *fly through the air*, *return back*;
- an adjectival consisting of an adjective containing, and an adverbial expressing, the focal component, as in *potentially capable*, *more than unique*.

These constructions have a modifier in common that is syntactically optional and semantically redundant. It is, however, the modifier, not the head, that codes the focal component more explicitly.

The preceding classification is restricted to the syntactic level, i.e. it is a subclassification of the first class of section 2.2.1. For present purposes, it does not seem necessary to take up the issue of grammatical relations at the word level; the categorical distinctions introduced in section 2.2.2 will suffice.

This discussion amounts to a recognition that in the prototypical pleonastic construction, the dedicated unit modifies the unit that properly includes the focal component. We will treat this as an empirical generalization over many examples from English, German and a couple of other European languages, based on the semantic definition of pleonasm given in section 2.1. Although pleonastic constructions are typically modificative, it is probably wise not to elevate this to the status of a definitory criterion, because then the concept would consist of purely semantic and purely structural criteria which seem to be essentially independent.[8]

Intuitively, **hypercharacterization** is pleonasm at the level of grammar. We can now refer this to the structural distinctions introduced in section 2.2.2. Hy- percharacterization may then be defined as that kind of pleonasm where the focal component is expressed by an inflectional or derivational morpheme. This is taken as criterial no matter whether this morpheme can be identified as the surplus element in the construction and whether the other occurrence of the focal component in the construction takes the form of a dedicated unit, too.

The methodological upshot of section 2.2 is, then

- The classification of 2.2.1 is a prerequisite for the classification of section 2.2.3.
- The classification of 2.2.2 is presupposed for the delimitation of hyper-characterisation.
- The classification of section 2.2.3 yields an empirical generalisation over pleonastic constructions.

As a consequence of this, hypercharacterised constructions will be just as heterogeneous structurally as pleonastic constructions in general. This should be kept in mind for section 3.

2.3. Asymmetry in pleonasm

Given a tautological expression $E_1 + E_2 \ldots E_n$, $E_1 \ldots E_n$ each make an equal contribution to the overall tautological character of the expression. If $E_1 \ldots E_n$ are linked by a sociative relation, we can choose any one of them at random, omit the others and still have the same total meaning. For instance, we can easily reduce *useless and unnecessary* to either *useless* or *unnecessary*. In this sense, binary tautologies are symmetric.

Now the question arises whether non-tautological pleonastic expressions are semantically symmetric in the sense that the focal component can be omitted either in the head or in the modifier, or whether they are asymmetric in the sense of having a legitimate core and a superfluous periphery. Since non-tautological pleonastic expressions generally have a dependency structure, they are structurally asymmetric, so that one can leave out the modifier, but one cannot simply leave out the head. We will therefore assume that the methodological counterpart to leaving out the dependent in an expression such as *wesentliche Essentials* is to replace the head by a hyperonym that does not contain the focal component, e.g. *wesentliche Punkte* 'essential points'. Semantically, then, pleonasm might be symmetric in the sense explained.

An examination of a large set of data—some of which are adduced in section 2.4—shows that the procedure of replacing the head by an appropriate hyperonym is not viable in many cases because there is no such hyperonym. *Exactly the same*, *potentially capable*, *original source* illustrate this point. On the other hand, omission of the modifier is always possible both syntactically and semantically. It is also the simpler procedure. I will therefore assume that non-tautological pleonastic expressions are asymmetric not only structurally—by virtue of their dependency structure—but also semantically in the sense that the syntactic head is the semantic core and the syntactic modifier is the surplus element that renders the expression pleonastic. In other words, the implication

used to operationalise the definition of pleonasm will be directed in this way: 'head → dependent' or else 'head → head + dependent'. We will see in section 2.4.6 that this assumption is not entirely unproblematic.

2.4. *The motivation for pleonasm*

Everywhere in linguistic structure, a movement descending the levels of structure from discourse down to the morpheme correlates with a decrease in the freedom of selection and combination of the units of those levels. At the highest level, these operations are motivated by semantic, stylistic, pragmatic, etc. considerations, i.e. by considerations concerning the cognitive and communicative aims the speaker is pursuing. At the lowest level, such motivations no longer exert any influence, because it is the linguistic system that dictates them. If hypercharacterization differs from other kinds of pleonasm only by the lower level at which it plays, it is foreseeable that there will be a variety of extrastructural motivations for pleonasm in general, which will be relevant only in a diluted and weakened form for hypercharacterization.

2.4.1. *Intensity*

Given a predicate that may be true of its argument to different degrees, there may be a default value for that predicate for that class of arguments, and there may be particular individuals that the predicate is true of to a higher degree or even to the highest conceivable degree. To express such a situation, ascription of that predicate to that argument may be intensified. E3 contains some relevant examples.

E3. a. bitterly cold, boiling hot

b. German *bärenstark* (bear-strong) 'husky', *strohdumm* (straw-dumb) 'empty-headed'

The expressions chosen for intensification are often based on exaggeration. Probably, somebody calling a person *bärenstark* is not committed to a bet that that person could stand a test against a bear. But the concept of intensification is indifferent to the validity of such literal interpretations. It suffices that *bärenstark* is not synonymous with *stark*, but assigns its argument a position on the relevant scale that is above the default. This kind of intensification will be called **polar extreme enforcement**.

This analysis implies that polar extreme enforcement is not a kind of pleonasm in the sense defined in section 2.1. It is nevertheless necessary to start our treatment of motivations for pleonasm with intensification, because the conditions for intensification are often loosened. That is, intensification often treats

predicates as gradable that are inherently absolute. We are coming to this in the next section.

2.4.2. Emphasis

Like most kinds of redundancy, pleonasm is often regarded as bad style. Ancient rhetoric did, in fact, classify it as a kind of solecism (Lausberg 1990, §502). It is also true that unwitting pleonasm violates the Gricean maxim of quantity and may insofar be irritating. On the other hand, many pleonastic expressions are evidently no unwitting slips, but are meant to lend emphasis to the message. Examples of such **emphatic pleonasm** are given in E4; moreover, all of the examples of tautology given in E1 are motivated by emphasis.

E4. a. completely deaf, perfectly legitimate, surrounded on all sides, diametrically opposed, coal-pitch-black, totally unnecessary

   b. exactly the same, exact replica, completely empty, more than unique/extremely unique, I have been there myself, with these very eyes I saw it

The emphatic character of the expressions in E4 is verifiable by a test: in all of them, the modifier may receive emphatic stress.

Analysing the examples in E4, we see at once that in most of them the modifier is an intensifier. Emphatic pleonasm may be subdivided as follows:

1. **Default confirmation**: In E4(a), the head may be interpreted more or less liberally. However, what the modifier says is the default interpretation of the head, anyway, and insofar the expression is pleonastic. The intensifier confirms this default interpretation, forestalling a possible moderate interpretation of the head.
2. **Insistence on focal component**: In E4(b), the meaning of the head is absolute in the sense that it applies to something in a yes-or-no fashion rather than to some extent. Consequently, the intensifier cannot do more than underline the significance of what the head implies.

Many heads in emphatic pleonasm admit of a less-than-perfect reading and, correspondingly, of an attenuative modifier. Thus, expressions like *inexact replica, almost the same, surrounded on almost all sides* are unobjectionable. They presuppose the possibility of cancelling the perfect interpretation of the head. In this perspective, intensification has a purely semantic justification in the cases of section 2.4.1 (E3); it is semantically motivated to some extent in

'default confirmation' (E4(a)) and only stylistically motivated in 'insistence on focal component' (E4(b)). In other words, the three varieties of intensive and emphatic pleonasm seen so far may be ordered on a scale from purely semantic to stylistic motivation as in S2:

S2. *Motivation of intensive and emphatic pleonasm*

polar extreme enforcement > default confirmation > insistence on focal component

Insistence on the focal component is legitimated by analogy to default confirmation, and default confirmation is legitimated by analogy to polar extreme enforcement. Emphatic pleonasm sails under the flag of polar extreme enforcement. The latter is just a kind of intensification, which, in itself, is not (yet) pleonastic. Thus, S2 symbolises the emergence of pleonasm; its central position may be taken to mark the pole of incipient, unobtrusive pleonasm.

2.4.3. Rhematicity

Functional sentence perspective is gradual in many ways. One of these is the fact that the difference between thematic and rhematic material is greater at higher levels of syntactic complexity and shrinks down to the lowest level, viz. the level of the word form. Now if I have a sentence in which the focal component is to be rhematic, this will not be sufficiently represented by the word of whose meaning it is but a component. The modifier codes the focal component separately so that it can receive rhematic status in the utterance. This is the typical motivation for expressions such as those of E5.

E5.   specific examples, sudden impulse, little baby, original source, free gift, pre-planning/forward planning, potentially capable, may possibly

Here again, the focal component may, in some cases, be a defeasible implication of the meaning of the head noun. Thus, the concepts of a *big baby*, of an *intermediate source* or of a *Danaans' gift* are not self-contradictory. As in the default confirmation variety of emphatic pleonasm, the modifier here makes explicit a component that is part of the default interpretation of the head.

On the other hand, non-pleonastic uses of some of the phrases in E5 are possible. One might construct a text that meaningfully opposes *potentially capable* to *actually capable*. The point here is that these phrases are generally used in a pleonastic fashion where *potentially capable* is not opposed to *actually capable*, but just means *capable*.[9]

2.4.4. Safety

The set of examples in E6 shows another motivation for pleonasm:

E6.   bound affix, handwritten manuscript, joint cooperation, collaborate to-
      gether, circulate around, postponed until later, vacillating back and forth

If you are not sure whether the head actually possesses the focal component, you
play it safe by expressing the component separately in a modifier. We will call this
safety pleonasm.[10] There are several fields in which safety pleonasm appears to
be commonly operative. An especially important one is loanwords, as in Table 2.

Table 2. Safety pleonasm in loan words

Language	Expression	Comment
English	Rio Grande river	Spanish *rio* 'river'
English	Sahara desert	Arabic *sahara* 'desert'
English	Mount Fujiyama	Japanese *yama* 'mountain'
Italian	Mongibello	Sicilian *mon* = Arabic *gebel* 'mountain'
German	die La-Ola-Welle	Spanish *la ola* = German *die Welle* 'the wave'

In a speech community, there is variation with respect to command of the
donor language of loans. Those that borrow an expression may be assumed to
have some knowledge of the meaning and even structure of the loan. To other
speakers of the recipient language, the structure of such foreign names is either
unknown or irrelevant. For these, *rio* is not another word for 'river', but part
of the proper name *Rio Grande*. To this extent, such formations are not really
pleonastic in the recipient language.

In general, safety pleonasm is a symptom of instability of variation, at the
level of the individual or of the speech community. For some speakers, *hand-
written manuscript* is clearly pleonastic, while for others it is not, but just means
'handwritten paper'. Safety pleonasm therefore indicates that at least part of
the speech community does not feel that the base of the expression is (already)
characterised for the focal component.

2.4.5. Verbosity

Yet other examples evince a desire to equip a naked noun, verb or adjective with
a companion so that it need not stand alone. The word alone seems too weak.
E7 contains a couple of relevant examples.

E7.   past experience, resulting effect, unexpected surprise, return back, sink
      down, fall down, repeat again, fly through the air

In some cases, this horror vacui may be motivated purely phonologically, by reasons of rhythmic euphony. Observe also that several of the heads are monosyllabic.[11] This variety may be called **phatic pleonasm**. The modifier is not stressed and in most cases cannot even be stressed because there is no possible contrast.

2.4.6. Concord

A pleonastic combination may become usual to the extent that it is less marked than its non-pleonastic counterpart which lacks the modifier. The expansion of *repeat/wiederholen* to *repeat again/noch einmal wiederholen* is almost an automatism. To the extent that there is a rule that requires that modifier and head agree in the focal component, we have a kind of semantic concord at the syntactic level. That some such mechanism must be operative becomes more plausible if this rule manifests itself at the morphological level. This may be seen in the following two sets of examples.

A variant of the pleonastic nominal appears in diminutive expressions of the kind illustrated in E8–E10:

E8. Gyricons SmartPaper besteht im Wesentlichen aus kleinen zweifarbigen Kügelchen, die in einer dünnen flexiblen Plastikschicht eingebettet sind. Die Kügelchen drehen . . . (c't 1/2004:22)
GERM 'Gyricon's SmartPaper essentially consists in small dichromic mini-balls embedded in a thin flexible plastic layer. These mini-balls turn . . .'

E9. Dieser [Chip] ist mit seinen 1024 × 576 kleinen Spiegelchen auf die hierzulande übliche PAL-Norm . . . abgestimmt. (c't 1/2004:22)
GERM 'With its 1024 × 576 small mini-mirrors, this [chip] is attuned to the PAL norm which is standard in this country.'

E10. kleine vorgelagerte Inselchen (MDR Kultur, 31 October 2004)
GERM 'small islets situated in front'

Such examples share with the foregoing types the fact that the focal component is expressed more explicitly by the syntactic modifier than by the head. However, something similar to agreement appears to be operative in such a combination, in that once we have chosen the adjective *klein* as a modifier, diminution of the head noun is almost an automatism.[12] We therefore call this variant **concord pleonasm**. In this and the following case, concord pleonasm manifests itself at the morphological level: The focal component is not just a semantic feature of the lexical meaning of the noun, but expressed separately by the diminutive morpheme. Because of this, either the syntactic or the morphological modifier is freely omissible, with little difference in meaning.

The same phenomenon may be illustrated with female sex marking in German. E11 illustrates the range of phenomena relevant here.

E11.　a.　Im Jahr 1884 wird Sofja Kovalevskaja in Stockholm die erste weib-liche Professorin Europas. (http://ruprecht.fsk.uni-heidelberg.de/ [ausgaben/58/ru05.htm](http://ruprecht.fsk.uni-heidelberg.de/ausgaben/58/ru05.htm), 3 February 1999)

Germ　　'In 1884, Sofja Kovalevska in Stockholm becomes the first female she-professor of Europe.'

　　b.　Liselotte Welskopf-Henrich...1960 erster weiblicher Professor an der Berliner Alma Mater (http://home.t-online.de/home/ametas/ [welskopf.htm](http://home.t-online.de/home/ametas/welskopf.htm), 16 June 1999)
　　　　'Luise Welskopf-Henrich...first female professor at the Alma Mater of Berlin in 1960'

In E11(a), the female sex of the referent is expressed twice, by the adjective attribute and by the female derivational suffix. In E11 (b), it is only expressed by the attribute. Moreover, the NP has feminine gender in E11(a) and masculine gender in E11(b). A search on the web (Google, 12 February 2004) turns up 57 examples of *weibliche Professorin* and 4 examples of *weiblicher Professor*.

The motivation of this kind of pleonasm is intricate. In a diachronic perspective, one can be sure that the numerical ratio would have been inverse if this web search had been executed 50 years ago. At that time, *weibliche Professorin* would either have seemed unnecessarily redundant or else it would have meant 'feminine [i.e. womanly] professor'. In contemporary German, female human beings are mostly designated by nouns of feminine gender and, if possible, derived with the female suffix. In an NP containing the adjective *weiblich* as a modifier, this rule is almost obligatory, as the numerical ratio shows.[13] Thus, the use of the adjective *weiblich* in sentences like E11 is contrastive, while the use of the female suffix *-in* is due to concord pleonasm.

In the varieties of pleonasm analysed before, the focal component is expressed separately by the modifier, but is just a semantic component of the head. Pleonasm in such constructions is thus a purely semantic, not a morphological phenomenon. In morphological concord pleonasm, the focal component receives separate expression by a bound morpheme on the head, fulfilling thus the condition for hypercharacterization. In other words, the focal component is expressed twice separately, so that its two occurrences are near-synonymous. Given that one of them is a word, while the other is a derivational morpheme, they can hardly be totally synonymous. However, morphological concord pleonasm as illustrated here constitutes a transition from a purely semantic to a morphological phenomenon.

Both the syntactic modifier and the bound morpheme are optional, but to the extent that the focal component is more explicitly coded at the syntactic

level, its morphological coding is perceived as a contingent phenomenon. From a processing perspective, the asymmetry postulated for pleonastic constructions in section 2.3 may be reversed here: In the constructions of sections 2.4.2–2.4.5, it appears that the speaker first selects the head and then expands it into a pleonastic construction, succumbing to one of the motivations discussed there. Contrariwise in morphological concord pleonasm, it appears that the speaker first selects the syntactic modifier together with an unmarked version of the head and only then pleonastically marks the latter for the focal component. The morphological marking of a feature of one word on another member of its construction is like agreement. However, concord pleonasm differs from agreement not only in being largely optional, but also in its direction: inside the noun phrase, agreement works from the head towards the modifier,[14] while in the noun phrases of the present section, concord works from the modifier towards the head.

2.4.7. Summary of motivations

The kinds of motivation for pleonasm that we have distinguished differ in their strength and may accordingly be arranged on a scale, as in S3 (which embodies S2 at its start):

S3. *Strength of motivation of pleonasm*

(intensive >) emphatic > rhematic > safety > phatic > concord pleonasm

There are several criteria for identifying the motivation of a given pleonastic construction:

- **Entailment**: At the end of S3, the meaning of the modifier is entailed by the meaning of the head. At the start of the scale, the former merely pins down a possibility provided by the latter.
- **Usualness**: At the start of S3, pleonasm is marked; at the end, it becomes the normal way of expression.
- **Contrast**: Contrastive stress on the modifier is normal at the start of S3 and then recedes down the scale until it becomes outright impossible at the end.

Although the phenomena analysed so far abide at the lexical-syntactic and derivational levels, it may be seen that these three criteria are reminiscent of the criteria that define grammaticalisation (cf. Lehmann 2002, chapter 4). That is, increasing entailment is an early stage of desemanticisation, usualness is a milder form of obligatoriness, and loss of the ability to contrast is the prerequisite for cliticisation. It is as if S3 were a pre-stage of a grammaticalisation scale. And, of

course, a given expression or construction may move down S3 from left to right. We will come back to this in section 3.1.1.

As we have seen in section 2.4.1, there is a kind of intensification which we called polar extreme enforcement, illustrated by expressions like *boiling hot*, which insist that the extreme pole of a scale is being referred to and which are not yet pleonastic. At the opposite pole, pleonasm becomes similar to syntactic agreement. At the beginning of S3, semantic and pragmatic considerations condition the choices; at the end, usage and grammar start to dictate them. The scalar representation of pleonasm as in S3 makes us see how it ties in with related phenomena.

The classification of the five kinds of pleonasm is, of course, not clear-cut. *Little baby*, for instance, need not be rhematic in every case, often it will be merely a phatic pleonasm. Again, the various motivations do not exclude each other. *Fall down* and *repeat again*, which I classified as phatic pleonasms, are almost obligatory collocations, a feature that they share with concord pleonasm.

Finally, many pleonastic expressions share with the tautologies reviewed in E1 the property of being phraseologisms. In such cases, pleonasm is not a collateral result of a constellation at the syntactic or the discourse level, but something built into the lexicon of a language.

2.5. Repetition

As anticipated in section 2.1, one can conceive of repetition as a particular kind of tautology where the synonymous elements are identical. And repetition does have some of the functions of pleonastic expressions that we saw in section 2.4. It may have the same function as tautology—insistence on the focal component, as illustrated by the German adverbials in E12.

E12.   a.   immer und ewig 'for ever and ever'

       b.   immer und immer (ditto)

E12(a) is synonymous with E12(b) (although their use is slightly different). E12(a) is an example of tautology like the phrases of E1. E12(b) differs from those cases only by the formal identity of the synonymous items.

Repetition may have a purely phatic function, as in E13.

E13.   That is totally impossible—totally impossible.

Thus, the scale of S3 may be applied to repetition as to non-identical redundancy. As has been indicated above and as will be argued further in section 3.1.1, pleonasm has a grammaticalised manifestation, which is hypercharacterization. In the same way, reduplication may be seen as grammaticalised repetition (cf. Marantz and Wiltshire 2000:558). We will therefore consider repetition as a

limiting case of the redundancy phenomena analysed here. A couple of examples involving repetition will come up; however, reduplication and iteration will not be treated per se.

A peculiar kind of repetition may be seen in abbreviation elaboration, which is, at the same time, a kind of hyponym compounding and therefore treated in section 3.4.

3. HYPERCHARACTERIZATION

In hypercharacterization, the focal component is expressed by an inflectional or derivational morpheme (cf. section 2.2.2). It should be born in mind that the concept of hypercharacterization imposes no conditions on the expression of the second occurrence of the focal component constitutive of any pleonasm. Thus, English *more easier* is hypercharacterised by the adverb *more* combining with a morphological comparative form; but so is German (*der*) *einzigste* 'the most only', where the superlative suffix repeats the idea of singling out one individual fulfilling a relevant condition, which is also part of the concept of *einzig*. We already saw some relevant cases of hypercharacterization in morphological concord pleonasm (section 2.4.6). Other typical examples include, in the domain of inflection, the English *children* and *brethren* adduced in Table 1, and in the domain of word-formation, the German examples given in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypercharacterization in German word-formation

Hypercharacterised	Basic	Meaning
aufoktroyieren	oktroyieren	impose, force upon
wegeskamotieren	eskamotieren	retract, play down

Given that hypercharacterization is a kind of pleonasm, it may be motivated in the same ways seen before. The German preverbs are added to their bases in order to make explicit a meaning component commonly expressed by these preverbs, as in the near synonyms *aufzwingen* and *wegschaffen*, respectively. Analogy is clearly at work here. Since the bases are French loans of whose meaning one cannot be entirely sure, the motivation of these formations combines rhematicity with safety.

At the grammatical level, pleonasm concerns linguistic theory in a much more vital way. All of the expressions analysed in section 2 are syntactically and semantically well-formed, so that they do not constitute a problem for either syntax or formal semantics.[15] Their peculiarity may thus safely be relegated to stylistics. At the level of morphology, however, we deal with specific operators combining specific structural features with their operands in a rule-governed

way. Now how can OE *brether* and *childer* take a plural affix if they are already marked for plural? Any theory of grammar that constructs complex forms in a compositional fashion by combining an operand of a certain category with an operator that transforms it into a resulting expression of another category has a serious problem here.[16] We shall come back to these problems below and first review a couple of examples of hypercharacterization in order to familiarise ourselves with the phenomenon.

3.1. Hypercharacterization in syntax

In doing this, we can take up where we left off in section 2.4.6, viz. at the level of syntactic concord.

3.1.1. Personal agreement

In Latin just as in the written norm of several Romance languages, the personal ending contained in the finite verb form is sufficient reference to the subject; thus neither grammar nor semantics require an overt subject. In several spoken varieties, and in French even in the written standard, the subject pronoun is obligatory. Table 4 visualises the situation in two Romance languages in a simplified way.

Table 4. Pronominal subjects in Romance 'we live'

	Pronominal subject			
	Without		With	
Language	Example	Value	Example	Value
Italian	*viviamo*	normal	*noi viviamo*	emphatic
French	*vivons*	ungrammatical	*nous vivons*	normal

In the right-hand column of Table 4, we have hypercharacterization of the subject reference. In Italian, its motivation is emphasis, while in French, it is sheer concord. As is well known, the French construction evolves by grammaticalization of a Proto-Romance construction that is reflected in Italian. This shows that once we concentrate on grammatical pleonasm, the scale S3 becomes a manifestation of a general grammaticalization scale.

At the start of the development, the verbal clause is expanded by an emphatic subject pronoun. The Italian line of Table 4, read from left to right, illustrates this process. This kind of pleonasm comes under the concept of **reinforcement** (cf. Lehmann 2002, chapter 2.5). At this stage, the subject pronoun is clearly

the surplus element of the pleonastic construction. In the further course, the reinforcement of the subject reference no longer works at the communicative, but merely at the syntactic level, i.e. the pronoun is needed to ensure the subject reference in the first place. This shows that the concept of pro-drop occasionally used to describe the Italian situation is misconceived with regard both to the diachrony and to the function of the construction. It is only from an anglocentric perspective that Italian drops some element that should be there. On the contrary Italian optionally and French obligatorily add a subject pronoun.

As concord hypercharacterization is grammaticalised to mere agreement, redundancy seems to be introduced into the grammar. However, in this course it loses its pleonastic function at the communicative level and gets a new function at the structural level, in the marking of syntactic relations.

3.1.2. Spatial relations

Another area where hypercharacterisation is very frequent in the languages of the world is spatial deixis and spatial relations. E14 illustrates four variants of a sentence containing the deictic *da* 'there' in Standard German (a), Northern Colloquial German (b), Bavarian (c) and Alemannic German (d).

E14. a. Davon weiß ich nichts.

GERM b. Da weiß ich nichts von.

     c. Dadavon weiß ich nichts.

     d. Da weiß ich nichts davon.
        'I know nothing of it.'

All of these variants are attempts to solve the problem of the topicalisation of the pronominal complement of the preposition. Both Standard German pied piping and Northern Colloquial German preposition stranding solve it without redundancy. Southern dialects avoid preposition stranding while feeling that mere pied piping is communicatively insufficient and the topical pronoun must be present separately.

E15 illustrates three different uses of the spatial relator *ex* 'out of', all of which are from Classical Latin. In E15(a), the relator appears only as a preposition; in (b), it appears only as a preverb; in (c), it is used pleonastically both as a preposition and a preverb.

E15. a. ex   urbe   fugere
LATIN   out.of town:ABL.SG flee:INF

     b. urbe effugere

    c. ex urbe effugere
        'to flee out of town'

German constructions of the kind illustrated in E16 appear to be structurally similar to E15(c).

E16. a. an etwas anschließen
GERM   'to adjoin to something'

    b. auf jemanden aufpassen
        'to watch over somebody'

They differ from the Latin construction in several respects. One that we can forgo relates to the fact that the German compound verb is separable. What is of more importance is that the compound verb governs the preposition of its complement.[17] This pleonasm is therefore completely grammaticalised or lexicalised.

    Both redundant demonstrative topicalisation and preverb–preposition concord are cases of concord hypercharacterization; but they are special in that they involve repetition of the same element. Since hypercharacterization plays at the level of grammar, the choice of synonymous morphs decreases, so that pleonasm often takes the form of identical repetition [sic!].

3.1.3. Other cases

In German, subjunctive II, which like a Romance conditional marks unreal propositions, is obligatory after certain modal adverbs such as *beinahe* 'almost', as in E17.

E17. beinahe wäre ich gefallen
GERM 'I almost fell'

The adverb is syntactically optional, but if it is omitted, the meaning changes. The irreal subjunctive here is redundant, because the adverb by itself says that the situation was not realised. Other languages, e.g. English and Latin, have the indicative in such sentences. Since the subjunctive here is predictable, we deal with a case of concord pleonasm.

    Another kind of construction, known from Latin, involves what has been called the 'pleonastic reflexive' for a long time. Since it is analysed at length in Cennamo 1999, an example may suffice here:

E18. Quid   igitur sibi   volt   pater?
LATIN what(ACC) then RFL:DAT wants father(NOM.SG)
     'What then does my father want?' (Ter. *Andr*. 375 ap. Cennamo 1999:117)

The reflexive pronoun in E18 is omissible with no change in meaning. It is pleonastic insofar as it underlines the subjective component inherent in the notion of volition. It also combines with other verbs of inactive meaning, focusing on the fact that the process abides in the sphere of the subject. In Vulgar and Late Latin, the construction loses its marked character and evinces some symptoms of grammaticalization.

3.2. Hypercharacterization in inflection

Hypercharacterization in inflection has been a topic in linguistics at least since Paul (1920:162f), where it is treated as 'pleonasm of formative elements'. This term allows for the possibility that an inflectional category may be hypercharacterized by different morphological processes. Since the phenomenon is well documented (see also Haspelmath 1993, section 5f, and Dressler 2004), we can limit ourselves here to a couple of examples.

In Middle High German, the suppletive comparative of the adjective *guot* 'good' was *bass* 'better', as in E19 (from ~1200)[18]:

E19.   von Veldeke der wîse man! der kunde se baz gelobet hân. (Parz. 8, 404, 29f.)
MHG 'von Veldeke, the wise man! He could have praised her better.'

Secondarily, the form gets the comparative suffix *-er*, which triggers metaphony, so that the modern form *besser* results.

Redundant comparative and superlative marking is common in Indo-European languages. In colloquial English, we find *more easier*, in French and Spanish, we find E20f:

E20.   le plus meilleur pays au monde (http://www.frapru.qc.ca/Comm/ Comm044.html, 29 June 2000)
Fr   'the best country in the world'

E21.   KEV …el mas lindo, el mas mejor!!!! (http://www.fotoslocas.com/ usuarios/k/kevinstone.htm, 11 February 2004)
Span   'KEV … the most handsome, the best one!'

The examples from the three languages have it in common that the surplus element is an analytic marker attached to a synthetic form of grading. They differ in that the synthetic comparative has a morpheme of its own in the English example, while E21f evince a suppletive superlative. A pleonastic superlative is, of course, motivated by emphasis. In addition, it may be relevant that the pleonastic comparative and superlative in the Romance languages is restricted

to adjectives with suppletive grading. Insofar, it is safety pleonasm. On the other hand, no emphasis and no safety is discernible in *more easier*; this is just phatic pleonasm.

The examples of E22 are similar both functionally and structurally:

E22. a. der einzigste/extremste/optimalste
Germ   'the most only/extreme/optimal'

      b. in keinster Weise 'in no way'

The underlying Latin forms *extremus* 'outermost' and *optimus* 'best' have the position of superlatives in their paradigm and are even marked as such by an—admittedly irregular—superlative allomorph. Naturally, this does not matter for German grammar.[19] Here, the examples in E22(a) are on a par: The focal component—the function of the superlative suffix—is something like 'the relevant domain (identified by the argument of the adjective) is restricted to that subset (or individual) that occupies the positive pole of the scale designated by its host (the adjective stem)'. It is represented by a dedicated inflectional or derivational morpheme (which assigns these cases to hypercharacterization), but otherwise just entailed by the meaning of the latter's host. The application of the superlative suffix to *kein* (E22(b)) works similarly insofar as it pretends *kein* to mean something like 'occupying the positive pole on a scale of scarcity'.

A related phenomenon occurs in German adjectival compounds whose determinans is a superlative form of some adjective and whose determinatum is another adjective or participle, as those in E23(a).

E23. a. bestmöglich/kürzestmöglich/meist verkauft
Germ   'best possible/shortest possible/most sold'

      b. das bestmöglichste Ergebnis/der kürzestmöglichste Weg/das meist-
          verkaufteste Buch
          'the best possible result/the shortest possible way/the best selling
          book'

Hypercharacterised forms as those in E23(b) are very frequent. In this case, we clearly have concord pleonasm. In addition, pleonasm is here motivated by the principle that inflection should be at the word margin.[20]

The Old English forms *children* and *brethren* illustrate hypercharacterised nominal plural. Other examples of this kind are Dutch *kinderen* 'children' and German *Jungens* 'boys', all with two different allomorphs of the plural morpheme. Pleonastic plural marking is particularly common in loans. Thus the Italian plural form *spaghetti* ends up as *spaghettis*, with a plural *-s*, in English, Spanish and optionally in German. In contemporary German, the plural *-s* is sufficiently productive to yield such hypercharacterised forms as

Praktikas = Praktika 'practical courses', *Visas = Visa* 'visas', *Lexikas = Lexika* 'lexicons'.[21]

All of these examples clearly involve analogical transfer of a marker from a context in which it is the only operator to fulfill the function in question to a context where it pleonastically duplicates an operator already applied. We may generalize that hypercharacterization in morphology is based on **analogy**.[22] Moreover, in a diachronic perspective, the two concurrent markers are not on the same level. There is an inner marker which for some reason does not quite do the job, and an outer marker which is currently productive and which speakers feel should appropriately appear on such a word form (cf. Dressler and Dziubalska-Kolaczyk 2001, section 5, Dressler 2004). A more precise formulation of the analogical account might therefore say that hypercharacterization is a kind of **adaptation** of a stem or word form based on paradigmatic pressure (Koefoed and Marle 2004:1581).

A special case of inflectional hypercharacterization may be seen in **word-internal agreement**. E24 provides an example from Lithuanian.

E24. balt-os-i-os   nakt-ys   mane
Lith   white-NOM.PL.F-DEF-NOM.PL.F   night-NOM.PL.F   I:ACC
       veik-ia   kaippaslapting-i   ker-ai
       seem-PRS.3   like mysterious-NOM.PL.M   witchcraft-NOM.PL.M
       'the white nights seem like mysterious witchcraft to me' (Stolz 2004:17)

Synchronically, the Lithuanian definite adjective consists of the adjective stem, inflected for case, number and gender, and a suffixal definiteness morpheme that is again marked for the same categories, often with the same declensional allomorph (Stolz 2004). Such cases arise by grammaticalization, where an erstwhile syntagma consisting of two words showing syntactic agreement is univerbated. At the level of syntax, agreement, although pleonastic, fulfills a function in marking syntactic relations (cf. section 3.1.1). At the level of morphology, it loses any kind of motivation.

3.3. *Hypercharacterization in derivation*

3.3.1. *German action nouns*

Consider the derivational relationship between noun and verb. Since we have both deverbal nouns and denominal verbs, this relationship is not per se directional. From the root of the German verb *konzipieren* 'conceive', we form the action noun *Konzeption* 'act of conceiving', and on the basis of the noun *Analyse* we form the verb *analysieren* 'make an analysis'. In both cases, an

iconic interpretation of the derivational process would make one believe that the derived stem is semantically more complex than the base; but since the two processes are mirror images of each other, this would lead into a contradiction. We have to conclude that a stem does not, in general, become semantically more complex by mere derivational transferral into a different category. As a matter of fact, we simply get the same concept in two different syntactic categories.

Deverbal nouns in *-ion* (with its allomorphs) such as *condition* and *relation* have been polyfunctional since Latin times. They are primarily action nouns (**nomina actionis**), as *relation* originally signifies the act of referring. Secondarily, they are act nouns (**nomina acti**), as *relation* signifies the result of referring something to something else. Moreover, such a verbal noun from a transitive base may develop a **nomen patientis** reading, as in *derivation* (=*derivatum*) 'derived word', which shares its non-dynamic character with the nomen acti. Once the noun has acquired the secondary meaning, it may seem too weak to serve as an action noun; it may seem to lack in 'dynamic force'. A clear example is the English noun *position*, which no longer signifies the act of putting, but only its result. The act must now be expressed by *positioning*, which itself is on the way of losing its dynamic character.

The semantic passage of nomina actionis into nomina acti and nomina patientis and the corresponding functional shift in the derivational morpheme forming such deverbal nouns is probably widespread. The German derivational suffix *-ung* is subject to the same process. Thus *Glättung* 'smoothing' is a nomen actionis, *Bewerbung* '(job) application' is a nomen actionis and acti, *Spannung* 'tension, voltage' is only a nomen acti, *Packung* 'package' only a nomen patientis. There seems to be a drift towards stativisation and reification.

Sometimes the speaker wants to make sure that an action is being designated. His problem is then to signal that whatever nominalising process is applied to the verbal base is not subject to the semantic shift just observed. Abstract nouns that are not overtly derived, like those of the first column of Table 5, are the first to become suspect of stativity. To ensure their dynamic character, they are first verbalized by the suffix *-ier-* (second column), which forms verb stems chiefly from non-German bases. In a second step, these verb stems are nominalised by *-ung*, which, one hopes, conserves the action meaning (third column).

Table 5. Action noun renewal in German

Nominal base	Denominal verb	Action noun	Meaning
Reform	reformieren	Reformierung	reform(ation)
Typologie	typologisieren	Typologisierung	typologisation
Metapher	metaphorisieren	Metaphorisierung	(application of) metaphor
Hypostase	hypostasieren	Hypostasierung	hypostasis

Although the nouns of the first column do conserve a nomen actionis reading besides the frequent nomen acti use, they are now mostly replaced—chiefly in the former function—by the nouns of the third column.

Nouns derived in *-tion* are not exempt from this remodelling. There are two variants of applying to them the combination of operations observed in Table 5. The first is illustrated by Table 6. Here, the base underlying the derivation in *-tion* is derived, by means of *-ier-*, into a verb. The latter is then nominalised by *-ung*. Thus we find, instead of the age-old action/act nouns in the left column of Table 6, alternate action nouns newly derived in *-ierung*, as in the middle column.[23]

Table 6. Alternate action noun derivation in German

Latinate	Germanised	Action reading
Integration	Integrierung	integrating
Qualifikation	Qualifizierung	qualifying (oneself)
Klassifikation	Klassifizierung	classifying
Konversion	Konvertierung	converting
Konzeption	Konzipierung	conceiving/planning
Revision	Revidierung	revising
Tradition	Tradierung	transmitting

The second solution to the expression problem—this one involving hypercharacterisation—is to derive a verb from the act noun itself and nominalise this again. For instance, *Konzeption* 'conception', both an action and an act noun, can be verbalised by the suffix *-ier*, yielding *konzeptionieren*, and this can be nominalised again by the suffix *-ung*, yielding *Konzeptionierung*.[24] This is visualised in S4, together with the parallel *Revisionierung* 'revision'.

S4. *Recursive nominal and verbal derivation in German*

operation	$[[X]\text{-}tion]_N$	$[[X]\text{-}ier]_V$	$[[X]_V\text{-}ung]_N$
product	konzip(ieren) Konzeption konzeptionier(en) Konzeptionierung		
	revid(ieren) Revision revisionier(en) Revisionierung		

Konzeptionieren is the same as *konzipieren*, and *Konzeptionierung* is the same as *Konzeption* (or *Konzipierung*, for that matter). As the examples show, the processes of action noun derivation and denominal verb derivation may be applied recursively, either one undoing the result of the application of the other. Hypercharacterization here requires the execution of two derivational operations

in tandem, since if I am not content with *Konzeption*, I must first verbalise and then nominalise it again in order to arrive at *Konzeptionierung*.

The motivation behind this trend is not easy to pin down. *-ung* by itself displays the same polysemy as *-tion*, which makes it hard to believe that speakers trust in its dynamicity. One might hypothesize that it is the component *-ier* in *-ierung* which guarantees the action noun reading because *-ier* reflects the underlying verbality. (For speakers' motivations, it would not matter that no theoretically sound argument could be made along these lines, since verbs derived in *-ier* are also at the basis of categorically stative deverbal nouns, e.g. nomina agentis in *-ierer* like *Kopierer* 'copying machine'.) We would then be faced with a new suffix *-ierung*, exclusively dedicated to the formation of nomina actionis. Some documented cases do presuppose that if there is a pair of nouns one of which is derived in *-tion* and the other in *-ierung*, then the second is dynamic. Clear witness of such reasoning is a publication title such as E25:

E25.   Konzeptualisierung von Motivation und Motivierung im Kontext situierten Lernens
GERM 'conceptualisation of motivation and motivating in the context of situated learning'[25]

Here *Motivation* refers to the pupils' disposition, while *Motivierung* refers to the teachers' action. *Klassifikation* vs. *Klassifizierung* is a stock example of the distinction intended here.[26] However, a web search turns up a host of examples like *Deutsche Hotelklassifizierung* 'German hotel classification',[27] which clearly refer to the result of the action. Equally in E26f, the nouns derived in *-ierung* are clearly nomina acti.

E26.   Der räumlich-zeitliche Bereich ist auf die Positionierung des Referenten im Raum sowie deren Beibehaltung im Zeitverlauf bezogen. (linguistic term paper 2004).
GERM 'The spatio-temporal area concerns positioning of the referent in space and maintenance of the latter [i.e. the position] in the course of time.'

E27.   "Ostasien" older "East Asia"—eine deutsche Konzeptualisierung (http://www.lvk-info.org/nr17/lvk-17polap.htm 1 November 2004)
GERM 'Ostasien' or 'East Asia'—a German conceptualisation

An alternative hypothesis is that—apart from a couple of specific cases like E25—no semantic issue is involved here, and what matters instead is only the replacement or reinforcement of an unproductive derivation mechanism (*-tion*)

by a productive one (*-ierung*). It is true that many formations in *-ierung* are just now replacing older formations in *-tion*. Examples include *Demonstrierung* 'demonstration' and *Variierung* 'variation', each found several hundred times on the web (1 November 2004), but absent from *Duden Wörterbuch*, 2001 edition. On the other hand, there are also recent well-established neologisms in *-tion* like *Animation, Emission, Präsentation* (and even more scientific terms such as *Extraposition, Kollokation, Partizipation*) which show no tendency to get ousted by counterparts in *-ierung*.

Thus, every attempt to come up with a specific semantic motivation of the redundant application of the derivation in *-ierung* fails. It seems that the general motivation of phatic pleonasm must suffice: the sheer desire to make words sound more impressive. The hypercharacterization resulting from this in cases such as S4 is not specifically intended, but does not bother most speakers either.

The analysis shows that hypercharacterization in derivational morphology must be seen in the context of the renewal of inherited derivata by productive means.[28] This renewal itself is not hypercharacterization; but sometimes the renewal does not go back to the roots, but simply works on some available base, which may or may not already be marked for the category in question.

3.3.2. Other cases of derivational hypercharacterization

Derivational processes which come under intensification in the broadest sense, including diminution, augmentation, iteration, etc., are particularly prone to hypercharacterization. Diminution provides some well-known examples. Sometimes different allomorphs of the diminutive marker are stacked, as in Italian *Bertinetto* 'little Bertie', *librettino* 'little booklet'.[29] Sometimes the most productive diminutive suffix can be iterated, as in Spanish *chiquitito* 'tiny little'. There is also a derivational counterpart to the pleonastic superlative in such Italian forms as *ultrabellissimo* 'most hyperbeautiful', typical of the language of publicity. The Latin intensive-iterative suffix *-(i)t-* is reapplied in verbs such as *dic-t-it-o* (say-INTS-INTS-1.SG) = *dic-t-o* 'say repeatedly', *iac-t-it-o* (throw-INTS-INTS-1.SG) = *iac-t-o* 'throw repeatedly'.

However, derivational hypercharacterization occurs in other functional contexts as well. The German suffix *-lich* may derive adjectives like *freundlich* 'kind', but also adverbs like *schwerlich* 'hardly', *gröblich* 'in a gross way', *fälschlich* 'wrongly'. In the latter function, the suffix is barely productive today. Since most adjectives can be used in adverbial function without morphological change, there are many words derived in *-lich* that function both as adjectives and as adverbs, like *wissentlich* 'knowing(ly)'. Furthermore, there is a more recent and productive adverbialising suffix *-weise*, which has an analogous diachronic origin as Romance *-mente*, viz. its basis are circumlocutions such as *in freundlicher Weise*

'in a friendly way', which get univerbated to derived adverbs like *freundlicher-weise* 'kindly'. Now this suffix is also sometimes added to adverbs derived in *-lich*. Thus we find E28.

E28.   . . . ein Turmalin, der fälschlicherweise lange für einen Rubin gehalten
        wurde. (MDR Kultur, 22 February 2004)
GERM '. . . a turmaline that was long regarded as a ruby in a wrongly way.'

Besides such hypercharacterisations, there are also constructions like E29 which go back to the periphrasis, but use an adverb as the attribute to *Weise*[30]:

E29.   Ein Mitglied kann durch den Vorstand ausgeschlossen werden, wenn
        es in gröblicherWeise gegen die Vereinsinteressen verstoßen hat.
        (Förderverein Bilzingsleben 31 August 1996)
GERM 'A member may be excluded by the executive board if he has infringed
        the association's interests in a seriously way'.

It seems that the authors of E28 and E29 regarded *fälschlich* as synonymous with *falsch*, and *gröblich* as synonymous with *grob*; i.e. they did not feel that *fälschlich* and *gröblich* are characterised as adverbs. This is then safety pleonasm.

Transitivisation of transitive verbs also belongs here. The German applicative prefix *be-* generally transitivises verbs, as in *singen* 'sing', *besingen* 'sing to the honour of'. It applies redundantly in examples like *befüllen = füllen* 'fill', *bejagen = jagen* 'hunt',[31] *befüttern = füttern* 'feed'. Such examples appear to be due to phatic pleonasm.

If, however, a loan is provided with a marker specifying its grammatical class irrespective of the fact that, in the donor language, it already belongs to that class, it is rather a case of safety pleonasm. Thus Spanish *alcanzar* 'reach' is a transitive verb, but as a loan in Yucatec Maya, it is provided with the transitivising suffix *-t-*, as shown in E30 and a myriad of similar examples.

E30.   k-u   alcanzar-t-ik
YM   IMPFV-SBJ.3   achieve-TRR-INCMPL[32]
        'he achieves it'

3.4. Hypercharacterization in compounding

In the endocentric nominal compound, the determinans forms a more specific concept on the basis of the determinatum. There are at least two pleonastic varieties of this compounding type. The first is illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7. German hyponym compounds

Expression	Composition	Meaning
Sturmwind	storm:wind	storm
Enkelkind	grandchild:child	grandchild
Eichbaum	oak:tree	oak
Grammatikalisierungsprozeß	grammaticalization:process	grammaticalization

Here the determinans is a hyponym of the determinatum; the construction may therefore be called **hyponym compounding**.[33] Although these compounds satisfy the semantic characterization of pleonasm given in section 2.1, they differ in their structure from the phenomena considered so far because it is the modifier alone, not the structural head, that is synonymous to the complex. Unlike all the other cases of pleonasm, it is, thus, the head of the construction that is redundant. It is known that the strategy of hyponym compounding can give rise, through grammaticalization, to a system of nominal classification. In this, hyponym compounding is functionally similar to concord pleonasm, which, as we saw, may evolve into agreement.

A subvariety of hyponym compounding may be seen in the left-hand column of Table 8:

Table 8. Abbreviation elaboration

Elaborated abbreviation	Resolution of abbreviation
ABS system	Anti-lock Braking System
HIV virus	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LCD display	Liquid–Crystal Display
PIN number	Private Identification Number
ABM-Maßnahme	Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahme 'labour provision measure'

This construction may be called **abbreviation elaboration**. It is very common both in English and in German.[34] As in Table 7, the added noun repeats a semantic component already contained in the abbreviation. It also has the same kind of motivation as other pleonasms: In abbreviation elaboration, safety pleonasm concurs with phatic pleonasm. The peculiar feature of abbreviation elaboration is that the focal component is identically present in the base. It is not a matter of synonymy, but of repetition, although the component is not spelt out in the base.

The other main variety of pleonastic compounding is **synonym compounding**, as in E31f:

E31.   German *schlußendlich* 'end-finally', *letztendlich* 'last-finally'

E32.   *duo-yu*
Chin   extra-remaining
       'excessive, extra' (Chao 1968:374f)

While this type does not appear to constitute a productive pattern in German, it has been very important in Mandarin Chinese, apparently as a form of safety pleonasm to disambiguate homonymous bases.

4.   THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

There is pleonasm at all the grammatical levels from the sentence down to the stem. As in any movement downwards the grammatical levels, paradigmaticity increases. At the highest level, pleonasm starts out as a strategy that lends emphasis to an expression. At the lowest level, it is a strategy that fits an expression in a paradigm or in a structural class. This has become clearest in the two sections (3.2f) devoted to hypercharacterising inflectional and derivational morphemes. Discourse motivations here give way to system-internal pressure.

Theoretically, the pleonastic comparative of English could involve a repetition of the operator *more*, just as the pleonastic action noun in German could involve a repetition of the nominaliser *-tion*. However, this is not what happens. As we have seen, repetition is only a limiting case of redundancy. Hypercharacterization is therefore not just a process of copying. It shares properties with contamination (blending), where the speaker cannot make a choice between two synonymous expressions.[35]

Hypercharacterization provides some important lessons for linguistic theory. In the fields of syntax, inflection and word-formation, formal descriptive models describe the formation of complex units of a certain category by the combination of an operator with an operand of a certain category. An extreme form of this approach has been known as the 'unitary base hypothesis'. As we have seen (and as has been shown repeatedly in the literature), this purely analytic description runs into problems. There is one category in syntactic and morphological constructions that is of prime importance, and that is the category of the resulting syntagma. The speaker uses an operator to create an expression with certain grammatical properties. Operators are often sensitive to the properties of the operand. But these are of secondary importance, and often the speaker simply does not care.[36] This is clearest in the treatment of loans. Here one might want to argue that the grammatical properties of the donor language cannot possibly play a role in the recipient language. However, things are not so simple. Borrowing an item presupposes some degree of knowledge of the donor language, and the item is borrowed precisely for its properties. The most one can say is that the

speaker wants to make sure, with the means of the code he is currently using, that the item has the properties needed in the discourse. The most transparent way of guaranteeing this is the application of a productive operation whose operator confers just the desired property. This speaks in favour of a goal-directed theory of language and of a **holistic approach** to grammatical description, to complement the otherwise needed analytic approach.

Grammaticalization has often been described as a transition from universal iconic discourse strategies to language-specific system-dependent grammatical rules. As far as that goes, grammaticalization involves a loss in motivation. As we have seen, pleonastic phenomena can be arranged on a scale that starts from full motivation in terms of intensification and emphasis and where motivation weakens gradually. As soon as we get to a stage where elements in a sentence start being in concord with each other, we enter the domain of rules of syntax. From here on, the phenomenon goes by the name of hypercharacterization. Further grammaticalization leads to grammatical agreement, first at the syntactic level, finally even inside a word-form.

Some have proposed a principle of **derivational blocking** which says that an otherwise productive derivational process is blocked for a particular base if there is already a derivatum—formed from this base by another process—that occupies the target position. The facts adduced in section 3.3 falsify a simple general version of such a principle. Sometimes the opposite principle seems to be active: concepts that continue to be needed deserve to be expressed by currently productive means, which may lead to a renewal of their expression. This phenomenon is well known from grammaticalization research. It suffices to mention a stock example like the renewal of various verbal categories of Ancient Indo-European languages in their modern descendants (see Lehmann 2002, chapter 2.4, for details). The marking of inflectional categories is thus far from being constrained by a blocking principle. Quite on the contrary, if the system of grammatical meanings includes a certain category, then that category will be marked by such structural means which correspond to the type the language is currently following; and at the same time, their marking by means that belonged to a previous type will fossilise. Research into hypercharacterization may shed new light onto the corresponding issue in derivational morphology. Blocking is counteracted by renewal there, too.

Safety pleonasm evinces a basic insecurity in the control of the code. Since none of us is the master of the norm, we do not have full certainty of the meaning of a word and the service it can do in our speech. Therefore we prefer to play it safe and to combine it with another sign which should also contribute the desired meaning and of which we may feel a little more sure.

Pleonasm and hypercharacterization thus provide evidence of a peculiar kind that language is not a stable system. Older textbooks teach that language changes because we have to adapt it to new needs. Younger textbooks teach that it changes because the language acquisition device comes up with an original

analysis of the input. Pleonasm and hypercharacterization confirm what Coseriu (1958, chapter III) said long ago (cf. also Booij 2005b): Language changes because we create it every day. We have to do so to the extent there is no ready-made language that we could rely upon.

LANGUAGE ABBREVIATIONS

Chin(ese), Fr(ench), Germ(an), Lith(uanian), M(iddle) H(igh) G(erman), Span(ish), Y(ucatec), M(aya)

NOTES

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[1]   The word *overcharacterisation* 'exaggeration, caricature' is not a technical term of linguistics.

[2]   In phonemics, a phoneme is hypercharacterised if it differs from the closest less marked members of its subsystem by more than one feature value, as e.g. in Ancient Greek the high round vowel opposed to /o/ was not /u/, but /y/. On the syntagmatic dimension, Sherer (1994) applies the concept of hypercharacterization to syllable structure.

[3]   Cf. Lausberg (1990, §§ 502, 604).

[4]   Given this, the title of this paper is slightly ill-formed; it should read 'Pleonasm and, in particular, hypercharacterisation'.

[5]   One of whose manifestations is ellipsis.

[6]   However, Lausberg (1990:328) cites a Roman author who does subsume this construction (in Latin) under pleonasm.

[7]   Most of the English examples in section 2 are from www.wordexplorations.com/pleonasm.html as of 10 February 2004. Some of them may already be found, in their Latin or Greek version, in ancient treatments of rhetoric.

[8]   The modificative nature of pleonastic constructions is, in fact, methodologically ambivalent: It is here treated as an empirical generalization over a phenomenon whose concept does not entail it. However, as Lausberg (1990, §502) shows, already in ancient rhetoric some authors defined pleonasm with respect to modificative constructions.

[9]   A Google search (6 May 2005) for *potentially capable* yields 40,400 pages, 20 of which oppose it to *actually capable* and one to *capable*.

[10]   It follows the (German proverbial) maxim *doppelt genäht hält besser* 'double-stitched lasts longer'.

[11]   Cf. Malkiel (1957f:79, 98f) on rhythmic aspects of hypercharacterised Spanish *pieses* 'feets', Löfstedt (1933) on the idea that a word may be perceived as too short for what it signifies, and Haiman (1985) for theoretical aspects of quantitative isomorphism.

[12]   How strong this automatism is may depend on the particular language and a variety of other factors. A text count of combinations of *malen'kij* 'small' with diminutive nouns in Russian reported on in Rusakova (2004) finds the following numbers of tokens: (a) no such adjective +

diminutive noun: 200; (b) *malen'kij* + non-diminutive noun: 58; (c) *malen'kij* + diminutive noun: 14. In that corpus, the concord tendency is thus relatively weak. Moreover, in contrast with E8–E10, there are non-pleonastic combinations of 'small + diminutive', viz. whenever the diminutive does not mean 'small'.

[13]   Another example, just to show that professors enjoy no preferential treatment: *daß er eine Beziehung zu einer weiblichen Managerin des Konzerns unterhielt* 'that he entertained a relationship with a female she-manager of the company' (*Der Standard* 6 March 2005, p. 3).

[14]   With some simplification; cf. Lehmann (1982) for more accuracy.

[15]   There may be exceptions to this. Taken literally, a predicate like *more than unique* is self-contradictory. However, a literal interpretation is out of place, because then *more* would have to be the syntactic head of the phrase, while in fact *more than* is a modifier to *unique*.

[16]   Ortmann (1999) quotes a number of morphological theories—and defends one himself— that exclude hypercharacterization because of its redundancy. Such theories declare the non-existence of facts like those adduced here and in the literature.

[17]   It could, in principle, govern any preposition. For instance, in *mit x aufhören* 'to stop doing x', the verb particle and the preposition governed are distinct.

[18]   I will assume without further discussion that comparison is an inflectional category in the languages at hand.

[19]   It may be comforting for German speakers that already the Romans did not shun *extremissimus*.

[20]   See Haspelmath (1993), section 2.4 for discussion of cases of this kind and Dressler (2004) for the sequence of hypercharacterised and hypercharacterising affix.

[21]   Cf. Booij (2005a:259) for similar examples in Dutch.

[22]   In view of Haspelmath's (1993, section 5.2) objections against an analogical account, it should be stressed that an analogical model need not be perfect in motivating each and every feature of the transformed item; it suffices that it share some features with the latter.

[23]   Some of the nouns in the left-hand column have actually lost their action meaning. Thus: *Unser aller Pflicht ist die Tradierung/?Tradition von Werten*. 'Everybody among us has as his duty the tradition of values.'

[24]   *Konzeptionierung* is absolutely fashionable; a Google search (2 November 2004) turns up 29,200 examples. One can also hear *Konzeptionalisierung* (Google: 2,280 examples). Many of the examples of both nouns exhibit a stative sense.

[25]   Stark, Robin and Mandl, Heinz (1998), *Konzeptualisierung von Motivation und Motivierung im Kontext situierten Lernens* (Forschungsbericht Nr. 091). München: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Lehrstuhl für Empirische Pädagogik und Pädagogische Psychologie, Internet.

[26]   It is adduced, e.g., in Fleischer (1971:156f). In other cases, an investigation into the differential function of rival forms of derivation does yield positive results; cf., e.g. Kaunisto (1999) on the English suffixes *-ic* and *-ical*.

[27]   It is adduced, e.g., in Fleischer 1971:1567 and Knobloch 2002:336. The main title of the website http://www.hotelsterne.de/.

[28]   The derivational suffix German *-ität* = English *-ity* forms abstract nouns on the basis of adjectives chiefly of Greco-Latin origin, as in *Publizität* 'publicity'. This is currently one of the most productive means towards this end. Other suffixes like *-ie* '-y', as in *Monotonie*

'monotony', are losing ground. For some time, old derivata in *-ie/-y* have been replaced by more modern (and longer!) ones in *-ity*. Thus, *Anonymie/anonymy* have been all but ousted by *Anonymität/anonymity*; *Synonymie/synonymy* and *Homonymie/homonymy* still go strong, but *Synonymität/synonymity* and *Homonymität/homonymity* are on the advance.

[29] German allows this to a much more limited extent, as in *Kinderleinchen* 'children-DIM-DIM' or *Schatzileinchen* 'darling-DIM-DIM-DIM'.

[30] The typo in E29 is telling: the text is evidently an emendation of an earlier version that contained *gröblicherweise* 'seriouslywise'.

[31] *Bejagen* also means 'hunt in (a hunting-ground)' and then is a regular, non-pleonastic applicative derivation.

[32] IMPFV imperfective, SBJ subject, TRR transitiviser, INCMPL incomplete.

[33] Fleischer (1971:93f) speaks of 'clarifying compounds'. See Bloomer (1996) for a detailed study.

[34] According to anecdotal evidence provided by G. Banti (p.c.), abbreviation elaboration occurs in Italian, too, although there it has a different structure, e.g. *virus HIV*.

[35] This point is stressed in Dressler et al. (2001). Cf. Haspelmath (1993, section 6.2) for some discussion.

[36] Plag (2005) argues emphatically that categorical properties of the bases of word-formation processes are in general irrelevant. Earlier proponents of a holistic, semantic rather than structural approach to word-formation include Plank (1981).

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