

Intensifiers in Greek and Latin: A typological approach.

In this paper I will try to offer a new account for Classical Greek *autós* and Latin *ipse*, whose core meaning is “self”, by regarding them as an instantiation of the category “Intensifiers”, as defined by König (2001). The characterization of intensifiers is mainly semantic and syntactical, rather than morphological, since crosslinguistically prototypical intensifiers can vary from pronouns (e.g. English *himself*) to adjectives (e.g. Italian *stesso*). Intensifiers are often classified as “emphatic reflexives” (see Cantrall 1973, Kemmer 1995), because in most of the world’s languages they are morphologically identical to reflexive pronouns, but on the whole there is no agreement on their definition. The reason for creating a special category for so-called intensifiers lies in the fact that they show similar syntactic properties across different languages. Their most distinctive property is that they can be adjoined both to NPs and to VPs. In other words it is possible to distinguish between an “adnominal use” and an “adverbial use” exemplified in English by the two following two examples (from König 2001)

The President himself will attend the ceremony (adnominal use)

The President wrote his speech himself (adverbial use)

I will argue that *autós* and *ipse* exhibit the main features associated with prototypical intensifiers and that, if they are categorised as such, their semantics becomes clearer. Both adnominal and adverbial uses are found in Greek and Latin.

Lys. *Orat.* 7,11,1

Epeidē toínun ho chrónos oútos exékei, autós georgō
After so ART.DET. timeNOM thisNOM terminatedHE selfNOM.SING. cultivateI
“Now, since the termination of that time I have cultivated it myself.” (adverbial use)

Cic. *Fam.* 2,11,2

ipse dies me admonebat
selfNOM dayNOM me remindedHE
“The day itself reminded me (of it)” (adnominal use)

However, *ipse* and *autós* show some peculiar features that pose interesting questions. It is generally assumed (see König 2001) that, in languages which clearly distinguish between intensifiers and reflexives pronouns, intensifiers cannot occur in argument position without a nominal or pronominal head to which they attach. But in classical Greek *autós* does occur in all argument positions without an expressed head and it is widely used as an anaphoric pronoun. Similarly classical Latin *ipse* occurs in argument position, even if it is not an unmarked anaphoric pronoun as in Greek (but note that *ipse* developed into an anaphoric pronoun in Sardinian).

Lys. *Orat.* 4,5,3

Oukoūn ēlthon autós autòn apoktenōn hōs oūtós fēsi
So camel selfNOM him killPART.NOM. as thisNOM sayHE
“So I myself came to kill him, as he says”

I will show that the peculiar behaviour of Latin and Greek is motivated by the more general situation of their pronominal systems. Moreover I will demonstrate that the special behaviour of *ipse* and *autós* is linked to the problem of the reconstructing a common third person pronoun for Indo-European languages.

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