

FOCUS MARKING IN PAKISTANI ENGLISH

CASE STUDY OF *ITSELF*

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Abstract

This research paper studies the use of *itself* in Pakistani English drawing on the data from Pakistani Written English corpus (PWE). *Itself* is used in all varieties of English exclusively as reflexive pronoun and emphatic pronoun or Intensifier. Pakistani English has developed an additional use of *Itself* as presentational or non-contrastive marker. This paper investigates in depth the syntactic and semantic contexts of *Itself* in order to study the functional use of this lexical item in Pakistani English. The paper strengthens the fact that Pakistani English is an independent variety with norms of its own.

Keywords: Focus markers, Pakistani English, Standardization, Nativization, Intensification

Introduction

The post-colonial scenario has given birth to the different varieties of English. It is still for linguists to decide that 'Who owns English'. (Widdowson, 1993) First of all, it was Braj.Kachru(1982) who introduced the concept of Pakistani English as a non-native variety: "Kachru showed that English in sub-continent changed on account of its contact with indigenous languages but also because of its use in different cultural contexts." (Talaat, 2002, p.33)

Pakistani English is an independent variety. Pakistani English, being a non-native variety, exhibits different norms and shows variation at different levels of grammar, phonology and lexis and various features have been recently explored as independent norms which strengthen the place of Pakistani English as an independent variety with features of its own.

This research paper aims at highlighting innovative feature found at the level of grammar in Pakistani English. The present study investigates the focus marking in Pakistani English and studies the innovative use of *Itself* in Pakistani English.

Literature Review

The deviant and innovative features of Pakistani English have been a key area that calls for a detailed analysis. Kachru (1983) observed

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some tendencies of using more complex structures in the South Asian Englishes. In Pakistani English, Baumgardner (1990, 1992, 1993, and 1998) worked on the influence of Urdu upon the lexical level in a detail. He put forward that Pakistani English borrow frequent words from Urdu and the regional languages. Rahman (1990) also showed some distinct morphological and syntactic features in the Pakistani English.

Talaat (2002) proved that there are texts that are divergent grammatically without showing any divergence in the vocabulary. Mahmood.R.(2012) worked on the lexico-syntactic variation of Noun Phrase in Pakistani English. Mahmood. A. (2012) worked on the corpus-Based analysis of Pakistani English. Bhatt (2008) discussed about the variant use of focus markers in the New Englishes especially in Indian English. Lange (2007) worked on the focus marking in Indian English. Fuchs (2012) studied the focus marking and semantic transfer in Indian English: Case of *Also*.

Pakistani English also exhibits different use of focus marking especially *itself*. *Itself* is used in Pakistani English as an invariant focus particle. It has developed an additional/non-contrastive focus or functional use in addition to its use as intensifiers and reflexives. Moreover, unlike the Present Day English (PDE), *itself* in Pakistani English has been found to have been used with the locative and temporal expressions which is an innovative use of *itself* in Pakistani English.

No one has, so far, worked on focus markers in Pakistani English and this study is pioneering in its nature because it studies the innovative use of *Itself* in Pakistani English and paves the way for the future researchers to study the focus markers in Pakistani English at length. The present study will explore the following research questions:

- What is the preferred position of *itself* with respect to its foci in Pakistani English?
- Whether the use of *itself* is related in terms of meaning or in function?
- Which agreement patterns exist for *itself* in Pakistani English?
- Whether the Innovative use of *Itself* has become a norm of Pakistani English over time?

Itself in Present Day English (PDE)

Focus markers are generally divided into two large groups according to the semantic contribution they make to the meaning of the

sentence (Konig 1991). The first group is named as additive or inclusive particles that “include some alternatives as possible values for the variable of their scope” (Konig 1991:33) The second group of particles are called restrictive or exclusive particles due to their “semantic property of excluding other focus alternatives” (Nevalainen 1991:31); they “imply that none of the alternatives consider the relevant open sentence” (Konig 1991:33)

It is a common knowledge that in all varieties of Present Day English or the standard British English , the form pronoun+ self (yourself, myself, themselves, him/her self has got two explicit characteristics as the following examples indicate from the Pakistani written English corpus(PWE):

1. They asked her not to worry herself about such difficult things like Mathematics. (PWE 01, bks.txt).
2. The prince himself led a life of simplicity and honesty. (PWE 116, bks.txt)
3. “You must devote yourself whole-heartedly to your studies, for that is your first to yourself, your parents and to the State”. (PWE 12, bks.txt.)
4. I feel I am expanding my area in terms of storytelling, and not restricting because I am speaking to people from the east myself. (PWE 11, INT.txt.)

In example (1), herself is a reflexive pronoun, indicating that the subject and the object of the verb are coreferent. Examples (2) to (3) pinpoint the intensifying use:

Typically, intensifier constructions evoke a set of alternative referents that are in some way defined or identified in terms of the value given. (Konig 2002:89)

It has become routine matter to distinguish between adnominal and adverbial use of pronoun+self (Siemund 2002). In sentence (2) , the focus Prince is immediately followed by intensifying himself; thus the adnominal himself makes the meaning of the sentence as central; in relation to the alternatives. The focus followed by the marker himself forms the centre among identical entities that are located to the periphery:

When the two types of adverbial intensifiers are compared, the adnominal pronoun+self is not restricted to occurring with noun phrases with a specific thematic role or in a specific syntactic position.

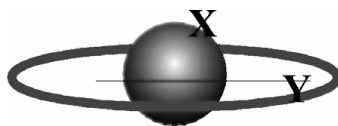


Figure-1: Focus X and alternative values Y (Konig and Siemund 1998: 2)

The adverbial intensifiers as in examples (3) and (4) do not follow their focus immediately, but they agree with their focus in gender and number. Example (3) shows the adverbial-exclusive use; yourself here can be paraphrased by 'alone'. It is a fact that the focus of adverbial-exclusive pronoun+self has to be animate, agentive subject but not always human. Similarly, Sentence (4) demonstrates the adverbial-inclusive use of myself that can be paraphrased with additive focus particles as well. The adverbial-inclusive particles chiefly depend upon the contexts and are generally found in much less frequent number in everyday discourse than both the adnominal and the adverbial-exclusive intensifiers.

Table-1: Syntax and semantics of intensifiers in PDE

	Position, distribution	Meaning
Adnominal Intensifier	Immediately following the focus and agreeing with it in gender and number. Focus has to be a noun phrase, but not necessarily the subject.	Focus is marked as the central value among a set of alternative values.
Adverbial Inclusive Intensifier	Focus has to be the subject, intensifier agrees with it in gender and number, but occurs as part of the verb phrase, usually following the predicate.	Focus is included in a set of alternative values (x too/also)
Adverbial Exclusive Intensifier	Focus has to be the subject (animate, agentive); intensifier agrees with it in gender and number, but occurs as part of the	The person interested in action is also the most directly involved agent (Konig 2002:223)

The syntax and semantics of intensifying pronoun+self in PDE are summarized in Table1.

Keeping in view these semantic conditions for the occurrences of intensifying pronoun+self, it becomes clear that itself is very

common in its use. *Itself* is typically adnominal and occurs in contrastive contexts such as found in following examples (5) and (6).

5. If the government itself orders the police raid students hostels in the darkness of the night, and resort to violence against teachers, women and students, how then does it hope to reform it. (PWE.27, ART.txt)
6. The revolution in Iran, itself a product of deep political, economic, social and religious forces, affords a unique opportunity for Soviet exploitation. (PWE 22, bks.txt)

Research Methodology

The present research work has been carried on qualitative and quantitative basis. The theoretical framework of the present research is world Englishes and corpus has been used as methodology. The present work is a corpus-based study and Pakistani Written English (PWE) corpus which consists of 2.1million words has been used for the present study and all the instances of *Itself* have been derived and studied from the corpus by using AntConc.3.1.1 research and sort software.

Pakistani Written English (PWE) corpus has been compiled by two researchers from GC University Faisalabad, Dr. Asim Mahmood and Dr. Rashid Mahmood and has been sent to ICE and PWE is also accessible freely for academic research. The instances have been sorted from the corpus and studied in their semantic and syntactic contexts and accordingly, the results have been drawn.

The Syntax and Semantics of *Itself* in Pakistani English

It is a fact that syntax and semantics cannot be kept apart in the analysis of focus markers and intensifiers. Both the context and the position of a focus particle determine its contribution to the meaning of the sentence. Whereas in the case of *itself*, specific positions within a sentence correspond to their specific meanings.

The intensifying and reflexive *itself* has been found more common in Pakistani Written English corpus:

Table-2: *Itself* in PWE

	All tokens	Reflexive itself	Intensifier itself	Innovative itself
PWE	562	189	299	74

Out of 562 instances in PWE, 74 times *Itself* has been found innovative in terms of its use in various contexts other than being an intensifier or reflexive:

7. They could not get anything from the elections and are therefore, despairing from democracy and vote, *itself*. (PWE 41. ART.txt)

8. My train was at that station, which means, I had presumed; Maggie would know how far I was *itself* from Bangalore station. (PWE 17)

In example (7) & (8), the occurrence of *itself* is syntactically unexpected. There is lack of agreement between *itself* and its focus as found in Present Day English (.PDE) and therefore, *Itself* in these examples is clearly used as invariant focus particle. *Itself* here shows the syntax of an ordinary adnominal intensifier ----- it is adjoined to neuter noun-----but there is no context of centre vs periphery which should be the license of using *itself*.

Similarly, *itself* has been found innovative in locative and temporal use in PWE:

9. It is not the equivalent of a cricket commentary that silting away from the field now *itself* you are announcing the score and uttering beautiful phrases about the enthusiasm or otherwise in the game or the skill of the players . (PWE 187)

10. Such a civilization brings forth its effects and results in hundreds of years in a sum-total and here *itself* clarifies whether it was a virtuous or a vicious civilization. (PWE 34)

In examples (9) & (10), *itself* occupies the innovative position adjacent to locative and temporal adverbs and its interesting to note that here that *itself* takes a temporal and locative adverb as its focus which is quite contrary to the use of *itself* in Present Day English (PDE). So, in examples (9) & (10) , *itself* is adjoined to a non-nominal focus and thus becomes presentational/non-contrastive in its use unlike the contrastive use of *itself* in Present Day English and such examples are frequently found in Pakistani Written English corpus.

Mismatch of focus is often found in the use of *itself* in Pakistani English Corpus:

11. The Absolute in its absoluteness is Nameless and it has no signs by which it can be approached. It is absolutely inconceivable and

inaccessible. It is beyond human perception, conception and imagination. No qualification or relation can be attributed to It for It even transcends transcendence. It is at once, solely and totally *itself* and is 'the most indeterminate *itself* of all indeterminate'. No linguistic category can describe it. (PWE 53.ART.txt)

12. Were they not guilty of insulting itself Islam, the Muslim umma *itself* and mankind? (PWE 69, ART.txt.)
13. Pakistan since being frontline state and victim *itself* of drug trafficking deserves this concession.(PWE 29, bks.txt)

In examples (11) to (13), *itself* occurs at the unexpected positions and found adjoined again to non-nominal focus and there is a categorical mismatch of itself with its focus in these examples. Thus it clearly serves as the presentational or non-contrastive focus which speaks of its functional use.

Likewise, *itself* has been found to have been used in PWE as scalar additive particle even:

14. We have lost the traditional message that was implicit in the symbolic image of the horizon, for example, a message that spoke of the duality of man and the world, in which *itself* reality was shattered into two parts âs the one above, the other below â with the horizon as the seam of the world that actually united the reality of this world into a seamless whole that mirrored the Transcendent Reality.(PWE 67)
15. Everything and anything should be permissible, provided, of course, that no âlawâ is broken. But the âlawâ, when it is formulated by majority vote, *itself* becomes a most pliable and flexible institution. (PWE 49, ART.txt)

In examples (14) and (15), *itself* categorically represents the innovative position in place of *even* and this quality is also similar to the “:two distinct New Englishes: Irish and Indian English”(Siemund 2002).

In PWE, *itself* has found innovative in its use in place of pronoun+herself with the names of nations or countries

16. France had hoped that Britain and America would guarantee its security after the Peace Treaty, but as both retired into their shells and adopted a policy of isolation, France felt *itself* insecure rather

more acutely. So France, left all alone, started entering into separate treaties with powers encircling Germany. (PWE 192)

17. India considers *itself* a useful model of a self-reliant economy; the countries of South Asia, India thinks, should learn from the Indian example. (PWE 28)

In examples (16) & (17), *itself* has been used in place of herself which is quite contrary to the usage found in PDE. This quality has also been found in the other New Englishes like Indian and Irish English (Siemund 2002). But the innovative examples that clearly mismatch their focus and ultimately pointing towards non-contrastive focus are often found in Pakistani written English:

18. Why should Pakistan agree to be hustled into signing the CTBT when eighteen out of forty-four designated states whose ratification is a precondition for this treaty's entry into force continues to delay action? They include *itself* the United States. (PWE198)
1. By winning the war in Afghanistan, NATO hopes to showcase now *itself* as an effective organization. (PWE 04, LTR)

Table-3: Contexts for innovative *itself* in PWE

Context	PWE
<i>Itself</i> in locative expression	9
<i>Itself</i> in temporal expressions	12
<i>Itself</i> in place of +self	11
<i>Itself</i> in place of even	8
Other contexts	34
All uses	74

Table 2 categorically indicates the frequent innovative use of *itself* in Pakistani English in different contexts and demonstrates that *itself* in Pakistani English not only shares the functions of reflexive pronoun and intensifier like all other varieties of present day English but also has developed an additional meaning namely that of non-contrastive or presentational focus marking. Whereas the intensifier *itself* in PDE always calls for a set of (contextually given) alternatives to its focus, this specific contrastive interpretation may be cancelled in Pakistani English.

Consequently, the innovative prevalent focus found in Pakistani English is entirely different to that syntactic and semantic patterns found in Standard British English or Present Day English. It has been found that *itself* is adjoined to temporal or locative expressions that are not

necessarily NPs. Moreover, *itself* may even occur as an invariant focus particle. It has also become clear that the pattern of NP+ *itself* in locative, temporal and other expressions has been observed well represented in Pakistani written English and has been found stable over time. The adjoining *itself* to an adverbial is not only semantically but also syntactically an innovation which is not shared by the other varieties of Present day English (PDE).

Conclusion

The present research paper has categorically studied the innovative semantic and syntactic patterns of *itself* in Pakistani Written English. It has been observed that *itself* has developed the presentational or non-contrastive focus in Pakistani English. The pattern of NP+ *itself* in locative, temporal and other contexts has been found prevalent in Pakistani English which is innovative and in stark contrast with the Present Day English. It has been further observed that the use of adverbial +*itself* in Pakistani English represents the advanced stage of “structural Nativization.”(Schneider 2003:246) This usage of *Itself* in presentational or non-contrastive way ascertains yet another individual norm of Pakistani English and strengthens the fact that Pakistani English is an emerging independent variety with norms of its own.

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