

(nuclear) stress. Unlike basic reflexive pronouns, they may have positional mobility:

{ *I mysĒLF* wouldn't take any NŌTice.
 { *I* wouldn't take any NŌTice *mysĒLF*.
 { *MysĒLF*, *I* wouldn't take any NŌTice of her.

Here the meaning of the pronoun is 'speaking personally'. In other contexts, the pronoun has a meaning better captured by the paraphrase 'X and nobody else':

Do you mean that you spoke to *the Pope himsĒLF*?
 A: Who told you that Jill was leaving? B: *She hersĒLF* told me.

Sometimes there is an explicit contrast between the referent and some other thing or person:

I'd prefer *you* to do the job *yoursĒLF*, rather than to leave it to Tony.

On the positioning of the emphatic reflexive pronoun, cf 18.39f.

- Note [a] Emphatic reflexives with cataphoric reference are generally literary in tone:
HimsĒlf a fervent believer, Newman was nonetheless able to sympathize with those who . . .
 [b] Emphatic reflexives sometimes occur sentence-initially in rather mannered or literary uses:
Myself is thus and so, and will continue thus and so. (Bellow)
Oneself did not die; that, like the very quiddity of otherness, was for others. (Burgess)

Possessive pronouns

Determinative and independent possessives

- 6.29 Possessive pronouns consist traditionally of two series: the first, 'weak' set of possessive pronouns has a determinative function (cf 5.12ff), while the second, 'strong' set has an independent function as a noun phrase (cf 5.124):

DETERMINATIVE: *my our your his her its their*
 INDEPENDENT: *mine ours yours his hers (its) theirs*

As the genitive forms of personal pronouns (cf 6.2), the possessive pronouns behave very much like the corresponding genitive noun constructions, and they have already been illustrated in that connection (cf 5.117ff).

But whereas the genitive noun does not change its form in moving from determinative to independent function, five of the possessive pronouns change by the addition of a consonant (either /n/ or /z/) to the determinative form:

my /maɪ/ → *mine* /maɪn/
your /jɔːr/ → *yours* /jɔːrz/, *our* → *ours*, *her* → *hers*, *their* → *theirs*

His already ends in /z/ and therefore does not add a further sibilant; compare [1] and [1a]:

This is *MĪ* bike and that is *hīs* bike. [1]
 This bike is *MĪNE* and that is *hīs*. [1a]

Its is extremely rare in independent function (but cf Note [a]):

*The collar is *its*.

One reason for this gap is that the pronoun *it* is very rarely stressed (cf 6.16), and this conflicts with the phonological status of the independent possessive, which is always stressed. Another and related reason seems to be that there is rarely semantic motivation for an independent nonpersonal possessive pronoun.

Parallel to the independent genitive, the independent possessive can occur as any of the following nominal elements: subject, object, complement, or prepositional complement. But it is particularly common in complement function. Compare:

DETERMINATIVE	INDEPENDENT
$\left. \begin{array}{l} \textit{Mary's} \\ \textit{my daughter's} \\ \textit{her} \end{array} \right\} \textit{book}$	$\textit{The book is} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{Mary's.} \\ \textit{my daughter's.} \\ \textit{hers.} \end{array} \right.$

The independent possessive in other functions generally has a quasi-elliptical role, replacing a noun phrase with a determinative possessive:

If you need a bicycle, I'll lend you $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{mine.} \\ \textit{my bicycle.} \end{array} \right.$

It also occurs regularly as prepositional complement in the 'post-genitive' construction described in 5.126:

I have been talking to *a friend of yours*. ['one of your friends']

A: Do you know Wagner's operas?

B: No, the only *opera of his* I've seen is 'Lohengrin'.

Note [a] Independent *its* may occasionally be found in parallel constructions, such as:

History has *its* lessons and fiction has *its*.

She knew the accident was either her husband's fault or the car's; it turned out to be not *his* but *its*.

[b] Like genitives and *of*-constructions (cf 5.115), constructions with possessive pronouns can be ambiguous, eg: *my* in *Give me back my photograph* may have at least three interpretations:

the one $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{I own} \\ \textit{I took} \\ \textit{taken of me} \end{array} \right.$

[c] Note the following expressions where the *of*-construction, rather than the possessive, is used:

I can't understand it $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{for the life of me.} \\ \textit{*for my life.} \end{array} \right.$

On the face of it, $\left. \begin{array}{l} \\ \textit{*On its face,} \end{array} \right\} \textit{it seems a good idea.}$

I don't trust *the likes of him*.

This will be *the death of me*.

Possessives and the 'emphatic determinative *own*'

6.30 The possessive cannot be accompanied by any modifiers or determiners, except for the 'emphatic determinative *own*'. Just as the emphatic reflexive pronoun (cf 6.28) intensifies the meaning of a personal pronoun, so *own* intensifies the meaning of a possessive pronoun. For example, *my own* carries the force of 'mine and nobody else's' in:

This book doesn't belong to the library – it's *my own copy*.