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Non-Canonical Reflexives

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The aim of this talk is not to give a comprehensive theory of these reflexives, but to **show the variety of constructions and functions** which fall outside the prototypical perception of *-self* forms in English. I will follow dual approach, noting both structure and function.

Some points on the distribution and functions of *-self* forms (non-exhaustive list):

- **Syntactic positions of *-self* form:** direct object; in PP (complement or adjunct); in complex NP (N *of/about -self*, mostly likenesses 'Picture NPs', coordinated NPs); IR (adjacent, post-aux, post-V); comparative constructions (*like -self*, *as adj as-self*, *adj-er than -self*, *some/anyone but -self*, *beside -self*); disjunct (bare *-self*, *as for -self*)...
- **Syntactic position of antecedent:** argument of the same predicate (typically subject); subject of super-ordinate clause; nominal in preceding clause; no linguistic antecedent
- **Function:** coreference; subjective point-of-view (logophoricity); comparison (emphasis, contrast, remarkability, unexpectedness, importance, prominence, centrality, inclusion, exclusion); politeness...

The canonical environment for *-self* forms (1-6) is taken to be the complement of a transitive verb, and referring to the subject (or, more marginally, another, preceding complement).

Accounts of reflexivity that focus on this configuration: Binding Theory, but by no means limited to it (from Jespersen 1933 to Reuland 2005; to the present).

Canonical [DO / IO coreferential with local antecedent, complementarity w/ pron]

1. **Ben_i** saw **himself_i** / him_k / someone / something
2. **Maggie_i** pinched **herself_i** / him_k / someone / something
3. **He_i** looked at **himself_i** / him_k / someone / something
4. **He_i** talks to **himself_i** / him_k / someone / something
5. **She_i** imagined **herself_i** / him_k / someone capable of heroism
6. **Peter_i** told **Frank_j** about **himself_{i/j}** / him_k / someone / something

Two significant properties characterize this distributional pattern:

- **Locality of the anaphoric relation:** *-self* and its antecedent occur within the same predicate ("clausemates"), the antecedent preceding *-self* and prototypically the S.
- **Complementary** distribution with pronouns: pronouns and *-self* in the same environment cannot refer to the same entity. Pronoun refers outside the local domain.

Non-canonical *Subj.-V- -self* Constructions

I.

The first set of data that diverges from this pattern (7-9) also involves ***-self* as the complement of a transitive V, coreferential with the subject**. These technically still conform to the expected syntactic restrictions.

The significant point is that *-self*, in these cases, **is not interchangeable with other NPs**, (full NP have different theta role wrt the verb; note no passive). **Pronouns** don't just show different reference, but **are completely ruled out**. This suggests that establishing coreference is not the primary function of *-self*.

The data lead to the question: what is the function of *-self* here? (Jespersen (1933) mentions "exertion", more intentional input of energy).

Subj V *-self* [transitive with different senses (no passive); local, *pronouns]

7. **You_i** enjoy **yourself_i** / *him vs. You enjoy a book / Bill

8. **You_i** repeat **yourself_i** / *him vs. You repeat text/it
 9. **You_i** prove **yourself_i** to be reliable / *him vs. You prove something

II.

The second set of data (10-14) also involves **-self coreferential with the local subject, here in a complement/adjunct PP of a V**.

In these examples, **-self** is **not interchangeable** with other NPs and pronouns in the same PP complement, or, for some verbs, only marginally so (compare *pull -self a chair/pipe* / *?pull him a chair* / **pull him a pipe*). Again, this pattern of distribution suggests that coreference is not the primary function of **-self** in these constructions.

The function of **-self** in these constructions remains a question (*think to non-self* is meaningless; awareness?).

Subj V -self [transitive only/mostly with -self; local, *pronouns]

10. **S_i** think to **-self_i** / *him_k / *Bill vs. think about NP
 11. **S_i** wonder to **-self_i** / *him_k / *Bill vs. wonder about NP
 12. **S_i** laugh to **-self_i** / *him_k / *Bill vs. laugh at NP
 13. **S_i** smiled to **-self_i** / ?him_k / ?Bill vs. smile at NP
 14. **S_i** pull **-self_i** a N / ?him_k / ?Bill vs. pull NP for NP

Non-local -self Environments

(Selected refs: Cantrall 1974; Kuno 1987; Zribi Hertz 1989; Levinson 1991; Reinhart & Reuland 1993; Huang 2000; Pollard 2005; Reuland 2005a,b for overview; Cohen *in prep.*)

In the next sets of data, the antecedent is **not necessarily local**, and **complementarity breaks down** (both **-self** and an equivalent personal pronoun can refer to the same antecedent).

Examples (15-19) involve **-self inside various complex NPs**: coordination and constructions known as picture NPs (prototypically, but not exclusively discussing a likeness of the referent: *picture/ statue/ reflection/ shadow of -self; book/ movie /article/ rumour about -self*). The important parameter is the embeddedness within a

NP rather than the semantic likeness (e.g., *conception/ surrender/ criticism/ hatred of -self*).

-Self in complex NPs, coordination [not always local, no complementarity]

15. **Max_i** boasted that the queen invited Lucie and **himself_i** for a drink. (R&R)
16. There was too much of everything in the banker's office, the banker's house. It all only emphasized the gap between Elizabeth and **himself**. (Hegi) [vs. him_i]
17. **He_i** had a huge office and every square inch of the walls was covered with pictures of **himself_i**. (Stern) [vs. him_i]
18. It seemed to **Blackie_i** that **she_i** had no control over anything, her life, her job, her emotions, and that in dying Henry Peverell had taken with him an essential part of **herself_i**. (P.D. James) [vs. her_i]
19. **He_i** had been dismayed to hear the word accent used in relation to **himself_i**, having always thought of it as something someone else had. (Levin) [vs. him_i]

A similar problem arises with **-self inside various PP** (frequently locative, but not always). Again, **complementarity breaks down** and the antecedent **is not necessarily local**.

-Self in PPs [not always local, no complementarity]

20. **She_i** shut the door behind **herself_i** [vs. her_i]
21. **He_i** pulled the blanket around **himself_i** [vs. him_i]
22. **His_i** voice sounded awkward to **himself_i** [vs. him_i]

There have been many attempts to explain these "problem" cases. Various syntactic configurations have been suggested, particularly modifying the definition of the "local" unit, the hierarchical structure involved and whether there are potential antecedents intervening (usually animacy-based) (selected refs: Reinhart & Reuland 1993; Pollard 2005; Reuland 2005a,b for overview). However, these cannot cover all locally-free cases, most notably cases with no explicit linguistic antecedent, or when it is several sentences away.

And again, there is the function to consider. The purpose of *-self* in these cases is not strict coreference (which can be handled by the pronoun).

To illustrate, let's look more closely at (23) from (Cantrall 1974), assuming the sentence describes a photo in which the standing women have their backs turned to the camera.

23. **The women_i** were standing in the background, with the children behind **themselves_i**. (Cantrall) [vs. them_i]

- In the pronoun version, the children of may be located 'behind the women' **from the viewpoint of the speaker/camera**, therefore in the background of the picture.
- In the *-self* version, the children are necessarily located 'behind the women' **from the point of view of the women**—that is, behind the women's backs, and consequently in the foreground of the picture.

So, although the two forms point to the same referent, they signal different information.

Many studies have shown that **locally-free -self forms** in both types of environments frequently **correlate with a subjective point-of-view of the referent**, physical, cognitive or emotional (Selected theoretical refs: Cantrall 1974; Kuno 1987; Zribi Hertz 1989; Cohen *in prep.*; Selected experimental refs: Burkhardt 2005; Runner *et al.* 2005; Runner *et al.* 2006). (Non-logophoric cases are illustrated in (47-50)).

24. **Miss Stepney_i's** heart was a precise register of facts as manifested in their relation to **herself_i**. (ZH/Wharton) [vs. her_i]
25. And that was exactly it, he_i thought, he_i really didn't care too much what happened to himself_i. (ZH/Highsmith) [vs. him_i]
26. Her acquaintances in Northam, **she_i** thought, would have considered such affection unnatural, and probably perverted, if not wholly insincere, and there was something in herself_i that could not help but suspect it. (ZH/Drabble)

To clarify, **subjectivity is not unique to reflexives**. Various other linguistic devices mark subjectivity: verbs of perception and thought (traditionally linked to

logophoric *-self*); spatial deixis and directional markers *here, there, come/go*; speaker oriented adverbs *frankly, apparently*; evaluatives *beloved, unfortunate, regrettably*. (Selected refs: Smith 2003; Speas & Tenny 2003; Reuland 2005b re *-self*).

The term logophoricity comes from the study of pronominal system of African languages.

In most analyses of reflexives, discourse factors such as POV are restricted to regulating the distribution of locally-free *-self* only. This leads us to a more theoretical question: **Should syntactic and discourse anaphora be distinguished and separate?** Should locally bound *-self* obey one set of (syntactic) rules and locally-free *-self* obey different (discourse) rules?

Intensive Reflexives: Comparison with Alternatives

(Selected refs: Edmondson & Plank 1978; Baker 1995; Kemmer 1995; König 1991; König & Gast 2006; Gast 2006; Cohen 2010/*in prep.*)

We move to a different type of construction: (27-29) show the reflexive known as “intensive” or “emphatic” reflexive.

27. **The judge_i himself_i** signed the papers.
28. **The judge_i** signed the papers **himself_i**.
29. **The judge_i** had **himself_i** signed the papers.

As evident from the examples, the intensives in English can appear in three positions in the sentence: the "post-nominal" intensive, (in 27) which immediately follows the antecedent, the "post VP" (28), and the post-auxiliary position (29).

Technically, these cases **easily conform to the canonical configuration**, as their antecedent is always local, either the subject or to the adjacent nominal. But, *-self* here is not a complement of the predicate in these cases and its primary function in these cases is **not coreference** of arguments in the sentence. Crucially, **no other NP can occupy these positions**.

A range of concepts have been brought up to try and account for the meaning of these forms (emphasis, contrast, remarkability, unexpectedness, importance, prominence, centrality, inclusion, exclusion, and comparison).

Putting aside the question whether IRs are distinct polysemous items or just one linguistic entity, one element is clearly common to all three: they **signal comparison of the referent against a set of alternatives** (implied in the context as in (27-29) or explicit as in (30-31)).

30. **Lucrezia_i** poisoned Lorenzo, and was **herself_i** poisoned by Cesare. [E&P]

31. Smith is taller than **Jones_i**, who is **himself_i** taller than my aunt. [E&P]

In this function, IRs are like focus markers (e.g., *even*, *only*, *alone*, *also*, *too*). The precise interpretation is highly context-dependent. The following examples display some of the various options as a result of this comparison.

32. How could the Pope talk of immortality when he knew **he_i** would die **himself_i**?

Inclusive implicature: others besides the Pope will die. [~also/too]

33. I can't baby-sit tonight. **I_i**'m going out **myself_i**. [~also/too]

Inclusive implicature: others besides the speaker are going out tonight

34. **I_i** solved the problem **myself_i**. [~alone]

Exclusive implicature: nobody else solved the problem (for me)

35. **Clinton_i** **himself_i** will vote for the republicans. [~even]

36. **Clinton_i** will vote for the republicans **himself_i**. [~even]

Additive: others besides Clinton will vote for the republicans.

Scalar: Clinton is a highly unlikely person (in the set) to vote for the republicans.

Several analyses classify locally-free *-self* as a special case of IR (selected refs: Baker 1995; König 1991; König & Siemund 2000; Gast 2006). But, there are arguments against this classification, at least with respect to subjective *-self*, particularly since the two

types produce distinct meanings (compare *behind the women themselves* in 23; for discussion, Cohen in prep ch.7.).

-Self in Comparative Constructions

Examples (37-41) show *-self* in explicit comparative constructions. The label "emphatic" has been used for these cases as well. Like the non-local NP/PP data above, *-self* in these constructions frequently signals a logophoric perspective.

Such cases are used to support the classification of subjective *-self* as a type of IR. But, looking more closely, the **comparative effect in these cases does not come from *-self***, but stems solely from the other linguistic marker. As such, **it remains constant when another NP is inserted** (*larger than Billy; apart from Jim...*).

Subjectivity in explicit comparative construction

37. Presently Tom checked his whistle. A stranger was before **him_i**--a boy a shade larger than **himself_i**. [Twain]
38. **Lucie_i** counted five tourists in the room apart from **herself_i**.
39. It wouldn't matter if **he_i** failed this time, for no one would know except himself_i. (Randell)
40. **He_i** [the shaman] chants loudly in an ancient language that few but **himself_i** understand. (BBC)
41. I think he's not as frightened as he should be because he imagines his father will somehow get him out of it in order to preserve his own dreams. He doesn't feel the guilt he should be because **he_i** barely thinks of Ada McKinley as the same species as **himself_i**. (Perry)

Yet another *-self* form under the label "emphatic" is prosodically prominent *-self* in any syntactic configuration, receiving contrastive intonation which signals a comparative 'alternatives' context. Note, however, that contrastive intonation is equally available to any nominal, and is in no way restricted to *-self*. In this case too, the comparative interpretation is constant when the stressed nominal is another NP and not *-self*. Therefore, **comparison in these cases does not stem from *-self***.

Disjunct -self

There are cases that show **a combination of comparison and subjectivity**, where both are triggered by the *-self* form.

Examples (42-43) illustrate bare *-self* in a disjunct position. It corefers to the subject of the same clause, whether preceding or following it. These bare reflexives are not interchangeable with other NPs, assuming we maintain the same function (* *He always thinks it's rather neat, Bill*). This is another adverbial position (cf., *frankly, personally*).

In contrast, the *as for NP* construction (44), although also a disjunct, should probably be classified with the previous set, where comparison is triggered by other devices (cf. *as for Bill, he doesn't need to know*).

Disjunct [subjectivity, comparison]

42. Do you think my handwriting is awful? **I** always think it's rather neat, **myself**. (Sayers)
43. I've given that point of view a great deal of thought, Inspector. Celia was well liked here. **I'd** say, **myself**, it was not a personal matter at all which brought about her end. (Christie)
44. If I find anyone who needs it I'll be sure to recommend it. **As for myself**, I don't need it.

Non-local 2nd person -self : Politeness

Examples (45-46) show 2nd person *-self*, that show no complementarity (*you* is acceptable for the same referent). The contrast between the two suggests that *-self* is used here as an honorific, for increased politeness. These are the same locally-free structural configurations that trigger subjectivity in other *-self* forms.

45. I only printed one copy so please circulate it among **yourselves**. (Y. Falk p.c.)
46. Was he a surgeon like **yourself**? (Jack the Ripper, ITV)

Locally-free, non-subjective –self [comparative]

47. 'The first news that reached me of **her**,' he [Colonel Brandon] continued, 'came in a letter from **herself**, [Eliza Williams] last October.' (Baker ex. 9e)
48. But at the same time, she could not help thinking that no one could so well perform it as **himself**. (Baker. 9g)
49. If **Cassandra** has filled my bed with fleas, I am sure they must bite **herself**. (Baker ex. 9i)

Locally-free, non-subjective –self [non-comparative]

50. "It was a face that he remembered from childhood. Upstairs in her room, stuck casually into the edge of a looking glass, was the faded photograph of **herself** and her dead fiancée taken in 1916. Dalglish thought of it now. (PD James)

In Conclusion:

Much of the literature on reflexives groups non-canonical *-self* forms **under two labels: emphatic and logophoric**.

The variety presented here shows, at the very least, that these labels cover a range of distinct constructions. And this is by no means an exhaustive presentation.

Of the two central properties—locality and complementarity with pronouns—

- many constructions do not require locality (or complementarity);
- even more constructions show no complementarity even when showing locality. The latter can be distinguished into three types:
 - $\sqrt{\text{pron}}_i$ pronouns allowed with the same reference as *-self*.
 - ***Pron** pronouns excluded entirely
 - ***NP** NPs not interchangeable; *-self* not in NP environment.
- ***-self* / pron are not co-extensive in either distribution or function.**
- The Major functions: marking **coreference**, marking **subjectivity** and marking **comparison** with a set of alternatives, in isolation or in combinations.
- Note that all *-self* forms, regardless of function and position, require some reference resolution—in the most basic sense, that some referent must be assigned. But **there is no necessary correlation between the environments noted above and any specific function** (e.g., subjectivity is neither necessary in

√pron; environments nor limited to them; contra Neo-Gricean analyses: Levinson / Huang)

- Cross-linguistically, the same functions are frequently realized by forms that are related to reflexivity, although not necessarily converging on the same morpho-phonological form. Convergence of some functions, synchronically and/or diachronically, is a frequent cross-linguistic pattern (on diachronic analyses of English *-self*, cf. Keenan; Van Gelderen; on diachronic convergence of IR and coreference, cf. König & Siemund).
- The precise definition of anaphora becomes important here. A restricted definition limited to a linguistic antecedent leaves part of the *-self* patterns noted above outside the domain of anaphora, given that all *-self* forms, regardless of function and position, require some reference resolution. (the same is true, even more so, for personal pronouns, that are canonically 'non-local').

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