THE TYPOLOGY OF FOCUS MARKING IN SOUTH ASIAN ENGLISHES

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Abstract

The emergence of grammatical norms in postcolonial varieties of English has been argued to manifest itself in quantitative preferences rather than in categorical distinctions (cf. Schneider 2007: 46). Several studies on Indian English, however, have shown that this South Asian variety has developed innovative uses, i.e. marked qualitative differences, for the additive focus marker also and the restrictive focus markers only and itself as presentational focus markers (Bhatt 2000, Lange 2007, Balasubramanian 2009), e.g.

Since 7 am itself, schoolchildren started to reach the venue smartly dressed and armed with their queries and waited patiently for more than two hours for the programme to begin. (IN_TI_38032)

Number-related mismatches in agreement between the antecedent in plural and the focus marker in singular have also been attested. This structural phenomenon may be indicative of a grammaticalization process of the focus marker itself to an invariant focus particle as illustrated in the following example.

He said the temporary peace achieved by leaders of the country was a victory for the Sri Lankan Security Forces itself as it was gained by the Security Forces at the expense of their lives. (LK_DN_2004-07-02)

The present study is concerned with variation and convergence in the use of focus marking with itself in South Asian Englishes, i.e. Bangladeshi English, Indian English, Maldivian English, Nepali English, Pakistani English and Sri Lankan English. On the basis of the South Asian varieties of English (SAVE) corpus, an 18-million word web-based newspaper corpus featuring acrolectal language use of the varieties under scrutiny (cf. Bernaisch et al. 2011), we report on the pervasiveness of (presentational) focus marking with itself. Although the novel usage of itself as illustrated above certainly represents a feature of South Asian English, there is a clear pattern characterised by unity and diversity with regard to the individual varieties of English in South Asia.Despite the pan-South Asian presence of presentational itself, quantity, grammaticalization processes and structural combinability provide grounds to argue that presentational itself is more firmly rooted in some South Asian varieties of English (e.g. Indian English and Sri Lankan English) than in others (Bangladeshi English or Maldivian English).

1 Introduction

The point of departure for the present study is a syntactic innovation in Indian English (IndE), namely the extension of the functional range of focus markers such as *also*, *too*, and *only*. While these forms mark contrastive focus in all varieties of English, they do double duty both as contrastive and as presentational focus markers in Indian English, as studies by Bhatt (2000) and Balasubramanian (2009) confirm. So far, this phenomenon has not been attested outside a broadly conceived Indian context: Mesthrie (1992) reports the availability of *only* and *too* as presentational focus markers in South African Indian English.

Lange (2007) has shown that *itself* and *only* in IndE in their presentational meaning complement each other acrossregisters:*only* is very common in the spoken language, but largely absent from writing, whereas *itself*, although much rarer overall, has already found its way into the written language, which might be taken as an indicator of endonormative stabilization and ultimately standardization of this particular innovative feature.

It is further uncontroversial that the presentational uses of *only*, *itself* and *also* are contact-induced (cf. Sharma 2003, Lange 2007); these focus markers are calques of enclitic focus particles that are found in all Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages of South Asia (cf. section 3 below). The question that immediately presents itself, then, is whether other South Asian varieties of English show similar innovations in their paradigms of focus marking. So far, presentational *only* has only been reported for Sri Lankan English (Meyler2007: 185), but this might primarily be due to the uneven distribution of scholarly attention to the South Asian varieties of English. Most studies so far have concentrated on Indian English, not least because the variety is already well represented and easily accessible in corpora such as ICE-India.Work on ICE-Sri Lanka is under way, with the written part almost completed, but so far no spoken data are available for South Asian varieties of English other than IndE, which precludes the possibility of an exhaustive study of the meaning and distribution of focus markers across all South Asian varieties of English. Fortunately, there is one corpus of written English that lends itself to a comparative study of focus marking across South Asian Englishes, namely the South Asian varieties of English (SAVE) corpus covering newspaper English from Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (cf. section 4.1 below).

In the following, we will investigate the functions and contexts of *itself* as a presentational focus marker in the six varieties of South Asian English represented in the SAVE corpus. The questions we like to address are the following:

- Is the innovative use of *itself* also apparent outside India?
- If so, how frequent is presentational *itself* across South Asian Englishes, and are there similarities in the patterns of use?
- How do we explain similarities and differences in frequency and distribution of presentational *itself*? Several possibilities come to mind:
  - Presentational *itself* has stabilized first in India, the economically and culturally dominant country of the South Asian region, and then diffused to the other varieties of English; differences in the frequency of occurrence of *itself* might then be accounted for by the relative closeness or distance of an individual country to Indian cultural influence;
  - Innovative *itself* is a contact feature that arose independently in the six South Asian varieties of English; differences in the frequency of occurrence and distribution of *itself* would then point to different rates of language change in the six varieties, with higher frequencies for *itself* indicating a higher degree of endonormative stabilization.

This paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we will look more closely at the domain of focus marking and provide examples for the innovative uses of *itself*. We will then consider briefly the focus-marking strategies in the languages of South Asia in order to substantiate the claim that presentational *itself* as a contact feature could in principle have emerged in all the South Asian Englishes under scrutiny. In the subsequent section 4, we will focus on our database, namely SAVE, and the data derived from it. Section 5 presents the results of our corpus-linguistic investigation into presentational *itself*, while section 6 is devoted to a discussion of the possible implications of our results when viewed against the background of the incipient

endonormative stabilization of South Asian Englishes. The final section summarizes our main findings and claims and points to prospects for further research.

2   Focus: Contrastive and Presentational

As already mentioned above, the form *only* has become polysemous in IndE, marking not only contrastive, but also presentational focus, as in the following examples:

(1)   This year's PG admissionshave been marred by confusion and controversies with RGUHS decision to allownon-Karnataka candidates to appear for the post-graduate entrancetest.Following the new regulation, students raised a hue and cry, afterwhich the government was forced to revoke the decision and allow *only* Karnatakastudents to appear for the entrance test. RGUHS refunded the entranceexamination fee to the non-Karnataka students. (IN_TI_37340)[i]

(2)   B: Now I teach in <,> fourth fifth and <,> sixth seventh standard maths <,>
              The children are not quite good in Maths <,,>
              But why they are not quite good <,,> ?
              What do you think <,> what more <,,> something else should be done <,> so
              that there Maths <,> will become perfect <,,>[ii]
       A: Uh suddenly it will be <,> become perfect *only*<,,>
              So <,,> it depend upon that <,,> uh their environment <,,>
              And even home <-> did </-> condition also <,>
       If they be in always that this is [one word] there are <}><-> not improve </-><+> no
       improvement </+></}>*only*<,,>
       B: No means they don't know
       A: No here I will not <,> uh that think that students are very weak <,>
              Actually they are good *only*<,,> (ICE-IND:S1A-087#13-23)

Only in example (1) marks contrastive or identificational focus:

> An identificational focus represents a subset of the set of contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold; it is identified as the exhaustive subset of this set for which the predicate phrase actually holds. (Kiss 1998: 245)

In the clause *the government was forced to revoke the decision and allow only Karnataka students to appear for the entrance test*, *only* marks the referent *Karnataka students* as the focus and evokes a contrast to other possible referents, in this case students from other parts of India.

As a restrictive focus marker, *only* further expresses that what is predicated of the entity in focus holds exclusively for this particular entity; all other evoked alternatives are excluded. This specific property of evoking alternatives to the referent or entity in focus is absent from the meanings of *only* in example (2), where the constituents adjacent to *only* merely receive presentational or information focus (cf. Kiss 1998: 246), also sometimes referred to as wide focus. The intensifier *itself* (cf. Siemund 2002) has likewise developed a new function as presentational focus marker, and has already attracted the attention of authors contributing to what the Milroys called the "complaint tradition", even though the form is far less conspicuous than *only*. The journalist Jyoti Sanyal, in a collection of his columns on language use in a South Indian newspaper, comments on *itself* as follows:

> Of the various forms of *Indlish* that get into our English-language newspapers, perhaps the most jarring is the use of reflexive pronouns for emphasis that is unidiomatic in English, and unnecessary in any language. […]

> English-language papers in south India place the 'emphatic pronoun' after names of persons and places, specified time or day, and facts that need no emphasis. In north Indian papers, the redundant emphasis usually comes after some significant detail that is already conspicuous and needs no such prop. More often than not, what looks like the emphatic pronoun in news reports doesn't function like one. (2006: 200)

Sanyal provides the following example:

> Rural Development Minister … told reporters that … the government would write to the State Election Commission tomorrow *itself* that it might go ahead with the process of fixing the date for the elections … since the notification was being issued today *itself*, the commission … may hold the elections even in the first week of June. (2006: 201)

Sanyal's further discussion of this abhorred feature of *Indlish* is interesting in two respects. First of all, he makes explicit reference to *only* and *itself* as contact-induced, referring to parallel phenomena in both Dravidian (Malayalam and Tamil) and Indo-Aryan (Hindi and Bangla) languages. Second, he points out that *only* and *itself* are used more or less interchangeably:

> Where does this habit come from? In most south Indian languages, such emphasis is accepted as idiomatic. The words *tannay* (Malayalam) and *taan* (Tamil) are used for an emphasis that is mistranslated into *itself* and *only* (mistranslated, because neither *itself* nor *only* are used in the same way as *tannay* or *taan*). There is no discernible pattern in when those words translate into *itself* nor in what contexts they mean *only*. […] Going by logic, words denoting specific time such as *yesterday*, *today*, *tomorrow* should need no emphasis. But most Indian languages add such emphasis after specifying day or time. Compare *aajhee* (Hindi), *aaj-ee/aaj-kayee* (Bengali). (2006: 201)

Sanyal would probably be even more horrified to come across an example like the following:

(3)   On December 8, the inaugural lamp will be lit for IFFK 2006, the International Film Festival of Kerala at Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala. The 11th edition of IFFK is eagerly awaited not just by film buffs across Kerala, but by film buffs from across the globe as it is a festival that has earned for itself a reputation in international circuits *itself*. (*Screen*, December 8, 2006, p. 12)

The sentence-final token of *itself* in example (3) fails to agree in number with its antecedent. Rather than treating this case of agreement mismatch simply as a mistake, it might be taken as an indication that *itself* in IndE shows first signs of developing into an invariant focus particle (cf. Lange 2007: 102). In section 5 below, we will explore the corpus evidence for this hypothesized tendency further; however, before we turn to presentational *itself* in the South Asian varieties of English, we will first return to Sanyal's remarks about the examples set by Indian languages for the use of *only* and *itself* and consider briefly how focus is marked across the languages of South Asia.

3   Focus Marking in South Asian Languages

For an outsider, the degree of linguistic diversity as well as the extent of grassroots multilingualism across South Asia is staggering. India as the largest and most populous country in the area is home to 234 'mother tongues' subsumed under 122 'languages' from four different languages families, according to the 2001 census.[iii] There is an almost inverse relationship between the number of languages belonging to each language family and the number of speakers, as Table 1 (from Asher 2008: 33) shows:

Table 1: Language families in South Asia and their numbers of speakers.

	Number of languages	**Number of speakers (m.)**
Indo-Iranian	110	1,000
Dravidian	35	250
Austro-Asiatic	25	12
Tibeto-Burman	150	11

Despite the enormous linguistic diversity in the area, many linguistic features are common both within and across language families. As Masica notes in a comparison of the European and the South Asian linguistic geography:

> Lacking clear cut geographical units of the European type where dialectal variants can crystallize in semi-isolation, or longstanding political boundaries, the entire Indo-Aryan realm (except for Sinhalese) constitutes one enormous dialectal continuum, where continued contact inhibits such crystallization, and differentiated dialects continue to influence one another. (1993: 25)

The South Asian area also represents one of the classical examples of a *Sprachbund*, where mutual influence between Sanskrit/Indo-Aryan and Dravidian over millennia led to linguistic convergence (cf. Emeneau1956, Masica 1976). In the context of this paper, it is sufficient to note that both the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian languages have 'emphatic clitics' or 'emphatic particles' that can attach to sentence constituents to express focus. Krishnamurti includes the emphatic clitic *-ē among the clitics that can be reconstructed for Proto-Dravidian and notes that "[t]his clitic adds emphasis to the meaning of any constituent of a clause to which it is attached, broadly meaning 'only'". (2003: 415). In Krishnamurti's overview of emphatic clitics in the modern Dravidian languages, we also come across the Tamil and Malayalam forms that were mentioned by Jyoti Sanyalin the quote above: the clitic -ē "is used in addition to *tān* 'self' which is an innovation in Proto-South Dravidian I" (*ibid*.). Similarly, Malayalam "adds –ē and –*tanne* to any major constituent of a sentence as emphatic particles" (*ibid*.). Krishnamurti further points out that there is a cognate clitic –*i* in some Central and North Dravidian languages:

> It is very likely that –*i* represents Indo-Aryan/Hindi –*hī* (emphatic) with *h*-loss. Since clitics are important elements of discourse, it is quite possible that borrowed ones from the neighbouring dominant Indo-Aryan languages have replaced the native ones. (2003: 416)

For the Indo-Aryan languages, Masica notes the following:
> A feature of NIA [New Indo-Aryan] syntax that must also be kept in mind, however, is the set of emphaticparticles (H. *hī*, B. *i*, G. *j*, M. *ts*, etc.) which make it possible to express "emphasis" without the help of either word order variation or intonation (although also not incompatible with either). (1993: 396)[iv]

Thus, the two language families which, taken together, account for the overwhelming majority of speakers across the region share a morphosyntactic strategy of marking focus by enclitic particles, and they also share the option of marking both contrastive and presentational focus by this strategy. These two language families are also clearly dominant compared to the other languages families in the region listed above when the individual South Asian countries are taken into account. Bangladesh is almost monolingual: "Bengali […] is spoken by approximately 98 percent of the population of Bangladesh" (Bhatt & Mahboob 2008: 148).[v] The majority language of the Maldives is Dhivehi, another Indo-Aryan language. In both Nepal and Pakistan,

although home to a large number of languages, Indo-Aryan languages are official languages, namely Nepali and Urdu respectively. Despite its status as the national language, Urdu is actually a minority language in Pakistan, spoken by around eight per cent of the population (cf. Bhatia 2008: 127); "[t]he majority language is Punjabi, spoken by approximately 60 per cent of the population" (*ibid*.). Further, since Hindi and Urdu are basically the same language written in different scripts, and since "[i]n spite of the national divide, the Punjabi-speaking regions of India and Pakistan form a single (socio)linguistic area" (*ibid*.), we have good reason to suspect that the contact-induced pattern of presentational focus marking with *itself* is not restricted to Indian English, but is found in other South Asian varieties of English as well. In the following, we will investigate the occurrence of presentational *itself* in South Asian Englishes on the basis of the SAVE corpus.

4   Methodology

The methodological part of this paper is divided into two subsections. Section 4.1 presents in detail the corpus data used to study presentational *itself* in the varieties of South Asian English covered and section 4.2 outlines the extraction of presentational *itself* from the respective datasets.

4.1 The Corpus

As the object of investigation of the present paper is presentational *itself* in South Asian Englishes, the SAVE corpus is resorted to in order to empirically investigate the usage of this focus particle across various second-language varieties on the Indian subcontinent. The 18-million-word database at hand features acrolectal newspaper language representing six South Asian varieties of English.

Table 2: Overview of the SAVE corpus.

Variety	Word count[vi]	Newspapers	URLs
Bangladeshi English (SAVE-BAN)	3,052,796	Daily Star New Age	http://www.thedailystar.net http://www.newagebd.com
Indian English (SAVE-IND)	3,071,735	The Statesman The Times of India	http://www.thestatesman.net http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com
Maldivian English (SAVE-MAL)	3,049,497	Dhivehi Observer Minivan News	http://www.dhivehiobserver.com http://www.minivannews.com
Nepali English (SAVE-NEP)	3,012,204	Nepali Times The Himalayan Times	http://www.nepalitimes.com http://www.thehimalayantimes.com
Pakistani English (SAVE-PAK)	3,064,534	Daily Times Dawn	http://www.dailytimes.com.pk http://www.dawn.com
Sri Lankan English (SAVE-SL)	3,065,820	Daily Mirror Daily News	http://www.dailymirror.lk http://www.dailynews.lk

Table 2 illustrates the structure of the SAVE corpus. SAVE consists of six national components, each of which comprises newspaper data drawn from two local English-medium newspapers respectively (cf. Bernaisch et al. 2011: 7).

A particularly valuable asset of the SAVE corpus is its cleanliness. In order to guarantee that each national component represents variety-specific material produced by proficient users of that variety only, news agency reports (e.g. from Reuters, Associated Press, etc.) were systematically removed from the data (cf. Bernaisch et al. 2011: 9). This procedure ensures that researchers can

be relatively confident that the empirical findings they delineate on the basis of the SAVE data indeed stem from local usages of the English language and have not been distorted with material from varieties other than the one(s) under investigation.

Although it is undoubtedly true that spoken data offer useful insights into the structure of varieties of English on the Indian subcontinent (cf. e.g. Herat (2005), Herat (2006), Lange (2007), Sedlatschek (2009), Lange (forthcoming)), this does by no means imply that written material as it is used in the present study is less conducive when it comes to the description of emerging norms of South Asian Englishes. In fact, the usage of written data for studies of second language varieties of English, and in particular the usage of newspaper data in this context, is central because of the strong association of the English language and the written medium in outer-circle varieties of English (cf. Hundt 2006: 223). Furthermore, in South Asia

> English newspapers [...] fulfil a dual function of identity construction and language standardization. Since no concise grammars or dictionaries exist [...], publication in newspapers often serves as an instrument of codification of variety-specific features. (Schilk 2011: 47)

Thus, it could be the case that the study of newspaper data of ESL varieties reveals variety-specific structures in the making. Complementarily, the data used for the study at hand may be regarded as stemming from "the most prestigious varieties in the individual linguistic settings, i.e. the kind of language use that is most likely to be codified as soon as such developments are brought under way" (cf. Bernaisch et al. 2011: 1).

4.2 Coding the Data

As innovative means of focus marking with *itself* are under scrutiny in the present paper, the word form *itself* served as a lexical anchor for the corpus searches. For the analysis, however, it was necessary to discard three types of usages of *itself* from the data. Examples (4) - (6) display instances of *itself* which were excluded from the analysis.

(4)   [...] the dark hag who lives by the water, who she gleefully reminds me comes out occasionally to sun *itself* on the very rock that I am sitting on. (NP_NT_2002-05-10)

(5)   Mr Khan described as 'inhuman' the treatment meted out to Lebanon by Israel in response to the kidnapping of two of its soldiers by Hezbollah. The response is more inappropriate and unjustified in a scenario where Israel *itself* had been holding an unspecified number of Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Fatah members. (PK_DA_2006-07-21)

(6)   The government also appears to be getting increasingly jittery at the slightest hint of political expression. This is particularly worrisome, as the government *itself* must also know that the time has now come for it to lift the state of emergency altogether and to allow full political activity, if it wishes to remain on course of its electoral 'roadmap'. (BD_NA_2007-12-03)

The first type of usages of *itself* disregarded in the analyses comprises examples in which *itself* is not used as an intensifier, but as a reflexive pronoun as illustrated in (4). These instances were ignored since they do not provide any insights into focus marking with *itself*. As this paper zooms in on innovative uses of *itself* in South Asia, types of intensifying *itself* which are also attestable outside South Asia had to be excluded in the present analyses as well. Thus, the second and the third type of *itself* which were discarded from further analysis are uses of *itself* as a contrastive focus marker which are also observable in inner-circle varieties of English such as American or British English.

The second usage type of *itself* excluded from the analyses encapsulatesa particular subgroup of instances in which *itself* has an intensifying function. This subgroup of intensifying *itself* is characterised by explicit alternatives to the focused element in its pretext. This use of *itself* with at least one preceding contrasting element is exemplifiedin (5). The author of this example describes the cruelty of Israel's reaction to a Lebanese kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, which, the author claims, is not justifiable given the fact that Israel has kidnapped Lebanon-based militants before as well. Consequently, in this example, Israel (and its earlier kidnapping of Lebanon-based people) isfocussed with *itself* and contrasted with the aforementioned Lebanon (and its currently discussed kidnapping).

Example (6) shows the third use of *itself* disregarded in the analyses. In some cases, the prestige ascribed to a focused element (i.e. *government* in (6)) may be held accountable for the usage of the focus marker. A lexeme such as *government*inevitably attracts the focus marker *itself* "because it takes up an extreme point on a hierarchy of the real world" (Siemund 2002: 4). As this kind of focus marking is also attestable in varieties outside South Asia, these cases constitute the third type of *itself* which is not considered any further in the present study.

While it is straightforward to identify reflexive uses of *itself* as in (4), it goes without saying that establishing whether or not a certain focused entity is preceded by elements which contrast with the one in focus as in (5) proves to be much more challenging. The same holds true for deciding whether or not a certain element has high prestige or not as in (6), although consistent back-tracking certainly helps with this task. In order to keep the results as clean and meaningful as possible, the data were coded relatively conservatively, which means that unclear cases were not included in the analyses.

5   Results

After the exclusion of the above instances of *itself* shared by varieties of English inside and outside South Asia, the data yield only cases of innovative usage patterns of presentational *itself* in South Asian Englishes. The relevant usage patterns are given in (7) - (9) and draw attention to three different subsets of presentational *itself* in the South Asian corpus data.

(7)   We had a chance to see two militants adorned with Kalashnikov when they got down at Gangerbal from <u>our bus *itself*</u>. (IN_SM_2003-08-09)

(8)   He was expecting Supreme Court's ruling on this writ application <u>today *itself*</u>. (NP_NT_2003-10-24)

(9)   If any case is referred to Samatha Mandalaya, the particular case must be solved <u>there *itself*</u>. (LK_DN_2003-08-26)

In Example (7), *itself* focuses a noun phrase, namely *our bus*. However, as statedin the earlier descriptions of the usage patterns of *itself* (cf. example (5)), noun phrase focusing with *itself* is attestable in a large number of varieties of English. However, the innovative force of this example lies in the fact that no alternatives to the focused element have been structurally realised in its pretext. As using *itself* to focus noun phrases without explicit discursive alternatives is not attested in BrE(cf. Lange 2007: 96), the historical input variety of the South Asian Englishes under scrutiny, this usage pattern constitutes a novel South Asian English form of presentational *itself*.

The usage patterns exemplified in (8) and (9) showcase instances of presentational *itself* focusing adverbials. Adverbialfocusing with *itself* as a discursive strategy has so far not been attested in varieties of English other than Indian English (cf. Lange 2007: 106) and, on the basis of this, can thus be claimed to be an exclusive feature of (at least one) South Asian English. In the

context of adverbial focusing, two subtypes of presentational *itself* can be constituted since temporal (8) as well as locative adverbials (9) can be put in focus.

In what follows, the structural pervasiveness of presentational *itself* with reference toits three usage types illustrated above will be analysed. In addition to that, the extent to which a process of grammaticalization may be attested in this context will also be discussed. The absolute frequencies and the frequencies normalised to one million words (pmw) of presentational *itself* in the six national components of the SAVE corpus are given in Table 3.[vii]

Table 3: Absolute (normalised (pmw)) frequencies of presentational *itself* in the SAVE corpus.

	SAVE-BAN	SAVE-IND	SAVE-MAL	SAVE-NEP	SAVE-PAK	SAVE-SL
presentational *itself*	8 (2.62)	60 (19.53)	25 (8.20)	51 (16.93)	18 (5.87)	33 (10.76)

The data show that presentational *itself* occurs in each of the six components of the SAVE corpus. Nevertheless, there is a noteworthy range in the variety-specific frequency of usage since the Bangladesh data yield 2.62 instances (pmw), the lowest normalised value, while SAVE-IND features the highest number of presentational *itself*s, i.e. 19.53 instances (pmw).

Despite the fact that *itself* as a focus marker may not be an outstandingly frequent phenomenon in some of the South Asian varieties of English scrutinised such as Bangladeshi English or Pakistani English, the innovative forms of presentational focus marking with *itself* are nevertheless part of the structural repertoire of each South Asian English investigated. This is a clear indication that presentational*itself* is a truly pan-South Asian English structural feature. However, it needs to be stated that focus marking with *itself* may be more characteristic of Indian English, Nepalese English and Sri Lankan English as opposed to Bangladeshi English, Pakistani English and Maldivian English.[viii]

The results regarding the overall frequency of occurrence of presentational *itself*in the SAVE corpus still gloss over different subtypes of focus marking with *itself* as illustrated in (4) - (6), namely noun phrase focusing and adverbial focusing. In order to paint a more detailed picture of these novel usages of *itself* as a focus marker, Table 4 provides an overview of the frequencies of presentational *itself* across the six national components of SAVE arranged according to whether a noun phrase or an adverbial is in focus.

Table 4: Absolute (relative (%)) frequencies of presentational *itself* according to focused element.

subtypes of presentational *itself*	SAVE-BAN	SAVE-IND	SAVE-MAL	SAVE-NEP	SAVE-PAK	SAVE-SL
noun phrase focus	8 (100)	16 (26.67)	20 (80)	39 (76.47)	14 (77.78)	18 (54.55)
adverbial focus	0 (0)	44 (73.33)	5 (20)	12 (23.53)	4 (22.22)	15 (45.45)
Total	8 (100)	60 (100)	25 (100)	51 (100)	18 (100)	33 (100)

The distribution of the different subtypes of presentational *itself*in the national components of SAVE is statistically highly significant and there is a moderate correlation between the subtypes of presentational *itself* and the components of SAVE ($\chi^2 \approx 45.3686$, *df*= 6, p < 0.001, Cramer's V ≈

0.4823). The datapoints which deviate most strongly from the expected distribution are the absolute frequencies for the different subtypes of presentational *itself* in the Indian data.[ix]

A closer look at the frequency of the subtypes of presentational *itself* reveals that noun phrase focusing is attestable in all the SAVE components under scrutiny. Adverbial focusing, in contrast to this, figures prominently in the Indian (73.33%) and in the Sri Lankan data (45.45%), while it plays a minor role in the Maldivian (20%), Nepali (23.53%) and Pakistani data (22.22%). In the Bangladeshi component of SAVE, which generally features a low total number of presentational focus marking (8), *itself* does not focus adverbial elements at all.

On the basis of these observations, it seems to be the case that noun phrase focusing with *itself* has become established as an innovative discursive device across all South Asian Englishes concerned and, thus, represents the default case of pan-South Asian presentational focus marking with *itself*. Adverbial focus marking, contrastively, does not yet seem to have permeated all South Asian Englishes and may consequently be indicative of a more nativised and more flexible usage of presentational focus marking in the varieties in which it occurs.

The varieties that stand out regarding the subtypes of presentational *itself* are Indian English and Sri Lankan English in that adverbial focusing is comparatively frequent in these varieties, while this is not the case for the other varieties examined. The association plot in Figure 1 supports this view in that, concerning the tendencies as regards focus subtypes, Indian and Sri Lankan English can be grouped together and Maldivian, Nepali, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Englishmight constitute a second group.[x]

Against this background, it is particularly interesting that past research assigns Indian English the role of an emerging epicentre which may serve as a lead variety for the entire Indian subcontinent (cf. Leitner 1992: 225). In this line of thought, Sri Lankan English would thus follow Indian English since Sri Lankan English has clearly widened its discursive scope of presentational *itself* by institutionalising focus marking of adverbials alongside that of noun phrases. Analogous developments may have taken root in Maledivian, Nepali and Pakistani English because for these varieties, adverbial focus marking can be attested, while the data suggest that such developments are absent from Bangladeshi English.
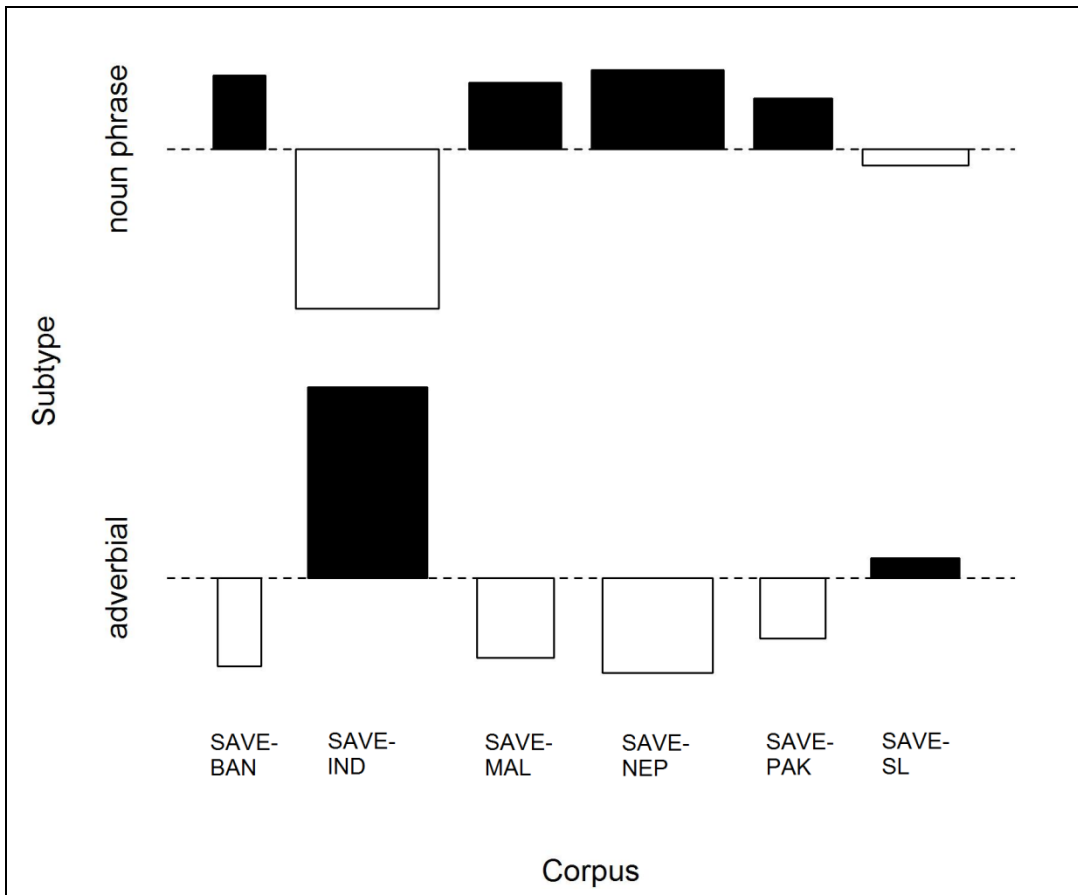
Figure 1: Association plot of the subtypes of presentational *itself* in the
national components of SAVE.

The overall frequencies as well as the corresponding subtypes of presentational *itself* provide an additional empirical footing to the findings of past research indicating that Indian English, followed by Sri Lankan English, is that variety among the South Asian Englishes which displays the highest degree of what may be called structural nativisation (cf. e.g. Leitner 1992, Mukherjee 2007, Mukherjee 2008). Consequently, in case Indian English may be regarded as the lead variety for other South Asian Englishes, then our data imply that Sri Lankan English should probably be considered its closest followerin terms of the development and adoption of nativised structures of English in South Asia.

Against this background, it is particularly interesting to observe that the grammaticalization process of presentational *itself* towards an invariant focus particle, which has already been described by Lange (cf. 2007: 102) for spoken Indian English, is also attestable in the written data at hand. Due to the fact that the written texts used in this study represent the acrolectal ends of the dialect continua of the respective varieties, these attestation of presentational *itself* are highly unlikely to be learner mistakes (cf. Schilk 2011: 47). Instances of presentational *itself* as an invariant focus marker are illustrated in (10) and (11).

(10)   As for ethics and "unethical conversions" *itself,* why should ethics be confined to conversions from one religion to another only? (LK_DN_2004-01-10)

(11)   According to a real-estate dealer, <u>in the last couple of months *itself*</u>, three huge bungalows on CG road have been or are in the process of being sold. (IN_TI_38094)

Itself as an invariant focus particle occurs six times in the Indian English data and twice in the Sri Lankan English data. For the other South Asian varieties of English, *itself* cannot be attested as an invariant focus particle at all. In the Indian English texts, invariant *itself* focuses noun phrases as well as adverbials, while in the Sri Lankan English data, only noun phrases are focused with the help of *itself*.

The fact that invariant *itself* is published in newspapers with a comparatively wide circulation, thus affecting local linguistic ecologies, may be interpreted as a sign that presentational *itself* in its invariant form is slowly making its way into the standards of Indian and Sri Lankan English.This, in turn, is a reflection of the above mentioned innovative force these varieties of English exert in the South Asian *Sprachbund*.

6   Discussion

The preceding discussion has amply illustrated that the innovative use of *itself* as presentational focus marker contributes significantly to the "South Asianness" (Kachru 1994: 513) of South Asian Englishes, albeit to different degrees. When we consider the relative frequencies of presentational *itself* in all contexts, then the Indian, Nepali and Sri Lankan varieties of English appear most advanced in embracing this innovative feature. When, on the other hand, we consider solely the subset of the data quantifying presentational *itself* with an adverbial focus, then Indian and Sri Lankan English emerge as the varieties leading the change, with Nepal, Pakistan and the Maldives trailing behind and Bangladesh not participating in the endonormative stabilization of this particular usage.

At the beginning of this paper, we raised the question whether these patterns can be explained in terms of diffusion from India as the South Asian epicentre, or whether the feature under discussion arose independently in each variety and was then subjected to different rates of change within the local linguistic ecologies. While it is tempting to assume a wave model of linguistic change, with the wave emanating from India and moving towards the surrounding countries, so to speak, such an assumption is clearly not warranted by the data: the SAVE corpus only allows synchronic comparisons across varieties, and while it has become quite common to combine dialectology and typology (cf. Kortmann 2004) and to conceptualize dialects/varieties of a language as their diachronically prior states, we simply do not know enough at this stage to posit such a relationship between the South Asian varieties of English. We can therefore offer only circumstantial evidence and general observations about the position of English in the individual countries' communicative space for an interpretation of our data.

There is evidence that innovative focus marking strategies in the area are not a post-independence development in the South Asian region, but have been in use since colonial times. *Only* with an adverbial antecedent as focus was already conspicuous enough to be included in an article on Indian English which appeared in 1938 in the *Transactions of the Philological Society*:

> *only,* adv., merely emphasizing preceding term ; cf. *to-day only:* this very *day.* **D** very frequent.**Bo** less frequent. (Kindersley 1938: 32)[xi]

The *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/cwmg.html) offer examples that *itself* in the same function and context was also already well established:

> If the Government would permit me to proceed to the Frontier tomorrow, I shall rush to that place. So, if those of you here who have got the ear of the Government can procure for me this permission, I shall directly start for the Frontier, I would love to go there

tomorrow *itself*. (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*Vol. 54,p. 326; from a speech published in *The Hindu*, 31-12-1931)[xii]

If presentational *only/itself* were already part of the Indian English linguistic repertoire before Independence along with Partition created Pakistan (and later Bangladesh) and India out of the former British India, then we would expect to see this usage continued, and we would expect a clear dividing line between the 'core' South Asian successor states and those on the fringe of the former British Raj, namely Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives (cf. McArthur 2003: 309). However, neither Pakistani English nor Bangladeshi English conform to this expectation, whereas Sri Lankan English scores high on all aspects of the usage of innovative *itself* and Nepali English features a rather unexpectedly high frequency of presentational *itself*-tokens. The latter phenomenon can indeed be explained by influence from Indian English:

> In one respect Nepal is unique among the South Asian nations discussed in this chapter: it was never politically colonised by a western power, nor has it been open to the influence of Christian missionaries for proselytisation. The tradition of English education and methods for curriculum design came from neighbouring India. Until Tribhuvan University was established in 1960, all teachers, administrators and the cultural elite were trained in Indian universities. (Kachru 1994: 548)

For Nepali English, then, the comparatively high frequencies of presentational *itself* constitute a change from above, a feature introduced via the written language modelled on Indian English. This does not preclude that presentational *only/itself* are also established in the spoken language, but since English is essentially a foreign language in Nepal, it is reasonable to assume that the standards for newspaper writing were adopted from Indian English. Nepali English thus represents the intriguing case of a postcolonial English squared, so to say, inthat it is Indian and not British English which provides the exonormative target variety for a possible new cycle of development.

As already mentioned, Sri Lankan English, apart from Indian English, is the only South Asian variety of English for which the widespread usage of presentational *only* and *itself* has been attested for spoken as well as written language (cf. Meyler 2007: 122, 185). This observation leaves us with two possible interpretations and, given the synchronic nature of our data, with no unequivocal evidence for choosing one over the other: the innovative pattern of using *itself* in Sri Lankan newspaper English may indicate a change from below entering the written language, or it may be an innovation taken over from or facilitated by the Indian model. In any case, the Sri Lankan data clearly indicate that SLE is moving towards endonormative stabilization with respect to this particular feature.

The difference between Indian English usage on the one hand and Pakistani and Bangladeshi English usage on the other remains striking, especially if we take presentational *itself* to be a feature that predates the creation of the three states. Indian English would then represent a continuation of earlier established usages, with English in Pakistan and Bangladesh diverging from the historical trajectory towards the endonormative stabilization of presentational *itself*. Again, no spoken data are available for either variety, and studies focussing on the range and depth of English in the two respective countries are few for Pakistan (cf. Baumgardner 1993, Rahman 2007) and even fewer for Bangladesh. Following Partition, Pakistan (then consisting of East- and West Pakistan) pursued a policy of restricting the domains of English for the sake of establishing national unity via the promotion of Urdu as the national language and identity-carrier for the new Islamic state. This policy of privileging the minority language Urdu (and its speakers) alienated the Bangla-speaking population of East Pakistan and incited discontent from the very inception of the new political entity (cf. Musa 1985), contributing eventually to the violent separation of East and West Pakistan and the formation of Bangladesh as a new state. Bangladesh

language policy, in turn, similarly emphasized Bangla and restricted the role of English in the country's communicative space: "Since its formation as an independent state, Bangladesh has not adopted a consistent policy towards the role of English; it falls between an ESL and an EFL country" (Kachru 1994: 547f.).

Against this background, a reasonable explanation for the low frequency of presentational *itself* in the two varieties would then be that on both the individual and the societal level, there is neither the need nor the opportunity to develop an endonormative variety of English. The discontinuity in the teaching of English as a consequence of the *Ausbau* (Kloss 1967) of Bangla as the sole national language might have affected a "break in transmission" in Thomason & Kaufman's (1991) terms, such that English in Bangladesh has again become a foreign rather than a second language with the concomitant reliance on exonormative models. However, such a seemingly straightforward explanation in terms of the limited role of English within Pakistan's and Bangladesh's linguistic ecologies becomes slightly less straightforward when Sri Lanka is again taken into account. Following independence in 1948, Sri Lanka pursued a language policy of demoting the former colonial language and promoting the majority language Sinhala:

> It was during this period [=the 1960s and 1970s] that the term **kaduwa**, the Sinhala word for 'sword', to refer to the English language, was coined and gained a currency which continues till today. Sinhala-speakers perceive/d English as a weapon to cut them down, to intimidate and control them. (Goonetilleke 2005: 50)

However, the similarities in official language policies in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka remain superficial, as the range and depth of English is undoubtedly more extensive in Sri Lanka than in the other two countries. In present-day Sri Lanka, English occupies a central place in the local linguistic landscape in conjunction with Sinhala and Tamil and continues to permeate private and professional domains (cf. Künstler et al. 2009). The sociolinguistic persistency of English in Sri Lanka over the course of the post-independence era was *inter alia* facilitated by two partly interrelated factors. First, in spite of constitutional discouragement of the usage of the English language, "[t]he English-educated [...] remain/ed in power" (Goonetilleke 2005: 36), thus providing further socio-economic incentives to learn and speak the English language. Second, the emergence of an open economic system on the island state in the 1970s gave an additional boost to the status of and, in the true sense of the word, need for the English language (cf. Samarakkody & Braine 2005: 149). In the light of these perspectives on the development of English in Sri Lanka after 1948, it may be argued that the English language never vanished from the linguistic repertoire of the local speech community to the extent originally envisaged by the then government, or, in other words, that language planning and policy in Sri Lanka did not affect the process of endonormative stabilisation as adversely as in other countries on the Indian subcontinent.

One further, albeit highly speculative, possibility comes to mind: we might be dealing with a case of divergence between Indian (and Sri Lankan) English on the one hand and Pakistani and Bangladeshi English on the other, paralleling the deep political rift between India and Pakistan. A recent collection on the phenomena of convergence and divergence in language contact situations defines the relevant terms thus:

> While convergence involves linguistic unification and homogenisation of the linguistic repertoire, divergence leads to diversification and heterogenisation, such that languages or varieties grow more distinct from one another (Braunmüller & House 2009: 13)

For Postcolonial Englishes, the two processes are inextricably linked. Convergence between English and South Asian languages at the local level entails divergence at the international level: the nativization and endonormative stabilization of South Asian varieties of English makes them more distinct from established British or American English usage.[xiii] In the South Asian varieties of English under scrutiny, we see convergence between Indian, Sri Lankan and Nepali English on the one hand, and divergence from the innovative usage of presentational *itself* in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi varieties of English. The term *naboopposisjon* ('neighbour opposition'), coined by the Norwegian linguist Amund B. Larsen in 1917 and later re-introduced by Peter Trudgill as *hyperdialectism* (Trudgill 1988: 551), captures a process of contact-induced change in which speakers of closely related varieties more or less deliberately create divergences between their varieties, which then come to serve as markers of local identities.[xiv] The operation of such a process might provide an alternative explanation for the striking differences in the distribution of innovative *itself* across the historically closely related South Asian Englishes.

7   Conclusion and Outlook

The present study has focused on presentational *itself* as an innovative feature in the domain of focus marking across South Asian Englishes. *Itself* as a marker of presentational rather than contrastive focus has so far only been attested for Indian and Sri Lankan English. The present study has drawn on the SAVE corpus, which represents newspaper texts from six South Asian varieties of English, to determine whether this feature is also found in regional varieties of English beyond India and Sri Lanka. Since presentational *itself* is clearly contact-induced, and since the source pattern for this construction is available in all the major languages of the region, the default assumption would be that presentational *itself* is not restricted to IndE and SLE. This assumption is indeed borne out by the data: presentational *itself* is clearly a pan-South Asian English feature, albeit with clear differences in frequency and distribution. IndE and SLE are the leading varieties when it comes to structural nativization and endonormative stabilization of this particular feature. Unfortunately, an explanatory account for the emergence and diffusion of presentational *itself* has to remain incomplete, given the synchronic nature of our data. Even though there is evidence that presentational *itself* has been around since colonial times, we cannot make any claims on the basis of our data whether presentational *itself* spread from India as the regional epicentre to other South Asian Englishes, or whether the feature arose independently in the spoken language of the varieties under discussion and was then subjected to different degrees of endonormative stabilization. It would be highly desirable to have a diachronic counterpart to the SAVE corpus to shed further light on this question. In addition, not much is known about the Englishes of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Maldives. Further investigations into possible pan-South Asian English features would need to build on more information about the structural properties as well as the functional range of those varieties of English.

NOTES

i.   PG: postgraduate; RGUHS: Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences; Bangalore
ii. *there* seems to be a misspelling of 'their'.
iii. We will discuss the individual countries' linguistic ecologies that are represented in the SAVE corpus and the role of English in them in more detail below.
iv. H.: Hindi; B.: Bangla; G.: Gujarati, M.: Marathi.
v.   Banerji (2003) provides a detailed descriptive account of focus marking in Bangla.
vi. The individual word counts were retrieved with the help of statistics in WordSmith5. The respective corpus sizes were established via the number of tokens in the running text, which is statistical information available after the creation of a word list of the data scrutinized.
vii. We thank Sandra Weiser (Giessen) for cheerfully undertaking the task of extracting the relevant examples from SAVE.

viii. The two subgroups emerge if one considers normalised frequencies lower than 10.65, the mean value of the normalised frequencies of occurrence, to be indicative of a more peripheral role of presentational *itself* in the respective varieties and a higher normalised frequency as evidence for presentational *itself* being a more integral part of the varieties concerned.

ix.   The data points for noun phrase and adverbial focusing with *itself* in the Indian data contribute significantly to the χ^2value. This can be established by squaring the Pearson residuals and comparing the respective values against the corrected p-value for multiple post-hoc tests.

x.   The association plot displays black and white boxes representing table cells whose observed frequencies are greater and smaller than the expected ones respectively, which corresponds to positive and negative Pearson residuals. The areas of the boxes are proportional to the difference between observed and expected frequencies (cf. Gries 2009: 198).

xi. *D*. refers to "Dravidian linguistic area of South India", *Bo*. to "Bombay and Sind" (Kindersley 1938: 25)

xii. There are numerous other examples of *today itself* or *there itself* in Gandhi's *Collected Works*, but most of these occur in personal letters that are translated from Hindi or Gujarati. While such a translation is undoubtedly a strong indicator for the endonormative stabilization of presentational *itself*, it cannot be taken as a reliable indicator for the dating of the emergence of the feature.

xiii. Nevertheless, there are instances where South Asian nativization processes, i.e. structural developments deviating from British English, may result in South Asian structural phenomena similar to those in American English. Mukherjee and Hoffmann (2006) as well as Koch & Bernaisch (forthcoming) report on new ditransitives in South Asian English and show structural parallels between the usage of PROVIDE in South Asian and American English.

xiv. Claudia Lange would like to thank Kurt Braunmüller, Steffen Höder and Karoline Kühl as the organizers of the workshop on "Stability and divergence in language contact" in Hamburg, Germany on 3.-4.11.2011, and all participants of the workshop for bringing the work of Amund Larsen and his notion of *naboopposisjon* to her attention.

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