Bathe, shave, and dress:
How reflexive events are and aren't marked in the morphology

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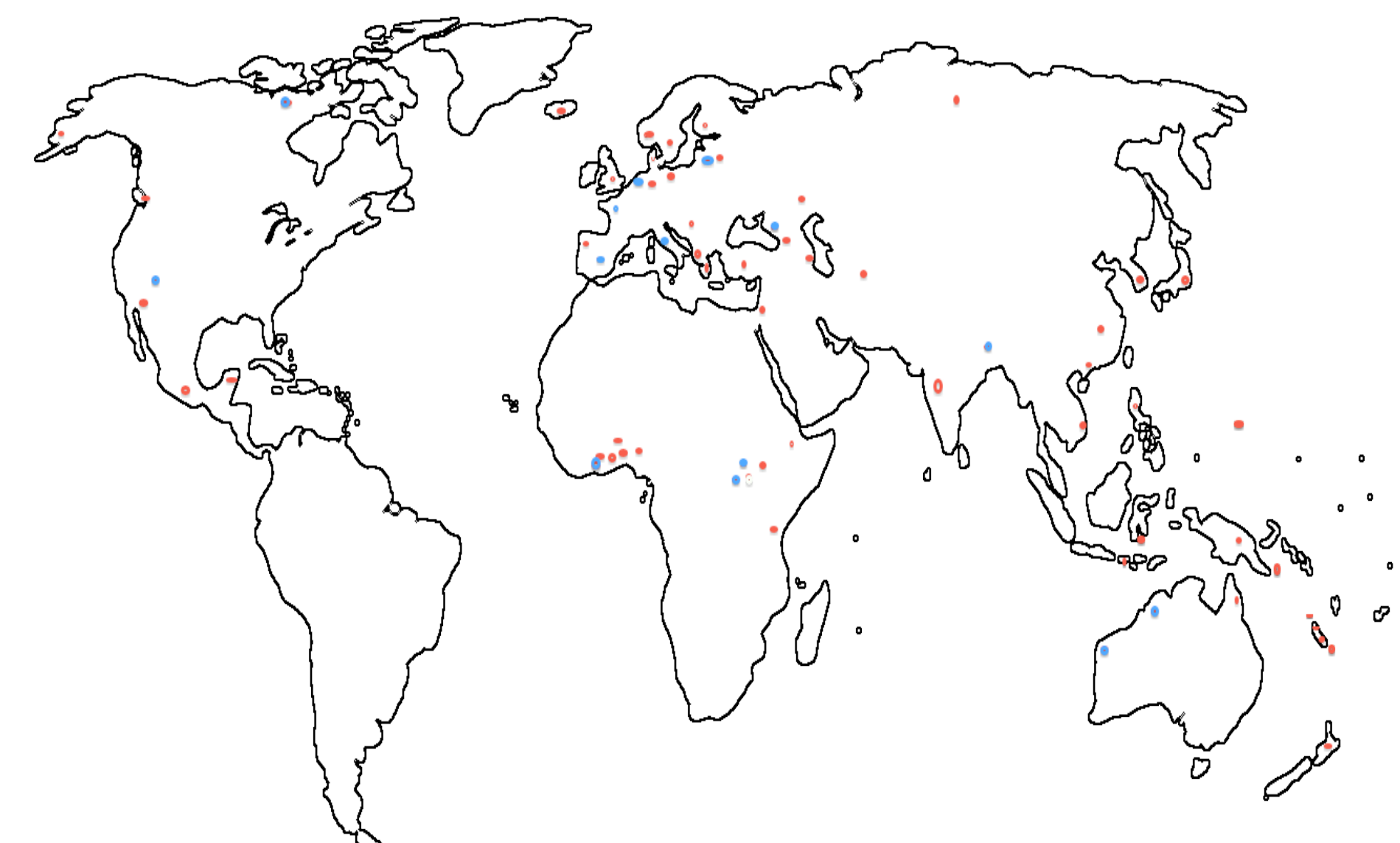SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

Introduction

The typological description of reflexive markers in the world's languages is almost always approached from a formal and functional perspective (e.g. Geniušienė 1987; König & Gast 2008); that is, most researchers are interested in identifying which reflexive marker(s) exist in a particular language and subsequently exploring their various grammatical functions beyond semantic reflexivity (middle, passive, reciprocal, etc.). However, there is an alternative typological approach to the study of reflexivity, which includes more focus on the conceptual structure of reflexive events (cf. Haiman 1980, Kemmer 1993, Gast 2006). These researchers argue that some events, most notably events of self-care or grooming (i.e. bathing, shaving, and dressing) are inherently reflexive, they are canonically inwardly directed. Kemmer (1993) places grooming events at the center of a prototypically constructed middle category and offers evidence from several languages to show that these events are middle marked in some cases with the same form that marks true reflexive actions. In English, events of grooming, which I will call 'intrinsically reflexive' events, are often unmarked while all other reflexive actions, which I will call 'extrinsically reflexive' events, are obligatorily marked (*John shaved this morning* vs. *John was stabbing himself this morning*). Given this conceptual distinction, I have begun a research program to investigate typological questions around how languages do and don't overtly mark intrinsic vs. extrinsic reflexivity.

Materials and methods

Sample data for each language represented in the database comes from data cited in large typological studies on reflexivity (Faltz 1977; Geniušienė 1987; Gast et. al. 2007), supplemented by individual published grammars and native speaker elicitation. Each intrinsic reflexive entry in the database is represented by at least one example sentence of a verb of grooming which translates to *bathe*, *shave*, and/or *dress*. Each extrinsic reflexive entry is represented by at least one sentence containing an explicitly other-directed verb, the most frequent of which are *see*, *love*, *hate*, *kill*, *hit*, *shoot*, and *stab*. (Other outward-directed verbs are included in single instances such as *cover*, *count*, *bite*, *pinch*, *ask*, and *praise*.) Example sentences were chosen according to which reflexive data were available in the source grammars.

Findings: Intrinsic and extrinsic reflexivity is usually differentially marked

DIFFERENTIAL MARKING				IDENTICAL MARKING
Type 1a *Intrinsic* Not Marked *Extrinsic* Syntactic: NP pronoun	**Type 1b** *Intrinsic* Not Marked *Extrinsic* Morphological Marking	**Type 2** *Intrinsic* Morphological Marking *Extrinsic* Syntactic: NP Pronoun	**Type 3** *Intrinsic* Simple Pronoun *Extrinsic* Complex Pronoun	**Type 4** *Identical Marking*
English **Japanese** **Korean** **Basque** **Vietnamese** (Austroasiatic) **Cantonese** (Sino-Tibetan) **Mandarin** (Sino-Tibetan) **Samoan** (Austronesian) **Inuit** (Eskimo-Aleut) **Zapotec** (Oto-Manguean) **Hausa** (Chatic) **Yoruba** (Niger-Congo) **Igbo** (Niger-Congo) **Fongbe** (Niger-Congo) **Marathi** (Indo-Aryan) **Azerbaijani** (Turkic) **Tatar** (Turkic) **East Futunan** (Austronesian) **Xârâcùù** (Austronesian) **Kwaio** (Austronesian) **Ajië** (Austronesian) **Māori =**(Austronesian) **Chamorro** (Austronesian) **Selayarese** (Austronesian) **Alamblak** (Papuan/Sepik) **Mayan** (Some dialects)	**Dyirbal** (Pama-Nyungan) **Uzbek** (Turkic)	**Turkish** (Turkic) **Sakha** (Turkic) **Tagalog** (Austronesian) **Drehu** (Austronesian) **Balinese** (Austronesian) **Fula** (Niger-Congo) **Finnish** (Uralic) **Tohono O'odham** (clitic) (Uto-Aztecan) **Greek** (Indo-European) **Russian** (Slavic) **Albanian** (Indo-European) **Estonian** (Uralic) **Hungarian** (Uralic) **Halkomelem** (Salishan) **Lango** (Western Nilotic) **Maasai** (Eastern Nilotic) **Georgian** (Kartvelian) **Amharic** (Semitic) **Hebrew** (Semitic)	**North (and some West) Germanic** *Dutch* *Danish* *Norwegian* *Frisian* *Icelandic* *Swedish*	**NP Pronoun** **German** (Germanic) **Twi** (Kwa, Niger-Congo) **Karajarri** (Pama-Nyungan, Western Australia) **Ma'di** (Central Sudanic) **Clitic** **Romance** *Spanish* *French* *Italian* **Prefix** **Kinyarwanda** (Bantu, Niger-Congo) **Abkhaz** (North-West Caucasian) *'Navajo* *('shave' is reflexive)* *(Athabaskan)* **Suffix** **Lithuanian** (Balto-Slavic) **Limbu** (Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Tibetan) **Yup'ik** (Eskimo-Aleut) **Bolivian Quechua** **Circumfix** **Nyulnyulan languages** (Australia)

🔴 = differential marking 🔵 = identical marking

- 78% of sample languages mark intrinsic reflexives differently from extrinsic reflexives*

- Of the languages that differentially mark the two types of reflexives, roughly half (Type 2) encode intrinsic reflexivity in the morphology. Intrinsic reflexivity is unmarked (coded lexically) or encoded syntactically (Germanic) in the other half (Type 1 and Type 3).

- In some Type 2 languages, like Hebrew, marking for reflexivity, once very much a productive morphological process, is currently being replaced with pronominal reflexives (Junger 1987: 88).

- The Type 2 pattern suggests a functional decline of the morphological reflexive marker. This bleaching process may be explained by the ways in which event simulation interacts with the conceptual transparency of morphological derivation: the inherent, self-directed nature of the event masks the semantic job of the reflexive.

- When the form-function relationship weakens, we should expect a paradigmatic division between the marking of the two event types, frozen marking of intrinsic reflexives, and a reinterpretation of intrinsic reflexives as being zero-marked.

Examples of Types 1a, 2, 3, 4

Azerbaijani -intrinsic reflexive not marked

(1)   Ana   - Ø   jujun-ur
         Mother-ABS   wash-PRES.3.SG.
         'Mother washes herself'

Azerbaijani -extrinsic reflexive marked with pronoun

(2)   Ana   - Ø **özu**   -nu   sev -ir
         Mother-ABS **herself** -ACC   wash-PRES.3.SG.
         'Mother loves herself'

Estonian -intrinsic reflexive marked in morphology

(3)   Ema   riiet **-u** -b
         mother dress -RM-PRES.3.SG.
         'Mother dresses [herself].'

Estonian -extrinsic reflexive marked with pronoun

(4)   Ta   katti –s   **ennast**   teki -ga
         She-NOM cover-IMPF **herself-PART** blanket-COM
         'She covered herself with a blanket'

Dutch -intrinsic reflexive marked with simple pronoun

(5)   Jan heeft **zich** aangekleed
         'Jan has dressed himself'

Dutch -extrinsic reflexive marked with complex pronoun

(6)   Jan zag **zichzelf**
         'Jan saw himself'

Spanish -intrinsic reflexive marked with clitic

(7)   Juan **se**   bañó
         Juan **RM** bathe-3.SG.PERF
         'Juan bathed'

Spanish -extrinsic reflexive marked with clitic

(8)   Juan **se**   metió   el   cuchillo.
         Juan **RM** PUT-IN-3.SG.PERF the knife
         'Juan stabbed himself'

Conceptual Models of Two Reflexives

Kemmer (1993: 71) makes a distinction between reflexive events and body action middles. A direct reflexive event like stabbing oneself is one in which there are two participant roles evoked and each role is filled by one entity. On the other hand, in a middle, like shaving or bathing oneself, the event has an initiator and an endpoint, but there is minimal "conceptual differentiation" between those two event components since the event is carried out by just one participant.
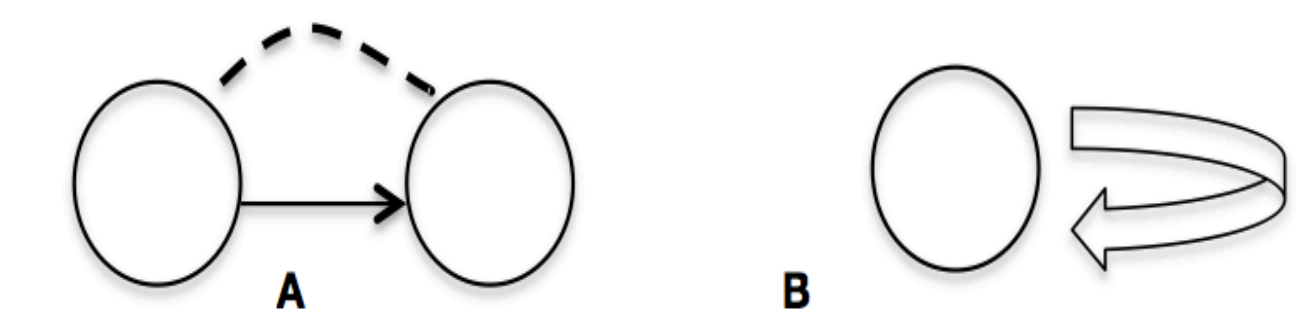

Figure 1. Kemmer's (1993: 71) representation of direct reflexive events (A) vs. body action middles (B)

In cognitive grammar, *profiling* refers to the perceptual information placed in focus by a particular expression and understood within a larger conceptual construct (Langacker 2013). Expressions like *hub*, *spoke*, and *rim*, refer to concepts that can only be understood by accessing a base or matrix concept, the wheel in this case.

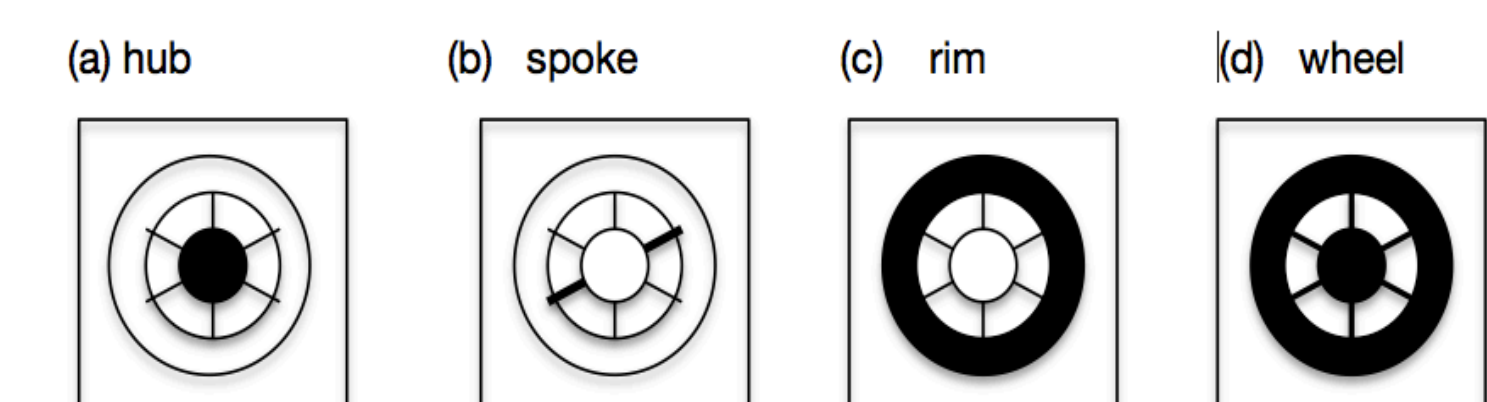(a) hub   (b) spoke   (c) rim   (d) wheel

Figure 2. Differential profiling of the conceptual components of a wheel (Langacker 2013: 67)

Profiling isn't a linguistic mechanism exclusive to lexical semantics, it also helps explain grammatical phenomenon. I propose that self-direction is *profiled* in the extrinsic reflexives of Type 1, 2, and 3 languages and it isn't profiled in the intrinsic reflexives of these languages.

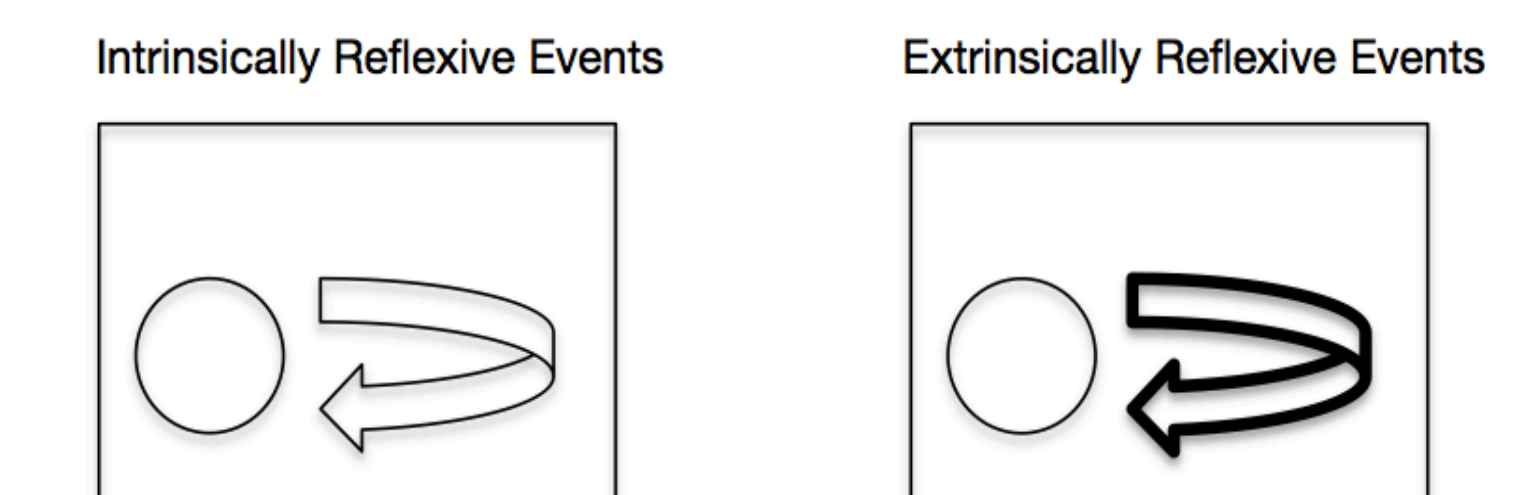Intrinsically Reflexive Events   Extrinsically Reflexive Events

Figure 3. Self-directed nature of event is profiled in extrinsically reflexive events

Intrinsic and extrinsic reflexives are both understood as self-directed events involving one person, but because intrinsic reflexives are canonically inwardly directed, their reflexivity is not profiled in the grammar.

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Want to use or contribute to my database?

I'm always in search of more data. And maybe my collection could be of use in your study. Please consider filling out my questionnaire and/or contacting me if you would like access to my database.

What about Type 4 Languages?

Why do Type 4 languages mark all reflexives in the same way?

The primary semantic job of the conceptually salient reflexive marker is to profile the self-directed nature of the event. However, there are of course many other meanings of a reflexive marker including proximity to the body, perspective marking, reciprocity, benefit, etc. It's possible in a language like French (where grooming verbs were diachronically the last reflexives to be marked with the clitic), the semantic profile of the clitic had already broadened from its contrastive origin and was reinterpreted as a marker of events performed on the body.