

## Focussed Assertion of Identity: A Typology of Intensifiers

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### 1. Introduction

- closely related domain; prerequisite for the analysis of reflexive markers
- intensifiers and reflexives very often derive from expressions for **body parts (metonymy)**
- in a wide variety of languages intensifiers and reflexives are formally identical
- intensifiers play an important role in the development and renewal of reflexive markers (cf. English *X-self*)
- intensifiers may combine with reflexives

#### 1.1. As a starting point

##### a) Latin

- The dogma of empiricism: *Nihil est in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu, nisi intellectus ipse*. ‘Nothing is in the mind that was not before in the senses except for the mind itself.’ (empiricism + Leibniz)

- (i) To which lexical category does this word belong?
- (ii) What kind of contribution does it make to the meaning of a sentence?

- *ipse* as **adjective**? (inflection: *ipsam vitam dedit* ; the superlative *ipsissimus*)
- *ipse* as **pronoun**?

##### b) English (major grammar handbooks):

- Two uses of *self*-forms: (a) reflexive use, (b) emphatic use
- (a) John admires **himself**
- (b) It was probably the work of the rabbi’s warden, not of the rabbi **himself**.
- How can they be distinguished?

#### 1.2. A typological perspective

- Expressions like Latin *ipse/a*, English *him-/her-self* (*X-self*), Russian *sam/-a*, Italian *stesso/-a*, Mandarin *zìjǐ*, Spanish *mismo/-a*, Fr. *lui-/elle-même*, etc.
- There is no established categorical label (“emphatic reflexives”, “emphatics”; “emphasizers”, “emphatic pronouns”; “appositive/adverbial reflexives”; “limiting adjectives”; “identity pronouns”; “focus particles”, “**intensifiers**”)
- In English and many other languages there is no formal distinction between reflexive markers and intensifiers; there is only a difference in distribution:
  - (1) a. *John was clearly protecting **himself**.*
  - b. *Fred hates **himself**.*
  - c. *She poured **herself** another cup of tea.*
  - (2) a. *Writers **themselves**, rather than their works, should be vetted for their sense of social responsibility..*

- b. “*All things must change*”, says Father Ferguson. “*Sin **itself** must change.*”
- c. Arderly **herself** had wanted the case. (PFA, p. 68)
- Languages seem to have several intensifiers (English: *X-self*, *by X-self*, *in X-self*, *own*, *of his own accord*, *personally*, *in person*, etc. Italian: *stesso*, *proprio*, *in persona*, *in prima persona*, *in sé*, *per sé*, etc.), which may differ in their syntax and in their interpretation;
  - Identification across languages is easiest on the basis of **prosodic** and **semantic** criteria:
    - (i) focused and stressed;
    - (ii) evoking alternatives
    - (iii) used as adjuncts (rarely as arguments)
    - (iv) etymology: derived from expressions denoting body parts, truth, possession, local notions; ‘persona’; ‘precision of reference’, ‘return/again’; ‘alone’, ‘downwards’, etc.)

### • Use types

(3) (a) the **ADNOMINAL** use

*Writers **themselves**, rather than their works, should be examined for their sense of social responsibility.*

(b) the **ADVERBIAL EXCLUSIVE** use ( $\cong$  ‘alone’/‘without help’)

*Mrs. Dalloway wanted to buy the flowers **herself**.*

(c) the **ADVERBIAL INCLUSIVE** use ( $\cong$  ‘too’)

*If he’s busy breaking the rules **himself**, he could hardly demand that they do otherwise.*

(d) the **ATTRIBUTIVE** use

*John wants to be together with people of his **own** age.*

(4) Early Modern English (OED, s.v. *self*)

*He forbad the often attempting of warres agaynst ones **self** party or enemies.*  
(1585 T. Washington tr. Nicholay’s Voy. IV, xxxi. 153 b)

(5) Turkish (Münevver Özkurt, p.c.)

(a) *müdür-ün **kendi-si** bizim-le konuşacak* (adnominal)  
director-gen int-3.poss us-with will.talk  
‘The director himself will talk to us.’

(b) ***kendi** oda-m* (attributive)  
INT room-1POSS  
‘my own room’

(5’) Latin

***Ipsius** ante oculos* ‘before his very eyes’

## 2. Categorical Status and Meaning

- Striking variation in their morpho-syntactic properties; parallels in their distribution
- **semantic analysis**

(a) intensifiers express **contrast**

(b) intensifiers are generally focused and thus **evoke alternatives** to the value given

(c) intensifiers denote an **identity function**

(6)a. [NP[NP the president] himself]

b. [[the president himself]] = ID([[the president]]) = [[the president]]

c. secretary of (the President); collaborators of the (President); family of the (President)

- the meaning of the identity function is trivial (irrelevant)
- therefore intensifiers are always focused
- semantic effect: evoking of alternatives relative to the value given

(7) (a) #I have invited both the president of the US himself and the Pope.

(b) I have invited both the president of the US **himself** and his wife.

(7')a. I prefer the surroundings of London to London **itself**.

b. ?? I prefer Paris to London itself.

### 3. Parameters of Variation

- variation in formal, distributional and selectional properties; variation within clear limits;

#### 3.1. Inflection vs. invariance (correlation with other parameters)

(8) **Invariant intensifiers:** Albanian *vetë*, Modern Breton *end-eeun*, Irish Gaelic *féin*, German *selbst*, West Greenlandic *nammineq*, Yiddish *aleyn*, Mitla Zapotec *lagahk* etc.

(9) German

[sie **selbst**] hat es mir gesagt.  
 she INT has it to.me said  
 'She herself told me about it.'

(10) Albanian (Buchholz & Fiedler 1987: 283)

[ajo **vetë**] më tha  
 she INT to.me said  
 'She herself told me about it.'

- **agreement (with co-constituent or subject)**

(11) **Inflecting intensifiers:** Abkhaz *xatá-*, Amharic *ras-*, Arabic *nafs-*, English *himself/herself*, Finnish *itse-*, Hausa *kâi-*, Hungarian *mag-*, Latin *ipse/ipsa*, Spanish *mismo/misma*, Tzotzil *-tuk* etc. ( $\phi$ -features: gender, number, person, case)

(12) Italian (gender, number) → adjective like

[il direttore **stesso**] parlerà con noi.  
 the director himself talk.FUT with us  
 'The director himself will talk to us.'

(13) Finnish (person, number, case) (Ursula Lehmus, p.c.)

saan-ko puhua johtaja-lle **itse**-lle-en  
 may.I-Q speak director-ALL INT-ALL-3POSS  
 'Could I talk to the director himself?'

### - identification of co-constituent through agreement

- (14) (a) John knows [the wife of the Mayor of London herself].  
 (b) John knows the wife of [the Mayor of London himself].  
 (c) John knows the wife of the Mayor of [London itself].

### 3.2. Relation to reflexive anaphors

- Intensifiers play an important role in the genesis, reinforcement and renovation of reflexive markers, as well as in the formation of ‘reflexive compounds’ (*self-control, self-confidence, self-administration; self-sufficient, self-indulgent, etc.*)

- expressions for body parts as a basis of expressing (**personal**) **identity** and of expressing **metonymic reflexivity**;

#### - Complete identity of intensifiers and reflexives:

Amharic *ras-*, Arabic *nafs-*, English *him/herself*, Finnish *itse*, Hausa *kâi-*, Hebrew *etsem*, Hungarian *mag-*, Lezgian *wič-*, Mandarin *zìjǐ...*

(15) Persian (Moyne 1971: 153, 148)

(a) hušang        **xod**-aš        zāla-rā        did  
 Hushang        INT-POSS.3SG    Zhala-ACC    saw  
 ‘Hushang himself saw Zhala.’

(b) hušang        **xod**-aš-rā        košt  
 Hushang        REFL- POSS.3SG-ACC    killed  
 ‘Hushang killed himself.’

(16) Mandarin Chinese (D. Hole & Hsin-yun Liu, p.c.)

(a) bùzhǎng        **zìjǐ**    huì        lái        huānyíng    wǒmen  
 minister        INT    will    come    welcome    us  
 ‘The minister himself will welcome us.’

(b) Lǎowáng        bù        xǐhuan    **zìjǐ**  
 Laowang        not    like    REFL  
 ‘Laowang does not like himself.’

#### Implicational Generalization I

If a language uses the same expression both as an intensifier and as a reflexive anaphor, this expression is not used as a marker of derived intransitivity (middle marker). (but: cf. Siemund, 2010)

- **Partial identity**: intensifier and reflexive marker share morphological material: Dutch *zelf/zichzelf*, Georgian *tvit/tav-*, Ancient Greek *autós/he-autón*, Hindi *aap/apnee aap* etc.

- **Differentiation of intensifiers and reflexives**: Bulgarian *sam/se(be)*, German *selbst/sich*, Italian *stesso/si*, Lithuanian *pàts/savè*, Copainala Zoque *ne ?ki/-win* etc.

(17) German

(a) Hans        **selbst**    wird    kommen  
 Hans        INT    will    come  
 ‘Hans himself will come here.’

(b) Hans bewundert    **sich**  
 Hans admires        REFL  
 ‘Hans admires himself.’

- Reflexive pronouns and intensifiers can be combined (German *sich selbst*; Italian *sé stesso*; Span. *si mismo*; Russian *sam sebja*); high degree of grammaticalization;

(17') Italian

Non parlo per me stesso. 'I don't speak for myself.'  
NEG speak.Pres.1SG for me personally

### 3.3. Selectional restrictions

- with respect to nominal co-constituent (speaker, hearer, human, animate, location, time)  
- few if any combinatorial restrictions Spanish *mismo* (*ahora mismo*, *aquí mismo*); German *selbst* (few restrictions); Amharic *ras-*; Japanese *zisin* (animate nouns) – *zитай* (inanimate nouns);

(17) Amharic: no restrictions

*bä-ras-u*                      *bä-kure-w*                      *wust bäqi*                      *wuha allä*  
LOC-INT-3SG.MASC LOC-oasis-ART in enough water exists  
'In the oasis itself there is enough water.'

(18) Japanese (Akio Ogawa, p.c.)

- (a) *Taroo-zisin kyouzyu-o sonkeisite iru.*  
Taro-INT professor-ACC honours  
'Taro himself honours the professor.'
- (b) *kono hon-zитай/\*zisin yomunoga muzukasii.*  
this book-INT to.read difficult.is  
'This book itself is difficult to read.'

#### The Animacy Hierarchy

1,2 > 3 [human] > human proper nouns > human common nouns > animate common nouns > inanimate common nouns (concrete) > inanimate common nouns (abstract, time, location)

(19) French

- (a) *Dans Paris même, il est devenu très difficile de se loger.*  
in Paris INT it is become very hard to MID lodge  
'In Paris itself, it has become very hard to find accommodation.'
- (b) *Marie est la beauté même.* (Italian 'Marie è la bellezza stessa')  
Marie is ART beauty INT  
'Marie is beauty itself.'
- (c) *Il faut le faire aujourd'hui même (et ici même).*  
it NEC it do today INT and here INT  
'It needs to be done this very day. (and right away)'

(19') Spanish

- a. *Vamos a ordeñar a las vacas aquí/ahora mism-it-o.*  
Go.IPL to milk ACC DEF.PL here/now MISMO-DIM-MASC  
'We are going to milk the cows right here/ now.'
- b. *El coche se detuvo en el mism-isim-o precipicio.*  
Def car SE stop.PAST in DEF MISMO-AUG precipice  
'The car stopped at the very edge of the precipice.'

- higher end of scale

(20) Basque (Iraide Ibarretxe, p.c.)

- (a) *aita santua-k bera-k gurekin hitzegino du* 3SG  
 father holy-ERG INT-ERG with.us will.talk aux  
 ‘The Pope himself will talk to us.’
- (b) *ni-k n-eu-k ikusi nuen* 1/2SG  
 I-ERG 1SG-INT-ERG saw AUX  
 ‘I saw it myself.’

(21) English (cf. König & Siemund 2000a: 187)

- (a) As for myself, I won’t be invited.  
 (b) ?As for yourself, you won’t be invited.  
 (c) As for him(\*self), he won’t be invited.

- intensifiers etymologically related to Latin *persona* ‘mask, person’, such as Italian *in persona*, German *persönlich*, or English *personally*, superlative forms *.höchstpersönlich*, Swedish *självaste* (⇒ **high rank** of referent)

(22) German

*Diesmal spricht der Minister höchst-persönlich.*  
 this.time speaks the minister highest-personally  
 ‘This time the minister himself will give a speech.’

- alternatives: **different representations** of the same referent

- (23)a. Voilà Jacques Chirac en personne (lui-même). ‘Here is Chirac in person/himself.’  
 b. Voilà Jacques Chirac en chair et en os. ‘Here is Chirac in flesh and blood.’  
 c. Je lui ai parlé en personne. ‘I talked to the man himself.’  
 d. Je lui ai parlé personnellement. ‘I talked to him personally.’

### Implicational generalization II

If a language has an intensifier that can combine with a noun at any point in the hierarchy it will also have an intensifier that can combine with all nouns further to the left.

### Implicational generalization III

Specific intensifiers can co-occur with nouns only at adjacent positions in the hierarchy.

### 3.4. Minor parameters of variation

- position of intensifier relative to nominal co-constituent (before and/or after)
- possessive intensifiers
- intensifiers without head nouns (English he *himself* vs. ??*him himself*)

(24) Lithuanian (Raimonda Jonkutė, p.c.)

*Pati* (= *aš pati*) *pietūs isvirsiu.*  
 myself (= I myself) dinner cook  
 ‘I myself will cook dinner.’

(25) Turkish (Lewis 1967: 71)

*kendi-si ev-de.*  
 INT-3POSS house-LOC  
 ‘He is at home.’

(26) Hibernian English (Filppula 1999: 80)

I'm afraid himself will be very angry when he hears about the accident to the mare.

#### 4. Major types of intensifiers

- five major types defined on the basis of morpho-syntactic properties
- implicational connections can be described in terms of these types
- areal clustering

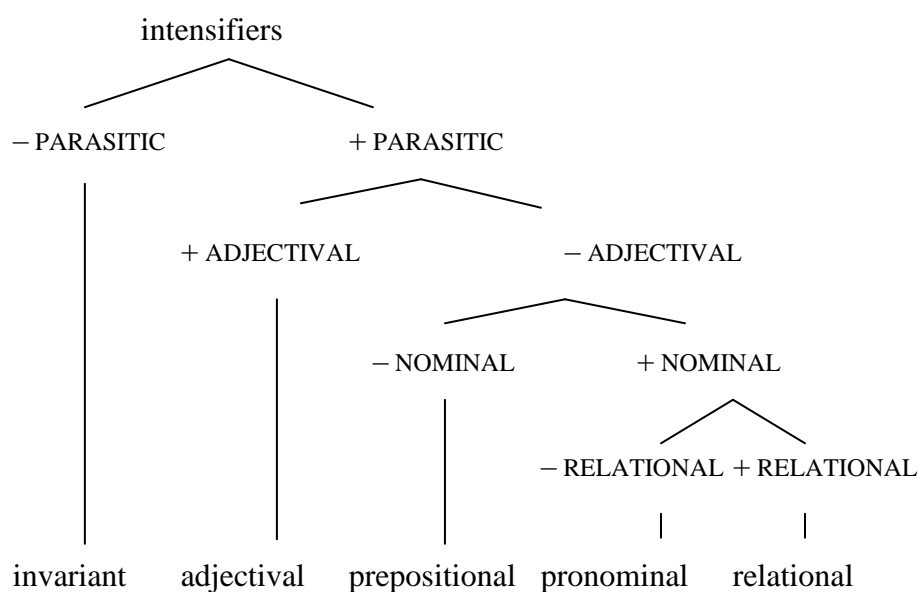


Figure 1: A typology of intensifiers

**Parasitic intensifiers** have the formal make-up of major lexical classes like adjectives, relational nouns and pronouns

##### (a) adjectival intensifiers (Europe)

(27) Swedish (Holmes & Hinchliffe 1994: 146)

[Barn-et *själv-t*] sa ingenting  
 child-ART INT-INDEF.NEUT.SG said nothing  
 'The child itself said nothing'

##### (b) relational nouns as intensifiers (Africa, Middle East, Mesoamerica, Finno-Ugric; head-marking languages)

(28) Turkish (Münevver Özkurt, p.c.)

*müdür-ün kendi-si bizim-le konuşacak*  
 director-GEN INT-POSS.3SG us-with will.talk  
 'The director himself will talk to us.'

##### (c) pronoun-like intensifiers (South Asia, French, English, Basque)

Incorporate pronominal forms; inflect for person, number, gender; typically identical to reflexive markers; typically follow their head noun;

(29) French

*J'ai rencontré le Président lui-même.*  
 'I met the President himself.'

(d) **Invariant intensifiers** (most common type)

Few, if any, sortal restrictions, highly grammaticalized; no areal clustering;

(30) Yiddish (A. Albright, p.c.)

*der direktor aleyn vet undz ufnemen*  
 ART director INT will us welcome  
 'The director himself will welcome us.'

(e) **Intensifiers as prepositional phrases**

(31) Yoruba

*A ò rì kádínáìlì fúnraárà`*  
 We not see cardinal INT.POSS.3SG  
 'We did not see the cardinal himself.' (Lit. for his body).

– PARASITIC	+ PARASITIC			
	+ ADJECTIVAL	– ADJECTIVAL		
		– NOMINAL	+ NOMINAL	
			– RELATIONAL	+ RELATIONAL
INVARIANT	ADJECTIVAL	PREPOSITIONAL	PRONOMINAL	RELATIONAL
no inflection	reduced inflection	maximal inflection		
weak distributional restrictions		strong distributional restrictions		
no or partial identity with REFL			often complete identity with REFL	
rarely in argument position (pro-drop)			often in argument position	

**Figure II: Implicational connections****References**

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