

Intensifiers as parasitic cross-categorial operators

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1 What are Intensifiers?

ModE

- (1) Writers *themselves*, rather than their works, should be examined for their sense of social responsibility.
- (2) Mrs. Dalloway wanted to buy the flowers *herself*. (~ ‘alone’)
- (3) If he’s busy breaking the rules *himself*, he could hardly demand that they do otherwise. (~ ‘too’)
- (4) John wants to be together with people of his *own* age.

EModE

- (5) He forbad the often attempting of warres agaynst ones *self* party or enemies. 1585 T. Washington tr. *Nicholay’s Voy.* IV, xxxi. 153 b; OED s.v. *self*
- (6) They [g]ormandize at their *selfe* pleasures. 1632 Lithgow Trav.IV.158; OED s.v. *self*

Turkish¹

- (7) müdür-ün *kendi-si*
director-GEN INT-POSS.3SG
‘the director himself’ (lit.: ‘the director’s self’)
- (8) *kendi* telefon-um
INT telephone-POSS.1SG
‘my own telephone’
Kornfilt (1997: 138)

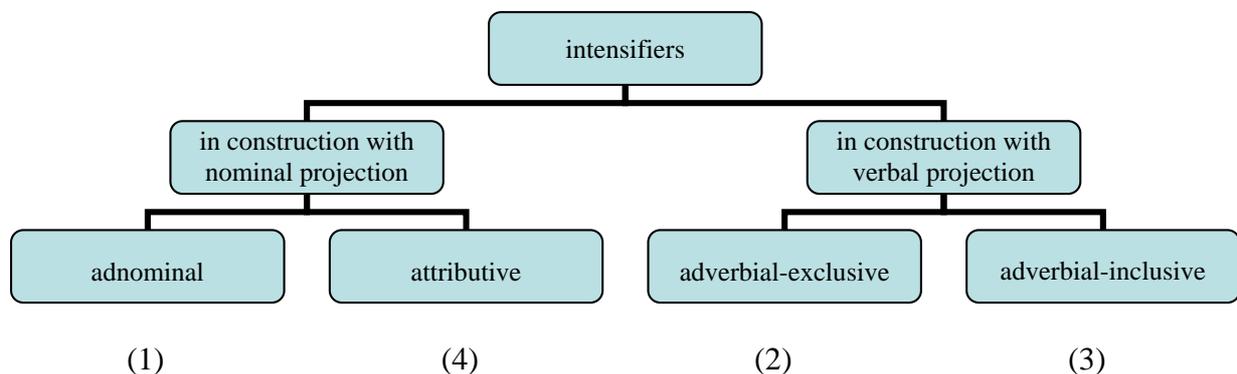


Figure 1: A typology of intensifiers

¹ All examples without an indication of the source have been collected by one of the authors. Most of these examples are also assembled in the *Typological Database of Intensifiers and Reflexives* (Gast et al. 2003).

2 The meaning of adnominal intensifiers

- intensifiers as expressions of a focused identity function (cf. Eckardt 2001, Hole 2002, Gast 2002, König & Gast 2002)

(9) $[_{NP}[_{NP} \text{the president}] \text{ himself}]$

(10) $[[\text{the president himself}] = \text{ID}([\text{the president}]) = [[\text{the president}]]$

- focusing of ID introduces alternatives of the same semantic type (functions from individuals to individuals); e.g. SECRETARY.OF, SON.OF
- meaning of (9):
 $\text{ID}([\text{the president}]) = [[\text{the president}]]$
- alternatives to (9):
 $\text{SECRETARY.OF}([\text{the president}]) = [[\text{the president's secretary}]]$
 $\text{DEPUTY.OF}([\text{the president}]) = [[\text{the vice-president}]]$
 $\text{SON.OF}([\text{the president}]) = [[\text{the president's son}]]$
- the analysis predicts that intensifiers are used to establish a contrast to other individuals that are functions of the referent of the head NP (individuals that can be identified in terms of that referent)

(11) #I have invited both *the president of the US himself* and *the Pope*.

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

3 Parameters of cross-linguistic variation – an overview

3.1 Inflection and agreement

I. Invariant intensifiers

(13) German

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

(14) Albanian

[ajo *vet?*] m? tha
 she INT to.me said
 ‚She herself told me about it.‘

Buchholz & Fiedler (1987: 283)

II. Inflecting intensifiers

(15) Spanish (gender and number)

[ella misma] / [él mismo] me lo dijo
 she INT.FEM.SG he INT.MASC.SG to.me it told
 ‚She herself/he himself told me.‘

(16) Finnish (case and person)

Saan-ko puhua johtaja-lle itse-lle-en
 may.I-Q speak director-ALL INT-ALL-POSS.3
 ‚Could I talk to the director himself?‘

- also: inflection for (in)definiteness (e.g. Swedish, cf. below)
- inflection helps to identify the co-constituent of the intensifier

(17) John knows the wife of the Mayor of London herself/himself/itself.

3.2 Position of the intensifier relative to its co-constituent

- intensifier always follows its co-constituent (in underlying syntax)

(18) English

- The president himself was there.
- *Himself the president was there.
- Myself_i, I t_i am in favour.

- intensifier always precedes its co-constituent

(19) Mitla Zapotec

biääd [lagahk president]/*[president lagahk]
 came INT president
 ‚The president himself came.‘

- intensifier either precedes or follows (interaction with inflection)

(20) Swedish

- själv-e chef-en var här
 INT-DEF boss-DEF was here
- chef-en själv-Ø var här
 boss-DEF INT-INDEF was here
 ‚The boss himself was here.‘

(21) Spanish

- llegó el presidente mismo
 arrived the president INT.MASC.SG
 ‚The president himself arrived.‘
- el mismo presidente lo dijo
 the INT.MASC.SG president it said
 ‚The president himself said so.‘

- difference in focus structure: preposed intensifier is preferred with double focus constructions (referent of the head NP is not given) and contrastive topics
 - are there phonological (metric) factors involved?
 - given vs. new discourse participants:
- (22) Imagínate, el MISMO presidente lo Dijo.
 imagine the INT president it said
 'Just imagine, the PRESident himSELF said so.'
- (23) ?Imagínate, el presidente MISMO lo dijo.
- (24) La mujer del presidente es más corrupta que *el presidente mismo*.
 the wife of.the president is more corrupt than the president INT
 'The president's wife is more corrupt than the president himself.'
- (25) ?La mujer del presidente es más corrupta que *el mismo presidente*.
- (26) La mujer del presidente es más santa que *el mismo Papa*.
 'The president's wife is holier than the Pope himself.'
- (27) ??La mujer del presidente es más santa que *el Papa mismo*.
- contrastive topics:
- (28) El esposo de Olga trabaja en Ur. *La misma Olga* trabaja en Ulm.
 the husband of Olga works in Ur the INT Olga works in Ulm
 'Olga's husband works in Ur. Olga herself works in Ulm.'
- (29) ??El esposo de Olga trabaja en Ur. *Olga misma* trabaja en Ulm.

3.3 Relationship to reflexive anaphors

- three possibilities:
 - a) intensifiers and reflexives are identical (=)
 - b) intensifiers and reflexives share morphological material/are related (~)
 - c) intensifiers and reflexives are formally differentiated (≠)

I. Complete identity (intensifier = reflexive)

(30) English

- a. The chancellor admires *himself*. (reflexive)
- b. The chancellor *himself* opened the meeting. (intensifier)

(31) Mandarin Chinese

- a. bùzhang zìjì huì lái huanyíng wǒmen (intensifier)
 minister INT will come welcome us
 'The minister himself will welcome us.'
- b. Laowáng bù xihuan zìjì (reflexive)
 Laowang not like REFL
 'Laowang does not like himself.'
 Daniel Hole, p.c.

II. Partial identity (intensifier ~ reflexive)(32) Dutch (*zelf/zichzelf*)

- a. de directeur *zélf* zal met ons praten
 the director INT will with us speak
 'The director himself will talk to us.'
- b. Jan zag *zichzelf*
 Jan saw REFL
 'Jan saw himself.'

(33) Ancient Greek (*autós/PRO-autós*)

- a. *autoì* páreisin
 INT.PL they.are.present
 'They themselves are present.'
 Bornemann & Risch (1987: 60)
- b. *sýnoida* *em-autō:*
 I.am.conscious.of me-INT.SG.MASC.DAT
 'I am conscious of myself.'
 Bornemann & Risch (1987: 172)

III. Differentiation (intensifiers ≠ reflexive)(34) German (*selbst/sich*)

- a. Hans *selbst* wird kommen
 Hans INT will come
 'Hans himself will come.'
- b. Hans bewundert *sich*
 Hans admires REFL
 'Hans admires himself.'

(35) Bambara (*yèrè/i*)

- a. *màsake yèrè* [yé ù fò]
 king INT welcomed.them
 'The king himself welcomed them.'
 Kastenholz (1998: 118)
- b. *à yé ì sīgi*
 he PAST REFL sit.down
 'He sat (himself) down.'
 Kastenholz (1998: 118)

- implicational connection: a reflexive marker that is identical to an intensifier is never (productively) used as a middle marker

3.4 Selectional restrictions

- intensifiers may or may not exhibit selectional restrictions with regard to their co-constituents
- these restrictions are in accordance with the animacy hierarchy:

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

- no restrictions:

(36) Amharic

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

- only animate referents:

(37) Chalcatongo Mixtec

a. *màà baká* *nixáʔni* *seʔe*
 INT cow killed offspring
 ‚The cow itself killed its offspring.’

b. **ndaʔa nuè* *ndíká* *uà,* *pero máá* *ndíká* *bĩšǐ*
 peel PREP banana bitter but INT banana sweet
 ‚The peel of the banana is bitter, but the banana itself is sweet.’

- nouns denoting locations or abstract properties behave differently from concrete NPs in French:

(38) French (*même* vs. *lui-même*, *elle-même* etc.)

- À Paris *même*, il est devenu très difficile de se loger.
- Hillu Schröder est la beauté *même*.
- Le président *lui-même* nous recevra.

- asymmetries between 1st, 2nd and 3rd person in English:

(39) English

- As for myself, I won't be invited.
- ?As for yourself, you won't be invited.
- *As for himself, he won't be invited.

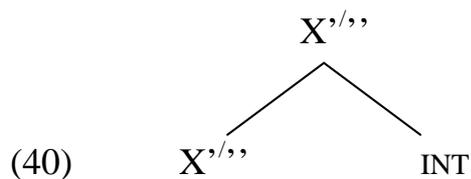
4 To what lexical category do intensifiers belong?

- pronouns? (often found in reference grammars of English)
- focus particles? (König 1991, Siemund 2000)
- quantifiers?
- proposal: we separate distributional from morphological criteria in determining word class membership
- **intensifiers 'borrow' the morphological make-up from other word classes but have a distribution of their own**
- therefore: intensifiers are

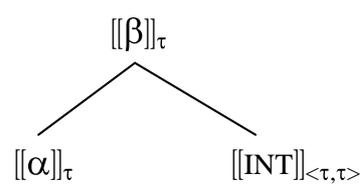
PARASITIC CROSS-CATEGORIAL OPERATORS

- *operators*: concerns the *interpretation* of intensifiers; they denote functions (not terms)
- *cross-categorial*: relates to the *distribution* of intensifiers; they interact with constituents of various syntactic types (semantically, they take different types of arguments)
- *parasitic*: describes the morpho-syntactic behaviour of intensifiers: intensifiers 'disguise as' elements from other major word classes (e.g. adjectives, relational nouns) without having the relevant distribution
- e.g.: the Spanish intensifier *mismo* looks like an adjective, but has a distribution of its own (e.g. *él mismo* 'he himself' but not **él alto* 'he tall')
- the distribution of intensifiers (cross-categorial):

syntactically:



semantically:



5 Major types of intensifier

5.1 Adjectival intensifiers

- intensifiers that exhibit the morpho-syntactic behaviour of adjectives
- Span. *mism/o* and Italian *stesso/a*: gender and number agreement
- Russian and Polish *sam-*: number, gender and case inflection
- similar: Ancient and Modern Greek (*aut-* and *idhio-*, respectively), Lithuanian (*pat-*)
- Swedish *själv-*: definiteness, number and gender

(41) Russian

My govorim s [sam-im avtor-om]
 we talk with INT-INSTR.MASC.SG author-INSTR.MASC.SG
 ‘We are talking to the author himself.’

(42) Swedish

[Barn-et själv-t] sa ingenting
 child-ART INT-INDEF.NEUT.SG said nothing
 ‘The child itself said nothing’
 Holmes & Hinchliffe (1994: 146)

- adjectival intensifiers seem to be restricted to Europe (areal feature?)
- never completely identical in form to reflexive markers, but often partial identity (Swed. *sig själv-*, Ancient Greek *he:-auto-*)
- no person inflection, generally no sortal restrictions, no asymmetries with regard to the type of the head NP

5.2 Invariant intensifiers

- look like adverbs or (focus) particles
- can be found all over the world
- Europe: German *selbst*, Dutch *zelf* and Frisian *sels*, Albanian *vetë*, Irish Gaelic *feín*, and Modern Breton *end-eun*
- elsewhere, from west to east: West Greenlandic *nammineq*, Mitla Zapotec *lagahk*, Bambara *yèrè*, Lingala *mókó*, Malayalam *tanne*, Hindi *aap*, Tukang Besi *alaʔa*, Riau Indonesian *sendiri*, Amele *dodoc* (cf. Gast et al. 2003)

(43) Mitla Zapotec

gižee xiääd [lagahk president]_{NP}
 tomorrow will.come INT president
 ‘The president himself will come tomorrow.’

(44) Bambara

[màsake yèrè]_{NP} yé ù fò
 king INT PAST them talk.to
 ‘The king himself talked to them.’

- various types of ‘source semantics’
- some invariant intensifiers are related to adjectives of token identity (e.g. German *selbst*)
- others indicate ‘precision of reference’ (‘exactly’, ‘precisely’) (Mitla Zapotec *-gahk*, Fulani *tigi*, Lingala *mpenjá*, Malagasy *mihitsy*, Koyraboro Senni *da*)
- third type: intensifiers deriving from expressions meaning ‘alone’ (Yiddish *aleyn*, Indonesian *sendiri*)

(45) Yiddish

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

(46) Riau Indonesian

a. mister *sendiri* yang kasi
 white.person INT REL give
 ,You yourself gave them to me.'

David Gil, p.c.

b. saya tembak *sendiri*
 I shot REFL
 'I shot myself.'

David Gil, p.c.

(47) Trumai

ha *falapetsi* ha make
 I do.alone I bite
 ,I bit myself.' (lit.: ,I did it alone I bit.')

Guirardello (1999: 326)

- invariant intensifiers are almost never completely identical in form to reflexive markers (exceptions: intensifiers of the Indonesian type)
- there are sometimes sortal restrictions (depending on the source semantics), but no major distributional gaps

5.3 Intensifiers with the make-up of relational nouns

- 'head-marking' languages (Nichols 1986) often have intensifiers that are, morpho-syntactically, relational nouns

(48) Abkhaz

à-jʁab *l-xatà*
 ART-girl POSS.3SG-INT
 'The girl herself.'

Hewitt (1989: 58)

(49) Turkish

müdiir-iin kendi-si bizim-le konuşacak
 director-GEN INT-POSS.3SG us-with will.talk
 ,The director himself will talk to us.'

(50) Modern Standard Arabic

al-mudir-u *nafs-u-hu* *sayastaqbiluna*
 ART-director-NOM INT-NOM-POSS.3SG will.welcome.us
 'The director himself will welcome us.'

- 'relational intensifiers' typically show person and number agreement and inflect for case if there is case inflection in the relevant language
- areal clusters:
 - Northern Africa/Middle East: Amharic *ras-*, Hausa *kâi-*, Hebrew *at-smo*, Malagasy *tena-*, Maltese *nifs-*, Persian *xod-*, Shona *-omènè*, Somali *naft-*, Swahili *-enye-we* etc.
 - Mesoamerica: Classical Nahuatl *-no?ma*, Chalcatongo Mixtec *máá-*, Tzotzil *-tuk*
- Europe: Finnish *itse-*, Hungarian *mag-*, Turkish *kendi-*)
- often complete identity with reflexive markers
- there are often sortal restrictions, but no major distributional asymmetries

5.4 Pronoun-like intensifiers

- intensifiers with the morphological make-up of pronouns; historically related to pronouns
- English *-self*, Kannada *taan-CASE-(n)ee*, Telugu *tan-ee*, Bagvalal *ewda*, Tsakhur *wuž-*, Lezgian *wic-*, Zoque *-ne?ki*, Armenian *ink'-*, Basque *-eu-* (1st/2nd person), and Latin *ipse*

(51) Kannada

intha janar-ige *tamage-nee* *naachike* *aagabeeku*
 such people-DAT ANPH.DAT-EMPH shame should.happen
 'Such people should themselves feel ashamed.'
 (lit.: 'To such people themselves shame should happen')
 Amritavalli (2000: 81)

(52) Telugu

maadhavi tan-ee *swayam-gaa* *ceesindi*
 Madhavi ANPH.NOM-EMPH INT-INSTR did
 ,Madhavi herself did it by herself.'
 Subbarao & Murthy (2000: 225)

- often completely identical in form to reflexive markers (e.g. English *-self*)
- combinations of reflexive + intensifier (looks like reduplication)

(53) Kashmiri

koorev sajoov *panun paan*
 girls.ERG decorated INT REFL
 The girls decorated themselves.
 Wali et al. (2000: 474)

(54) Tsakhur

rasul-e: wuž-e: wuž getu
 Rasul-ERG INT-ERG REFL.NOM beat

‘Rasul beat himself.’

Lyutikova (2000: 229)

- probably the class of elements where we find most morpho-syntactic asymmetries with regard to the category of the head NP
- in Basque, there are special stems for speech act participants (-*eu-* as opposed to third person *bera-*)

5.5 Some problematic cases

- French *même*: obligatorily combines with a pronoun when used in combination with (non-pronominal) animate head NPs (*le président lui-même* but not **le président même*), but there is no pronominal copy in other contexts (*dans l’oasis même* ‘in the oasis itself’; cf. above)
- Mandarin Chinese *zǐjǐ* is likewise difficult to classify; it occurs as a reflexive pronoun too, but does not have any specific morphological properties that would justify a categorization as a pronoun (e.g. no number inflection); etymology (‘nose’) suggests that it might likewise be a nouny element
- Japanese *jishin* takes either the position of a topic or case marker, or occurs in between the head NP and the topic/case marker (contrastive topic)

(55) Japanese

a. Taro-*jishin* kyouju-wo sonkeishiteiru
 Taro-INT professor-ACC honour
 ‘Taro himself will honour the professor.’

b. watashi-*jishin*-wa imanotokoro [himaga nai]
 I-INT-TOP in.the.moment [not.have.time]
 I myself do not have time now.
 Ogawa (1998: 169)

- similar: Korean *casin*; but *casin* may itself take case inflection and can therefore also be used in a pronominal function, especially in long-distance bound contexts

(56) Korean

a. Olga *casin*-eun Berlineso il ha(n)da
 Olga INT-NOM Berlin in works
 ‘Olga herself works in Berlin.’

b. John_i-i [Mary_j-ka *casin*_{i/j}-ul pinanhaysstako] sayngkakhanta
 John-NOM Mary-NOM REFL-ACC blamed think
 ‘John thinks that Mary blamed him/herself.’
 Son (2001: 1)

5.6 Non-parasitic intensifier constructions: prepositional phrases

- in many Western, Central and Southern African languages there are intensifier constructions that are syntactically prepositional phrases
- these constructions can be interpreted compositionally
- often, such ‘prepositional intensifier constructions’ are headed by a locative or instrumental preposition, and complemented by a (reflexive) pronoun or body-part term

(57) Podoko

ne?a na-ne [sləðabi popə [ba mudarə-mena]] la
 see.PST NEG-1PL disciple pope with INT-his NEG
 ,We didn’t see the cardinal himself.’ (lit.: ‘... the cardinal with his head.’)

(58) Yoruba

a kò rí kádínálì fúnraàrè
 we not see cardinal INT.POSS.3SG
 ,We did not see the cardinal himself.’ (lit.: ‘... the cardinal with his body.’)

- similar: Fulani (*bee hoore* ‘with head’), Kinyarwanda (*ub-POSS* ‘from/by-POSS’), and Wolof (*ci bopp-POSS* ‘with head-POSS’)
- prepositional intensifier constructions are never completely identical in form to reflexive markers, but often contain a reflexive marker; e.g. Yoruba (*fúnra-POSS*)
- there is often person and number agreement between the head NP and the prepositional complement (reflexive/body-part term)

6 Conclusions

- the morpho-syntactic and distributional properties of intensifiers do not go hand in hand
- intensifiers ‘as parasitic cross-categorical operators’: they share morphological and morpho-syntactic properties with other elements from major word classes without having the relevant distribution
- there are also ‘non-parasitic’ intensifier constructions (PPs)
- similar problems with other types of expressions (e.g. numerals)?

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