

Grammatical Change

Origins, Nature, Outcomes

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A new perspective on the historical development of English intensifiers and reflexives

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6.1 Reflexives and intensifiers in Old and Modern English

Modern English stands out from the rest of the Germanic languages with respect to reflexivity and intensification. First, it only has one kind of reflexive, a morphologically complex expression of the form pronoun+*self*, as in (6.1). Second, the reflexive is identical to the adnominal intensifier, as a comparison between (6.1) and (6.2) shows.

(6.1) The king_i excused **himself**_i

(6.2) The king **himself** came to the meeting.

The other Germanic languages have two types of reflexives: a morphologically simple one (e.g. German *sich*, Danish *sig*, Dutch *zich*), and a complex one (e.g. German *sich selbst*, Danish *sig selv*, Dutch *zich zelf*). The adnominal intensifier is a simple *self*-form (e.g. German *selbst*, Danish *selv*, Dutch *zelf*).

In contrast to Modern English, and similarly to the rest of the modern Germanic languages, Old English had a simple *self*-type adnominal intensifier, that is *sylf* ‘self’, see (6.3).

(6.3) *þæt þe hæðenan selfe hæfdon his*
 that the pagans self.NOM.PL held his
wundur... [Mart2.150; c875]
 miracles... (Keenan 2003b: 9b)

‘that the pagans themselves held his miracles (in the greatest honor)’

But unlike the modern Germanic languages, Old English had no specialized reflexives. Instead, it used personal pronouns for reflexive readings. Sentences such as (6.4) were ambiguous: The pronoun *hine* ‘him’ could be interpreted as disjoint in reference from, or as having the same referent as, the subject of the sentence.

- (6.4) *hine*_{i;j} *he*_i *bewerað mid wæpnum* [ÆGram 96.11]
 him he defended with weapons (Siemund 2000: 2.44)
 ‘He_i defended himself_i/him_j with weapons’

Personal pronouns with a reflexive interpretation were found even with predicates that do not take reflexives in Modern English (see (6.5)). Such predicates (that can be called *inherently reflexive*) require simple reflexives in a number of modern Germanic (and other) languages, see the German examples in (6.6).

- (6.5) a. ... *ðæt ðu ðin scamige, Sidon* [CP 52.409.33]
 that you-NOM you-ACC shame Sidon (= Siemund 2000: 2.54a)
 ‘... that you be ashamed, Sidon.’
- b. *he gereste hine on ðone seofopan dæg* [Genesis 2.2]
 he rested him-ACC on the seventh day (= Siemund 2000: 2.54c)
 ‘He rested on the seventh day.’
- (6.6) a. *Peter schämt sich / *sich selbst.* German
 Peter shamed REFL / REFL self
 ‘Peter is ashamed.’
- b. *Peter erholte sich / *sich selbst.* German
 Peter rested REFL / REFL self
 ‘Peter rested.’

These observations naturally lead to the following questions concerning the changes in the systems of intensifiers and reflexives, which took place between Old English and Modern English.

- (6.7) a. Why did specialized reflexives emerge?
 b. Why did the newly developed reflexives take the form of pronoun+*self* (e.g. *himself*)?
 c. Why did the intensifier change from *self* to pronoun+*self*?
 d. Why were reflexive object pronouns lost with inherently reflexive (but not other) predicates?

In this chapter we propose a new approach to the historical change of reflexives and intensifiers in English, which answers all the questions in (6.7). In particular, we propose that the change began with a class of predicates that we call *anti-reflexive* (e.g. *suspect, succeed, cheat*). These are predicates whose meaning is incompatible with, or strongly disfavorable to, reflexive scenarios. Because of this, alternatives to their reflexive object need to be evoked, which could be accomplished through contrastive focus or through the adjunction of an intensifier to the object pronoun. Pronouns in

Old English became increasingly phonologically weak, hence unable to bear stress, and thus, increasingly, intensification was the option of licensing a reflexively interpreted object pronoun with anti-reflexive predicates. Structures such as [[pronoun] *self*] were reanalyzed as a phonologically null reflexive intensified by pronoun+*self*, i.e. [[\emptyset] pronoun+*self*]. In other words, the newly emergent reflexives in Old English were not expressions of the form pronoun+*self* but null pronouns. The particular form of the new intensifier is directly predicted to be pronoun+*self* and not anything else. The appearance of loss of object pronouns with inherently reflexive predicates also immediately follows—the reflexively interpreted object pronouns were replaced by zero reflexives.

6.2 Brief summary of previous accounts

Any comprehensive analysis of the diachronic changes in the Old English pronominal system needs to account for all the changes listed in (6.7). Nevertheless, as discussed below, all existing analyses fail to provide answers to one or more of these questions. The history of English intensifiers and reflexives has remained a puzzle. Here we can only outline the main claims of the previous analyses, but these should suffice to clarify what the similarities and differences with our proposal are.

6.2.1 Disambiguation accounts

A number of previous analyses (Siemund 2000; König and Siemund 1999, 2000) are based on the idea that the need to disambiguate between reflexive and disjoint reference interpretations of pronouns with potential local antecedents (e.g. (6.4)) is the reason for the rise of specialized reflexives (a partial answer to (6.7a)). The simple intensifier *self*, attached to the pronoun, allegedly played such a disambiguating role: Pronoun+*self* was interpreted as reflexive whereas an unintensified pronoun was interpreted as disjoint in reference from co-arguments (and arguments of ECM predicates). As the sequence of pronoun+*self* came to be associated with reflexive readings exclusively, the new complex reflexives were created, which have persisted until Modern English (cf. (6.7b)). The unintensified pronouns, on the other hand, gave rise to the Modern English pronouns, which show locality effects in binding.

While disambiguation accounts of this type seem at first rather intuitive, they nevertheless fail to provide answers to (6.7c) and (6.7d), and also a complete answer to (6.7a). It is difficult to see why the use of the intensifier *self* as a disambiguation device should have an effect on its form. Hence the change of the adnominal intensifier from *self* to pronoun+*self* remains a mystery. Furthermore, on this account, inherently reflexive predicates (cf. (6.5)) are expected to either take objects of the form pronoun+*self* (the new reflexive) or to retain the simple pronoun (the old

reflexive), given that no disambiguation was necessary. That object pronouns were lost altogether with inherently reflexive predicates remains completely unexplained. Finally, disambiguation accounts cannot explain why the changes started in the first place (cf. (6.7a)). The need for disambiguation has presumably always existed. What played a disambiguating role before the intensifier started to? What triggered the start of the use of the intensifier in that role?

6.2.2 *Adjacency accounts*

According to the adjacency accounts (Farr 1905; 1985; Keenan 2003a, 2003b), Old English structures such as (6.8) (cf. (6.9)),¹ where a floated subject-intensifier *self* immediately followed a reflexively interpreted dative pronoun, were the source for a new form pronoun+*self*, as in (6.10). Crucially, the nominative intensifier *self* and the dative pronoun did not form a constituent, prior to the reanalysis; they were simply linearly adjacent. What allowed the reanalysis was the fact that the dative pronoun was not obligatory.

(6.8) ...Subject. Pronoun.DAT Intensifier.NOM Verb...

(6.9) *þæt he him seolf ær getimbrade*
 that he.NOM him.DAT self.NOM earlier built [Bede 208,14]
 (Keenan 1996; van Gelderen 2000: 32)
 ‘that he himself earlier had built for himself.’

(6.10) [pronoun.DAT] [*self*.NOM] → [pronoun *self*]

The new form pronoun+*self* is said to inherit the pronominal and the intensifier functions of its parts, that is it could be used both as a reflexive and as an intensifier. This is then claimed to partially explain why the intensifier changed from simple *self* to pronoun+*self* (cf. (6.7c)): A new intensifier came into existence and it replaced the old intensifier. The creation of a new pronoun, pronoun+*self*, created the opportunity for disambiguation between reflexive and disjoint reference readings. The new pronoun started to be associated with reflexive uses (cf. (6.7a) and (6.7b)) and bare pronouns began to be used anti-reflexively, that is in cases of disjoint reference.

While the adjacency accounts provide some answers to (6.7a), (6.7b), and (6.7c), they still fail to explain why the loss of pronouns had to occur with inherently reflexive predicates (cf. (6.7d)). The trigger for the change is also unexplained: Presumably environments such as (6.8) have always existed. Why did then the reanalysis in (6.10) occur when it did? Furthermore, it remains to be shown how common morphological

¹ More examples of this type can be found in Mitchell (1985: I:194–6, §§488–491, and also in Penning (1875: 22–4) and Farr 1905: 26–8). The latter are referred to in Mitchell (1985: I:195, §488).

fusion of syntactically unrelated elements is, and how likely it is for such a fusion to drive a large-scale syntactic change. Keenan (2003a,b) discusses another case of adjacency-based reanalysis of non-constituents, namely the formation of *what(so)ever* from the syntactically unrelated *what*, *so*, and *ever*. This change, however, appears to be confined to the particular expressions formed, that is it has no consequences for the syntax of *wh*-clauses beyond the introduction of a new *wh*-pronoun. Neither does the new expression drive out and replace the ones from which it was formed, the way pronoun+*self* is said to take over the function of the old reflexive and intensifier.

6.2.3 Nominalization account

According to van Gelderen (2000), the loss of case in adjectives results in the reanalysis of *self* from an adjective to a noun. Structures such as [[pronoun] *self*], with *self* as a modifier, are reinterpreted as [[_D pronoun] [_N *self*]], and a new pronominal is created. Because *self* has no person or case features, the new pronoun is reflexive (cf. (6.7b)). The assumption here is that underspecified ϕ -features can make a pronoun an anaphor. Another property that can render a pronoun anaphoric is said to be inherent case. In fact, inherent case is said to be what enables Old English pronouns to function as anaphors. When inherent case is lost, pronouns become unable to function reflexively. This is what motivates the introduction of the newly created specialized reflexives (cf. (6.7a)).

While this account addresses the questions in (6.7a) and (6.7b), it remains silent with respect to (6.7c) and (6.7d). Thus, like all the other current analyses, it fails to provide a unified and comprehensive account of all aspects of the historical change of English intensifiers and reflexives.

6.3 An overview of a new proposal

In the remainder of this chapter we outline an analysis of the evolution of reflexives and intensifiers in English that answers all four questions listed in (6.7). We propose that the reflexively interpreted pronouns of Old English were replaced by phonologically null reflexives, and not by a new reflexive pronoun, pronoun+*self*. In this, we adopt a (modification of) Bergeton's (2004) treatment of Modern English (and Mandarin); see (6.11).

(6.11) a. Bergeton's (2004) analysis of Modern English:

- | | |
|---|--|
| b. [_{reflexive} \emptyset] | \approx <i>sig</i> (Dan), <i>zich</i> (Dutch), <i>sich</i> (German) |
| c. [_{intensifier} <i>himself</i>] | \approx <i>selv</i> (Dan), <i>zelf</i> (Dutch), <i>selbst</i> (German) |
| d. [_{intensifiedreflexive} \emptyset <i>himself</i>] | \approx <i>sig selv</i> (Dan), <i>zich zelf</i> (Dutch), <i>sich selbst</i> (German) |

Bergeton proposes that the English counterpart of the simple reflexives in the other Germanic languages (e.g. German *sich*, Danish *sig*, Dutch *zich*) is a phonologically null reflexive. The pronoun+*self* form (e.g. *himself*) is an intensifier (like German *selbst*, Danish *selv*, Dutch *zelf*) that can also be added to simple reflexives (e.g. \emptyset *himself*), to form expressions analogous to the intensified reflexives in the other Germanic languages (e.g., German *sich selbst*, Danish *sig selv*, Dutch *zich zelf*). This account achieves a unification of the analysis of reflexives and intensifiers in Modern English and the other Germanic languages.²

With Bergeton's (2004) idea in consideration, question (6.7b) can now be rephrased as in (6.12).

(6.12) Why did the newly developed reflexives take the form of \emptyset ?

The answer to question (6.7d) also immediately follows. The pronominal objects of inherently reflexive predicates in Old English (cf. (6.5)) are reflexive, and when the reflexives become \emptyset , the illusion of pronoun loss with these predicates is created (cf. (6.7d)).

- (6.13) a. *On six dagon God geworhte heofon and eorþan and on ðam*
 on sixth day God made heaven and earth and on day
seofþan he hine reste. [AB(792): Ex.31,16]
 seven he.NOM him.ACC rested Old English
 'On the sixth day, God made heaven and earth, and the seventh day, he rested.'
- b. *Ic ðonne reste.* [AB(792): Ps.Th.54,6]
 I.NOM then rested Old English
 'I then rested.'

Adopting another idea of Bergeton (2004), we propose that predicates that are semantically incompatible with, or pragmatically unfavorable to, reflexive scenarios—what can be called *anti-reflexive* predicates—require that a set of focus-alternatives be evoked to their reflexive object. This can be accomplished through intensifier adjunction (see (6.14) and (6.15)).

- (6.14) *swa þe swica þe bi-swikeð hine seolfe on-ende* [LAMBET, 25.110]
 as the cheat who deceives him self in-the.end <1150–1250>
 'as the cheat who deceives himself in the end' PPCMEI

² The idea that German *selbst*, Danish *selv*, Dutch *zelf*, etc. are intensifiers, and not reflexivizers, in so-called complex reflexives (e.g. German *sich selbst*, Danish *sig selv*, Dutch *zich zelf*) is also found in König and Siemund (1999) and Kiparsky (2002a). For related ideas see Zribi-Hertz (1995). None of these authors makes the proposal that English reflexive *himself* is actually a zero reflexive intensified by *himself*.

- (6.15) *ic þa sona eft me selfum andwyrde* [PC, 4.22]
 I then soon after me.DAT self.DAT answered (van Gelderen 2000: 51)
 ‘I soon answered myself’

We assume that a similar, though not the same effect of evoking alternatives, can be achieved through contrastive focus on the reflexive object. For instance, when French *soi* ‘him’ occurs with anti-reflexive predicates, it either requires stress or intensification by *même* ‘same’, in order to be interpreted reflexively. The same is true for German as well, where *sich* is stressable, so intensification by *selbst* is not required. This contrasts with Danish and Dutch where simple reflexives cannot be stressed, and hence need intensification by *self* in anti-reflexive contexts, as well as other contexts where focus is required.

We suggest that at a certain point in history, Old English pronouns became phonologically weak clitics, that is unable to bear stress. Therefore, the only way anti-reflexive predicates with reflexive objects could be licensed was through the addition of the intensifier *self*. Unintensified pronouns in anti-reflexive contexts thus came to be associated with non-reflexive, disjoint reference readings. This change was conditioned by the grammar of intensification and the phonological weakness of the pronouns. Speakers had the implicit knowledge that reflexive interpretations of anti-reflexive predicates obligatorily involve intensifier adjunction or contrastive stress, and in the absence of either, they posited a new meaning for the pronouns.

Once speakers have assumed that unintensified pronouns in anti-reflexive contexts are non-reflexive, sequences of reflexively interpreted pronoun+*self* in such contexts have to be reinterpreted. The overt pronominal form was reanalyzed as part of the intensifier; see (6.16b).

Presumably, the fact that the pronoun was phonologically weak facilitated this reanalysis.

- (6.16) a. antecedent_i ... anti-reflexive predicate [**pronoun**_i [_{intensifier} *self*]]
 old grammar
 b. antecedent_i ... anti-reflexive predicate [\emptyset _i [_{intensifier} **pronoun+self**]]
 reanalysis

In other words, a new intensifier pronoun+*self* is posited (cf. (6.7c)), and so is a new reflexive pronoun \emptyset (cf. (6.7a)). The new intensifier and the zero reflexive are born together, so to speak. An alternative reanalysis (cf. (6.17b)), is not chosen, because the grammar of intensification dictates that an intensifier is needed in anti-reflexive predicates with reflexive objects (in the absence of contrastive focus).

- (6.17) a. antecedent_i ... anti-reflexive predicate [**pronoun**_i [_{intensifier} *self*]]
 old grammar
 b. antecedent_i ... anti-reflexive predicate [**pronoun+self**]_i
 *alternative reanalysis

In summary, we posit the three changes listed in (6.18) and (6.19). We remain agnostic about whether Modern English has also undergone a further change from a zero reflexive to a new pronoun+*self* reflexive, as in (6.18c):³

(6.18) Reflexive

- a. pronoun \rightarrow ₍₁₎ phonologically weak pronoun
- b. phonologically weak pronoun with reflexive interpretation \rightarrow ₍₂₎ \emptyset reflexive
- c. (\emptyset reflexive \rightarrow ? pronoun+*self*)

(6.19) Intensifier

- self* \rightarrow ₍₃₎ pronoun+*self*

This analysis provides a new perspective on the question of intensification and reflexivity in the history of English and it successfully explains all the changes listed in (6.7). However, it is still not a complete account. In particular, we don't know why the first change (\rightarrow ₍₁₎ in (6.18a)) came about, but cross-linguistically, it is a very common kind of change, and hence, a natural thing to posit. Moreover, as we discuss in Section 6.4, pronouns in Old English are believed to be syntactic clitics (at least in the environments where one can tell), so the change is natural from that perspective as well. We also do not discuss the details related to the case forms of the newly created complex pronoun+*self* forms, that is *myself* vs. *himself* (see Keenan 1996, 2003a, b; Ogura 1989; Siemund 2000; van Gelderen 2000 for more discussion of the role played by case). Finally, while we do indicate the relative timing of different changes, at this point we do not provide a precise time-course of all the interrelated changes.

6.4 Further details and evidence for the proposal

6.4.1 Predicate meaning and intensification

Bergeton (2004), inspired by Zribi-Hertz (1995) and König and Siemund (1999), shows that predicates fall into three classes based on their compatibility with reflexive scenarios, and that this division predicts the distribution of intensified (*sig selv*) and unintensified (*sig*) reflexives in Danish (among other languages); see (6.20)–(6.21) and the illustrations in (6.22), (6.23), and (6.24).

³ One reason to think that the change in (6.18c) may be under way in English is that in ECM environments a zero reflexive is precluded. Semantically, these should behave like the neutral predicates (e.g. *wash*).

(i) Peter considers *himself*/* \emptyset lucky.

- (6.20) a. Anti-reflexive predicates require an intensifier to be added to the reflexive.
 b. Neutral predicates may or may not add an intensifier to the reflexive.
 c. Inherently reflexive predicates prohibit intensifiers.
- (6.21) Distribution of nominal expressions with different predicates:
- a. Anti-reflexive *sig / sig selv / DP
 b. Neutral sig / sig selv / DP
 c. Inherently reflexive sig / *sig selv / *DP
- (6.22) Anti-reflexive predicates (Danish):
- a. *Peter mistænker *sig / sig selv / Marie.*
 Peter suspects *REFL / REFL-self / Mary
 ‘Peter suspects himself / Mary.’
- b. *Peter misunder *sig / sig selv / Marie.*
 Peter envies *REFL / REFL-self / Mary
 ‘Peter envies himself / Mary.’
- (6.23) Neutral predicates (Danish):
- a. *Peter vasker sig / sig selv / bilen.*
 Peter washes REFL / REFL-self / car.the
 ‘Peter washes himself / the car.’
- b. *Peter forsvarer sig / sig selv / Marie.*
 Peter defends REFL / REFL-self / Mary
 ‘Peter defends himself / Mary.’
- (6.24) Inherently reflexive predicates (Danish):
- a. *Peter skammer sig / *sig selv / *Marie.*
 Peter shames REFL / *REFL-self / *Mary
 ‘Peter is ashamed of himself / Mary.’
- b. *Peter hviler sig / *sig selv / *Marie.*
 Peter rest REFL / *REFL-self / *Mary
 ‘Peter rests *himself / *Mary.’

Neutral predicates are predicates that can be freely used to describe both other-directed⁴ activities and self-directed activities (e.g. washing, drying, etc.). Hence, they can be found both with simple reflexives and intensified reflexives. In the latter cases, the presence of the intensifier has to be licensed by contextually triggered focus (e.g. for reasons of contrast, emphasis, etc.) see Bergeton (2004).

⁴ The term “other-directed” is from König and Siemund (1999).

In the case of anti-reflexive predicates, it is the semantics of the predicate which triggers intensification of simple reflexives. These predicates are other-directed; that is, they presuppose non-identity of subject and object. For this reason intensification is necessary so that the reflexive reading can override the non-identity presupposition. Here, we cannot offer a complete justification for this analysis, but see Bergeton (2004) for details. The point we wish to make is that the distribution of intensified and unintensified reflexives in both Old English and Modern English is influenced by predicate meaning in the same way it is in Danish.

A search through the Brooklyn Corpus of Old English (Ruef, B. et al., 2004) and the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME1) (Kroch and Taylor 1995) for select inherently reflexive predicates (*rest, dread, rejoice*) did not reveal any with an intensifier (cf. (6.20c)). The fact that *self* forms do not appear with inherently reflexive predicates thus contradicts the standard view that pronoun+*self* serves as the new reflexive pronoun, a view shared by all previous accounts. If it did, we would expect to see it with inherently reflexive predicates (which take simple reflexives in the other Germanic languages), and we never do.

As expected, in the two corpora, neutral predicates like *dress, wash, bathe*, occurred with or without an intensifier; see (6.20b) (as in the modern Germanic languages).

- (6.25) a. *Heo wolde hi sylfe baðian* [ABS(63): Hml.S.20,48]
 she.NOM wanted her.ACC self.ACC bathe.INF
 ‘She wanted to bathe herself.’
- b. ...*heo baðað hi...* [ABS(63): Shrn.85,21]
 ...she.NOM bathed her.ACC
 ‘she bathed’

As for the anti-reflexive predicates, the generalization in (6.20a) also seems to hold in Old English. Keenan (1996) notes that there are at least ten verbs in Old English, with which a reflexively used object pronoun is always intensified: *kill, hang, destroy, scorn/renounce, castrate, slay, afflict/oppress, threaten/torture*. We would classify these as pragmatically anti-reflexive.

The above Old English facts thus clearly support Bergeton’s (2004) analysis of the relation between intensification and binding, and also our proposal that the history of reflexives and intensifiers in English is shaped by the requirements imposed by predicate meanings.

6.4.2 *The development of Ø reflexives*

The search through the Brooklyn Corpus of Old English and the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME1) revealed both pronouns (old grammar) and Ø reflexives (new grammar) with inherently reflexive predicates, see (6.26).

- (6.26) a. *eft he blisseð him* [ANCRIW, II.39.342]
 & again he rejoices him <1150–1250>
 ‘and again he rejoices’ PPCMEI
- b. *e hu ha blissið þeruore bituhe godes*
 & how they rejoice therefore between God’s
earmes. [HALI, 163.512]
 arms <1150–1250>
 ‘and how they rejoice therefore between the arms of God’ PPCMEI

Similarly, as expected, both locally-bound pronouns (old grammar) and \emptyset reflexives (new grammar) are found with neutral reflexive predicates, see (6.27).

- (6.27) a. ... *heo baðað hi* [ABS(63): Shrn.85,21]
 ... she.NOM bathed her.ACC
 ‘She bathed.’
- b. *Seldon heo baðian wolde* [AB(69): Bd.4,19]
 seldom she.NOM bathe would
 ‘She would seldom bathe’

The fact that inherently reflexive and neutral predicates without pronouns (cf. (6.26b), (6.27b)) are already attested in the early stages of Old English indicates that the change “phonologically weak pronoun \rightarrow (2) \emptyset reflexive” took place rather early in the history of English. The co-occurrence of expressions generated by the old and new grammar is the result of grammar competition, in the sense of Kroch (1989).

6.4.3 The development of the new intensifier

Our proposal holds that \emptyset reflexives and the new intensifier *himself* were created together (in the context of anti-reflexive predicates). Thus we would expect that *himself* could be used as an intensifier equally early. Indeed, we find examples of the new intensifier with DPs in Old English (see (6.28)).

- (6.28) a. *godd him-seolf seið þurh þe prophete* [HALI, 140.188]
 God him-self says through the prophet <1150–1250>
 ‘God himself says through the prophet’ PPCMEI
- b. *ich me-seolf smelle of þe swote iesu swottre...* [MARGA, 72.289]
 I my-self smell of the sweet Jesus sweeter <1150–1250>
 ‘and I myself smell from the sweet Jesus sweeter...’ PPCMEI

As expected we also find both simple and complex intensifiers in adverbial uses. However, cases of reflexively interpreted object pronouns intensified by the new complex intensifier appear not to exist. Perhaps this unexpected absence of attested instances of

him himself may be explained by a principle blocking the intensification of pronouns by adjunction of a complex intensifier composed of the same pronoun + *self*.⁵

Cross-linguistic evidence for such a principle can be found in French and Chinese. Like its English counterpart, the French intensifier changed from the simple form *même* ‘same’ to the complex form pronoun+*même*. In Modern French, archaic usages of the simple intensifier (e.g. (6.29a)) are still found alongside the productive forms with the complex intensifier (e.g. (6.29b)). Hence, one would also expect to find object pronouns being intensified with both the simple and the complex intensifier.⁶ However, this is not the case; see (6.29c–d).

(6.29) French	Chinese	Old English
a. DP <i>même</i>	a. DP <i>ziji</i> ‘DP <i>self</i> ’	a. DP <i>self</i>
b. DP <i>lui-même</i>	b. DP <i>ta ziji</i> ‘DP pronoun+ <i>self</i> ’	b. DP <i>himself</i>
c. <i>lui-même</i>	c. <i>ta ziji</i> ‘ <i>him self</i> ’	c. <i>him self</i>
d. * <i>lui lui-même</i>	d. * <i>ta ta ziji</i> ‘ <i>him him self</i> ’	d. * <i>him himself</i>

6.4.4 *The clitic status of pronouns in Old English*

Adopting the insights of van Kemenade (1987), Pintzuk (1991, 1993), Koopman (1997), and Fischer et al. (2000), we assume that Old English pronouns are syntactically clitics (or at least that they can be analyzed as such in several syntactic environments).⁷ Pronouns can occupy a special position in the clause, that is in front of the negation marker, as in (6.30a), while full nominal phrases follow the negation marker, as in (6.30b).

- (6.30) a. *Ne het he us na leornian heofonas to*
 Not ordered he us not learn heavens to
wyrce [ÆLS(Mem. of the Saints) 127]
 make (Fischer et al. 2000: 125)
 ‘He did not bid us learn to make the heavens’
- b. *Nis na se halga gast wuniende on his gecynde*
 Not.is not the holy ghost existing in his nature
swa he gesewen wæs [ÆCHom I, 22.322.17]
 as he seen was (Fischer et al. 2000: 125)
 ‘The holy ghost was not existing in his nature as he was seen’

The phonological weakness of pronouns is deduced on the basis of the distribution of the intensifier in cases when lexical stress is needed. Just like the simple reflexive in

⁵ Cf. Siemund (2000: 80ff) for a proposal along these lines.

⁶ Note that the form *him himself* is attested (albeit exceedingly rarely) in certain forms of Modern English, cf. Baker (1995), Siemund (2000), and Bergeton (2004). See also the discussion of intensified locally free object pronouns in Section 6.4.7 below.

⁷ See also Clark (2009).

Danish and Dutch,⁸ Old English weak pronouns were unable to host stress on their own and consequently needed to be reinforced through adjunction of the adnominal intensifier *self*.

Evidence for such “phonological strengthening” of reflexive and non-reflexive pronouns can be found in Old English where objects of phonologically weak prepositions, for example *to*, *of*, need to bear lexical stress. Since weak pronouns cannot be stressed on their own, reinforcement through adnominal intensification is required; see (6.31).

- (6.31) a. *heht hie bringan to him*
 commanded her.ACC bring to him.DAT
selfum [Genesis, 2628]
 self.DAT (van Gelderen 2000: 30)
 ‘ordered them to bring her to him’
- b. *for he wat ful wel he þe haeð iseiset me to*
 for he knew full well he that has seized me for
him-seolf [MARGA, 60.87]
 him-self <1150–1250>
 ‘for he knew full well, he that has seized me for himself’ PPCMEI

Conjuncts in coordination also need to have lexical stress. Again, intensification of weak pronouns by *self* is needed in such cases; see (6.32).⁹

- (6.32) a. *when þou has proved many þinges ... and knowes better*
 when you have proved many things ... and know better
þiself and God [ROLLFL, 101.315]
 yourself and God <1250–1350> PPCMEI
 ‘when you have proved many things and you know yourself and God better’
- b. *Godd Allmahhtiȝ ȝife us ... to cnawenn & to sen*
 God Almighty allows us ... to know and to see
himm sellfenn & hiss kinde [Orm H.19476; c1200]
 him self and his nature (Keenan (2003a: 27c))
 ‘God Almighty allows us to see him and his nature.’

As shown in (6.33), the phonological strengthening is needed for both reflexive and non-reflexive weak pronouns when they occur as focus associates.

- (6.33) a. ... *suelce we maran þearfe hæbben ðæt hie geðeon*
 ... as.if we more need have that they prpser

⁸ See Bergeton (2004) for discussion of adnominal intensification of simple reflexives triggered by the unstressability of phonological clitics.

⁹ As observed in Koopman (1997: 87), there are some exceptions to this rule, i.e. “coordinated object pronouns can be found but are not numerous”, e.g., his example (6.36).

ðonne hie selfe [CP, c880]
 than they selves.NOM.PL (Keenan 2003b: 10e)

‘as if we need more that they prosper than they themselves need’

- b. *And oðer bebod is þæt man lufige his nyhstan*
 and second command is that one love his closest.friend

swa hine sylfne. [WULF3, 181.105]
 as him self

‘And the second commandment is that you love your neighbor as yourself.’

In these cases too intensification of pronouns by *self* is needed so that stress can be realized. Intensification is not triggered by predicate meaning, as it also occurs with pronouns with disjoint reference.

6.4.5 *Pronoun+self forms in PPs*

As Keenan (2003a,b) and van Gelderen (2000) point out, reflexive pronoun+*self* forms spread much faster in complements to prepositions than in complements to verbs. This fact receives a natural explanation in our account. Both the phonologically reduced reflexives (in early stages of Old English), and the \emptyset -reflexives (in later stages of Old English) need to be intensified in PPs with phonologically weak prepositions (e.g. *to*, *of*) as they do not have lexical stress. There is no such need for intensification in complements to verbs where the verb hosting the cliticized weak pronoun or \emptyset -reflexive is able to carry the lexical stress. Sometimes, a conflict arises between the phonological requirement for an intensifier and the condition on inherently reflexive predicates; see (6.34).

- (6.34) a. We have a whole week before us / * \emptyset / *ourselves / *Mary.
 b. John has a lot of passion in him / * \emptyset / *himself / *Mary.

The predicates in (6.34) are semantically inherently reflexive. Hence, intensification is excluded since it would violate the contrastiveness condition on adnominal intensification, see (6.20) above. Since clitics are not allowed in PPs, the simple unintensified \emptyset -reflexive is not an option either. Consequently, the only forms allowed in such cases are simple pronouns.

In Modern French, the emphatic forms of the personal pronouns can carry stress on their own. Hence in these cases only semantic factors decide whether the simple or the complex form is required; see (6.35).

- (6.35) a. *Pierre est fier de lui / lui-même / Marie.* (cf. Zribi-Hertz 1995)
 Peter is proud of him / himself / Marie
 b. *Pierre est jaloux de *lui / lui-même / Marie.* (cf. Zribi-Hertz 1995)
 Pierre is jealous of him / himself / Marie

- c. *Pierre est hors de lui / *lui-même / *Marie de*
 Peter is outside of him / himself / Marie with
fureur. (cf. Zribi-Hertz 1995)
 rage

6.4.6 Person differences

One of the problems faced by the disambiguation account (and acknowledged by its proponents) is that it cannot explain why the fusion of *self* with pronouns happened also with 1st and 2nd person pronouns, given that no ambiguity exists there. An appeal to analogy in the paradigm (cf. Penning 1875: 13) is not in itself a formal explanation. Moreover, there are languages like Danish, where a specialized reflexive exists only for the 3rd persons, with the 1st and 2nd persons employing the same form that can both function as a disjoint-reference pronoun and as a reflexive.

- (6.36) a. *Jeg_i vaskede mig_i.* Danish
 I washed me
 ‘I washed.’
 b. *Sygeplejersken vaskede mig.* Danish
 nurse.the washed me
 ‘The nurse washed me.’

Danish also demonstrates another point. Even though a specialized reflexive exists for 3rd persons, and thus there is never any ambiguity (*sig* vs. *ham*), the intensifier *selv* is still obligatory with anti-reflexive predicates; see (6.22) above. Likewise, 1st and 2nd person pronouns are always intensified with anti-reflexive predicates, despite the fact that no ambiguity is possible in such cases; see (6.37).

- (6.37) a. *Jeg mistænkte ____.* a. **mig* b. *mig selv* Danish
 I suspected me me self
 ‘I suspected myself.’
 b. *Du mistænkte ____.* a. **dig* b. *dig selv* Danish
 You suspected you you self
 ‘You suspected yourself’

Van Gelderen (2000) illustrates that pronoun+*self* appeared first in the 3rd person. Our approach allows for such differences between persons, and even between individual pronouns, with respect to how far the change is advanced, as the individual pronouns may have become weak phonologically at different times.

6.4.7 Intensified object pronouns

As mentioned in Section 6.2 above, most existing accounts of the evolution of English pronoun+*self* forms assume that intensification of object pronouns serves to mark the

reflexive interpretation. But sentences like (6.38) clearly show that intensified object pronouns do not necessarily have to be interpreted as reflexives.

- (6.38) *Be dham cwædh se ædhela lareow sanctus Paulus: Ic wille dhæt ge sien wise to gode & bilwite to yfele. Ond eft be dhæm cwædh Dryhten dhurh hine selfne to his gecorenum: Beo ge swa ware sua sua nædran & sua bilwite sua culfran.*

[CP 35.237.18]

‘Therefore the noble teacher St Paul said: “I wish ye to be wise for good and simple for evil.” And again, the Lord spoke through **him** about the same thing to his elect: “Be cunning as adders and simple as pigeons.”’

(Siemund 2000: 2.47)

Rather than being a reflexive, the expression *hine selfne* in (6.38) is an intensified object pronoun composed of the accusative pronoun *hine* ‘him’ plus the adnominal intensifier *self*, also in the accusative. In this respect it is similar to *ihn selbst* ‘him himself’ in German and *ham selv* ‘him self’ in Danish, which are analyzable as object pronouns which have been intensified for various semantic or pragmatic reasons (e.g. focus, emphasis, contrast). Baker (1995) showed that many instances of locally free *himself* in Modern English should be analyzed as intensified object pronouns with a phonetically unrealized pronominal head.

- (6.39) Peter_i pointed out that the Republicans would look foolish if anyone except
- a. him_i
 - b. [him_i] himself
were nominated. (ex. adapted from Safir 1998)

Unlike frameworks in which *self* serves as a reflexivizing (cf. Reinhart and Reuland 1993) or disambiguating element, the analysis proposed here has no problems accounting for (6.38) and (6.39).

6.5 Conclusion

We outlined a new account of the historical development of English reflexives and intensifiers. The proposal provides answers to all four questions in (6.7), an advantage over previous accounts. It furthermore allows for a morphologically transparent system of intensification and binding to be maintained throughout the history of English. Furthermore, the proposal renders English no longer an exception to the general pattern of reflexives and intensifiers found in other Germanic languages.

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