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Where himself comes from

Una delle principali differenze tra l'inglese e le altre lingue germaniche riguarda il sistema riflessivo e gli intensificatori. Contrariamente a quanto accade nelle altre lingue germaniche, l'inglese possiede una sola forma per codificare sia l'anafora riflessiva sia l'intensificatore, ovvero *himself* (la 3^a persona singolare maschile rappresenta qui l'intero paradigma).

Le proprietà di *himself* non derivano dal sistema pronominale né dall'intensificatore anglosassoni. Si stabilizzano, invece, durante il tardo inglese medio per svilupparsi pienamente nel primo inglese moderno.

In questo articolo si cerca di fornire una spiegazione sia alla posizione particolare che l'inglese occupa nell'ambito delle lingue germaniche sia alle caratteristiche proprie di *himself* in termini di grammaticalizzazione. Si ritiene, infatti, che *himself* si sia sviluppata in un primo momento come espediente di disambiguazione in quei contesti in cui il semplice pronome personale sarebbe stato interpretato come marca di referenza disgiunta (ovvero con i predicati prototipicamente transitivi) e che successivamente si sia grammaticalizzata in marca di coreferenza, in modo alquanto simile a quello che avviene nelle lingue creole.

1. Introduction

Quite recently a great deal of attention has been paid to the English reflexive strategies, and more precisely to the complex reflexive anaphor *himself*, not only from a synchronic point of view (cf. Edmondson and Plank 1978; Langacker 1985; Everaert and Anagnostopoulou 1986; Bickerton 1987; Reinhart and Reuland 1993; Zribi-Hertz 1989 and 1995), but also in a diachronic perspective, especially among generative grammarians (cf. Kiparsky 1990; Keenan 1996; van Gelderen 2000). The main problem is to define how the distinction between 'pronominals' and 'reflexive anaphors' in Modern English (henceforth ModE) developed from the Old English (henceforth OE) situation in which personal pronouns marked both disjoint refer-

ence¹ and co-reference². Most studies link the development of *himself* to the OE pronominal system, and contend that it is the outcome of processes of reanalysis begun in the OE period.

However, the peculiar characteristics of English *himself* are not traceable back to OE, which is in harmony with its cognate languages and whose reflexive system closely resembles that of Present-Day Frisian³, but emerged during the Middle English (henceforth ME) period and were already established in Early Modern English (henceforth EmodE). Therefore we claim that the rise of *himself* is the response of the language to the need of more transparency and easier language-processing during the period of Early Middle English when “English was repressed” (Blake 1992a: 17) as a written medium and its domain was predominantly the spoken medium. The development of *himself* can indeed be accounted for in terms of grammaticalization.

After a brief discussion of some basic properties of intensifiers (Section 2) and a short presentation of the previous theories on the development and spread of the reflexive anaphor *himself* (Section 2.1), I will outline the development of reflexive anaphors as outlined in the literature (Section 3), including a brief look at the way in which innovations took place across time and space. This historical account will be followed (Section 4) by a discussion of the new question, how the predicate meaning has favoured and determined the rise of the new reflexive anaphor. To this purpose, I have collected a corpus of data derived from the *Helsinki Corpus*, the Old English Concordances, the Oxford Etymological Dictionary and some complete works (*Ælfric, The Sermons Catholici and Lives of Saints*; Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; Malory, *Le morte Darthur*; Wulfstan, *Homilies*). In Section 5 the historical data about the use of *himself* will be tested on the Overlap Model, i.e. a grammaticalization model. Section 6 then pre-

¹ Disjoint reference means that the referent of the personal pronoun is different from the subject of the sentence.

² Co-reference means that the referent of the personal pronoun coincides with the referent of the subject of the sentence.

³ In Present-Day Frisian the intensifier formally differs from the co-reference marker and simple pronouns are normally used reflexively, reinforced by the addition of the intensifier only when ambiguity may arise. The similarity between Frisian and OE is traceable back to their genealogy, both belonging to West Germanic languages and in particular to the so-called ‘languages of the North Sea’, together with Old Saxon (cf. Prokosch 1966, Poussa 2002).

sents a brief discussion of how my hypothesis about the direction and path of the grammaticalization process of the English reflexive anaphor finds support from the comparison with Creole reflexive systems and their diachronic development.

Such a comparison may shed light on some puzzling facts in the ModE system, which the grammaticalization hypothesis leaves unsolved: 1) why English has grammaticalized a reflexive anaphor from a combined expression pronoun + intensifier, while Frisian still preserves the same situation as OE, that is, plain pronouns do double duty, unless co-reference is unexpected and therefore marked; and 2) why English extends this new reflexive anaphor to all the persons of the pronominal paradigm, unlike its cognate Germanic languages.

2. *The meaning and use of intensifiers*

English employs the same element *himself* as intensifier and reflexive anaphor. In both cases it agrees with its antecedent in person, number and gender (see 1a-d). These two classes of function words are distinguished according to their syntactic position: intensifiers are used as adjuncts to noun phrases or verbs phrases, whereas reflexive anaphors occur in argument positions, i.e. as objects of verbs or complements of prepositions.

- 1 a The doctor himself took the other end [Mc Ewan *Atonement*, 291].
- b Everybody had said it was so from the porters [...] to Churchill himself [Mc Ewan *Atonement*, 315].
- c One last time he braced himself in front of the mirror [Mc Ewan *Atonement*, 90].
- d He imagined himself strolling on a smooth, rounded mountain summit [Mc Ewan *Atonement*, 138].

There seems to be general agreement (Moravcsik 1972, Edmondson & Plank 1978, König 1991, Primus 1992, Kibrik & Bogdanova 1995, etc.) that there are at least two main uses of intensifiers: as an adnominal intensifier, when it combines with a NP (see 1a-b) and as an adverbial one, when it is a part of a VP or some projection thereof (see 2a-b).

- 2 a I wash my clothes myself
- b She herself has taught her children.

According to König (1991), the most basic property of all intensifiers is that they associate a central focused referent (centre) with an entourage of possible alternative values (periphery). The property of relating the focus value to a set of possible alternative values derives from the fact that intensifiers are members of the class of focus particles. The way the alternative values are structured is peculiar to intensifiers: the set of alternatives (Y) is characterised as the periphery with respect to a centre constituted by the referent of the focus (X). König and Siemund (1999: 296) explain the relations between the centre and its set of alternatives as instantiated by one of four more specific relations:

- 3 a X has a higher rank than Y on a real-world hierarchy
- b X is more important than Y in a specific situation
- c Y is identified relative to X (kinship terms, part-whole, etc.)
- d X is a subject of consciousness, centre of observation, etc. (logophoricity).

The following examples show the perfect adequacy of the four conditions for the explanation of the different occurrences of adnominal intensifiers (see 4a-d).

- 4 a The Pope himself does not know what to do.
- b Most of the passengers suffered light injuries. The driver himself was killed.
- c Adam's wife was picking apples, Adam himself was peeling them.
- d He was not particularly tall, a little taller than Jemina herself perhaps ...

In all of the examples given above (taken from Siemund 2001), alternatives are brought into discussion by the intensifier: the Pope as opposed to his secretaries, his archbishops etc., the driver as opposed to the passengers, Adam as opposed to his wife, Jemina's perspective as opposed to the others' perspectives. The evoked alternatives are of a particular type, that is, they are extralinguistically or textually 'inferior' to the centre: in (4a) the intensifier evokes people inferior or subordinate to the Pope in the relevant professional or religious context; in (4b)

the driver is the centre or the most important person, in that the passengers are passive participants in the act of travelling and their destiny depends on the driver's action. In other words (4b) is a situation-specific variant of (4a). In (4c) Adam is the point of orientation for the referential identification of the NP *wife*; finally in (4d) a person becomes the centre since she is chosen as the centre of observation and narration. These four conditions are applicable primarily to the adnominal use, but partly also to the adverbial use of intensifiers.

In examples such as (2a) the referent of the focus of adverbial intensifiers is related to a periphery of alternative values: it is central in the sense of being the interested party of the action mentioned in the sentence. This kind of intensifier (exclusive) implies that nobody other than the agent (I) performed the action, that he did it without help and that, within the overall situation, he is regarded as responsible for the action. Its meaning can be paraphrased with 'alone', 'only'.

In examples with inclusive intensifiers such as (2b) – paraphrasable with 'also', 'too' – the centre-periphery distinction has to do with the property of being affected by a situation, which has already been mentioned, establishing the identity of the affected referent.

2.1. *Previous theories of the development of himself*

In OE the personal pronouns are UBEs (unbindable expressions) or endophoric expressions (Zribi-Hertz 1995): they can mark both disjoint reference and co-reference, as shown in examples (5a-b).

- 5 a heo nam hraþe hyre wæfels and bewæfde **hi** [ÆGen 24.65]
 'she took a veil and covered **herself**'
 b forþam hi ondreddon þæt hie **hi** fordon wolde [Chron E 1013]
 'because they were afraid that they would destroy **them**'

Diachronic linguists have been long debating how it is that ModE reflexive anaphor could originate from such a situation. Three are the main interpretative perspectives that have been proposed so far on the rise of the reflexive anaphor *himself*: 1) reanalysis of *him* 3rd pers. pron. + *self* as a noun; 2) reanalysis of *him* pleonastic + *self* intensifying the subject; 3) coalescence of *him* reflexive anaphor + *self* as a reinforcement.

One interpretative approach, proposed by Grimm and followed by Penning (1875), Brunner (1951) and more recently by van Gelderen (2000), considers *himself* to result from reanalysing *self* as a noun. More precisely van Gelderen (2000) observes that the change of *self* into a noun only takes place in Middle English, when nouns and pronouns tend to lose their inherent case. She further observes that *himself* is first attested with the 3rd person and later with the others. Accordingly *self* becomes necessary with the 3rd person pronoun in the first place, because the strength of its features (i.e. deictic force) prevents its anaphoric use: the addition of *self* should make it less referential. On the other hand, the weak features of the 1st and 2nd personal pronouns allow them to be used anaphorically. The reanalysis of *self* as a noun accounts for the so-called nominal series, i.e. *myself*, *yourself*, *ourselves*, *yourselves* which consist of the adjectival possessive form + *self*⁴. This view had already been rejected by Farr (1905), Mitchell (1985) and Keenan (1996). According to their hypotheses, the nominal series is simply due to vowel reduction in unstressed syllables (*miself* < *me self*). They argue that *himself* is the outcome of the re-interpretation of [pleonastic pronoun⁵] + [intensifier *self* (in the nominative case)] as a unit.

Both views leave questions unanswered: the first proposal does not account for the fact that the 3rd personal pronoun in all Indo-European languages has by its very nature a deictic force, that in OE there are already cases of *himself* as an intensifier without a pronominal focus, and that there is no motivation for an adjective to change to a noun; the second does not answer why *himself* replaces the OE reflexive system, why it extends to all persons and why everything takes place in the ME period and not before.

Moreover, such interpretations pay no attention to the meaning of intensifiers: König and Siemund (2000a) are an exception to this rule. On the basis of typological evidence, the authors contend that intensifiers can be the source of semantic change to reflexive anaphors. Rheto-Romance and Brazilian Portuguese, for instance, renovate, through the ad-

⁴ The other forms, namely *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *themselves*, are referred to with the term 'pronominal series'.

⁵ The term 'pleonastic pronouns' refers both to oblique forms of personal pronouns occurring with intransitive motion verbs, and to dative-case personal pronouns whose function resembles the 'dative of interest'. For more details see Mitchell (1985: 112-116).

dition of the intensifier, the category of reflexive clitics, affected by morphological erosion: Rheto-Romance *sez* (< * lat. *se* (reflexive anaphor) + lat. *ipsum* ‘self’) is now replaced by *sesez*, formed by *sei* + *sez* (e.g. *Jed vesel memez el spieghel* ‘I see myself in the mirror’); Brazilian Portuguese *ele se perguntou / ele perguntou-se* ‘he was asking himself’ has been reinforced by *ele perguntou-se a si mesmo* (‘self’) and, through the intermediate stage *ele perguntou a si mesmo*, replaced by *ele perguntou a ele mesmo*. Accordingly something similar may have happened in English: the ambiguous personal pronoun could have been reinforced by and later added to the intensifier *self*.

This hypothesis, however, does not explain how this happened and why *himself* appears as a reflexive anaphor for all the persons of the pronominal paradigm or why *himself* establishes itself throughout ME and EModE.

3. *The traditional explanation of the change from intensifier to reflexive anaphor in English*

OE has no special reflexive anaphor⁶. Besides its primary⁷ reflexive strategy, namely the simple personal pronoun, OE could resort to a secondary reflexive strategy: the intensifier *self* was added to the personal pronoun, to indicate unambiguously co-reference with the preceding subject (see 6a-b). This strategy was not frequent and occurred only in contexts where ambiguity could arise, namely with highly transitive predicates and human objects.

- 6 a Judas se arleasa þe urne Hælend belæwde for þam lyðran sceatte
þe he lufode unrihtlice **hine selfne** aheng. [Admon 1 9.25]
‘Judas the disgraceful who betrayed our Savior for that wicked
money that he loved unrighteously hanged **himself**.’

⁶ The only exception was the possessive pronoun *sin*, attested only in poetry and soon replaced by the genitive form of personal pronouns. According to Mitchell (1985) it was never attested in any prose texts from Alfred onwards.

⁷ Faltz (1985) in his typological study on reflexivization notices that languages never have only one strategy, but they usually have at least two, of which one (primary) is the most frequent and unmarked, morphologically simpler (either codified in the verbal morphology or a clitic), and the other (secondary) is used less frequently, in pragmatically and semantically marked situations, and is morphologically more complex (consisting of either an independent morpheme, pronoun or two segments).

- b Hannibal ... **hine selfne** mid atre acwealde. [Or 4 11.110.2]
'Hannibal killed **himself** with poison'

The OE intensifier *self/seolf/sylf* was used both adnominally and adverbially. In its adnominal use it occurred particularly in combination with expressions for God, Jesus, or the devil, i.e. with expressions for 'individuals' of high rank or great importance (cf. Farr 1905: 19), as shown in (7 a-b).

According to Keenan (1996), 71 out of 74 instances of *self* with nouns refer to a person of high rank. With pronouns, only 34 out of 77 instances refer to a person of high rank. The other cases are instances of centre-periphery contrast, which meet the conditions b, c and d of König and Siemund's relations in (3). In (7c) *self* picks out *þæs cyninges* as its antecedent, as *þæs cyninges* is the point of referential identification for *heall*. In (7d) *self* is due to the contrast between the subject of consciousness (the speaker, I) and the holy scriptures.

- 7 a and hwæt Crist **self** tæhte and his apostolas on þære niwan
gecyðnisse [ÆLet 4 1182]
'and what Christ **himself** and his apostles taught in the New
Testament'
- b forðam þæt mæste yfel cymð to mannum þonne Antecrist **sylf**
cymð [WHom 1b. 12]
'for the worst evil comes to mankind when the Antichrist **himself**
appears'
- c þa forborn þæs cyninges heall mid eallum his spedum ond his
sunu awedde ond **he sylf** ahreofode. [Mart. 174]
'then the king's hall burnt down with all his treasures, his son
went mad and **he himself** became a leper'
- d selre is þæt man **me selfne** bærne þonne þa godcundan gewritu
[Mart. 158]
'it is better that "man" (=one) burns **myself** rather than the holy
scriptures'

In the course of time, the intensifier *self* is combined and fused with the dative, genitive or accusative forms of personal pronouns. Such new forms, i.e. *himself*, occurred both as reflexive anaphors and as intensifiers, gradually replacing, in the latter function, the monomorphemic

form *self*. The replacement was completed only in ME, but already in OE there are the first signs⁸ of such a development.

As a result of this compounding process, intensifiers were used in Early ME without pronominal foci, even though they combined with nominal foci: “The intensifier *self* fused with a pronominal copy of its focus and the resultant complex intensifiers with incorporated pronominal foci combined with nominal foci in EModE, but not with pronominal ones” (König and Siemund 2000a: 47). *Himself* was also used in subject position. Consequently, in ME and EModE intensifiers and reflexive anaphors were identical both in form and in distribution. In (8a-b) the subject position clearly identifies *himself* as an intensifier (with incorporated pronominal heads).

8 a MIDDLE ENGLISH

Hymself drank water of the wel./As dide the knyght sire
Percyvell (CT *Tale of Sir Thopas* 915)

b EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

For it endengers choler, planteth anger./ And better ‘twere that
both of us did fast / Since of **ourselves ourselves** are choleric./
Than feed it with such overroasted flesh [Sh. *The Taming of the Shrew* 4.1]

From EModE onwards the modern reflexive system is established⁹. Co-reference with an antecedent in the same clause or within the same local domain is more and more frequent and in the end exclusively signalled by *himself*, whereas co-reference across clause boundaries is still expressed by personal pronouns. Moreover, co-reference between sub-

⁸ Already in the Benedictine Rule *himself* or *he himself* translates the Lat. *ipse* as well as in the *Canticle of Psalters*: PsCaE (Liles) 20.4 *Himseolf þe lauerd himseolf off allan hiheret = Ipse dominus ipse omnium exauditor*). From Ælfric onwards *himself* is widely attested both in adjunction to SNs or alone, both as adnominal intensifier and adverbial intensifier (see Ogura 2001 for examples).

⁹ According to Peitsara (1997) the simple strategy (personal pronoun) predominates during the first three quarters of the fifteenth century and, in accordance with Spies (1897: 155) the complex strategy (*self*-form) begins to gain ground in the 1480s, though the simple strategy still prevails until the end of the century. Even if sermons – a text-type that favours the *self*-forms – are excluded, the final breakthrough of the complex strategy does not take place until the sixteenth century and even here its predominance is not marked until after the middle of the century. It is only in the last interval of Peitsara’s analysis (1570-1640) that the complex strategy behaves (as a reflexive anaphor and intensifier) like in PDE.

jects and the NP of a prepositional phrase could be expressed by pronouns. The change is particularly apparent in passages of the same text at different stages in the development of English, as in (9a-c) (the capitals are in the text).

- 9 a Adam and his wijf hidden **hem** fro the face of the Lord God
[Wycliffe *Genesis* 3 8]
b And Adam hyd **hymselfe** and his wyfe also from the face of the
LORde God [Tyndale *Genesis* 3 8]
c and Adam and his wife hid **themselues** from the presence of the
LORD God [*The Authorized Version, Genesis* 3 8]

In (9a) co-reference is still established by the simple pronoun. In (9b) *himself* is on the way towards developing into a reflexive anaphor: the component *self* still maintains much of its intensifying meaning, its occurrence being due to the co-ordinate structure rather than to co-reference marking. In (9c) *himself* functions as reflexive anaphor: in this context it simply signals co-reference between subject and object.

In ModE, intensifiers and reflexive anaphors are differentiated in their distribution, in that complex intensifiers are not permitted in argument positions without a preceding focus and occur as adjuncts to noun phrases or verb phrases, whereas reflexive anaphors must be bound by an antecedent in a local domain (that is, a minimal clause or sentence), which must also govern the reflexive anaphor and, therefore, are only possible in argument positions. Both the syntactic and distributional constraints determining the occurrence of *himself* have exceptions.

Himself in subject position without a pronominal focus can still be found in Irish English (Filppula 1999), where the following sentences, taken from Filppula (1997: 951), are acceptable:

- 10 a Himself and his wife were buried ... his wife was buried a few
weeks ago, himself was buried twelve months ago
b It's himself that told me that up in a pub
c How is yourself?

Here *himself* invariably characterises the person referred to as being high in rank, in some way important or simply salient in some situations; again they indicate the centre of a communicative situation.

Besides such geographically and socially marked uses, even standard use displays *himself* in contexts where they should be excluded, namely the so-called ‘creeping reflexives’ or ‘untriggered reflexives’ as in (11a) and in (11b). On the other hand, in Standard English simple pronouns are accepted in sentences such as the so-called ‘snake-sentences’¹⁰ where *himself* should be expected as in (11c-d).

- 11 a According to John, Mary and himself wrote the article.
[König and Siemund (2000a: 186)]
b He [Zapp] sat down at the desk and opened the drawers. In the top right-hand one was an envelope addressed to himself.
[Lodge, *Changing Places*, p. 62]
c John saw a snake near him (but also near himself)
[König and Siemund (2000a: 184)]
d Mary put all her problems behind her (but also behind herself)
[König and Siemund (2000a: 184)]

In contexts such as (11 c-d) the personal pronoun can still be adequate to indicate co-reference, as in OE. In sentences like (11a-b), by contrast, *himself* seems to enter the domain of personal pronouns.

4. *Reflexivizing strategies and the predicate meaning: a cross-linguistic perspective*

That English developed a distinction between personal pronouns and reflexive anaphors is not surprising. Given the semantic distinction between these two subclasses of function words as markers of co-reference and disjoint reference in a local domain, this is what we would expect at least for the 3rd person. The referent of 1st and 2nd person pronouns are uniquely determined by the speech act, there is no need for a special reflexive form, but this does not apply to 3rd person pronouns¹¹.

¹⁰ The term ‘snake-sentence’ derives from such a sentence as (11a) taken as the prototypical example in the relevant literature and in grammars.

¹¹ Many languages have such a distinction only in the 3rd person: for instance, Gilaki (a New Iranian language), Romance and Germanic languages (e.g. German, most Scandinavian languages) use the personal pronouns for the 1st and 2nd person and have a special reflexive pronoun only for the 3rd person. Danish stands out (together with some Upper German dialects) among the Germanic languages because in its spoken variant it has a reflexive pronoun only for the 3rd person singular. However, no languages have a reflexive pronoun exclusively for the 1st and 2nd persons, but not for the 3rd person.

They may either anaphorically refer to the subject referent or else to some other referent. As a matter of fact, if a language has a reflexive form to mark only one person, that person is the 3rd person singular. Accordingly, minimal pairs like the following are typically differentiated in languages:

12 John_i admires him_j vs. John_i admires himself_i

Furthermore, if a language has a reflexive anaphor and it occurs in non-object positions, then it must occur in the object position as well, but not vice versa. This is due to a general pragmatic principle for the unmarked interpretation of pronouns (see Comrie 1997, DuBois 1985, Givón 1983), namely the principle of ‘Disjoint Reference Presumption’, according to which “the arguments of a predicate are intended to be disjoint, unless marked otherwise” (Farmer and Harnish 1987: 557). The origins of such a presumption are still unclear, but one can certainly assume that “the prototypical action – what is described by the prototypical transitive clause – is one agent acting upon some entity distinct from itself” (Levinson 1991: 127). As a matter of fact, languages formally distinguish not only middle situations¹² from direct reflexive situations¹³, but, within the reflexive domain, they also tend to differentiate highly transitive situations where the action is prototypically directed towards others than the subject (henceforth other-directed), such as verbs of emotion, verbs of attack, destruction etc., from less transitive situations, where co-reference and disjoint reference between the subject and its object are both likely (e.g. verbs of preparing, verbs of defending, verbs of hiding etc.). The more complex strategies of reflexivization – secondary strategies according to Faltz’s terminology (see n. 7) – are used to signal co-reference in marked cases, i.e. in conventionally other-directed situations, where subject and object are usually in-

¹² With middle situations or with the so-called ‘introverted predicates’ (Haiman 1995), objects are necessarily or typically coreferent with their subjects (see Kemmer 1993: 24), i.e. grooming, self-induced motion events, change of position, reciprocal verbs like *meet*, *embrace*, *touch*, *fight*, *collide*. Middle voice (and consequently middle predicate situations) encodes those events in which the action involves the subject or his interests (Lyons 1977: 328).

¹³ Direct reflexive situations are characterised by the presence of transitive verbs, otherwise called ‘extroverted predicates’ (Haiman 1995), which are not necessarily or typically symmetrical and whose objects are not necessarily or typically co-referent with their subjects.

tended to be different, and the simpler ones in unmarked cases, i.e. in non-other-directed situations or in middle situations (cf. Faltz 1985 and Kemmer 1993).

Among the Germanic languages the distinction between other-directed predicates and non-other-directed predicates is particularly significant. In Frisian – the only Germanic language that still has no reflexive anaphor – the intensifier is obligatorily added to the simple pronoun with other-directed predicate but only when ambiguity may arise. But even such languages as German and Swedish, which do have a reflexive anaphor, tend to employ the intensifier with other-directed predicates. When the intensifier is used in non-other-directed situations, it gives the sentence additional meanings.

- 13 A) SWEDISH
 a Han angrep **sig själv** / * sig
 ‘He attacked himself’
 b Han försvarade **sig (själv)**
 ‘He defended himself (on his own)’
- B) GERMAN
 a (Wen hat Hans letztlich ruiniert?) Hans hat **SICH / sich SELBST** ruiniert
 ‘(Whom did Hans ruin/destroy in the end?) Hans ruined HIMSELF’
 b (Wen hat Hans versteckt/verteidigt) Hans hat sich versteckt/verteidigt
 ‘(Whom did Hans hide/defend?) Hans hid/defended himself’
- C) FRISIAN
 a Hii froit **ham** / ju froit **här** / jä froie **jam**
 ‘he is happy / she is happy / they are happy’
 b Hii hoorde **ham sels**
 ‘he heard himself’

Such a synchronic state of affairs shows the markedness of other-directed situations and more precisely of the direct object in the realm of reflexivity. Given that the English reflexive anaphor consists of a personal pronoun plus an intensifying element, it is plausible to hypothesize that it should develop into a reflexive anaphor not generally in object position, but in argument position of other-directed verbs, where a co-referential interpretation (of the simple pronoun) would be disfavoured.

4.1. Him vs. him self: a semantic choice in OE

In OE the adjunction of the intensifier *self* to the simple personal pronoun is determined by the communicative need to induce the co-referential interpretation of the personal pronoun unambiguously. Evidence of the use of *self* as a disambiguating device is given in a passage from Ælfric's Grammar (ex. 14), where the monk translates the same Latin reflexive differently according to the degree of unexpected co-reference between subject and object. It is worth noting that, unlike German, OE *self* inflects like adjectives and manifests agreement with its antecedent in number, gender and case.

- 14 sui homines his men, sui uilla his tun, sibi congregat pecuniam
him he gaderað feoh, petit ut sibi concedas he bit þæt ðu him ge-
unne ðæs, se custodit bene **hine** he hylt wel, se defendit armis **hine**
he bewerað mid wæpnum, Christus se dedit pro nobis Crist seald
hine sylfne for us [ÆLGram 96]
'sui homines his men, sui uilla his town, sibi congregat pecuniam
to **himself** he gathers money, petit ut sibi concedas he bids that you
bestow this to him, se custodit bene he controls **himself** well, se
defendit armis he defends **himself** with weapons, Christus se dedit
pro nobis Christ gave **himself** for us'

Farr (1905) and more recently Keenan (1996) have already noticed that in OE there is a group of verbs which seems to require the obligatory adjunction of the intensifier to the personal pronoun: i.e. "verbs of bodily harm *acwellan*, *ahon*, etc." (Farr 1905: 25). These verbs indeed denote other-directed events, i.e. events in which the action prototypically involves others from the agent or the experiencer, in which, consequently, the more natural interpretation of the OE simple pronoun in object position as in (15) would be disjoint reference. The insertion of *self* points out that the situation is unusual and characterises the object pronoun as a centre rather than a periphery¹⁴. So, other things being equal, it unambiguously indicates the co-reference with the subject – the agent

¹⁴ As noted in König and Siemund (2000a: 59, note 16) "*hine selfne* could be used for both the meaning corresponding to German *sich (selbst)* and *ihn selbst*. The non-reflexive interpretation was possible in cases where *hine selfne* referred to a central or prominent character introduced in the surrounding discourse".

(15a) or the experiencer (15b) – and the self-direction of the action. The meaning of the intensifier involved in this structure, therefore, seems to be adnominal¹⁵.

- 15 a ac heo lyfde sceandlice swa swa swin on meoðe and mid
 healicum synnum **hi sylfe** fordyde [ÆLS iii.1.528]
 ‘but she lived shamefully, even as swine on a dunghill, and by
 deadly sins destroyed **herself**’
 b Ne lufað se **hine selfne** se ðe hine mid synnum bebint
 [ÆCHom i 23 332.31]
 ‘he who loads himself with sin does not love **himself**’

In Old English, however, there were only modest beginnings of using *himself* in order to indicate that a personal pronoun expressed co-reference with a preceding subject. Its diffusion as reflexive anaphor belongs to the history of Middle and Early Modern English.

4.2. *Himself on the way to reflexive anaphor: the case of Middle English*

ME appears to systematize what in OE was optional and just a tendency. Reflexivity is now encoded by two strategies: either the simple pronoun or *himself*. The choice of strategy depends on several factors, among which we find intended emphasis, text type conventions, the author’s idiolect and individual stylistic preference, the chronology of the text, speech rhythm and poetic metre (Peitsara 1997). One main factor for the selection of one strategy over another, however, is the predicate meaning. In this respect, the two strategies show complementary behaviour. The simple strategy is preferably selected by: a) inherently reflexive verbs, i.e. verbs of motion and posture, and psychological verbs (16a), verbs of social behaviour, personal conduct or interrelationship between people (16b), which are otherwise described as cases of middle voice (Kemmer 1993); b) conventionally non other-directed transitive

¹⁵ Keenan (1996) and König and Siemund (2000a: 60ff.) suggest alternative interpretations. Intensifiers in the adnominal function evoke alternatives to their foci and identify them as a periphery of alternative values to their centre (i.e. their foci). In the absence of particular contextual information, the centre is the agent or experiencer, the referent of the subject, as opposed to other persons towards whom the relevant action could be directed.

verbs, which allow both non-co-referential and co-referential object, that is verbs denoting self-care, equipment either concretely or in a more extended sense (16c), verbs denoting desirable conduct, such as wielding, ruling, protecting, defending (16c) or guarding, preparing oneself (16d), and di-transitive verbs with a reflexive indirect object.

- 16 a Ne mei nan mon habben al his wil. And blissien **him** mid pisse wordle [Lamb 33]
'no man may have all his will and rejoice **himself** with this world'
b Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis **hym** swyþe [Gawain i.i.8]
'when royal Romulus to Rome **himself** addresses quickly'
c Shruðeð **eow** mid godes wapne, and werieð **eow** wið þe defles waitinge. [TrinHom 193.1-2]
'clothe **yourselves** with God's weapons and defend **yourselves** against the devil's assault'
d therefore we made **us** thus redy ... [Morte Darthur 272]

On the other hand, the compound strategy is used obligatorily with conventionally other-directed transitive verbs, with which co-referential objects are marked, namely with verbs denoting either destructive and similar negatively coloured actions, such as *deceive*, *damn*, *pine*, *misuse*, *charge with sin*, *wend to harm* (17a) or simply activities that are normally directed towards others (17b-c) or emotions (17d).

- 17 a Dianyre, that caused hym to sette **hymself** afyre [CT 726]
b Hwa se wile cume efter me; for-sake **him seolf**, and bere his rode, and folege me [Lamb 15 145]
'whoever wants to follow me, let him forsake himself and bear his rood and follow me'
c He thoughte wel that every man /Wol helpe **himself** in love if that the kan. / And eek delivere **himself** out of prisoun. [CT 1767-9]
d Þis man þat þus hatuþ God, mot aftur nedys hate **hymself**, and alle his breþren

[Wycliffe *Sermons* 11 I 524]

Other factors than the other-directedness of the predicate seem to determine the choice of *himself* in ME: for example, negation. With the same type of predicate, i.e. non-other-directed, and in a similar syntactic environment, *himself* is enforced in negative sentences (18b and 19a) whereas without negation the co-reference with the subject is estab-

lished as usual by means of the simple personal pronoun (18a and 19b): for instance, the examples in (18) and in (19) belong to the same thematic paragraph, they are not distant and correspond to independent clauses.

- 18 a He sayned **hym** in syþes sere, / and sayde ‘Cros-Kryst me spedē’
[Gawain ii.xi. 761]
‘he blessed **himself** oft and said The Cross of Christ me speed’
b Nade he sayned **hym-self**, segge, bot þrye [Gawain ii.xii.763]
‘he had not blessed **himself**, the man, but thrice’
- 19 a For þei measured nougt **hem-self**. Of þat þei ete and dronke
[PP1.B XIV 77]
‘therefore they did not restrain **themselves** from what they ate and drank’
b For-þi mesure we **us** wel. And make owre faithe owre scheltroun
[PP1.B XIV 81]
‘therefore we restrain **ourselves** well and make our faith our guard’

Furthermore in ME the occurrence of *himself* can be justified in terms of contextual motivation. Besides being used in concrete other-directed situation, it occurs in more abstract and figurative other-directed situations. For instance, *himself* seems to be obligatory in sentences where a certain activity is presented as undesirable or condemnable (20a and 20b) in contrast to desirable activities (20c), which require the simple strategy. In such contexts, the addition of the intensifier still marks the unusual co-reference relation between the subject and the object.

- 20 a the lawe seith that ther maketh no man **himselven** riche, if he do harm to another wight. This is to seyn, that nature deffendeth and forbedeth by right that no man make **hymself** riche unto the harm of another persone. [CT 2775]
b he lyued suffryd greete laboures and peryllys /wylfully puttyng **hym self** in many terryble and ferdful ieopardyes
[Caxton, The Prologues And Epilogues 15]
c þat wel and nobly gouernede þe lande and wonder wel made **him** bilouede of al maner foc [Brut 21]
‘who ruled the land well and nobly and made himself greatly beloved by all kinds of people’

4.2.1. Himself with intensifying function in Middle English

The above-mentioned figurative use of *himself* speaks in favour of a semantic bleaching of the word *self*, which is a necessary step in any grammaticalization process, and hence of its grammaticalization into a reflexive anaphor. In ME, however, and especially in Early ME, *himself* still retains much of its intensifying meaning insofar as it tends to occur, regardless of the predicate meaning, with high ranking persons (21a), in contrastive contexts (21b), in comparisons (21c) and in coordinations (21d): i.e. in situations where its main function is to pick up one participant as the centre vs. a periphery of alternative values, alternatives that in those cases are given in the context and not just evoked (see König and Siemund 2000b).

- 21 a And Godd Allmahhtig gife us [...] to cnaewenn and to sen **himm selfenn** and his kinde [Orm H. 19476]
'and God Almighty allows us [...] to know and to see **himself** and his nature
- b Sche was vanysst riht as hir liste, That no wyht bot **hirself** it wiste [Gower c. 1390]
'she sped off just as she wanted to, so that no man but **herself** knew it'
- c hwen euchan luueð godd mare þen **him seoluen** ant þen alle þen odre [S. Warde 263]
'because each one loves God more than **himself** and than all the others'
- d he sulden samen ðor **hem-self** and here orf framen [Gen & Ex 1671]
'they should gather there **themselves** and their cattle serve'

For that reason, *himself* appears to be the preferred option in non-other-directed situations when intention or the strong control of the action on the part of the subject is implied. That verbs change their meanings according to the presence vs. absence of *self* can be regarded as an epiphenomenon. For instance, in (22b) *delight* + *himself* means something like 'to cheer oneself up', implying some effort on the part of the subject, while the ME instances of *delight* with the simple pronoun (22a) focus on the emotion itself ('to find pleasure in something')¹⁶.

¹⁶ It is worth noting that in ME *himself* has already extended its domain to all persons. The on-

- 22 a gyf þou delyte þe yn riche beddyng [...] Alle ys pryde and vanye
[Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne* 119]
'if you delight in rich bed clothes [...] it's all pride and vanity'
b It is to me no litle comfort [...] to delite **my self** amonge in this
bitter tyme of your absens, by such meanes as I maye, by as often
writinge to you, as...
[Roper, *Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* 510]¹⁷

The occurrence of *himself* seems to be sensitive to person. With the same type of predicate and in a similar context, it is preferred for the 3rd person (23b) while the 1st and 2nd persons continue to be encoded by the simple strategy (23a).

- 23 a I shal therof as ful excusen **me** [CT 3.810]
b With face boold they shulle **himself** excuse [CT 2269]

In the course of Late ME *himself* increasingly occurs as a reflexive anaphor. The complex strategy is used in contexts proper to the simple strategy (although the latter is still the prevailing pattern), i.e. non-other-directed situation (24a), and the difference between the two strategies seems less clear-cut, as stylistic variation in (24b) would suggest.

- 24 a But in the same and all other your Highness maters we shal not
faile to endevoyre **our selfs** according to our most bounden
duties as shalbe, we hoope, to your Graces satisfaction
[HC *A letter by the Lords* I 125]

ly fluctuation we still find regards the spelling: as a matter of fact the two series (the pronominal and nominal ones) are different from one another (Mustanoja 1960: 153), as shown in (25a-d). The issue of the standard *himself* paradigm (*myself* and not *meself*, but *himself* and not *hisself*) is too complex to be treated here.

¹⁷ In ME, *self* could be added to both the dative case and the genitive case of the personal pronoun, the former being inherited from OE and the latter being a sort of innovation due to the re-analysis of *self* as a noun. The new form replaced completely the dative case + *self* in the 1st and 2nd persons, while the 3rd person maintained the OE pattern (Mustanoja 1960: 146 ff.). During the EModE period, with the establishment of *himself* as a reflexive anaphor, its paradigm was also fixed, the only variation concerning number concord, namely *themself* vs. *themselves* (see Denison 1998: 111): *myself*, *yourself*, *himself*, *herself*, *ourselves*, *yourselves* and *themselves*. Such paradigm is not attested in any English dialects, which have generally the nominal series (possessive + *self*) for every persons. Few dialects can form the reflexive anaphor of the 1st and 2nd persons by means of the oblique case of the pronoun joined to *self*, *selves* – e.g. *usselves*, *ussens* in South West and West Midlands and *thee self* in Berks (Wright 1905: 276).

- b Gif he [a horse] be ranke of blod he wol gnappe **himself** &
rubbe **him** agens þe walle [...] þe hors wol gnappe **him-self** &
rubbe out of curs [...] so þat þe hors wille rubbe **him-self** ...
[HC *A Late Middle English Treatise on Horses*, 89, 101 and 103]

4.3. Himself as reflexive anaphor in EModE

EModE texts register a drastic reversal of strategies and the consequent prevalence of the reflexive anaphor *himself*. Peitsara (1997: 303) finds the simple personal pronoun in only one third of all the instances of co-reference with the subject in the interval 1500-1570 and the number drops to less than one sixth in the interval 1570-1640. This increase in frequency corresponds to the functional extension of *himself*, which gradually extended its domain to many of those contexts where the simple pronoun was previously required, i.e. with predicates denoting personal behaviour (25a), psychological attitude (25b), with non other-directed activities (25c) and with inherently reflexive verbs (25d). Of course the fact that *himself* functions as a reflexive anaphor entails a loss of its emphatic function.

- 25 a at the same time the person misbehaves **him selfe** / he forgetts
also the engagement
[HC *King Charles II to Queen Henrietta Maria* 1657]
b The King [...] fearing **himself** to be the next betray'd caus'd
him to be slain
[Milton, *The History of Britain* X 276]
c He had made **himself** Master of the Ancient and Modern Wit
[Burnet, *The life and Death of John Earl of Rochester* 7]
d When Jhesus had lyfte up **his selfe** agayne and sawe no man but
the woman he sayde unto hyr
[Tyndale, *The New Testament John* 8 10]

The simple strategy continues to be used in fixed phrases which function as an attitudinal adjunct (26a), comparable to PDE *I'm afraid*, in editorial formulas (26b), letter openings (26c) or as parenthetical phrases (26d), roughly equivalent to sentence adverbials like *surely*. Curiously enough, all these instances have 1st person pronouns. We are not aware of any cases with other pronouns.

- 26 a I feere **me** þat jdelnesse ledythe yowre reyne
 [John Paston, *Paston Letters* 450]
 b Therefore I William Caxton a simple person haue endeouyred **me**
 to wryte first ouer all the sayd book of proloconyon
 [Caxton, *The Prologues and Epilogues* 68]
 c I recommende **me** unto you in the most loving wyse ...
 [Elizabeth Stonor, *The Stonor Letters and Papers* II 18]
 d An my neice and uncle, and cosen Brewster, who I assure **me** is
 now with you
 [Thomas Barrington, *Barrington Family Letters* 116]

Plain pronouns remain the favourite option with indirect objects. In the 17th century indirect objects co-referent with their subjects are, as a norm, personal pronouns (27). This situation can still be found in many diatopic (28c, taken from Wright 1905: 276) and also diastratic (28a-b, taken from Siemund 2001) varieties, where plain pronouns can still be found as markers of co-reference in indirect object position. It is noteworthy that this is particularly true for the 1st person (28a-b).

- 27 Not so common as commendable it is, to see young gentlemen choose **them** such friends with whom they may seeme beeing absent to be present, being a sunder to be conuersant, beeing dead to be alive
 [John Lyly, *Euphues – The Anatomy of Wit*, p. 197]
- 28 a I gonna make **me** a cup of tea [*but* he brewed himself a cup of tea]
 b I named my son after **me** [*but* you/he named your/his son after yourself/himself]
 c Get **thee** dressed while I wash **me**

After the 17th century, the simple strategy disappears almost completely. This phenomenon is probably also due to the use of passive, analytic and intransitive structures for inherently reflexive verbs (see Peitarsa 1997). As a final observation, it should be mentioned that the neuter form of *himself*, i.e. *itself*, makes its first appearance only in the course of the 16th -17th centuries: in other words, much later than the masculine and feminine forms. *Itself* occurs mainly in specific text-types, i.e. scientific texts and educational or philosophical treatises, that is to say, texts where abstract and material things are the topic and the centre of observation and description, and with the so-called pseudo-reflexives (29a-b).

Soon afterwards, however, it withdraws forever and its occurrence is restricted to the so-called 'reflexive domain'¹⁸ (Kemmer 1993:73).

- 29 a That it may not seem impossible, that electrical 'Effluvia' should be able to insinuate **themselves** into the pores of many other bodies
[Boyle, *Electricity & Magnetism* 13]
b This vice therefore brauncheth **it selfe** into two sorts ...
[Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* 21R]

5. *Grammaticalization of himself as reflexive anaphor: direction of change*

According to our analysis, and in conformity with other studies (cf. Peitsara 1997, Penning 1875, Falz 1985), the change of the intensifier *self* (univerbated with personal pronouns) into a reflexive anaphor appears to start in other-directed contexts and more specifically in argument positions, namely direct objects.

Looking at its properties in OE vs. ModE, it is apparent that *self* has undergone a process of desemantization and decategorization, losing some of its morpho-syntactic and lexical-semantic properties of intensifiers and its independent word status, to become a reflexive anaphor, that is, a local binder. More specifically, the historical development of *himself* can be depicted as a case of grammaticalization fitting the three stages of the Overlap Model (Heine 1993: 48-53), if A is read as the intensifier *self* and B as *himself* (personal pronoun + *self*).

- I. There is a linguistic unit A that is recruited for grammaticalization.
- II. In the initial process, this unit acquires a second use pattern, B, with the effect that there is ambiguity between A and B.
- III. Finally, A is lost, that is, there is only B.

The OE situation is compatible with stage I; thanks to its adnominal meaning, the intensifier *self* is recruited to disambiguate the indexing of the personal pronoun in object position in other-directed situations. ME

¹⁸ The reflexive domain according to Kemmer's cognitive analysis includes verbs denoting action with two participants (or more simply transitive verbs, of which subject and object co-refer).

matches stage II, since other factors than the predicate meaning do play a role for *himself*: the fact that *himself* does not occur simply to disambiguate, but represents the formal device to mark co-reference in both concrete and figurative or abstract other-directed contexts is a sign of its semantic loss and consequent gain in grammatical functions. In Late ME *himself* starts to occur with non-other-directed predicates, but there is still considerable fluctuation. At the beginning of the third phase of the process of grammaticalization (i.e. EmodE), *himself* steadily extends its domain to non-other-directed predicates, and also to inherently reflexive and pseudo-reflexive verbs. As far as the last two types of predicates are concerned, the presence of the reflexive anaphor *himself* is irregular and just related to specific text-types. However, this use of *himself* as a marker of the middle voice is never established. On the contrary, from the end of the 17th century, namely from the time when signs of processes of linguistic *Ausgleich* towards a standard form of English begin to be clearly visible and coherent (cf. Fennel 2001: 156f.), *himself* is established only as a reflexive anaphor and withdraws from the middle situation. Such a fluctuation seems to be a frequent phenomenon in grammaticalization processes especially during the transition from stage II to stage III (cf. Heine 2001, Reiter 2000)¹⁹.

The path along which *himself* grammaticalized into a reflexive anaphor moves from other-directed to non-other-directed predicates through a process of gradual desemanticization of the word *self*. The process is complete in the 17th century, but only for the object position. In indirect object positions the simple strategy still predominates. After prepositions the two strategies alternate and continue to do so in PDE. This is not surprising, but confirms our hypothesis, since:

On the assumption that subjects typically bear the role of agent whereas the referents of direct objects are typically patients, it is rather obvious that these two roles are difficult to combine in one and the same referent and that special expressions or marking is necessary to encode such a relation. By comparison, the semantic roles that typically go together with non-direct objects are those of recipient or beneficiary and in this case no incompatibility with the agent role arises (Siemund 2001: 48)

¹⁹ Fluctuation is taken into account even in theoretically more formal approaches to language change as in Kroch (1989) and in Pintzuk (1993 and 1996).

Moreover, according to our hypothesis *himself* would establish itself for human animate referents and later for neutral ones, since transitive actions prototypically involve animate agents and inanimate patients. As far as the person hierarchy is concerned, the grammaticalization of *himself* would start from the 3rd person, for which an unambiguously encoded differentiation of co-referent and disjoint readings is necessary, to extend to the 2nd and 1st persons.

The grammaticalization process of *himself* indeed proceeds along a grammatical continuum from direct to indirect objects and prepositional phrases, and from human objects to inanimate objects and first affects the 3rd person only, as indirectly confirmed by the fact that the personal pronoun can still mark co-reference with the subject in the 1st and 2nd persons in non-standard varieties (see 28).

OBJECT > INDIRECT OBJECT > PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE
HUMAN OBJECT > NON-HUMAN OBJECT
3RD PERSON > 1ST AND 2ND PERSONS

Compared with the grammaticalization continuum described by Hopper and Traugott (1993: 7) – content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix > (zero) – we cannot but notice that the grammaticalization process of *himself* has not yet been completed. The retention (though partial) of its lexical meaning is probably the reason why, unlike the German reflexive anaphor, the English reflexive anaphor cannot be used non-referentially as a marker of reciprocity, derived intransitivity, passivity and impersonality (see König 2001).

6. *A few remarks on the genesis of the intensifier strategy among Creoles*

Our hypothesis can find an external confirmation from the reflexive system of Creole languages, whose structures represent prototypical cases of grammaticalization (Reiter 2000; Heine 2001). Creoles possess various strategies of reflexivization (Muysken and Smith 1995): besides employing different lexemes denoting body parts and special one-argument verbs, all Creoles mark co-reference by using both the personal pronoun/possessive pronoun + intensifier (henceforth ‘*self*-strategy’)²⁰

and the simple personal pronoun (henceforth ‘simple strategy’)²¹. The various strategies are differently employed according to predicate types and pragmatic intentions. In brief, the morphologically simpler the reflexive strategy, the less marked the situation. Considering just the personal pronoun strategy and the *self*-strategy, we observe that the former preferably occurs with non-other-directed or inherently reflexive predicates (30a) while the latter is favoured with other-directed predicates (30b).

- 30 a Nu n fer sa pu nu amiz **nu** [Seychelles Creole French]
 ‘we did it to amuse ourselves’
 b I ti êvit sô lekor **li-mem** [Seychelles Creole French]
 ‘he invited himself’

When the two strategies occur with the same predicate, they trigger a different interpretation: the use of the intensifier strategy implies more intention and control of the subject on the action, so that (31b) means something like ‘to feel a texture; to feel oneself’.

- 31 a Mi ta sinti **mi** un tikki tristo [Papiamentu Creole Spanish]
 ‘I feel a bit sad’
 b Mi ta inti **mi mes** (dor di e deklò) [Papiamentu Creole Spanish]
 ‘I feel myself through the blanket’

²⁰ Heine (2001: 9-10) offers a complete classification of Creoles according to the single type of reflexive strategy, of which we give an extract with regard to the personal pronoun strategy (A) and the intensifier strategies, (AI) with personal pronoun and (PI) with possessive pronoun + intensifier.

A	Bislama PE, Cayenne CF, early Chinook Jargon, Gouadeloupean CF, northern Haitian CF, Louisiana CF, Martiniquese CF, Mauritian CF, Negerhollands CD, Nubi (Kinubi), Palenquero CS, Papiamentu CS, Reunion CF, Seychellois CF, Sranan CE, Tayo CF
AI	Cayenne CF, Jamaican CE, Kabuverdiano CP, Kituba, Martiniquese CF, Mauritian CF, Louisiana CF, Negerhollands CD, Papiamentu CS, Tomé CP, Saramaccan CE, Seychelles CF, Sranan CE Tayo CF
PI	Berbice CD, Ghanaian PE, Negerhollands CD, Nigerian PE, Papiamentu CS

²¹ This similarity between Creoles and OE becomes particularly impressive if one thinks the simple pronoun as a marker of reflexivity seems to be cross-linguistically very rare: “it appears that systems where pronouns in all three persons are unmarked for reflexivity [1,2,3,uR] are uncommon [...]. Outside of pidgin and Creole languages, we have so far been able to find only three independent innovations of [1,2,3, uR] pronouns: Early English and some related West Germanic languages, a number of Malayo-Polynesian languages and Harway (non-Austronesian, New Guinea)” (Carden & Stewart 1988: 85).

This holds for all Creoles (e.g. Papiamentu), although the similarity with Middle English obviously appears to be more remarkable with English- or French-based Creoles (e.g. Sranan, Seychelles Creole). In those cases where historical data are retraceable, it seems clear that what we have assumed for English is exactly what happened in some Creoles. In Sranan the *self*-strategy nowadays seems to be the most frequent reflexive strategy. Nevertheless, this has not always been the case. In 18th-century Sranan prototypical reflexive verbs mostly selected the simple pronoun strategy (32a), whereas the instances of the *self*-strategy were in combination with other-directed activities (32b).

- 32 a Wassi **joe** [Sranan Creole English 1765]
 ‘wash you’
 b a za kiele **he zlifi** [Sranan Creole English 1765]
 ‘he’ll kill himself’

Diachronic data on the development of reflexive anaphors in Creoles are scanty, and therefore we cannot make strong generalizations. However, *self*-strategies appear first in the 3rd person and occur more often than in the 1st or 2nd persons, which tend to retain the simple strategy longer. Moreover, the complex reflexive strategies (both *self*-strategies and patterns with body parts) arise primarily with human subjects/agents, for which it is always possible to have a concrete reading and a metaphorical one, and only later with inanimate ones, with which they can only be understood as a coreference marker (Heine 2001: 22). *Self*-strategies in Creoles do not differ according to persons, but constitute a complete paradigm.

Reflexive systems in Creoles are undoubtedly the outcome of grammaticalization processes like many other Creole grammatical constructions. Grammaticalization is the natural response to the need for more efficient and expressive communication (Traugott and Heine 1991). Accordingly, pragmatically salient and semantically transparent constructions – in this case, *self*-strategies and complex strategies – are recruited to encode grammatical relations and functions, which could also be or have been expressed with other opaque patterns. The genesis of Creoles itself, linked to extreme spoken situations and registers, is responsible for the key role played by language processing factors: the maintenance of the paradigm of constructions or the paradigmaticization of new con-

structions makes language processing easier from the hearer's point of view (Thomason and Kaufmann 1988; Muysken and Smith 1995; McWhorter 2001, Seuren 2001, Wurzel 2001). In this specific case, once the intensifier (+ pronoun) is selected to mark co-reference because of its stronger communicative effect, then it is used whenever there are objects that are co-referential with subjects, so that *self*-strategies and complex strategies, which were probably first selected as disambiguation devices and for the 3rd person, have been systematized and extended to the entire personal paradigm.

7. Conclusion

The semantic and pragmatic characteristics of ModE *himself* seem to be a typologically divergent innovation among Germanic languages which was not foreseeable in OE. Indeed, OE was in harmony with its cognate languages and the OE reflexive system is still preserved in Present-Day Frisian, where the intensifier formally differs from the co-reference marker, simple pronouns perform a double duty and are reinforced by the intensifier only when ambiguity may arise, i.e. in other-directed situations. The peculiarities of the English reflexive system emerge in ME: the use of the same form as an intensifier and as a reflexive anaphor, the grammaticalization of *himself* as primary reflexive strategy, and the uniformity of reflexive marking in all three persons.

Interestingly, the aberrant properties of the English reflexive system find a counterpart in many Creole languages, most of which have complex reflexive strategies involving an intensifier and a pronoun (both possessive and personal pronouns) that are used in accordance with the same constraints as the ME *himself* and (where there are historical data available) show a similar development to the English *himself* – that is, they first develop with animate patient for the 3rd person and in other-directed situations. Moreover, Creoles do not formally distinguish co-reference markers according to person, but extend simple and complex reflexive markers to all persons, very much like English.

Can the English reflexive system be considered as a creole-like feature? What may be suggested by this undeniable typological closeness between the English reflexive system and those of Creoles? I would not

claim that ME has undergone a creolization process in the narrow sense of the term and thus contend that ME is a creole²². In fact, ME bears similarity not only with French- or English-based Creoles, which could speak in favour of the creolization hypothesis, but also with Spanish and Portuguese Creoles (see Heine 2001).

Conversely, such close resemblance suggests that the conditions in which Creoles and ME develop their reflexive system might be comparable. I think we must bear in mind that since the beginning, among the Germanic languages, English has had a special language history. Unlike Germanic languages, English has undergone extensive and long-lasting language contact, passing from Celtic and Latin to Scandinavian and finally to French, almost without a break. Furthermore, only in England did the tradition of writing in the vernacular experience a sort of interruption (Francovich Onesti 1988). The Norman Conquest completely interrupted the production of poetry in English and only prose texts continued to be either copied or newly produced (Lass 1987) in a few monastic centres ruled by English bishops. Beside the replacement of the OE ruling class with French people connected with the Court, “The Norman invasion led to a reorganization of the Church and the introduction of monks and clerics from France. [...] French became the language of the Upper classes, both secular and religious. Latin was still the language of the Church and was available for religious writings and also for administration” (Blake 1992a: 16). In brief, in England there must have been a diglossic or triglossic situation at the time of the first phase of ME (Del Lungo Camiciotti 1994: 150), when English “had to meet the competition of Latin as well as French [...] French was the first language in England to dispute the monopoly of Latin in written matter” (Baugh and Cable 1978: 153), when English was primarily linked to the spoken register and related to the masses, and French and Latin were the prestigious languages of writing and leading social groups, i.e. the Church and the Court (cf. Baugh and Cable 1978: 13, Blake 1992b: 503ff., Del Lungo Camiciotti 1994: 150, Fennell 2001: 120-121). As a consequence, the vernacular literary texts of this period are necessarily written in regional

²² For the relevant discussion of ME as a creole or creole-like language, see Domingue (1977), Bailey and Maroldt (1977), and Milroy (1984). For the critique of such a hypothesis, see Görlach (1986) and Thomason and Kaufman (1988).

dialects and varieties: “to write in English meant to write one’s own dialect, using local forms and spellings” (Lass 1987: 62).

Therefore, although the conditions that would allow us to speak of creolization never really existed (Thomason and Kaufman 1988), nevertheless communication needs for clarity and language-processing facility at work in Creoles must have played an important role in the mutations that took place in the English language from the OE to the ME periods, and more precisely in the grammaticalization of a disambiguating device to mark exceptional co-reference: the personal pronoun and the intensifier *self* coalesced and *himself* was no longer a disambiguating device as in OE, but regularly signalled co-reference in other-directed contexts in both concrete and abstract situations and in non-other-directed situations either to emphasize its function as intensifier or to emphasize intention and control on the part of the subject.

Such long-lasting situations of contact with different languages and the period of triglossia must have forced and accelerated the process of simplification and change towards analyticity (a shift already set in motion from Indo-european to Germanic) and paradigmatic homogeneity to such an extent that ME begins to resemble a sort of interlanguage (Selinker 1972, Danchev 1997), in which cognitive transparency, pragmatic principles, and paradigm consistency were privileged, in a way very similar to what happens in the formation of creoles and pidgins (Bickerton 1984; Carden and Stewart 1988; Arends 2001).

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