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J'ai lu ce livre moi-même: Intensifiers in French

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Intensifiers have attracted a great deal of attention recently (cf. König and Siemund 2000, Siemund 2000, Gast 2006, Eckardt 2006). While they are not reflexives, they are in a close historical and typological relationship with them. Whereas intensifiers in English and German have been studied quite extensively, there is very little research on French intensifiers (see Zribi-Hertz 1995 though), which is why I will have a close look at them in this paper.

1. Intensifiers in English

1.1. Intensifiers vs. reflexives

Intensifiers in English are the forms *himself/herself* like in (1)-(5).

- (1) *No sooner did the Vice-Rector say this than the Rector herself walked in.*
- (2) *The queen herself received us.*

- (3) *Tony Blair wrote his memoirs himself.*
- (4) *I took this photo myself.*
- (5) *This novel by Ernest Gaines is a really good book. I have read it myself and it is really inspiring*

They are associated with an NP in the same clause: In (1), *herself* refers to the same entity as *the rector*; in (3), *himself* refers to the same entity as *Tony Blair*. They share this characteristic with reflexives, as exemplified in the following sentence:

- (6) *How does the author gain a better understanding of himself?*

However, there is an important difference to reflexives: whereas reflexives represent an argument on their own (or at least a slot of what would be an argument in the transitive counterpart of the reflexive), intensifiers do not. In (6), the NP *the author* and *himself* represent different arguments. By contrast, in (1) - (5), the NP and the *self*-form fill the same argument slot of the verb.

1.2. *Types of intensifiers*

Siemund (2000), as well as König and Siemund in a number of jointly authored papers (e.g. 2000a, 2000b), distinguish three types of intensifiers.

The first type is the “adnominal” intensifier, like in (1). Adnominal intensifiers modify an NP. They contrast the NP against a set of potential alternative referents, where the target NP and the set of potential alternatives are in a centre-periphery relation, with the target NP in the centre. The centre-periphery structure is hierarchical: thus, (1) contrasts the Rector with her less senior colleague, the Vice-Rector; (2) contrasts the Queen with her entourage.

The second type of intensifiers, according to Siemund, are the “adverbal-exclusive” ones, like in (3). They modify a VP, rather than an NP. They can often be paraphrased as 'alone', 'on their own'. Their contribution to meaning is that the subject of the verb phrase in question did the action with their own hands, rather than delegating it to someone else or having it done by proxy.

The third type, according to König and Siemund, are “adverbal-inclusive” intensifiers like in (5). According to Siemund, they modify the VP, just as the adverbial-exclusive ones. Also, just as the adverbial-exclusive ones, they are associated with the subject of the verb phrase in question. They can be paraphrased by 'also' and convey that the NP they are associated with is included in a set of potential referents. They are

furthermore characterized by rich contextual inferences that make the contribution made by this type of intensifier difficult to appreciate outside context.

It may be asked whether these three uses are really distinct functions of the form, or merely contextual effects. Thus, Rooryck & Vanden Wyngaerd (2010: 59n) claim, when referring to the various contrastive uses of the intensifier, that “this is a function of the pragmatic context, and as such the effect can easily be lifted by changing the context”. However, Siemund (2000: 12) offers the following argument: Intensifiers can co-occur in the same proposition, as in (7) (Siemund's example):

(7) Bill himself has himself not found the answer himself.

In this unrealistically artificial yet acceptable example, *himself* is used as adnominal, adverbial-exclusive, and adverbial-inclusive intensifier, respectively, meaning that ‘Bill, in contrast to somebody else, had to be told the answer and that he was not the only one for whom that was necessary’ (Siemund 2000: 12). The acceptability of such constructions is strong support for the notion that the three uses are indeed separate meanings of the form, rather than being merely contextually induced. Even stronger support for that notion comes from their diachronically staggered availability in French, as we will see later in section 5.5.

Next, I would like to investigate whether French has similar types of intensifiers.

2. Intensifiers in French

There is some information on French in the “Typological Database on Intensifiers and Reflexives” (TDIR, Gast et al. 2007). According to the source, French has all three types of intensifiers, expressed by *lui-même* / *elle-même*. I will now study them in turn.

2.1. Adnominal

In French, *lui-même* / *elle-même* can be used as an adnominal intensifier.

(8) *Ce sont les êtres les plus influents*

DEM be.3PL DEF be.PL DEF more influential

dans la ville après le roi lui-même.

in DEF city after DEF king 3SG.M-SELF

‘They are most influential people in the city after the king himself.’

- (9) *Le mensonge est bien mauvais car*

DEF lie is well bad because

le menteur lui-même ne l'aime pas.

DEF liar 3SG.M-SELF NEG 3SG-loves NEG

'Lying is really bad because the liar himself does not like it.'

- (10) *Mon commentaire concerne le produit lui-même et non mon achat.*

POSS comment concerns DEF product 3SG.M-SELF and NEG POSS buy

'My comment concerns the product itself, not the purchase.'

- (11) *Miami, avec ses 405 000 habitants est la 45ème ville des Etats-Unis,*

et l'agglomération compte 5 500 000 habitants. La population est en

grande partie hispanophone et il est plus courant d'entendre parler

espagnol qu'anglais dans la ville elle-même.

il est plus courant d'entendre parler espagnol

it is more common of-hear speak spanish

qu'anglais dans la ville elle-même

comp-english in DEF city 3SG.F-SELF

'Miami, with its 405,000 inhabitants is the 45th biggest city in the

US, whereas the conurbation has 5,500,000 inhabitants. The

population is largely Spanish-speaking and in the city itself it is more

common to hear people speak Spanish rather than English.'

As in English, this use of the intensifier evokes a centre-periphery scenario with *NP lui/elle-même* referring to a “centre”, contrasting with an appropriate “periphery”, for example a king and its entourage, a product and the scenario of its purchase, or a city and its conurbation. As Siemund (2000: 136-153) notes, this centre-periphery arrangement invokes genuine encyclopaedic knowledge, rather than discourse structure. In other words, the speaker is not entirely free to add adnominal *lui-même/elle-même* to any NP they wish to highlight as a centre. Consider this minor adjustment of (11):

(11') ? *Il est plus courant d'entendre parler anglais qu'espagnol dans l'agglomération elle-même.*

'It is more common to hear people speak English rather than Spanish in the suburbs themselves.'

While it is a perfectly reasonable thing to say that it is more common to hear English than Spanish in Miami's suburbs and nothing should prevent anyone to focus on the suburbs rather than the city, it is odd to mark this with *elle-même*. This is because in the city/suburbia frame set up by *ville*, the *ville* is, quite literally, the centre.

2.2. Adverbial-exclusive

Next, let us look at the adverbial-exclusive intensifier use of *lui-même/elle-même*. Firstly, some examples.

- (12) *Il_a construit lui-même sa maison.*

he has build.PTCP 3SG.M-SELF POSS house

‘He built his house himself.’

- (13) *Le beau temps revenant j'ai commencé par un carpaccio de bœuf que je n'ai pas tranché moi-même, mais que je me suis fait livrer par Auchan.*

que je n'ai pas tranché moi-même

REL I NEG-have.1SG NEG carve.PTCP 1SG-SELF

‘With the return of fine weather, I started off with a beef carpaccio that I did not carve myself but had delivered by Auchan [supermarket].’

The intensifier, while associated with an NP, really modifies the VP. It sets up a contrast *in absentia* between the predicate and another more general one that is ambiguous as to whether the subject performed the action in person or delegated it. Indeed, *construire sa maison* is ambiguous insofar as it can be said of someone who has their house built by builders, as well as of

someone who lays the bricks of their house with their own hands. Adding *lui-même / elle-même*, however, will exclude the former option and solely permit the latter one. With *trancher*, though, that ambiguity is more difficult to obtain. The contribution of the intensifier is rather to focus on the verb rather than setting up a contrast with a situation where that activity would be delegated. Thus, the contribution made by the adverbial-exclusive intensifier is at the level of predicate meaning.

2.3. *Adverbial-inclusive*

Finally, let us move on to adverbial-inclusive intensifiers in French. I start by giving some examples.

- (14) *[L]'incident fret étant dû à un train d'ECR, les grèves de la SNCF n'y ont donc rien à y voir, malgré nos grèves, car je suis cheminot moi-même, nous restons les plus sécuritaires avec une réputation et un savoir faire reconnu[s] dans le monde entier.*

je suis cheminot moi-même

I am railway worker 1SG-SELF

‘The freight incident was related to an ECR train, the SNCF strikes have thus nothing to do with it. I am a railway worker myself,

notwithstanding our strikes, we have the best safety record with a world-class reputation and skills base.’

(15) *Je peux vous aider à perdre du poids, j'en ai moi même perdu 5 kilos.*

j'en ai moi-même perdu 5 kilos

I-of have.1sg 1sg-refl lose.ptcp 5 kilos

‘I can help you lose weight, I have lost 5 kilograms myself.’

As with the other uses of the intensifier, the form *lui-même/elle-même* is associated with an NP. As noted with the English examples above, in consonance with Siemund (2000)'s observations, the adverbial-inclusive intensifier “includes” the NP in question in a set of referents or potential referents: in (14), the subject is a railway worker like others are, in (15), the subject has lost weight like someone else could, for example the addressee. As such, they can be replaced with 'also' or other additive markers. But this is not the whole story. It is striking that in this type of usage, the form is used in contexts of *argumentation*. This is quite obvious in the examples cited: the fact that the subject is a railway worker gives their claim about SNCF's safety record additional credibility. Likewise, the fact that in (15), the subject has lost weight themselves adds to the credibility of the claim that they can help the addressee lose weight. In short, the adverbial-inclusive invokes the *experience* associated with the predicate in question. This leads

us to take a fresh look at the distinction between adverbial-exclusive and adverbial-inclusive intensifier.

3. On the nature of the distinction between ad-verbal exclusive and ad-verbal inclusive

3.1. Siemund (2000): *Distinction in verbal semantics*

The labels “adverbial-exclusive” and “adverbial-inclusive” used by Siemund as well as by König and Siemund suggest that the distinction is a binary contrast. Indeed, Siemund attempts to capture the distinction by proposing a number of minimal contrasts that decide between an adverbial-exclusive and an adverbial-inclusive reading of the intensifier. These contrasts are located at a broadly aspectual level, at any rate at the level of predicate meaning.

The proposed key contrast is between *transferable* and *repeatable* situations. Transferable situations are characteristic of adverbial-exclusive intensifiers, whereas repeatable situations are typical of adverbial-inclusive situations. In fact, a non-repeatable situation, according to Siemund, automatically triggers the adverbial-exclusive reading. A situation that is both transferable and repeatable, however, would be compatible with both the exclusive and the inclusive reading of the intensifier. “Transferable” essentially means that the same event could apply, or could have applied, to

a different subject as well. “Repeatable” means that the situation is not unique, that it can occur more than once. Thus, in

(16) *J'ai lu ce livre moi-même*

I-have.1S read.PTCP DEM book 1sg-SELF

'I've read this book myself'

moi-même could be read either as exclusive or as inclusive adverbial intensifier. The situation could apply to a different subject (the speaker could ask someone else to read the book aloud, as opposed to reading it with their own eyes), thus yielding an adverbial-exclusive reading; or the situation could be repeated (the book can be read by various people), thus yielding an adverbial-inclusive reading.

As Siemund notes, adverbial-exclusive and adverbial-inclusive have somewhat different preferences when it comes to situation types and definiteness of the objects (in the case of transitive predicates), without however blocking the respective opposite. The adverbial-exclusive prefers achievements and accomplishments, as well as definite direct objects; the adverbial-inclusive, by contrast, prefers states and processes, as well as indefinite direct objects. However, if anything, this is really only a preference, rather than a robust generalization. Consider, for example, (16): we are in business with an accomplishment and a definite direct object here,

yet the sentence is perfectly compatible with an adverbial-inclusive reading.

Conversely, states or processes may be compatible with the adverbial-exclusive reading:

(17) *Pierre mange lui-même.*

P. eats 3SG.M-SELF

'P. eats himself'

This would be a perfectly acceptable utterance in, for example, a context where there is an expectation for people to be fed rather than taking in food with their own hands. The adverbial-exclusive is, equally, compatible with indefinite objects:

(18) *Il a construit pas mal de maisons lui-même.*

'He built many houses himself.'

Thus, the aspectual criteria proffered cannot be really decisive, and would be, if anything, the by-product of a more profound distinction.

Siemund makes it clear that the adverbial-inclusive is conducive to generating pragmatic inferences, in particular conditional ones, and often

used to introduce a request. However, by his own admission (2000: 228-229), he is unable to offer a genuine explanation for this.

Looking at the criteria “transferable” and “repeatable” as used to characterize the adverbial-exclusive and adverbial-inclusive intensifier, respectively, it would appear that they merely paraphrase, in an essentially circular fashion, what is inherent in the informal characterisation of these usage types anyway. Thus, “transferable” merely paraphrases the notion that a particular action can be delegated to someone else. Likewise, the definition Siemund (2000: 185) offers of “repeatable” merely spells out the informal characterisation of that type of intensifier usage: “Non-repeatable situations immediately trigger AVS [adverbial-exclusive intensifier]. [...] Situations restricted to happening only once contradict the very idea of inclusion.”

The conclusion that seems to impose itself here is that the distinction between adverbial-exclusive and adverbial-inclusive cannot really be located at the level of situation semantics. Rather, the basis for this distinction needs to be sought elsewhere.

3.2. *Adverbial-exclusive vs. adverbial-inclusive: content-level vs. context-level*

A concept that promises to be relevant for the contrast between adverbial-exclusive and adverbial-inclusive intensifiers is the content-level vs. context-level distinction (Hansen 2008). It refers to the truth-conditional vs. non-truth-conditional use of polysemous items. Some examples follow.

- (19) a. Claire moved to Brussels because she got a job there.
b. Tom is in because there is a blue Golf in front of the house.
- (20) a. *Paul habite toujours à Lille.* (Hansen 2008: 15)
'Paul still lives in Lille.'
b. *Téléphone-lui, toujours!* (Hansen 2008: 15)
'Call him/her, anyway!'

(19) exemplifies a well-known polysemy. In (19), the function of *because* is a different one in (19a) and (19b), respectively: In (19a), the fact of getting a job in Brussels is the reason why Claire moves there. By contrast, in (19b), the fact that there is a blue Golf in front of the house is not the reason why Tom is in; rather, it is the reason for the speaker to *say* that Tom is at home. Thus, whereas in (19a), the conjunction *because* establishes a material link between two statements about the world and is thus truth-conditional, the

same conjunction in (19b) does not establish a material link between two statements about the world. Rather, in (19b), the conjunction *because* relates a belief of the speaker's to the world. In other words, the truth of (19a) can be evaluated against facts in the real world, whereas the truth of (19b) cannot. As Hansen (2008: 14) explains, the reason for this is that *because* in (19a) has a "content-level" reading whereas in (19b) it has a "context-level" one. The same distinction applies to the adverb *toujours* in (20). In (20a), *toujours* refers to a phase in a given state of affairs, and its truth can be evaluated against this state of affairs. It is a content-level use of the phasal adverb (Hansen 2008: 15). In (20b), by contrast, it does not characterise a state-of-affairs; rather, it describe an attitude of the speaker. This is a context-level use of the same adverb (Hansen 2008: 15).

The contrast content-level vs. context-level does not, in itself, reflect a particular syntactic distinction. In other words, while a context-level use is likely to be located at a higher level of syntactic structure than a content-level one, there is no specific syntactic level associated with either of the two (cf. Hansen 2008: 16).

Nor does the contrast content-level vs. context-level match a particular level of semantic representation. That is, both content-level and context-level uses can be conventionalized functions of the same lexical item, i.e., meanings of a polysemous item; however, a context-level use of some form can as well be merely a contextually induced variant of its content-level counterpart, rather than being a fully-fledged conventional

meaning. Thus, it may be argued that the use of *toujours* in (20b) is a conventional context-level one, because it would not be possible to get the same effect with counterparts of *toujours* in other languages, e.g. English. By contrast, the use of *because* in (19b) may merely be a contextually induced context-level variant. After all, the context-level use of a causal conjunction is common with such conjunctions in many languages (e.g. Aijmer 1997).

Returning to the distinction between adverbial-exclusive and adverbial-inclusive intensifiers, it would appear that the difference between the two can be captured by assigning the former to content-level and the latter to context-level. The adverbial-exclusive intensifier has a truth-conditional function; after all, it adds a specific element to predicate meaning. It specifies that the subject did the action with their own hands/eyes, rather than leaving it open whether the event was carried out by the subject themselves or by proxy. This specific element may be checked against the instance of a state of affairs – it is truth-conditional. By way of example, the sentences of the minimal pair in (21) have, quite obviously, different truth conditions.

- (21) a. *Elle a construit une maison.*
'She had built/built a house.'

- b. *Elle a construit une maison elle-même.*
 she has build.PTCP INDF house 3SG.F-SELF
 'She built a house herself.'

By the same token, the adverbial-exclusive modifies the verb phrase (VP).

The adverbial-inclusive, by contrast, has a different function. It invokes the experience of the referent associated with the intensifier, in order to give greater credibility to a claim the speaker is making. It presents its host utterance as an argument for a conclusion. As such, it does not affect the truth conditions of the sentence. Compare the clauses of this minimal pair:

- (22) a. *Je suis cheminot.*
 'I am a railway worker.'
 b. *Je suis cheminot moi-même.*
 'I am a railway worker myself.'

The two sentences do not differ in truth conditions. The function of the adverbial-inclusive intensifier is at clause, rather than at verb phrase level. Syntactically, it is hence located above the verb phrase level (Gast 2006). As a consequence, it is not actually ad-verbal in the syntactic sense.

Nonetheless, I will keep with the established terminology and continue to refer to them as ad-verbal intensifiers. The distinction between ad-verbal inclusive and ad-verbal exclusive intensifier may, at times, be reflected syntactically.¹ Compare the two word orders in (23).

- (23) a. *J'ai lu ce livre moi-même.*
 I-have.1SG.M read.PTCP DEM book 1SG-SELF
- b. *J'ai moi-même lu ce livre.*
 I-have.1SG.M 1SG-SELF read.PTCP DEM book

(23a) is ambiguous. It permits the adverbial-exclusive reading 'I have read this book (with my own eyes, rather than having it read out aloud by someone else)' as well as the adverbial-inclusive reading 'I have read this book (I know what it is about)'. By contrast, (23b) only allows the adverbial-inclusive reading. The way word order interferes with intensifier reading is complex, though. It should not be inferred, for example, from the contrast in (23) that the position between finite verb and participle as in (23b) generally blocks the adverbial-exclusive reading. Thus, (23)

¹ This contrast was pointed out to me by Alain Berrendonner.

(23) *Il a lui-même construit sa maison*

he has 3SG.F-SELF build.PTCP INDF house

would be compatible with both the adverbial-exclusive and the adverbial-inclusive reading.

The preceding discussion on the nature of the distinction between the two adverbial intensifiers puts us in a position to address the relationship between the three types of intensifiers at semantic level.

4. On the relationship between the three types of intensifiers

As the three types of intensifiers are functions of the same form, we need to ask what the semantic relation between these functions is. Semantic relations between readings of the same item generally are of four types: metaphor, metonymy, hyperonymy or hyponymy (cf. Blank 1997, Gévaudan 2007). Metaphor is based on a perceptive or functional similarity. Metonymy is based on a focus/background shift in a frame (cf. Koch 2004). Hyperonymy and hyponymy are converse relations of taxonomic super- or subordination, respectively. The following polysemies exemplify the four relations.

(24) Metaphor

souris 'small rodent', 'computer mouse'

(25) Metonymy

bouteille 'bottle (as container)', 'content of bottle'

(26) Hyperonymy / hyperonymy

collaborer 'to work together', 'to collaborate with the enemy'

It is irrelevant for the purposes of this classification whether the readings are conventional meanings of the form, as arguably with examples (24) and (26), or merely contextual effects, as probably in (25).

While all of these are relevant in lexical meaning, Detges & Waltereit (2002: 164-165) have shown that only metonymy and hyperonymy/hyponymy are available in grammatical meaning. As far as intensifiers are concerned, I contend that the relation between the three is consistently metonymic. This can be seen in appropriate “bridging contexts”, i.e. contexts that are compatible with both among a pair of readings under consideration. I will now turn to this.

Firstly, let us look at the relation between adnominal and adverbalexclusive intensifiers.

- (27) *Lequel aiant fini sa harangue, qui fut assez longue, le Roy aiant pris lui-mesme leur cahiers, leur commanda de se retirer en son antichambre* (P. de l'Etoile, 1575, FRANTEXT)
- le Roy aiant pris lui-mesme leur cahier-s
- DEF king have.PTCP take.PTCP 3SG.M-SELF POSS notebook.pl
- ‘After the latter finished his fairly long speech, the King, having taken himself their notebooks, ordered them to withdraw to his antechamber’

It is not entirely clear whether we are dealing with an adnominal or an adverbial-exclusive intensifier here. Is it the king himself (as opposed to someone in his entourage) who took the notebooks, or is the point that the king took the notebooks himself, i.e., not delegating this to someone else? This makes the link between the two functions evident: if someone of high rank (as opposed to someone in their entourage) does something, it is reasonable to infer that the “high-rank individual” did it with their own hands. This is a metonymic link – the two readings are closely related through inference but neither perceptually similar nor inclusive in a logical way. Note, though, that even though the inference looks natural, it is not automatic: it would be perfectly possible for the king “to take the notebooks” by ordering one of his servants to do this. Thus, the two readings are clearly distinct. The former does not entail the latter even

though the inference seems very natural. Note equally that the shift from adnominal to adverbial intensifier implies a syntactic rearrangement. With the adnominal reading, the intensifier adjoins to the NP, whereas with the adverbial reading, it adjoins to the VP.

Turning now to the link between adverbial-exclusive and adverbial-inclusive intensifier, the connection between them is equally metonymic. This may be appreciated in example (28).

- (28) *Et samedi j'ai une connaissance qui vient voir la maison avec nous il est électricien et il a construit lui-même sa maison donc je pense qu'il saura nous conseiller*
- il a construit lui-même sa maison
- he has build.PTCP 3SG.F-SELF INDF house
- ‘On Saturday a friend will view the house with us ; he is an electrician and he built his house himself, so I think he can advise us properly’ (forum.doctissimo.fr/.../renovation-maison-1973-sujet_342_1.htm)

In this example, an adverbial-exclusive intensifier is put to use as an argument for a conclusion: the fact the electrician had built his own house *himself* is presented as evidence for the claim that he is a knowledgeable adviser for house-hunting. This can be presented as evidence because doing

something with one's own hands, for example building a house, means that one has gained the relevant experience, and that one can reliably count as an expert in the matter. This is the metonymic link between the two readings. Contexts like (28) make the link between adverbial-exclusive and adverbial-inclusive palpable. They are closely related in an encyclopaedic way, i.e. through knowledge of the world.

The metonymic link implies a reanalysis of the intensifier from content-level to context-level. In the adverbial-inclusive reading, the intensifier does not modify the VP; by the same token, it does not add to verb meaning.

In sum, there are metonymic links between the adnominal and the adverbial-exclusive, as well as between the adverbial-exclusive and the adverbial-inclusive reading.

After having identified, in the abstract, metonymic links between the intensifier readings, it is worthwhile examining whether these match the historical build-up of polysemy in the history of the intensifier.

1.1 Diachronic profile of intensifier readings

We now move to a diachronic study of the intensifier in the history of the French language. The goal here is not to provide an exhaustive historical analysis of the intensifier, but rather to show that the availability of the

various functions is historically staggered. The data are from the TFA and the FRANTEXT corpus. I only examine the form *lui-même*, not *même*.

There are very few occurrences of intensifiers in the Old French period. The very first example is an adnominal one.

(29) *Clarions lui meïsme tous seuls en araisonne.*

C. 3SG.M SELF all sole of talk.3SG

‘Clarion himself talks about it alone.’ (Adenet le Roi, 1271, TFA)

Alongside other clearly adnominal ones, we next find some examples that are ambiguous between an adnominal and an ad-verbal exclusive reading. One has already been discussed in the preceding subsection, repeated here for convenience.

(27) *Lequel aiant fini sa harangue, qui fut assez longue, le Roy aiant pris
lui- mesme leur cahiers, leur commanda de se retirer en son
antichambre*

‘After the latter finished his fairly long speech, the King, having taken himself their notebooks, ordered them to withdraw to his antechamber’ (P. de l’Estoile, *Registre-journal du regne de Henri III*, 1575, FRANTEXT)

Below is another example exhibiting the same kind of ambiguity.

(30) *De Cupido le diadème / Est de roses un chapelet*

of C DEF diadem is of roses INDF string

que Vénus cueillit elle-même / Dedans son jardin verdelet.

REL Venus pick.PRF.3SG 3SG.F-self within POSS garden greenish

‘Cupido’s diadem is a rosary that Venus herself picked in her lush

garden.’ (C. Marot, *L’adolescence clementine*, 1538, FRANTEXT)

There is some ambiguity here: is it the “goddess Venus herself” (as opposed to, say, mortal beings) that is picking the flowers, or is the intended meaning that Venus picked the rosary herself (rather than having it done by someone else)? The former alternative would mean that we are dealing with an adnominal intensifier, the latter however would imply that we are in business with an adverbial-exclusive one.

What these two examples confirm is that there is a metonymic link between the adnominal and the adverbial-exclusive intensifier to the effect that a high-ranking individual doing something rather than someone in their entourage invites the inference that the individual did this on their own, rather than delegating it to someone else.

Later still, we find unambiguously adverbial-exclusive intensifier use of *lui-même/elle-même*:

- (31) *Pour cela toutesfois il ne laissa de fort grand matin à faire donner le signal du combat, conduisant luy-mesme ses soldats jusques sur le bord du fossé*
 conduisant luy-mesme ses soldats
 lead.PTCP 3SG.SELF POSS soldiers
 ‘This is why, though, he did not stop to give the signal for battle, leading himself his soldiers to the edge of the ditch’ (B. de Vigenère, *L’histoire de la decadence de l’empire grec*, 1577, FRANTEXT)

The following example of an adverbial-exclusive intensifier from the early 17th century shows how its meaning can be put to use as an argument in discourse to support a conclusion.

- (32) *C'est toi / ce sont tes trahisons qui l'empêchent de vivre*
 DEM-is you DEM be.3PL POSS treacheries REL 3SG-prevent.3PL of live
Je t'ai vu dans ces bois moi-même le poursuivre
 I 2sg-have.1sg see.PTCP in DEM woods 1SG-self 3SG follow
 ‘That’s you and your treachery that prevent him from living. I’ve

seen myself that you were following him in those woods.’ (P.

Corneille, *Clitandre*, 1632, FRANTEXT)

The fact that the narrator has seen themselves their interlocutor “following someone in the woods” can be invoked to support the claim that the interlocutor committed a treachery. This is essentially the same argumentative pattern as the one used in (28): In the same way as having built one's house with one's own hands can be presented as an argument for being knowledgeable in all things houses, seeing with one's own eyes that a person followed someone where they weren't supposed to can be used as an argument to support the conclusion that that person committed a treachery. Having done / experienced something personally can be invoked as an argument for being a credible authority in the matter. In a similar fashion, the mere mention of “having done something personally” allows the inference of suitable relevant experience.

Later on, we find the adverbial-inclusive use, where the previous inference of relevant experience is conventionalized as a separate semantic function of the intensifier. One example is (33).

- (33) *Il y a des puissances saintes : Abraham, qui condamne le mauvais riche, a lui-même été riche et puissant ; mais il a sanctifié sa puissance en la rendant humble, modérée, soumise à Dieu,*

secourable aux pauvres.

A. , qui condamne le mauvais riche, a lui-même été riche

A REL condemn.3S DEF bad rich has 3SG.M-SELF be.PTCP rich

‘There are holy powers: Abraham, who condemns the wicked rich, was rich and powerful himself, but he sanctified his power by making it modest, moderate, subject to God, and helpful to the poor’ (J-B Bossuet, *Sermon sur la Providence*, 1662, FRANTEXT)

The use of *lui-même* here is clearly an adverbial-inclusive one. Abraham's being wealthy “himself” is presented as not consistent with Abraham's own condemnation of wealth. Thus, rather than operating at content-level, the function of *lui-même* is located at the level of expressing the narrator's attitudes – the context-level. It could not be read as an adverbial-exclusive use. After all, it makes no sense to say of someone that they are rich by themselves. Being wealthy is a property that an individual can only have at a personal level – it cannot be delegated to someone else. If one hands over one's wealth to someone else, then it becomes someone else's wealth. If one gave someone else power of attorney, this would not make the relevant assets property of the attorney, and it would not affect the individual in question's personal wealth.

It would be conceivable, though, to think of this intensifier as an adnominal one, assuming that Abraham is a person of high rank. However,

this seems unlikely. For one, the intensifier is placed next to the verb, quite distant from the NP. This is indicative of ad-verbal status. Moreover, in the context of the utterance, what is important is that Abraham's wealth is contrasted with his own condemnation of it, rather than contrasting Abraham with any person in his entourage. This again suggests an analysis as adverbial-inclusive intensifier.

The diachronically profile of intensifiers in French is, furthermore, important from a theoretical point of view. Firstly, it offers additional support for the assumption that the intensifier readings are distinct conventional meanings rather than contextual effects. Co-occurrence of the three readings in the same sentence provided already some support for this assumption (cf. (7)). Diachronic staggering of the readings makes the assumption even stronger. Secondly, it confirms Siemund's (2000: 180) implicational hierarchy of intensifier functions. Siemund submitted that if an intensifier is used as adverbial-inclusive, then it is also used as adverbial-exclusive, and that if an intensifier is used as adverbial-exclusive (but not necessarily as adverbial-inclusive), then it is also used as adnominal. This is confirmed for French.

5. Summary

In this article, intensifiers in French were studied. French *lui-même* / *elle-même* has, like its English counterpart himself/herself, three main functions: adnominal, adverbial-exclusive, and adverbial-inclusive. I discussed Siemund's (2000) analysis of the distinction between adverbial-exclusive and adverbial-inclusive. While the distinction itself was found to be highly insightful, I suggested that its nature cannot be located in propositional meaning alone. Rather, I suggested that the contrast content-level vs. context-level, proposed by Hansen (2008), is a more promising way of analysing the contexts of use of this pair.

I also analysed the diachrony of the intensifier in the French language. Use of the adnominal intensifier is attested from Old French. The adverbial-exclusive is found from the 16th century onwards, and the adverbial-inclusive from the 17th century onwards. This confirms Siemund's (2000) implicational hierarchy of intensifier functions.

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