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**Where do intensifiers belong?**  
**Locating a singleton category on the map of word classes**

**1 What are intensifiers?**

- English *himself/herself/itself* in an adjunct position: *the president himself*
- Latin *ipse/ipsa/ipsum*; Italian *stesso/stessa*; Russian *sam/samá/samó*; German *selbst*, etc.

(1) The Archbishop *himself* went to Rome in order to persuade Pope Gregor IX to call for a crusade against the Stedingers.

(2) Catilina *ipse* pertimuit.  
Catilina INT.MASC.SG.NOM was.horrified  
'Catiline himself was horrified.' [Cicero, Catiline II, 6]

(3) Direktor *sam* budet govorit' s nami  
director INT.NOM.MASC.SG will speak with us  
'The president himself will talk to us.'

- alternative labels: *emphatic reflexives, emphatics, reflexives in emphatic use, emphasizees, intensive pronouns*, etc.
- intensifiers can typically be used in different positions

(4) John (himself) has (himself) been involved in the negotiations (himself).

- focus on 'adnominal' ('head-adjacent') uses of intensifiers (*John himself...*)

(5) Definition of adnominal intensifiers

Adnominal intensifiers are expressions that are used to relate the referent  $x$  of a given (co-)constituent to a set of alternative referents  $Y = \{y_1, y_2 \dots y_n\}$ , such that each element  $y_i \in Y$  can be identified relative to  $x$ .  
(cf. König & Gast forthcoming)

(6) Did you meet [John's *brother*] or did you meet [John *himself*]?  
→ John's brother can be identified relative to John (himself)

(7) a. I prefer the [surroundings of]<sub>F</sub> London to London [itself]<sub>F</sub>.

b. #I prefer [Paris]<sub>F</sub> to London [itself]<sub>F</sub>.

c. I prefer [Paris]<sub>F</sub> to [London]<sub>F</sub>.

- Questions:

1. *To what word class do intensifiers belong...*

a. *...cross-linguistically?*

b. *...in particular languages?*

(*or do intensifiers make up a word class of their own?*)

2. *What can we learn about parts-of-speech systems from a cross-linguistic study of intensifiers?*

## 2 Intensifiers are not a word class

- intensifiers are defined in semantic terms and have a more or less homogeneous distribution across languages, but they have *highly diverging morphological properties*
- **Invariant intensifiers:** Albanian *vetë*, Bambara *yèrè*, Modern Breton *end-eeun*, Irish Gaelic *féin*, German *selbst*, West Greenlandic *nammineq*, Lingala *mókó*, Yiddish *aleyn*, Mitla Zapotec *lagahk*, etc.

### (8) German

[*Sie selbst*] *hat es mir gesagt.*  
 she INT has it to.me said  
 ‘She herself told me about it.’

### (9) Albanian (Buchholz & Fiedler 1987: 283)

[*Ajo vetë*] *më tha.*  
 she INT to.me said  
 ‘She herself told me about it.’

- **Inflecting intensifiers:** Abkhaz *xatá-*, Amharic *ras-*, Arabic *nafs-*, English *himself/herself*, Finnish *itse-*, Hausa *kâi-*, Hungarian *mag-*, Latin *ips-*, Spanish *mism-*, Tzotzil *-tuk* etc.

### (10) Spanish (Mónica Zepeda, p.c.)

[*Ella mism-a*] *me lo dijo.*  
 she INT-FEM.SG to.me it told  
 ‘She herself told me about it.’

### (11) Finnish (Ursula Lehmus, p.c.)

*Saan-ko puhua johtaja-lle itse-lle-en.*  
 may.I-Q speak director-ALL INT-ALL-3.POSS  
 ‘Could I talk to the director himself?’

- Inflecting intensifiers show striking variation in their morphological make-up.
- Spanish *mismo/a* (cf. (10)): behaves like an ADJECTIVE (superlative: *La mismísima reina de Inglaterra!*)
- English *self*-forms: look like PRONOUNS
- Arabic *nafs-*: behaves like a RELATIONAL NOUN

### (12) Modern Standard Arabic (Mohammed Nekrumi, p.c.)

*ʔal-mudīr-u nafs-u-hu sayastaqbilunā.*  
 ART-director-NOM INT-NOM-POSS.3SG will.meet.us  
 ‘The director himself will meet us.’

- König & Gast (forthcoming): *the morphological properties of intensifiers are an important parameter of cross-linguistic variation*

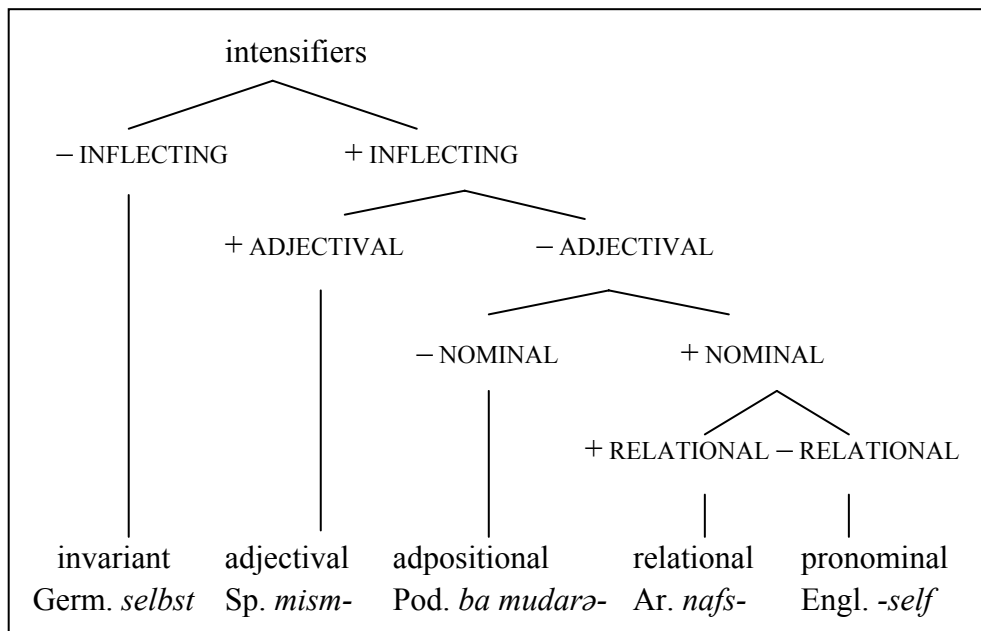


Figure 1: A typology of intensifiers

- typology in Diagram 1 allows for a number of generalizations

- INFLECTING	+ INFLECTING			
	+ ADJECTIVAL	- ADJECTIVAL		
		- NOMINAL	+ NOMINAL	
	+ RELATIONAL		- RELATIONAL	
INVARIANT	ADJECTIVAL	ADPOSITIONAL	RELATIONAL	PRONOMINAL
no inflection	reduced inflection	nominal inflection		
weak distributional restrictions		strong distributional restrictions		
no or partial identity with REFL			often complete identity with REFL	
rarely in argument position (only with pro-drop)			often in argument position	

Table 2: Correlations between parameters of variation

- alternative representation: two major types and one intermediate type

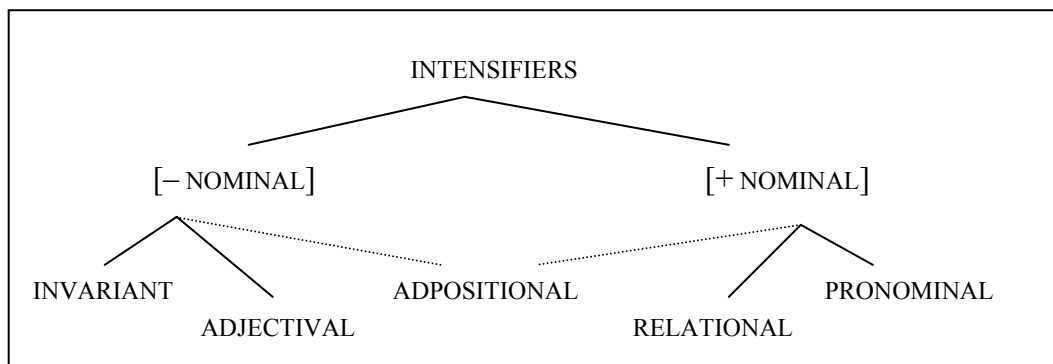


Figure 2: Alternative typology of intensifiers

### 3 Major types of inflecting intensifier

#### 3.1 Adjectival intensifiers

- (13) Ancient Greek (Bornemann & Risch 1978: 60)  
 [*Ho hyiós aut-òs*] *párestin.*  
 DET son INT-NOM.SG.MASC is.present  
 ‘The son himself is present.’
- (14) Swedish (Holmes & Hinchliffe 1994: 146)  
 [*Barn-et själv-t*] *sa ingenting.*  
 child-ART INT-INDEF.NEUT.SG said nothing  
 ‘The child itself said nothing.’
- (15) Polish  
*Nawet sam-ych pięciu ministrów było pijan-yh.*  
 even INT-MASC.GEN.PL five minister.GEN.PL was.NEUT.SG drunk-MASC.GEN.PL  
 ‘Even the five ministers themselves were drunk.’

#### 3.2 Relational nouns as intensifiers

- (16) Abkhaz (Hewitt 1989: 58)  
*à-jrab l-xatà*  
 ART-girl POSS.3SG-INT  
 ‘The girl herself.’
- (17) Turkish (Münevver Özkurt, p.c.)  
*Müdür-ün kendi-si bizim-le konuş-acak.*  
 director-GEN INT-POSS.3SG us-with talk-FUT  
 ‘The director himself will talk to us.’
- (18) Modern Standard Arabic (Mohammed Nekrumi, p.c.)  
*?al-mudīr-u nafs-u-hu sayastaqbilunā.*  
 ART-director-NOM INT-NOM-POSS.3SG will.meet.us  
 ‘The director himself will meet us.’
- (19) Tzotzil (field notes, V. Gast)  
*s-tuk li preserente*  
 3.POSS-INT the president  
 ‘the president himself’

#### 3.3 Pronominal intensifiers

- (20) Kannada (Amritavalli 2000: 81)  
*Intha janar-ige tamage-nee naachike aagabeeku.*  
 such people-DAT ANPH.DAT-EMPH shame should.happen  
 ‘Such people should themselves feel ashamed.’  
 (lit.: ‘To such people themselves shame should happen’)
- (21) Telugu (Subbarao & Murthy 2000: 225)  
*Maadhavi tan-ee swayam-gaa ceesindi.*  
 Madhavi INT.NOM-EMPH INT-INSTR did  
 ‘Madhavi herself did it by herself.’

(22) Kashmiri (Wali et al. 2000: 474)  
*Korev sajoov panun paan.*  
 girls.ERG decorated INT REFL  
 ‘The girls decorated themselves.’

(23) Tsakhur (Lyutikova 2000: 229)  
*Rasul-e: wuž-e: wuž getu.*  
 Rasul-ERG INT-ERG REFL.NOM beat  
 ‘Rasul beat himself.’

### 3.4 Intensifiers as adpositional phrases

(24) Podoko (Carola Emkow, p.c.)  
*Neŋa na-ne [sləðabi popə [ba mudarə-mena]] la.*  
 see.PAST NEG-1PL disciple pope with INT-his NEG  
 ‘We didn’t see the cardinal himself.’

(25) Yoruba (Insa Gülzow, p.c.)  
*A kò rí kádínàlì fúnraàrè. (fún: ‘for’, ara ‘body’)*  
 we not see cardinal INT.POSS.3SG  
 ‘We did not see the cardinal himself.’

### 3.5 Different types of intensifiers within languages

- English: has three types of intensifiers: pronominal, prepositional, invariant

(26) *The president himself opened the meeting.*

(27) *On March 1, 1991, Bolger personally telephoned US President Bush to congratulate him on the allied victory. [BNC]*

(28) *He came [pp by himself].*

- French: pronominal intensifier (PRO-*même*), invariant intensifier (*même*; with place, time, abstract nouns), prepositional (*en personne*)

(29) *Dans l’-oasis même il y a assez d’-eau*  
 in the-oasis INT there.is enough PART-water  
 ‘In the oasis itself there is enough water.’

(30) *Le ministre lui-même nous recevra.*  
 the minister him-INT us will.receive  
 ‘The minister himself will welcome us.’

(31) *Voilà Jacques Chirac en personne!*  
 there.is Jacques Chirac in person  
 ‘There is Jacques Chirac in person!’

- interim summary: From a cross-linguistic point of view, intensifiers can be classified according to the word class whose morphological properties they exhibit, even though they do not have the relevant distribution.
- question still remains: How can intensifiers be classified in particular languages?

#### 4 Classifying intensifiers in particular languages

- a syntactic approach along the lines of Hengeveld (1992), Hengeveld et al. (2004) is not feasible, since intensifiers are not identified as such by syntactic slots or constructions (or else, the constructions are *sui generis*)
- possible solution to the problem of language-particular classification: morphologically-based approach
  - ‘non-inflecting intensifiers’ are particles
  - ‘prepositional intensifiers’ are prepositional phrases
  - ‘adjectival intensifiers’ are adjectives
  - ‘relational intensifiers’ are relational nouns
  - ‘pronominal intensifiers’ are pronouns
- but: *Not all types of intensifiers have the distributional properties of the relevant (morphologically defined) classes.*  
→ pronominal intensifiers, adjectival intensifiers
- moreover, even in morphological terms such intensifiers exhibit certain idiosyncrasies
- Are intensifiers ‘(parasitic) cross-categorial operators’?
- but: intensifiers are not ‘fully cross-categorial’:

(32) \*I don’t think that he’s [sleeping itself] – he’s only pretending (to sleep).

- different approach: more fine-grained morphologically or paradigmatically based classification of word classes
- two ‘case studies’: Latin *ipse*, Old English *self*

#### 4.2 Latin *ipse*: a pronominal intensifier

- *ipse* basically inflects like the demonstrative pronouns *is/ea/id* (‘this (one)’), *ille/illa/illud* (‘that (one)’), *iste/ista/istud* (‘that (one)’, pejorative)

	<i>ist-</i>		
	MASC	FEM	NEUT
SG			
NOM	ist-e	ist-a	ist-ud
GEN	ist-ius		
DAT	ist-i		
ACC	ist-um	ist-am	ist-ud
ABL	ist-ō	ist-ā	ist-ō
PL			
NOM	ist-i	ist-ae	ist-a
GEN	ist-ōrum	ist-ārum	ist-ōrum
DAT	ist-is		
ACC	ist-ōs	ist-ās	ist-a
ABL	ist-īs		

	<i>ips-</i>		
	MASC	FEM	NEUT
SG			
NOM	ips-e	ips-a	ips-um
GEN	ips-ius		
DAT	ips-i		
ACC	ips-um	ips-am	ips-um
ABL	ips-ō	ips-ā	ips-ō
PL			
NOM	ips-i	ips-ae	ips-a
GEN	ips-ōrum	ips-ārum	ips-ōrum
DAT	ips-is		
ACC	ips-ōs	ips-ās	ips-ōs
ABL	ips-īs		

- only difference: *-um* in neuter nominative and accusative; *-um* is an adjectival ending
- ‘categorical blend’: between pronouns and adjectives?



- two-way distinction: personal pronouns vs. specifying pronouns
  - sub-classes of specifying pronouns:
    - a) q-pronouns (interrogative/indefinite pronouns, relative pronouns)
    - b) demonstrative pronouns
- (35) Quid tu dicis?  
 what you you.say  
 ‘What do you say?’
- (36) [Quis civis] creatur?  
 which citizen is.elected  
 ‘Which citizen/who is elected?’
- (37) hic dies  
 this day  
 ‘this day/today’

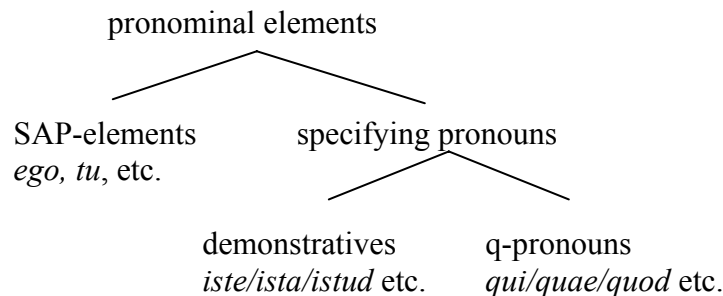


Figure 3: Pronominal elements of Latin (without intensifiers)

- intensifiers behave morphologically very much like specifying pronouns, but *they are not specifying pronouns*, since they do not have the distribution of a pronoun (e.g., they do not substitute for NPs)
- intensifiers *form a natural class with* specifying pronouns

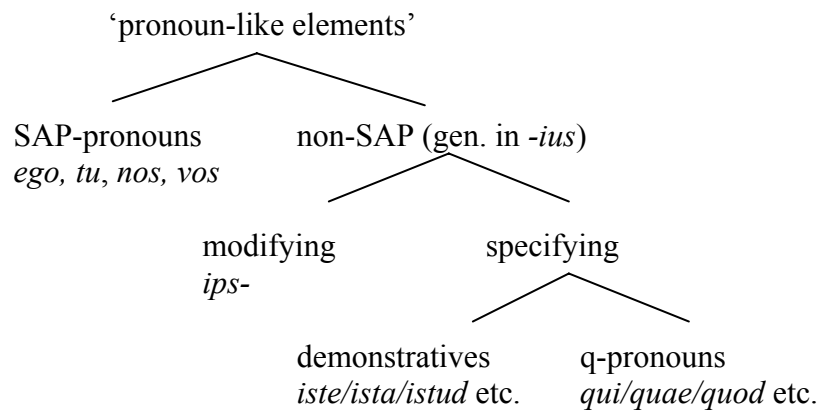


Figure 4: Pronominal elements of Latin (with intensifiers)

- in such a system, there is no such lexical class as that of ‘pronouns’
- there is a family of ‘pronoun-like elements’ that comprises different sub-classes which are distributionally and morphologically homogeneous, and



which constitute a hierarchical system whose nodes are characterized by well-defined attributes (→ no gradience)

- note: PoS-systems are more hierarchically organized in traditional grammar than in (post)structuralist linguistics

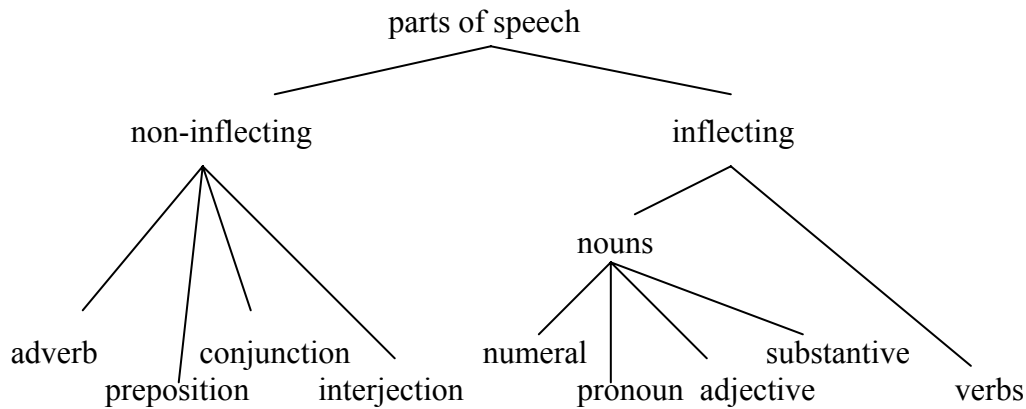


Figure 5: Parts of speech of Latin (Rubenbauer & Hofmann 1989: 23)

- proposal: reorganize the class of pronouns in such a taxonomy
- more fine-grained differentiations, deeper hierarchical structure (cf. Figure 4)

## 5 Old English *self*:- an adjectival intensifier

- Old English *self* (or *seolf*, *sylf*) clearly inflects like an adjective
- used with both strong and weak declension, depending on various factors (cf. van Gelderen 2001: 31, Gast 2006: 23-4)

(38) [æþele cempa *self*] mid gesiðum  
 [noble fighter *self*.NOM] with followers  
 ‘The noble fighter himself with his followers.’ [Beowulf 1312-3]

(39) swa [þu *self*] talast  
 such [you *self*.NOM.DEF] tell.2SG  
 ‘as you yourself think’ [Beowulf 594]

(40) swa [he *self-a*] bæd  
 as [he *self*-NOM.INDEF] asked  
 ‘as he himself had asked’ [Beowulf 29]

- interaction with position, different meanings (cf. Gast 2006: 23-4)
- inflectional paradigm is exactly that of an adjective

INDEFINITE	SG			PL		
	MASC	FEM	NEUT	MASC	FEM	NEUT
NOM	<i>self</i>	<i>self-u</i>	<i>self</i>	<i>self-e</i>	<i>self-a</i>	<i>self-u</i>
ACC	<i>self-ne</i>	<i>self-e</i>	<i>self</i>	<i>self-e</i>	<i>self-a</i>	<i>self-u</i>
GEN	<i>self-es</i>	<i>self-re</i>	<i>self-es</i>	<i>self-ra</i>	<i>self-ra</i>	<i>self-ra</i>
DAT	<i>self-um</i>	<i>self-re</i>	<i>self-um</i>	<i>self-um</i>	<i>self-um</i>	<i>self-um</i>
DEFINITE	SG			PL		
	MASC	FEM	NEUT	MASC	FEM	NEUT
NOM	<i>self-a</i>	<i>self-e</i>	<i>self-e</i>	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-an</i>
ACC	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-e</i>	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-an</i>
GEN	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-ra</i>	<i>self-ra</i>	<i>self-ra</i>
DAT	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-an</i>	<i>self-um</i>	<i>self-um</i>	<i>self-um</i>

(van Gelderen 2001: 31)

- choice of inflection:
  - free variation? cf. Modern German *selbst* (superlative? genitive?), *selber* (comparative? strong inflection?)
  - interaction with position, different meanings (cf. Gast 2006: 23-4 for discussion)
- comparison of adjectival declension with other declension classes
- pronominal declension is very similar to strong adjectival inflection (historically, the strong endings are endings of ‘pronominal adjectives’)

SG	MASC	FEM	NEUT
NOM	sē	sēo	þæt
ACC	þo-ne	þā	þæt
GEN	þæ-(e)s	þæ-re	þæ-(e)s
DAT	þæ-m	þæ-re	þæ-m

- nouns: different declension classes (major classes: vocalic/strong declension, weak declension/N-stems)
- complementarity: each noun shows either strong or weak inflection (hence, there are fewer cells in the paradigms; no gender distinctions)

	STRONG			WEAK		
	MASC <i>stone</i>	FEM <i>day</i>	NEUT <i>horse</i>	MASC <i>man</i>	FEM <i>tongue</i>	NEUT <i>eye</i>
NOM	stān	dæg	mearh	guma	tunge	ēage
ACC	stān	dæg	mearh	guma-n	tunga-n	ēaga-n
GEN	stān-es	dæg-es	mēar-es	guma-n	tunga-n	ēaga-n
DAT	stān-e	dæg-e	mēar-e	guma-n	tunga-n	ēaga-n

- weak declension (N-stems): cf. weak adjectival declension, but genitive plural in *-(e)na* instead of *-ra*
- **there are overlapping declension classes, but *self* clearly behaves like an adjective in morphological terms**

- proposal for a hierarchical classification (coarse-grained):

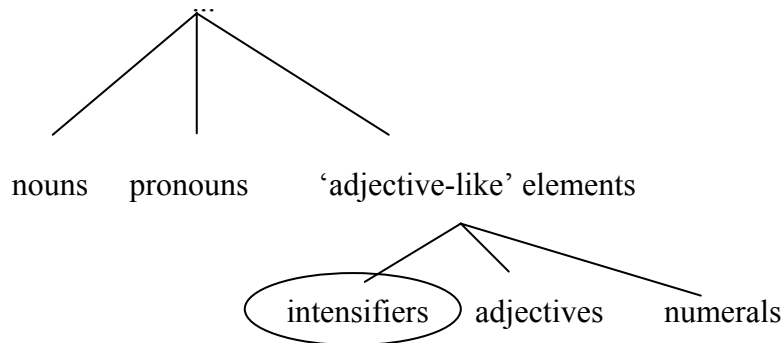
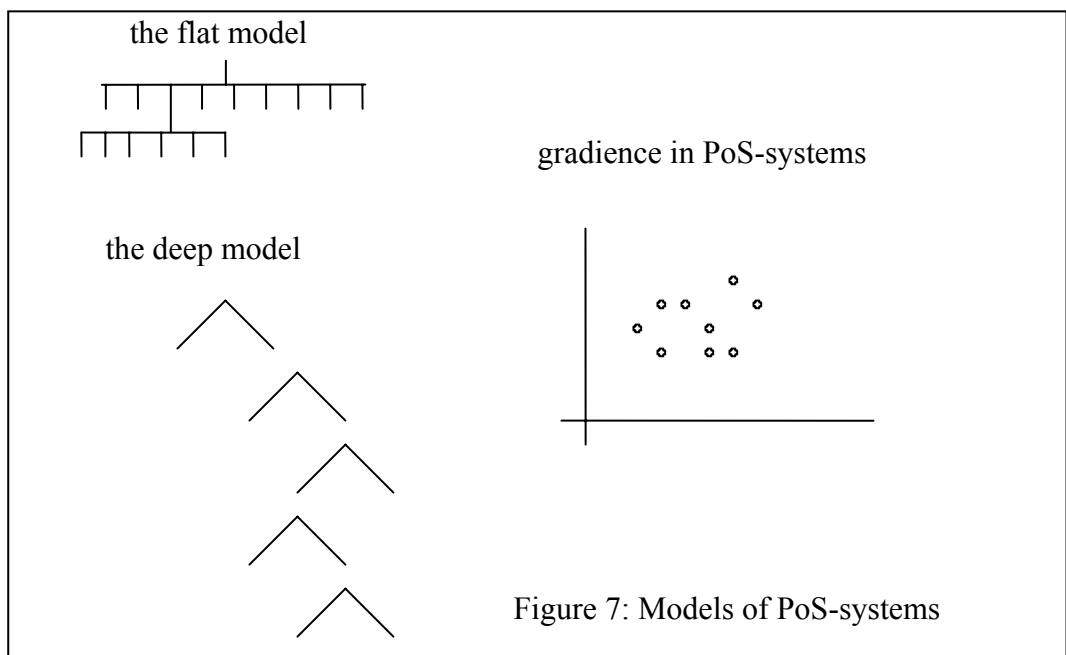


Figure 6: A coarse-grained classification of Old English parts of speech

- Old English *self* is not an adjective; but it forms a natural class together with adjectives ('adjective-like elements') and is, in this respect, more similar to adjectives than to pronouns

## 6 Summary: Intensifiers and parts-of-speech systems

- intensifiers are best defined in semantic (and maybe prosodic) terms
- they manifest a highly heterogeneous morphological behaviour from a cross-linguistic point of view
- within languages they are often characterized by idiosyncratic morphological properties
- but: their morphological properties are often largely parallel to the behaviour of other elements like pronouns or adjectives
- gradience, category squish? → not necessary
- better: assume hierarchical structure with many intermediate nodes and sub-categories; deep level of embedding; individual solutions for different languages



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