Person-neutral *ownself* in two varieties of Asian English

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The Issue The anaphor *ownself* has independently been observed to occur in Indian English (InE) and Singapore English (SgE), though only the latter has been the subject of intensive study (Hosali, 2005; Wee, 2007). This anaphor may be used in three typical English *self*-anaphor positions: coargument reflexive (1a), adverbial (1b), and adnominal (1c).

(1) a. When someone defends **ownself** after adding on an ugly deed...
     b. I just **ownself** play play the colour curves.
     c. You **ownself** also party a lot.

Also note in (1) that *ownself* does not vary by the person features of the antecedent. In this paper, we argue (i) that the functional distribution of *ownself* differs significantly between InE and SgE, (ii) that this can be accounted for by examining the substrate languages, and (iii) that the distinction can be captured within a Kratzer (2009) model of late lexical insertion for reflexives.

Corpus Findings With an initial search of the Global Web Based English (GloWbE) corpus (Davies, 2013), we establish that *ownself* is limited to South Asia, from India in the west to Singapore in the east. While the corpus data is scant, we observe that in InE, *ownself* is limited to coargument positions, while all three functions are present in SgE. Using the twitteR package (Gentry, 2015) we conducted two searches (one global, and one longer-term collection using geo-tagging) to verify these findings. In each twitter data set, there is a statistically-significant difference in the functional distribution of *ownself* between the two varieties. Statistical testing uses χ^2 tests, significant to $p < 0.001$ and $p = 0.005$, respectively (claim i).

Substrate Interaction Information on *ownself* in InE is quite limited. The form apears in a text from the late 19th century quoted by Hosali, but there is no discussion. Sridhar (1996) describes person-neutral *itself* as a feature of InE, hypothesizing transfer from the Hindi emphatic *-e*. For SgE, Wee (2007) suggests that *ownself* derives from transfer of Mandarin *ziji*, acting as an emphatic in the English variety. We propose a parallel account of *ownself* for InE. Hindi/Urdu and Bengali both have reflexives which, like *ziji*, do not vary for person. Following Sharma (2009), where differences in *-ing* usage between InE and SgE are explained based on differences in the aspectual systems of the substrate languages, we propose that case markings required to extend Hindi/Urdu and Bengali reflexives to different argument positions and functions have limited *ownself* to its "core" co-argument use in InE. As *ziji* requires no additional marking to extend to the additional functions in (1), the wider distribution of *ownself* in SgE is not surprising (claim ii).

Feature Contrast Kratzer (2009) has proposed that co-argument reflexives enter a derivation as featureless variables, and that person features are transmitted to the reflexive via semantic binding. The final form is derived via late lexical insertion. A reflexive which does not vary according to the person features of the antecedent would seem to challenge this claim, especially as both varieties also use agreeing *-self* forms. We propose that in each variety, *ownself* does not initially merge as a featureless variable, but rather carries an [EMPHASIS] feature, which overrides agreement at spellout. Further, we suggest that in InE, the variable also carries its own [REFL] feature, limiting the distribution to environments where binding will carry a matching feature (claim iii).

Conclusion We have proposed that while *ownself* appears to be superficially similar in InE and SgE, there is a distributional difference arising from the substrate languages. While we can imagine the form developing independently in both varieties, we cannot rule out the possibility that inter-variety contact may have occurred. A related issue is accounting for the fact that *ownself* has not developed in any other English varieties. Our proposal predicts that this should be a function of the substrate languages and/or contact situations, but this is held over for future work.

References

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