

Focus on identity – the dark side of *zìjǐ*

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Abstract

This article deals with the syntax and semantics of intensifiers in Mandarin Chinese. Intensifiers are expressions that are functionally and distributionally comparable to non-argumental x-self in English (e.g., the king himself, or do the work oneself). Mandarin examples are zìjǐ, běnshēn, qīnzi, or qīnkǒu. The descriptive goal is to identify the paradigm of adnominal and agentive-adverbial intensifiers in Mandarin and to determine the individual conditions of their use. On the theoretical side, I apply the analysis of intensifiers as lexicalizations of the identity function first proposed for German to the Chinese case. The identity function takes referential DPs as arguments, or, in the agentive-adverbial use, the agentive Voice head. The identity function in itself is semantically inert, but if the intensifier is focused, alternatives to the identity function come into play. These alternatives are used to explain the contextualization patterns attested for intensifier sentences. Two competing approaches to Mandarin intensifiers are reviewed and found not to be sufficient to account for the data.

1. Introduction

This article is about non-argumental uses of *zìjǐ* and functionally similar words.¹ Examples would be *Zhāngsān zìjǐ* ‘Zhangsan himself’ or *zìjǐ cā dìbǎn* ‘clean the floor oneself’. The research program defended partly follows the agenda stated by König (1991) or König and Siemund (2000b). Many of the descriptive generalizations made use of in this article were first stated by Hole (1998). The focus semantic theoretic background goes back to Eckardt (2001) and Hole (2002).

Since the word *zìjǐ* is typically studied in the context of reflexivity in the literature, Section 2 recapitulates some basic facts about the reflexive use of *zìjǐ*. Section 3 constitutes the main part of the article. An account of adnominal intensification as in *Zhāngsān zìjǐ* ‘Zhangsan himself’ is developed first (Section 3.1.), before an analogous, but Voice-related proposal is made for adverbial uses as in *zìjǐ cā dìbǎn* ‘clean the floor oneself’ (Section 3.2). I propose to model the semantic import of *zìjǐ* as denotationally inert. *Zìjǐ* denotes the identity function. But the identity function in focus relates to alternatives to the identity function, and it is the different contextualizations made available by the focus meaning (Rooth 1985, 1992) of *zìjǐ* that are the key to an understanding of the elusive semantics of intensifier words like *zìjǐ*. Towards the end of Section 3 further use types of *zìjǐ*-words are identified. Section 4 defends the claims made against competing approaches. In the conclusions, the relationship between intensifier *zìjǐ* and reflexive *zìjǐ* is addressed, but the matter is left as a desideratum for future research.

2. *Zìjǐ*, reflexivity and logophoricity, or the painful farewell to pure syntax

Many Chinese sentences with reflexive *zìjǐ* behave just as one would expect if all languages were like English. If an object pronominal is to co-refer with the subject, the reflexive pronoun or anaphor *zìjǐ* as in (1) must be used.²

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- (1) $\bar{A}ki\grave{u}_i$ $k\grave{a}njian-le$ $z\grave{i}j\check{i}/t\bar{a}^*_{i/j}$.
 Akiu see-ASP SELF/him
 'Akiu saw himself/him.'

Other sentences with pronominal $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ have properties that go beyond the standard use of English reflexive pronouns. (2) and (3) are such sentences.

- (2) [$\bar{A}ki\grave{u}_i-de$ $ji\bar{a}o'$ àò] $h\grave{a}i-le$ $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$.
 Akiu-'s arrogance hurt-ASP SELF
 'Akiu's arrogance hurt him.'
- (3) $\bar{A}ki\grave{u}_i$ $zh\bar{i}dao$ [$t\bar{a}men_j$ $ch\acute{a}ng$ $p\bar{i}p\acute{i}ng$ $z\grave{i}j\check{i}_{i/j}$].
 Akiu know they often criticize SELF
 'Akiu_i knows that they_j often criticize themselves_j/him_i.'

The problem with (2) is that reflexive $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ is used even though it is not the subject that co-refers with $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$.³ Just the possessor $\bar{A}ki\grave{u}$ of the whole subject DP is co-indexed with the object. Syntactic theories of reflexivity as in the tradition starting with Chomsky (1981) typically exclude such configurations because the syntactic relationship between $\bar{A}ki\grave{u}$, the antecedent, and $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ is not definable in terms of the tree-geometrical notion of c-command (Reinhart 1981). In (3), the antecedent does c-command $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$, but another restriction assumed by many researchers to hold for reflexives in general appears to be irrelevant; the relationship between the antecedent and $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ crosses a clause boundary, and this goes against the typical locality restriction found with reflexives in English (cf. *Paul_i had sold her a cup that she was going to return to him(*self)_i a day later*).

Linguists with a formal and generative background aimed at showing that the problems for a local and c-command-oriented account of Mandarin reflexive binding were only apparent. Huang and Tang (1991) presented a proposal where covert movement of long-distance bound $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ to a local configuration with its antecedent remedied the blatant violation of locality that we find at the surface of sentences like (3). In branches of linguistics that were not so much interested in the tree geometry of reflexivity, another line of thought had gained ground early. It had been noticed that the occurrence of far-away $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ and other non-local reflexives in other languages went hand in hand with

2. The following abbreviations are used in glosses: ASP – aspect suffix; BA – preposed object marker; CL – classifier; FOC . . . -FOC – focusing construction; PRT – (sentence-final) particle.

3. Jingyang Xue (p.c.) reminds me of the fact that some speakers prefer $t\bar{a} z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ in sentences like (2). This would seem to encourage analyses which take $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ in (2) to be $e_i z\grave{i}j\check{i}$, i.e., adnominal $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ adjoined to an empty pronominal. This would immediately allow for an explanation why $z\grave{i}j\check{i}$ need not be c-commanded by $t\bar{a}$. It doesn't have to be c-commanded, because it's not an anaphor/a reflexive. I leave the matter undecided here.

contexts of mind representation. The antecedent denotes the referent in whose linguistically represented thoughts or feelings that very same referent plays a second role. This phenomenon is called logophoricity (cf. Clements 1975; Hagège 1974), and knowledge about languages with special formal devices to signal logophoricity, among them special sets of pronouns, was accumulated. Kuno (1987) incorporated such insights in his functional syntax, and Huang, Y. (1994) and Pan (1997) were the first to describe Mandarin pronominals in detail from a perspective incorporating the notion of logophoricity.

It took a while for this trend to gain ground in the formalist camp, but recently we see a great degree of convergence. It is now generally assumed that long-distance bound *zìjǐ* should be discussed in the context of logophoricity, and that the domain of purely syntactic reflexive binding is restricted to local contexts where the antecedent and *zìjǐ* are clausemates (Huang and Liu 2000).

The focus of this article lies with *zìjǐ*, but not with its reflexive or logophoric use. Instead, we will take a detailed look at the non-argumental uses of *zìjǐ* and related words. Towards the end of the article we will return to the reflexivity and logophoricity data and ask ourselves what conclusions should be drawn from the multiple functional potential of *zìjǐ*, and whether we should aim at developing a unifying perspective for all uses. The matter will be left unsettled, but the discussion strives to pave the way for such a more far-reaching investigation.

3. *Zìjǐ* as an intensifier

The present section is the main section of the article. It treats *zìjǐ* and functionally similar words as intensifiers in the tradition of Tang (1989); König (1991, 2001); König and Siemund (1996 and following); Pan (1997); Hole (1998, 2005) and Eckardt (2001). We will first develop an account of adnominal intensifier-*zìjǐ*, before we move on to treat adverbial and attributive uses of Mandarin intensifiers. The recurrent idea (first proposed independently by Eckardt 2001 and Hole 2002) will be to say that intensifiers are expressions which have no semantic effect in the narrow sense at all. Only if they are stressed and consequently relate to (no longer semantically void) alternatives does their import on utterance meanings become relevant.

3.1. Adnominal *zìjǐ* and its kin – some descriptive generalizations

Zìjǐ may combine with a DP to form another DP. This is illustrated in (4).

- (4) [Ākiù zìjǐ] míngtiān huì lái huānyíng wǒmen.
 Akiu SELF tomorrow will come welcome us
 ‘Akiu himself will come to welcome us tomorrow.’

Not every DP is a good DP to combine with *zìjǐ*. Most DPs denoting inanimate referents yield infelicitous results if combined with *zìjǐ*.

- (5) [Lùzhōu ([#]*zìjǐ*)] *yǒu zúgòude shuǐ*.
 oasis SELF has sufficient water
 ‘The oasis (itself) has enough water.’

(5) shows that if a DP which has an inanimate referent combines with *zìjǐ* the result is deviant. It goes without saying that nouns for institutions like *xuéxiào* ‘school’, *dàxué* ‘university’ and the like have uses that allow for the adjunction of *zìjǐ* in the sense that the relevant referents are understood as rational individuals capable of perception and volitional action. Higher animals may also be fine with *zìjǐ*; cf. (6).⁴

- (6) *Zhè-jìan shì gēn [gǒu zìjǐ] wú guān, shì*
 this-CL matter with dog SELF not.have.anything.to.do is
zhǔrén-de cuòwù!
 owner-’s fault
 ‘This doesn’t have anything to do with the dog itself, it’s the owner’s fault.’

DPs with inanimate referents yield good results if they are combined with an expression which is functionally similar to *zìjǐ*, viz. *běn-shēn* ‘itself; (lit. :) this.very-body’. (7a) and (7b) are pertinent examples; as long as the DPs are referential (a restriction which I don’t discuss here; see Hole 1998, 2005 for more details), *běnnshēn* may be used.

- (7) a. *Lùzhōu běnnshēn yǒu zúgòude shuǐ*.
 oasis SELF has sufficient water
 ‘The oasis (itself) has enough water.’
 b. [You can see the billboards all over the city ...]
*Kěshì diànyǐng běnnshēn/*zìjǐ hái kànbudào.*
 but movie SELF/SELF still cannot.see
 ‘But the movie itself is not yet on show.’ (adapted from Pan 1997)

A third expression, *běnrén*, is not just restricted to higher animates, but occurs exclusively with DPs denoting humans.

4. Using *zìjǐ* with animal nouns like *gǒu* ‘dog’ appears to result in a strong personification. Speaker judgments vary in this area. For some speakers the use of *zìjǐ* with a noun like *gǒu* ‘dog’ is outright infelicitous, while it is quite normal for others.

- (8) *Bùzhǎng/Gǒu běnrén huì lái huānyíng wǒmen.*
 minister/dog in.person will come welcome us
 ‘The minister/#The dog in person will come to welcome us.’

In fact, this behavior is not much of a surprise, since *-rén* means ‘man, person’. *Běnrén* as a whole may be translated as *in person*.

3.1.1. *Intuitions about zìjǐ.* If it gets to determine what the semantic import of adnominal *zìjǐ* and other similar expressions like *běnrén* and *běnrén* really is, the tentative statement in (9) may be a good point of departure.

- (9) The use of adnominal *zìjǐ* etc. has an effect similar to focusing the DP to which it adjoins.

We will substantially modify this generalization below, but in the light of data as in (10) our first hunch doesn’t seem to be entirely out of place. (In (10) and in subsequent examples, small caps are used to highlight words with sentence-level focus accents.⁵)

- (10) a. *Bùzhǎng ZÌJǐ huì lái huānyíng wǒmen.*
 minister SELF will come welcome us
 ‘The minister HIMSELF will come to welcome us.’
 b. *BÙZHǎNG huì lái huānyíng wǒmen.*
 minister will come welcome us
 ‘The MINISTER will come to welcome us.’

Granted that there are many similarities between (10a) and (10b), there’s also a difference. The alternative referents that we think of with *zìjǐ*-sentences must “have something to do” with the referent of the DP to which *zìjǐ* attaches. This makes the *zìjǐ*-nominal appear “central”. (Here and in the following, a slash preceding a syllable in small caps marks contrastive topics in the sense of Büring 1997, 2003.)

5. An anonymous reviewer suggests that Chinese, being a tone language, doesn’t have prosodic focus marking. While it is true that the exact prosodic realization of information-structural categories in Mandarin is a matter of ongoing research (cf., among many others, Pan, Huang and Huang 2005), it seems to be an undisputed fact that there is information-structural prosody alongside lexical tones and that focal accents are realized by way of syllable duration elongation (and, to a lesser extent, by f0 range expansion).

- (11) [The minister him/SELF will NOT come to welcome us, ...]
- a. *zhǐyǒu bùzhǎng* ZHÙLǐ *huì lái huānyíng wǒmen.*
 only assistant.minister will come welcome us
 ‘... only the ASSISTANT-minister will come to welcome us.’
- b. #*zhǐyǒu wǒde lǎo* PÉNGYOU *huì lái huānyíng*
 only my old friend will come welcome
wǒmen.
 us
 ‘... #only my old FRIEND will come to welcome us.’

According to the preliminary generalization of relatedness stated in (10), (11a) is felicitous because the minister and the assistant-minister have something to do with each other. Unless we enrich the context, there is no comparable tie-up between the minister and the speaker’s old friend. This is the reason why (11b) is not felicitous. The deviance of (11b) may easily be repaired by enriching the common ground; if we assume that the speaker and the hearer know that the old friend actually is the assistant minister, then (11b) is felicitous, and this is so because the real-world link between the referent of the *zìjǐ*-DP and the relevant alternative (the minister) has been established.

With simple focusing and no *zìjǐ*-word present, no contextual fine-tuning or accommodation is needed to arrive at good discourses.

- (12) [The /MINISTER will NOT come to welcome us, ...]
- a. *zhǐyǒu bùzhǎng* ZHÙLǐ *huì lái huānyíng wǒmen.*
 only assistant.minister will come welcome us
 ‘... only the ASSISTANT-minister will come to welcome us.’
- b. *zhǐyǒu wǒde lǎo* PÉNGYOU *huì lái huānyíng*
 only my old friend will come welcome
wǒmen.
 us
 ‘... only my old FRIEND will come to welcome us.’

Both sentences in (12) are felicitous, no matter if my old friend has something to do with the minister or not.

So far, we have assumed without discussion that the use of adnominal *zìjǐ* is somehow linked to focusing and sentence accent. Before we wrap up our intuitions we should be a bit more explicit about this. It is not the case that sentences with unstressed adnominal *zìjǐ* are ungrammatical or generally infelicitous; they just require very special contexts. Look at (13).

- (13) *Bùzhǎng zìjǐ huì lái HUĀNYÍNG wǒmen.*
 minister SELF will come welcome us
 ‘The minister himself will come to WELCOME us.’

(13) would be fine in a context in which the speaker corrects the person who had the last turn. The preceding turn might have been the Mandarin equivalent of *Just imagine, the minister HIMSELF will throw a dinner party for us!*, and then (13) is used to correct the wrong statement. This shows that unfocused *zìjǐ* is natural if it was a focus in the preceding turn. In such contexts, the strings which require no correction are deaccented. Inasmuch as such contexts are special, we may maintain our original generalization that, in a standard utterance which is not corrective, *zìjǐ* bears sentence-level focus marking.

(14) summarizes the intuitions that ought to follow from a theoretical analysis of adnominal *zìjǐ* and similar words.

- (14) Intuitions to be modeled for adnominal *zìjǐ*, *běnnshēn* and *běnrén*:
- a. *Zìjǐ* etc. only relate to alternatives that “have something to do” with the referent of the *zìjǐ*-DP/the *běnnshēn*-DP etc.
 - b. *Zìjǐ* etc. want to be stressed/in focus.

To do justice to these intuitions we will first have to familiarize ourselves with focus semantics in the sense of Rooth (1985, 1992), i.e., with alternative semantics. This will be the goal of the following subsection.

3.1.2. *The ABC of focus semantics (Rooth 1985, 1992).* In alternative semantics, each linguistic expression has two different kinds of meaning. One meaning is the ordinary meaning, and the other one is the focus meaning. For each kind of meaning there is an interpretation function which takes the linguistic expression as its input, and delivers the respective meaning as its output. Before we clarify what the differences between these meanings are, let us just take a look at the way in which we will write down the different interpretation functions.

- (15) a. $[[Jack]]^0$
 b. $[[Jack]]^f$

(15a) shows the interpretation function for ordinary meanings or denotations, applied to the name *Jack*, which, in turn, refers to the person Jack. The function is symbolized by the double brackets with the zero superscript for ordinary meanings. In (15b) everything is the same, except for the superscript. It symbolizes the fact that this time, the function is to be taken as the interpretation function yielding focus meanings.

The focus meaning and the ordinary meaning of an expression differ if and only if the expression contains a focus. Let us assume that *Jack* in our example bears focal stress. Along with the tradition (cf. Selkirk 1995; Schwarzschild 1999 among many others) I posit a syntactic focus feature which is the syntactic

counterpart of prosodic focus marking. Prosodic focus marking is a matter of the PF branch of the syntactic derivation in the generative T-model of grammar, and therefore focus accents are not visible at the syntax-semantics interface, i.e., at the end of the LF branch. The F-index syntactically marks the focus. The focus marking of *Jack* will lead to the different meanings in (16) depending on whether we use the ordinary interpretation function, or the focus interpretation function.

- (16) a. $\llbracket Jack_F \rrbracket^0 = \text{Jack}$
 b. $\llbracket Jack_F \rrbracket^f = \{ \text{Jack, Jim, Jill, John, Joshua, Kim, Ken, Laurie, ...} \}$

The ordinary denotation of *Jack*, even if it is in focus, is the person Jack in the real world (or his mental representation in someone; the difference doesn't matter here). The focus meaning of *Jack* in focus is the set of all type-identical alternatives to Jack. A few examples of such type-identical alternatives have been listed in (16b). Of course, not all other individuals may be considered as possible alternatives in an utterance with a focus on a proper name. Contextual information, the knowledge state of the interlocutors and other factors will constrain the set of relevant alternatives.

Let us now see what happens if we have complete contextualized utterances with foci. An example is given in (17).

- (17) a. [Jack, Jill, and Jim were all at the manor when the murder happened, and nobody else was there. But who was in the park?]
 JILL *was in the park.*
 Jack ...
 Jim ...
 ...
 b. $\llbracket Jill_F \rrbracket^f = \{ \text{Jill, Jack, Jim, ...} \}$
 c. $\llbracket was\ in\ the\ park \rrbracket^f = \llbracket was\ in\ the\ park \rrbracket^0$
 d. $\llbracket Jill_F\ was\ in\ the\ park \rrbracket^f = \{ \text{Jill was in the park, Jack was in the park, Jim was in the park, ...} \}$

In (17a), just Jack, Jim and Jill are relevant discourse referents.⁶ The detective who asks the question just wants to know who among Jack, Jill and Jim was in the park. In this context, the contextually restricted focus meaning of *Jill* are the three persons Jack, Jill and Jim. The focus meaning of the VP in (17c) is identical to the ordinary meaning, because it contains no focus. If now we

6. Being a focus does *not* mean that the word/referent hasn't been mentioned before or is not under discussion or in the speaker's/hearer's mind; Jill, Jack and Jim in (17a) are all well established discourse referents. As such, they are not NEW in the discourse. But the information that Jill was in the park on Saturday afternoon *is* new information.

combine the subject with the rest as in (17d), a set of propositions is the result. This is the set of propositions that, given the context and the hearer's knowledge, could possibly have been uttered by the speaker. In a way, it contains all the propositions that were within the space of possibilities at this point of the discourse. The asserted proposition must be among these alternatives.

This is all the theory we need to come up with a very simple analysis of intensifiers like adnominal *zìjǐ*.

3.1.3. *The centrality/relatedness intuition derived from the identity function in focus.* Assume you're a passionate movie-goer. You visit L.A., and you want to see some movie stars in person. Later on you tell your friends what you have experienced.

- (18) a. [On a tour of Bel Air ...]
 Wǒmen búdàn kàndào-le míngxīng-de fùqīn, ...
 we not.just get.to.see-ASP star-'s father
 'We didn't only spot the **father** of the movie star, ...'
 b. ... hái pèngdào-le míngxīng běnrén.
 still meet-ASP star self
 '... we also bumped into the movie star **herself**.'

In (18) the movie star is, in a way, contrasted with the father of the movie star. But note that *míngxīng* '(movie) star' in (18b) does not bear a focal accent. *Běnrén* does instead.⁷ Here's what I assume to be the ordinary meaning and the focus meaning of the object DP of (18b).

- (18') a. $\llbracket \text{míngxīng běnrén}_F \rrbracket^0 = \text{ID}(\text{the movie star}) = \text{the movie star}$
 b. $\llbracket \text{míngxīng běnrén}_F \rrbracket^f = \{\text{MOTHER-OF}(\text{the movie star}), \text{ELDER-}$
 BROTHER-OF(the movie star), FATHER-OF(the movie star),
 MANAGER-OF(the movie star), ID(the movie star), ... }

(18'a) provides the denotation, or ordinary meaning, of *míngxīng běnrén* 'the star herself'. We interpret *běnrén* as the identity function ID. This is a function whose input and output are identical. Therefore, the ordinary meaning of *míngxīng běnrén* is identical to that of *míngxīng* alone, it is simply the specific movie star which is relevant here, say, Angelina Jolie. The important thing now is what happens with the focus meaning. If the use of *běnrén* doesn't make a

7. The argument is developed for *běnrén* first (and not for *zìjǐ*) because *zìjǐ* produces degraded judgments if it is adjoined to non-subjects, and in our example we want to discuss an intensifier adjoining to an object DP (both Hsin-yun Liu and Jingyang Xue have pointed this restriction out to me; an anonymous reviewer likewise prefers *běnrén* to *zìjǐ* in (18b)). I have not investigated the nature of this restriction.

difference in the ordinary meaning, it does have an effect in the focus meaning. What we get for *běnrén* in focus in (18b) is the set of contextually relevant alternatives to the identity function which take Angelina Jolie as input. In many contexts, kinship relations are contextually relevant, and they are relevant in our context, too. That is why a number of kinship functions is listed in (18'b), complemented by the MANAGER-OF function. Take the FATHER-OF function for exemplification. It is a function which, in our context, takes Angelina Jolie as input and yields her father as its output. We see again how the focus meaning of a sentence makes a sentence relate to the context in which it is uttered; recall that (18a) mentions the father of the movie star, and the relational noun *fùqīn*, i.e., the lexeme corresponding to the FATHER-OF function, is in focus.

It is important to note that, strictly speaking, the example in (18) doesn't oppose Angelina Jolie and her father. What it really does is contrast the relationship in which Angelina Jolie stands to her father with the relationship in which Angelina Jolie stands to herself. If we translate these contrasting functions into discourse referents we get the centre-periphery effects pointed out in the literature on intensifiers (cf. the publications by König and Siemund). Angelina Jolie, who is mapped to herself, has, sloppily speaking, all the referents as a periphery around her which are the outputs of the different functions listed in (18'b).

A parallel argument can be developed for the example in (19).

- (19) a. *Bùzhǎng zìjǐ bú huì lái huānyíng wǒmen, ...*
 minister **self** not will come welcome us
 'The minister/**himself** will **not** come to welcome us, ...'
- b. *zhǐyǒu bùzhǎng zhùlǐ huì lái huānyíng wǒmen.*
 only assistant.minister will come welcome us
 '... only the **assistant**-minister will come to welcome us.'
- (19') a. $[[\text{bùzhǎng zìjǐ}_F]]^0 = \text{ID}(\text{the minister}) = \text{the minister}$
 b. $[[\text{bùzhǎng zìjǐ}_F]]^f = \{ \text{ASSISTANT-OF}(\text{the minister}), \text{SECRETARY-OF}(\text{the minister}), \text{ID}(\text{the minister}), \dots \}$

(19'b) shows how the contextually restricted focus meaning of the whole DP *bùzhǎng zìjǐ* is made up of all the people who are related to the minister. The real contrast is again between functions, viz. the identity function as in the ordinary meaning, and all the functions that may take the minister as input and yield something else as output.

(20) abstracts away from the particulars and states the general pattern. For ease of exposition, and in order not to delve deeper into the formalities of the argument, I won't show how the individual parts of *zìjǐ*-DPs are interpreted; we only look at the complete DPs. But it ought to be clear that it is always only

zìjǐ which triggers the alternative sets. If it were for the nominal in (20) alone, we wouldn't arrive at focus meanings with more than one set member, simply because the nominal in such constructions is not in focus. Only the intensifier is.

- (20) The general pattern:
 $[[\text{nominal } zìjǐ/běnrén/běns hēn]]^0 = \text{ID}([\text{nominal}]^0)$
 $[[\text{nominal } zìjǐ]]^f$ = the set of referents identifiable through $[[\text{nominal}]^0]$
 (e.g., the sister of $[[\text{nominal}]^0]$, the mother of $[[\text{nominal}]^0]$, the husband of $[[\text{nominal}]^0]$, the colleagues of $[[\text{nominal}]^0]$, $[[\text{nominal}]^0$'s wallet, $[[\text{nominal}]^0$'s personal documents, the brand of ice-cream that $[[\text{nominal}]^0]$ likes most, the place $[[\text{nominal}]^0]$ went to for a holiday last year, $[[\text{nominal}]^0$ x-self, and many, many more)

The pattern in (20) allows us to explain what were stated as intuitions about adnominal *zìjǐ* in (14), viz. the relatedness intuition and the focus attraction of *zìjǐ*. Alternatives to *zìjǐ*-DPs always have something to do with the *zìjǐ*-referent because the alternatives are accessed via the *zìjǐ*-referent. Furthermore, *zìjǐ* always attracts the focus accent – except for very special discourse environments as discussed around (13) above – because its use doesn't make a difference if it's not in focus and focus alternatives are related to. In conjunction with a ban on unnecessarily prolix utterances – ‘Only use a word if it makes a difference’ – this explains why *zìjǐ* attracts the focus accent of the sentence in which it occurs. A preliminary lexical entry for adnominal *zìjǐ* is given in (21a). (21b) paraphrases the λ -term.

- (21) a. $[[zìjǐ_{\text{adn}}]]^0 = \lambda x . x$ (to be amended)
 b. ‘the function that maps each individual to itself’

(22) gives the focus meaning of *zìjǐ* in focus, again supplemented by a paraphrase.

- (22) a. $[[zìjǐ_{\text{adnF}}]]^f = \{f : f \in D_{\langle e,e \rangle}\}$ (to be amended)
 b. ‘the set of all functions that map individuals to individuals’

3.1.4. *Other adnominal intensifiers.* In Section 3.1, we identified a whole paradigm of adnominal intensifiers, viz. *zìjǐ*, *běnrén* and *běns hēn*, and each word had its own peculiarities. In the present subsection, we will take a closer look at these peculiarities.

Note for a start that we're not quite done yet with adnominal *zìjǐ*. What we haven't derived so far is the fact that it only adjoins to DPs with animate referents. This may easily be stated in the form of a presupposition, or, which

amounts to the same thing, as a restriction of the domain of the identity function. Such a restriction is spelled out in (23). The presupposition is the portion between the colon and the full stop.

- (23) a. $\llbracket z\dot{i}j\check{r}_{\text{adn}} \rrbracket^0 = \lambda x : x \text{ is an animate being} . x$
 b. ‘the function that maps each animate individual to itself’

This will give us the focus meaning of adnominal $z\dot{i}j\check{r}$ in focus as in (24).

- (24) a. $\llbracket z\dot{i}j\check{r}_{\text{adnF}} \rrbracket^f = \{f : f \in D_{\langle e,e \rangle} \ \& \ \text{dom}(f) = \text{the set of animates (a subset of } D_e)\}$
 b. ‘the set of all functions that map animate individuals to individuals’

In the case of *běnrén* ‘in person’, we need a stricter restriction of the input because only human referents yield good results. Recall our example (8), which is repeated here as (25).

- (25) *Bùzhǎng*[#]*Gǒu* *běnrén* *huì lái huānyíng wǒmen.*
 minister/dog in.person will come welcome us
 ‘The minister/[#]The dog in person will come to welcome us.’

As said above, this restriction does not come as a surprise, because *-rén* means ‘man, person’. A lexical entry along these lines for *běnrén* is (26).

- (26) a. $\llbracket b\check{e}nr\acute{e}n_F \rrbracket^0 = \lambda x : x \text{ is a human being} . x$
 b. ‘the function that maps each human individual to itself’

Běns hēn brings no specific restrictions along, except that the DP to which it adjoins must be referential (for a general and more precise discussion of this restriction in connection with German *selbst* ‘(non-argumental) x-self’ cf. Hole 2005). Its lexical entry looks as in (27).

- (27) $\llbracket b\check{e}nsh\bar{e}n \rrbracket^0 = \lambda x : x \text{ is identifiable} . x$

Figure 1 summarizes the results of the present subsection. The subject preference of $z\dot{i}j\check{r}$ (cf. Fn. 7) is not represented.

3.2. Adverbial $z\dot{i}j\check{r}$ and its kin

In this section we will deal with adverbial uses of $z\dot{i}j\check{r}$ and similar expressions. A representative example is found in (19).

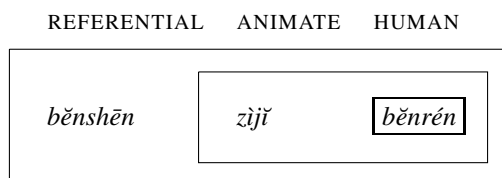


Figure 1: Adnominal intensifier functions – domain restrictions/presuppositions

- (28) [A: Could you do my washing for me?]
 B: *Nǐ wèishénme bu [ZÌJǐ/*BĚNRÉN/*BĚNSHĒN xǐ] ne?*
 you why not SELF/in.person/SELF wash PRT
 ‘Why don’t you do your washing YOURSELF?’

(28) shows that *zìjǐ* has an adverbial use, while *běnrén* and *běns hēn* as discussed in previous sections do not. This use of *zìjǐ* was first described by Tang (1989) and has since received attention in Hole (1998) and Tsai (2005). Before I propose a syntax-semantics implementation for adverbial *zìjǐ*, let us first take a look at an important restriction of its use.

3.2.1. *The absence of the centrality effect.* Adverbial *zìjǐ* cannot simply be dislocated or floated adnominal *zìjǐ* (as is sometimes claimed for its German or English counterparts⁸) because it doesn’t trigger the centrality effect of adnominal *zìjǐ*.

- (29) [The hermit hasn’t been to the valley in 20 years, he doesn’t know anybody down there any longer.]
 a. *Tā zhǐhǎo [ZÌJǐ zuò měi-jìàn shìqing].*
 he must SELF do every-CL matter
 ‘He must do everything HIMSELF.’
 b. *#[Tā ZÌJǐ] zhǐhǎo zuò měi-jìàn shìqing.*
 he SELF must do every-CL matter
 #‘He HIMSELF must do everything.’

The argument to be distilled from the data in (29) runs as follows. If adverbial *zìjǐ* were a positional variant of adnominal *zìjǐ* we would expect to find the same centrality effects with adverbial *zìjǐ* that are found with adnominal

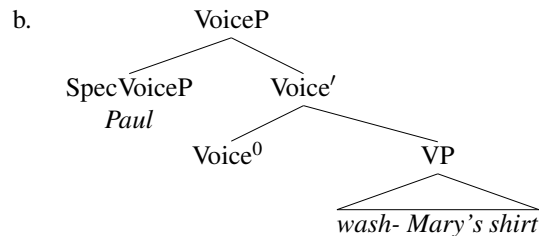
8. Cf. Eckardt (2001) or Gast (2002) for such diverging views. While these authors present no floating analyses for English and German adverbial intensifiers, they use type-lifted lexical entries for agentive intensifiers which lead to an interpretation entirely parallel to that of adnominal intensification.

zijǐ. This is not the case. The two sentences in (29) are embedded in a context which presents the hermit as entirely derelationalized such that he doesn't have a periphery of human discourse entities accessible through him. Under these circumstances, adnominal *zijǐ* indeed turns out infelicitous. Adverbial *zijǐ*, however, is fine in such a context.

I take this to be sufficient evidence to discard analyses which treat adverbial *zijǐ* as dislocated adnominal *zijǐ*, because such analyses predict that (29b) should be just as good as (29a) in the context given. Let us now move on to the implementation of adverbial *zijǐ* that I propose. It will have to deliver an explanation for *zijǐ*'s adverbial syntax, and for the lack of centrality effects with adverbial *zijǐ* as opposed to adnominal *zijǐ*.

3.2.2. *Agentivity and Kratzer's implementation.* The proposal for the syntax and semantics of adverbial and agentive *zijǐ* will be couched in the implementation of Voice and argument structure put forward by Kratzer (1996). Kratzer's theory delivers the explicit semantics for little *v* (Chomsky 1995). Kratzer argues that agent arguments are *not* part of the lexically defined argument structure of verbs or verbal stems. Instead, there is a thematic role head – or, as in Kratzer's terminology, a Voice head – right above VP, and this head delivers both the syntactic structure and the semantic content to tie an agentive involvement of a referent to the described eventuality. Take (30) as an example.⁹

(30) a. *Paul washed Mary's shirt.*

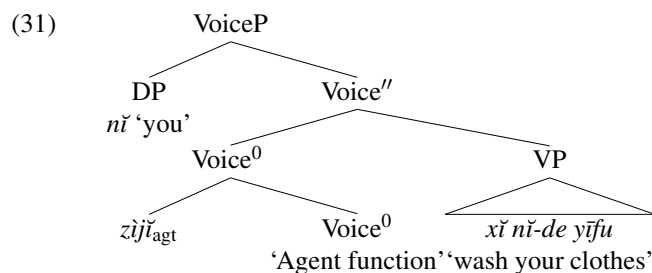


The meaning of the VP in (30) just relates to an event of washing Mary's shirt. The Voice head introduces the agentivity predicate for this event, and its argument slot then gets filled by Paul in the specifier of VoiceP.¹⁰

9. I use Kratzer's (1996) X-bar implementation of her proposal because it is quite perspicuous. However, it could easily be restated in bare phrase structure terms.

10. Cf. Kratzer (1996) for more details, especially to see how the Voice head regulates the interplay of agentive semantics and accusative case checking, and what a compositional semantics looks like for a tree as in (30b).

3.2.3. *Agentive zìjǐ and the identity function in focus.* In this section we will see how the identity function in focus, if applied to the agentive Voice head, leads to the felicity pattern that we really find with adverbial *zìjǐ* as investigated here. (31) shows the tree that results from adjoining *zìjǐ* to the Voice head above VP – certainly a plausible adjunction site if we consider *zìjǐ*'s surface syntax. Still, we will return to the issue.



According to our semantics for the identity function in focus that was developed for the adnominal case, conjoined with the Voice semantics introduced a moment ago, we will get bits of interpretation for (31) as listed in (32).

- (32)
- An event of washing the addressee's clothes is related to (in the VP).
 - The subject referent is the agent in this event (entailment of the agent function, with its argument slot filled by the subject DP).
 - The agentive involvement of the subject referent is mapped to itself.
 $\llbracket zìjǐ_F \text{ Voice}^0 \rrbracket^0 = \text{ID}(\text{agentive involvement of someone in an event})^{11}$
 - Focusing the identity function here will ultimately lead to a set of alternative thematic-role involvements for the asserted agent.
 $\llbracket zìjǐ_F \text{ Voice}^0 \rrbracket^f = \{ \text{involvement of someone in an event, causative involvement of someone in an event, assisted involvement of someone in an event, ... } \}$
 - The fact that the event is agentive remains stable in all alternatives, because the agent function in Voice^0 is GIVEN, and not in focus.

If we take all this together, then the ordinary meaning of (33) will be the same as if *zìjǐ* wasn't used. The focus meaning of (33) is the set of propositions

11. Note that the zero superscript on "Voice⁰" follows the X-bar syntax notation scheme, while the zero superscript on the interpretation brackets is used to notate the interpretation function for the ordinary meaning (as opposed to the focus meaning; cf. Section 3.1.2).

stating different relations between the subject referent of the assertion and the agentive event of washing his clothes.

(34) lists a row of sentences spelling out individual members of the focus meaning of the structure in (33).

- (33) *Nǐ* [ZìJǐ_F xǐ nǐde yīfu].
 you SELF wash your clothes
 ‘You wash your clothes YOURSELF.’

- (34) a. ‘You make him wash your clothes.’
 b. ‘You are helped while washing your clothes.’
 c. ‘You have a benefit from someone washing your clothes.’
 d. ...

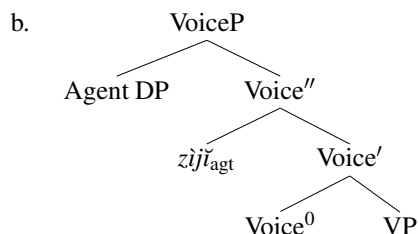
The predicted contrasting alternatives in (34) are precisely those that yield good contexts for a sentence like (34). More specifically, we are now in a position to understand why there are no centrality effects in the domain of adverbial *zìjǐ* as found with adnominal *zìjǐ* (cf. Section 3.1.1). Since the identity function doesn’t apply to individuals in the adverbial case, no other individuals are arrived at when alternatives to the identity function apply to the Voice head. What we get after the application of alternatives to ID in the Voice domain are other thematic involvements of the next higher argument in the agentive eventuality at hand.

As announced above, we must briefly return to the syntactic side of the proposal. In terms of semantics, a second adjunction site for adverbial *zìjǐ* would deliver precisely the same results as the adjunction to Voice⁰ proposed above (see Hole 2005 for details). This second position would be a modifier or adjunct position on the main projection line between Voice⁰ and the agent argument. Since at the moment I see no way to exclude either variant, I will assume both. Both options are represented in (35).

- (35) a.
-
- ```

graph TD
 VoiceP --> AgentDP[Agent DP]
 VoiceP --> Voice_prime[Voice']
 Voice_prime --> Voice_0_1[Voice0]
 Voice_prime --> VP[VP]
 Voice_0_1 --> zìjǐ_agt[zìjǐagt]
 Voice_0_1 --> Voice_0_2[Voice0]

```



3.2.4. *Other agentive intensifiers.* In the adverbial domain, *zìjǐ* is the most general intensifier. But as in the adnominal domain, other Mandarin expressions with more complex lexical meanings are available in the adverbial domain as well. One of these expressions is *qīnzì*, and (36) is an example of its use.

- (36) *Nǐ kàn, tā qīnzì cā-le dìbǎn!*  
 you look (s)he SELF wipe-ASP floor  
 'Look, (s)he wiped the floor him/herself!'

What appears to set *qīnzì* apart from adverbial *zìjǐ* is that a VP must denote a delegatable action for the VP to be combinable with *qīnzì*. It is probably this fact that lies behind the deviance of *qīnzì* in (37).

- (37) *Nǐ kàn, xiǎo dìdi zìjǐ#qīnzì chī-le wǎnfàn.*  
 you look little.brother SELF/SELF eat-ASP dinner  
 'Look, your little brother has eaten his dinner himself/without help.'

In the domain of specific adverbial intensifiers, and apart from *zìjǐ* and *qīnzì*, there's a whole paradigm of instrumental intensifiers, each of them featuring reference to a specific kind of instrument or body part. The whole row of expressions, each of them supplemented with an example, is listed in (38).

- (38) a. *qīnshǒu* 'with one's own hands'  
*Zhèi-ge dàngāo shì wǒ qīnshǒu zuò-de.*  
 this-CL cake FOC I with.own.hands made-FOC  
 'I made this cake with my own hands.'
- b. *qīnbǐ* 'in one's own hand-writing'  
*Zhèi-fēng xìn bú shì tā qīnbǐ xiě-de.*  
 this-CL letter not FOC (s)he in.own.hand-writing  
 write-FOC  
 'The letter is not written by him/herself/in his/her own hand-writing.'

- c. *qīnkǒu* ‘(spoken) with one’s own mouth’  
*Zhè shì tā qīnkǒu shuō-de.*  
 this FOC (s)he with.own.mouth say-FOC  
 ‘That’s what (s)he said her/himself.’
- d. *qīnyǎn* ‘(seen) with one’s own eyes’  
*Wǒ qīnyǎn kàndào-le nèi-chǎng chēhuò.*  
 I with.own.eyes see-ASP that-CL car.accident  
 ‘I saw that accident with my own eyes.’
- e. *qīnĕr* ‘(heard) with one’s own ears’  
*Wǒ qīnĕr tīngjian tā shuō nǐde*  
 I with.own.ears hear (s)he say your  
*huàihuà.*  
 malicious.remarks  
 ‘I heard him/her telling bad things about you with my own ears.’

It is worth noting that the selectional restrictions of these adverbial expressions go beyond what one would expect if they could be analyzed compositionally. What we find is that the interactive purposes of the involved body parts or instruments are conventionalized. For this reason (39) is bad. *Qīnkǒu* ‘with one’s own mouth’ is restricted to co-occur with verbs of saying, it cannot modify events in which people use their mouths for other actions.

- (39) *Wǒ (\*qīnkǒu) bǎ zhèi-zhāng zhǐ chuī-zǒu le.*  
 I with.own.mouth BA this-CL paper blow-away PRT  
 intended: ‘I blew away the sheet of paper (with my own mouth).’

We won’t discuss the semantics of words like *qīnkǒu* here, leaving their further analysis for future investigations. What should have become clear, though, is that just as in the nominal domain, related lexical items with a narrower distribution cluster around adverbial *zìjǐ* as well. The following subsection will be devoted to uses of *zìjǐ* within adnominal modifiers.

### 3.3. Attributive intensification

The English attributive word *own* is not morphologically related to *x-self*. Therefore, its semantic relatedness with intensifier uses of *x-self* is usually overlooked (but cf. König 2001: 748). The facts in Mandarin are different; cf. (40).

- (40) *Wǒ yǒu (wǒ) zìjǐ-de yàoshi.*  
 I have I SELF-’s key  
 ‘I have a key of my own/my own key.’

In (40), the Mandarin counterpart of *own* is again *zìjǐ*. To be more precise, we are dealing with the adnominal use (*wǒ zìjǐ* ‘I myself’), and this constituent is used as a possessive *de*-modifier with *yàoshi* ‘key’. As with other intensifiers, generative grammarians tend to locate the function of ‘own’-words in the domain of reflexivity. This view may superficially be said to be supported by the fact that *wǒ* ‘I’ may be dropped in (40), but the comparison with (41) proves that coreference between possessor and subject is not a necessary condition for the use of attributive intensifier-*zìjǐ*.

- (41) *Wǒ yǒu tā zìjǐ-de yàoshi.*  
 I have (s)he SELF-’s key  
 ‘I have his own key.’

In (41) *zìjǐ* adjoins to the third person pronoun *tā*, but the subject is the first person pronoun. The DP denoting the possessor of the key need not have a sentence-internal antecedent. What the Mandarin facts suggest is that the semantic structure of English *his own* as in the translation of (41) is ‘[the himself]’s’. I.e., by way of the focus meaning of sentences with attributive *zìjǐ*, the possessive relationship between someone and a possessum is presupposed, as opposed to the possessive relationship between someone who is related to that someone in some way, and the possessum.

As in the domain of adnominal and adverbial intensifiers, Mandarin has a small paradigm of specialized attributive or possessive intensifiers for certain close relationships. This paradigm is illustrated in (42) and (43).

- (42) *Relatives of the first degree*  
 a. *qīnshēng fùmǔ*  
 ‘s.o.’s own/biological parents’  
 b. *qīnshēng hái’zǐ*  
 ‘s.o.’s own/biological children’  
 c. *qīn(\*shēng) jùjiu/jiěmèi*  
 ‘s.o.’s own/biological uncle/sisters’
- (43) *First-hand experience*  
*qīnshēn jīnglì/gǎnshòu*  
 ‘s.o.’s own/first-hand experience/feeling’

The examples in (42a) and (42b) show that *qīnshēng* may be used to intensify the relationship between an ego and its first-grade blood relations, i.e., (biological) parents or (biological) children. Other kinship relations (as in (42c)) yield deviant results. Immediate experience and feelings as opposed to, for instance, hearsay experience or communicated feelings characterize the semantic domain of the use of *qīnshēn*. As for the case of *běnrén* in Section 3.1.4.

above, it would be desirable to have an analysis in which only one part of these compound intensifiers denotes the plain identity function, while the other half provides the domain restriction/presupposition. *Qīn-* would then encapsulate the identity function, while *-shēng* and *-shēn* would be those components that restrict the domain of the identity function to closest relatives and instances of unmediated perception or feelings, respectively.<sup>12</sup> Since the goal of this article with its limitations of space is only to present a general way of handling the semantics of intensifiers in Mandarin, I will leave it at that, hoping to be able to return to this subparadigm in the future.

### 3.4. Summary of the analysis, and more adverbial uses of *zìjǐ*

We have seen three different syntactic environments in which non-argumental *zìjǐ* (and partially synonymous elements) may occur. *Zìjǐ* may adjoin to a referential argument DP, it may adjoin within VoiceP, i.e., in that part of the syntactic structure where the agentive theta-role has its place in the constituent structure, and it may, finally, adjoin to a DP such that the resulting constituent [DP *zìjǐ*] in turn yields an attributive modifier. Specialized variants, i.e., expressions with a narrower distribution than *zìjǐ* are available in all three different types of environments. The shared feature of these expressions is that they may all be analyzed as lexicalizations of the identity function which typically attract the sentence focus. In addition, they may carry presuppositions concerning animacy, evidentiality, instrumentality and related concepts.

In fact, there are more adjunction sites available for *zìjǐ* and functionally similar words than those mentioned so far. Look at (44) for such additional uses.

- (44) a. *Nà-xiē mùtóu zìjǐ luòxiàlai le.*  
 that-some wood SELF fell.down PRT  
 ‘Those logs came down all by THEMSELVES.’
- b. *Ākiù yěxǔ zìjǐ yào gēn wǒ shuì nà-zhāng chuáng.*  
 Akiu maybe SELF want with me sleep.in that-CL  
 bed  
 ‘Akiu may on his OWN accord be willing to share that bed with me.’

(44a) is an example with an unaccusative verb involving no agentivity, and still *zìjǐ* may be used in an adverbial position. In (44b), *zìjǐ* precedes a circumstantial

12. The basic meaning of *shēng* in *qīnshēng* is ‘give birth to’, and *shēn* ‘body’ in *qīnshēn* is also the head of *bēnshēn* discussed in Sections 3.1 and 3.1.3 above.

modal verb meaning ‘be willing, want to’. Neither sentences with unaccusative change-of-state verbs like *luòxiàlai* ‘fall down’ nor sentences with circumstantial modals like *yào* ‘want, will’ have agentive morphemes adjacent to the position of *zìjǐ* as in (44). Therefore, *zìjǐ* may not be said to map the agentive Voice head to itself in such environments. Whatever the exact adjunction site of *zìjǐ* is in these cases (probably a non-agentive Voice head), it appears again plausible to aim at an analysis which contrasts the asserted involvement of the subject referents in the event at hand with other kinds of involvement. For (44a) this would mean that the logs came down due to a cause seen as inherent in the logs, as opposed to contrasting causes external to the logs. (44b), much in the same vein, could be said to relate to alternatives in which the willingness on Akiu’s part is induced by somebody else. An analysis of these cases would require a precise analysis of the unaccusative and modal structures of these sentences, respectively. I consider this a viable task, but I must leave it for a future occasion.

#### 4. Competing approaches

##### 4.1. Liu (2003): *běns hēn* as a focus marker

Liu (2003) is mainly interested in anaphoric uses of *zìjǐ běnshēn* as in (45) in “Tussaud’s contexts” (Jackendoff 1992).

- (45) *Kèlín dùn hēnhēnde dǎ-le zìjǐ-běns hēn yíxià.*  
 Clinton furiously hit-PRF SELF-SELF once  
 ‘Clinton<sub>i</sub> hit himself<sub>i</sub>/\*[the statue portraying him<sub>i</sub>]<sub>j</sub> furiously.’ (cf. Liu 2003’s (11c))

Even though I found that not all speakers consider this sentence entirely well-formed, Liu would assume that it is possible to use it if Bill Clinton is in a wax museum in a room where his statue is exhibited. Instead of hitting the statue, he hits his own body. Liu states that the sentence doesn’t have a reading which has Clinton hitting the statue portraying him. It is quite straightforward to come up with an explanation of this contrast in terms of the account as it has been developed in the present article. *Běns hēn* attaches to the reflexive anaphor *zìjǐ*, and all the referential leeway that there may still have been for the interpretation of *zìjǐ* alone (viz. as Clinton vs. the statue depicting Clinton) vanishes. If the *běn*-part encapsulates the identity function and the *shēn*-part makes reference to the physical shape or the body of the referent in question, then (45) means something like ‘Clinton hit his very body’. Focus alternatives are sentences which may still be understood as sentences in which Clinton hits himself. But with alternatives to the identity function, near-identity will still be

a good result as long as the looser identity requirements of *zìjǐ* have not been overstretched. That is, if an English sentence like *He hit himself, because this is what it means if he hit his children* has a good Mandarin translation with *zìjǐ*, it is predicted to be bad with *zìjǐ běnshēn*.

Now, how does Liu (2003) describe the interaction of *zìjǐ* and *běnshēn*?<sup>13</sup> What will help us to partially weigh its pros and cons is Liu's (2003: 32-9) claim that *běnshēn* ought to be analyzed as a focus particle like *zhǐyǒu* 'only' or *lián* 'even'. Just like 'only'-words quantify over alternatives, and exclude them all, and just like 'even'-words involve a scalar statement about alternatives, Liu claims that *běnshēn* picks out the most similar element from a set of referents that are all near-identical to the referent of the purported focus DP to which it attaches and that this most similar referent will be the denotation of the DP to which *běnshēn* adjoins. The referent most similar to a referent will, of course, always be that referent itself. Therefore, Liu claims, the strict identity reading observed with all uses of *běnshēn* is explained.

If that much of Liu's proposal can be reconstructed, there remains one big problem, viz. the assignment of *běnshēn* to the class of focus markers. The problem with this analysis is that, by all criteria that we have at our disposal, *běnshēn* attracts sentence stress and is in focus. Focus markers, by contrast, are not in focus – or they may only be in focus if special discourse conditions analogous to corrective utterances like (13) are given. The same facts relating to adnominal intensifiers are also used by Eckardt (2001) and Hole (2002, 2005) to deny the German intensifiers the status of focus markers.

The complement of the problem that *běnrén* attracts the focus is that, by all criteria available, *zìjǐ* in sentences like (45) is *not* a focus, but part of the background. This can be seen from the fact that all contextually relevant alternatives to (45) will still be about Clinton hitting someone or something that has something to do with him. Put differently, a variable bound by the subject will be included in the object denotation of all alternatives to (45). This is tantamount to saying that, in this sentence, anaphoric *zìjǐ* (cf. Section 2) is part of the background. As such, it cannot be the target of a focus marker (unless the focus marker is likewise backgrounded; cf. (13) once more).

To conclude, I assume that our account in terms of the identity function in focus will be able to take care of the wax museum uses of *zìjǐ běnshēn* that Liu (2003) is mainly interested in. Moreover, the categorization of *běnshēn* as a focus marker makes predictions that render his proposal unattractive from the point of view of the general architecture of the focus-background partition.

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13. This question is not easy to answer, because Liu's argumentation is quite complex and sometimes not easily accessible.

4.2. Tsai (2005): reduction to reflexivity, or: an anti-comitative semantics for agentive *zìjǐ*<sup>14</sup>

Tsai's (2005) study has a merely overlapping, and at the same time larger, empirical scope than the present article. What Tsai aims at is to unravel the underlying conceptual link, or even identity, between reflexive uses of *zìjǐ* and adjunct uses of *zìjǐ*. In the domain of adverbial intensifying uses, he doesn't just concentrate on agentive adverbial *zìjǐ* as this study does, but presents ideas for the treatment of all other adverbial uses of *zìjǐ*, i.e., also for those uses that have briefly been mentioned in Section 3.2.4.

In my discussion of Tsai's article I will concentrate on the treatment of agentive *zìjǐ*. We will see that Tsai's proposal is attractive at first because it reconstructs a "missing link" between reflexivity and intensification, and because he only makes use of independently established concepts. What will turn out upon closer scrutiny, though, is that his theoretical apparatus is not apt to predict the right interpretation for sentences with agentive *zìjǐ*.

Tsai's starting point is that *zìjǐ* in a sentence like (46) is like a refusal of the expectation that there was a comitative participant in the situation and that the function of *zìjǐ* is basically reflexive in this use, too.

- (46) *Ākiù* [*zìjǐ chǔlǐ-guò zhè-zhǒng shì*].  
 Akiu SELF handle-ASP this-CL:kind affair  
 'Akiu handled this kind of thing himself before.'

(47) assembles the truth-conditions that Tsai (2005) assumes for (46). We will turn to the status of the crossed-out portion of meaning in a moment.

- (47) a.  $\exists e$  (handling(*e*) & Agent(Akiu, *e*) & Theme(this kind of thing, *e*)  
 & ~~Comitative(Akiu, *e*)~~ &  $\neg \exists y$ (*y* ≠ Akiu & Comitative(*y*, *e*)))  
 b. 'There was an event of handling which had Akiu as Agent, this kind of thing as Theme ~~and Akiu as Comitative~~, and there is no individual who is not Akiu and who has the comitative role of *e*.'

Working within a theory of mapping thematic roles to syntactic function as in Reinhart (2002), Tsai assumes that the addition of a comitative role (do some-

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14. Dylan Tsai (p.c.) informs me that he no longer endorses his 2005 analysis, but mainly for reasons different from the ones emphasized here. Given the large impact that Tsai's work has, it appears legitimate to discuss his proposal here, despite its obsolescence. The way it is reviewed in the main text should make it clear that there are good reasons to try out an analysis like Tsai's.



thing *together with someone*) does not require any syntactic licensing mechanisms. This comitative adjunct, because it is targeted by reflexivization such that the agent and the comitative participant are identical, is “swallowed” and is no longer active. Behind this lies the idea of a specific implementation of reflexivity in the tradition of Reinhart and Reuland (1993) and recently put to use by Reinhart and Siloni (2004) and Siloni and Reinhart (2005). According to this view, reflexivization leads to valency or arity reduction by one. In many languages reflexive morphemes have the status of verbal (voice) affixes, and the resulting structures are intransitive. The detransitivizing view of reflexivization seems well suited for such cases. Quite a few languages with what is traditionally viewed as reflexive pronouns may rather be argued to have verb-bound reflexivity clitics. If agentive *zìjǐ* is subsumed under this kind of morpheme, there may be a way to understand why the freely introduced comitative is not part of the pronounced sentence in (46). The crossed-out conjunct is, according to Tsai (2005), the predication targeted by reflexivity-induced arity reduction. The last conjunct of the truth-conditions in (47) is, so Tsai’s argument goes, a consequence of contrastive stress on *zìjǐ*.

As said already, at first glance it is attractive to treat agentive adjunct *zìjǐ* on a par with reflexive *zìjǐ*. Also, Tsai’s proposal is quite explicit, and this makes it a good hypothesis. There is one major problem, though. While it is indeed the case that the reflexivized argument vanishes in the visible syntax of many languages, its semantic import doesn’t go away in cases of true semantic reflexivity. If one says *I cheated myself* in a language with intransitivizing reflexive markers, the meaning of the sentence doesn’t come out as ‘I cheated’. I.e., the kind of thematic involvement of the “swallowed” argument is still part of the truth-conditions of a reflexive sentence, or it should at least “bundle up” with the other thematic involvement of the same referent (cf. Siloni and Reinhart 2005). The more realistic prediction would thus be that the meaning of (46) should come out with the crossed-out conjunct still active. (46) doesn’t have such a meaning because it would imply that Akiu is not just the agent, but also the comitative referent of the event. Put differently, (46) would have to mean ‘Akiu handled this kind of thing with himself’, but it doesn’t mean this.

A second, somewhat less direct argument against Tsai’s proposal comes from the fact that there are languages in which the closest equivalents of agentive *zìjǐ* are infelicitous in anti-comitative contexts like the one in (48).

- (48) A: *Nǐ píngcháng gēn Ākiù yìqǐ chǔlǐ zhè-zhǒng*  
 you usually with Akiu together handle this-CL.kind  
*shì ma?*  
 thing PRT  
 ‘Do you usually handle this kind of thing together with Akiu?’

B: *Bù, wǒ píngcháng yíge rén/zìjǐ chūlǐ zhè-zhǒng shì.*  
 no I usually alone/SELF handle this-CL:kind  
 matter  
 ‘No, I usually handle this kind of thing alone’.

German and English are such languages with *himselb/selbst* coming out infelicitous in anti-comitative contexts. Consider (49).

- (49) [Q: *Did Ed and Paul paint the kitchen walls together?/Did Ed paint the kitchen walls together with Paul?*]  
 A: *Nein, Ed hat es ALLEIN/#SELBST gemacht.*  
 no Ed has it alone/SELF done  
 ‘A: No, Ed did it ALONE/#HIMSELF.’

The argument to be derived from this pattern is as follows: If an anti-comitative semantics lay at the heart of the meaning of the Mandarin agentive ‘self’-word, we would not expect this component of meaning to be absent from (near-)equivalent expressions in other languages.<sup>15</sup> The (non-)aptness to be used in anti-comitative contexts therefore seems to be a peripheral property of agentive intensifiers, and a lexical semantics with a different core meaning ought to be preferred. The syntax-semantics of *zìjǐ* proposed in this article, viz. the identity function adjoined within VoiceP, is such an hypothesis.

## 5. Outlook

There has been a recurrent super-theme in the argumentation. We started out from *zìjǐ* as a reflexive anaphor and then turned to the non-argumental uses of *zìjǐ* and similar words. Liu’s (2003) treatment of *běnnshēn* was couched in a discussion of special kinds of reflexivity. Towards the end, it was mentioned that Tsai’s (2005) article aims at reconciling adjunct/intensifier uses of *zìjǐ* with reflexive uses. He seeks this reconciliation under the roof of reflexivization. But is this move really necessary?

From the perspective of generative grammar, the framework which Tsai and Liu adopt and which is also used in the present article, this direction of extension seems natural. After all, binding theory and the theory of reflexivization have played a major role in the development of the overall theory for more than 25 years now.

15. See Hole (2005) for an explicit analysis of precisely what it is in English agentive *x-self* and German *selbst* that bars these words from anti-comitative contexts, while they come out good in anti-assistive contexts, which would a priori appear to be very similar.

Looked at from a diachronic perspective, the reverse situation holds. It is well known that markers of reflexivity are quite often the result of a grammaticalization of intensifier morphemes (Faltz 1985; König and Siemund 2000a, 2000b; Schladt 2000). Recently, the claim has been put forward that the agentive use of intensifiers, which has been one of the main concerns of our investigation, may frequently have played a key role in the development from intensification to reflexivization (Gast and Siemund 2006). Therefore, we should look at more examples of such links to shed light on the connection between the two kinds of identities involved. It may turn out that intensification, i.e., structures with the identity function in focus, is the basic notion to give us a firmer grip on reflexivity, i.e., the assertion of subject-nonsubject identity. At present, however, I don't know what the nature of this link really is.

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