

The Prosody of Emphatic Reflexives in English

Byron Ahn

Abstract

English, as with many other languages, uses the same word/morpheme for a reflexive use and an emphatic use. This is demonstrated with a small, yet typologically diverse, sample of languages below, with the simple reflexive use given in (a) and the emphatic use given in the (b).¹

- (1) English
 - a. John hit himself.
 - b. John read the book himself.
- (2) Chinese
 - a. Lǎowáng bù xǐhuan zìjǐ
Laowang not like self
'Laowang does not like himself'
 - b. nǐ wèishénme bù zìjǐ xǐ ne?
you why not self wash PRT
'Why don't you do your washing yourself?'
- (3) Arabic
 - a. baʿti nafs-i furθ^ʕa li n-najaah
I.will.give self-POSS.1SG chance for 1PL-succeed
'I will give myself a chance to succeed.'
 - b. al-mudīr-u nafs-u-hu sa-ya-staqbilu-nā
the-director-NOM self-NOM-POSS.3SG will-3SG.M-welcome-us
'The director himself will welcome us.'
- (4) Turkish
 - a. Paul ve Maria kendi-ler-i-ne hayran
Paul and Mary self-3PL-POSS-DAT admire
'Paul and Mary admire themselves.'
 - b. müdür-ün kendi-si bizim-le konuşacak
Director-GEN self-POSS.3SG us-with will.talk
'The director himself will talk to us.'

When used emphatically as in (b) above, the reflexive is termed an Emphatic Reflexive. This paper will explore the prosodic realization of English Emphatic Reflexives.

1 Background

1.1 Emphatic Reflexives?

As briefly demonstrated in (1)-(4), Emphatic Reflexives (ERs) seem to be the same word as the simple reflexive pronoun. However, the properties of ERs are marked distinct from simple reflex-

¹These foreign language examples are based on data in (Gast *et al.*).

ives, and they can be categorized in terms that simple reflexives cannot be. Below I make a few general categorizations that will be theoretically important in this paper.

1.2 Syntactic Classification

First of all, the ERs are rather flexible in terms of their syntactic position. In (5), there is a small subset of the possible sentential positions in which an ER can show up.

(5) Sentential Position

- a. John himself was typing the paper last night.
- b. John was typing the paper himself last night.
- c. John was typing the paper last night himself.
- d. John was himself typing the paper last night.

I will call the ER in (5a) – in which the ER is adjacent to its antecedent – an Adjacent Emphatic (AE). Conversely, I will call the ER in (5b) – in which the ER is found immediately after the verb and its complement – a Post-VP Emphatic (PVE).² As for (5c) and (5d), these seem to be instances where the ER has been inserted in a more free way – perhaps similar to a parenthetical. More will be said about this later on.³

Furthermore, PVEs seem to be sensitive to the syntax in a way that other ERs are not. Specifically, PVEs look to be ungrammatical when following an argument promoting verb, such as an unaccusative, inchoative or passive.⁴ Below are some examples showing that PVEs appearing with these argument promoting verbs look ungrammatical.

(6) Transitive

- a. ✓The doctor himself made the discovery.
- b. ✓The doctor made the discovery himself.

(7) Underspecified for Object

- a. ✓She herself was drinking last night.
- b. ✓She was drinking herself last night.

(8) Inchoative

- a. ✓The radio itself broke.
- b. *The radio broke itself.

(9) Unaccusative

- a. ✓John himself arrived.
- b. *John arrived himself.

(10) Passive

- a. ✓The beef itself was burned.
- b. *The beef was burned itself.

²This name should not be interpreted as a commitment to a syntactic story where the ER's position is necessarily related to the VP.

³It is clear to me that (5c) and (5d) are a little more stilted than others. However, instances similar to them are still well attested in both spoken discourse and writing.

⁴These are verbs who take what seems to be the underlying object, and "promote" them to the subject position.

1.3 Semantic Classification

There are (at least) two distinct interpretations of ERs. The first is the so-called ‘additive’ interpretation of an ER (⁺ER), in which the ER is interpreted as identifying the antecedent – perhaps in addition to others related to him/her. The second is the so-called ‘exclusive’ interpretation of an ER (^xER), in which the ER is interpreted as saying the antecedent acted on his/her own.⁵

Examples of the possible interpretations of an AE and a PVE are given below in (11) and (12).

- (11) Ed read the book himself. (*PVE*)
a. ⇒ “Ed’s dad read the book, Ed’s mom read the book, and *Ed* read the book too.”
b. ⇒ “Ed didn’t need anyone’s help – he read the book on his own.”
- (12) Ed himself read the book. (*AE*)
a. ⇒ “Ed’s dad read the book, Ed’s mom read the book, and *Ed* read the book too.”
b. ⇏ “Ed didn’t need anyone’s help – he read the book on his own.”

It is important to notice that PVEs have both possible meanings, whereas AEs have only one (⁺ER). However, a PVE’s sensitivity to verb type is independent of interpretation.

Most importantly, however, is that both ⁺ER and ^xER are innately contrastive focusing. That is, an ⁺ER contrasts the antecedent with others related to the antecedent, and an ^xER contrasts the antecedent’s agentivity with other theta roles (co-agentivity, indirect agentivity, etc.).

1.4 Prosodic Classification?

As explained in section 1.1, Emphatic Reflexives in English are segmentally identical to simple reflexives. However, we might wonder if they differ in another phonetic way – perhaps prosodically. Furthermore, we might ask whether ERs are prosodically distinct with respect to syntactic, semantic, or other factors.

To answer these questions, this paper will explore the prosodic realization of ERs. I assume the framework of MAE-ToBI (as most recently formalized in Beckman *et al.* 2005), though exact conventions may not be followed if it seems appropriate. For example, I use the mismatch label ‘1m’ label to mean ‘word-level break, with a intermediate phrase (iP) tone’, as has been discussed in a recent ToBI workshop.⁶

Based on intuition and anecdotal evidence, I expect (a) that ERs must always be prominent, and (b) that there will be optional ip breaks surrounding the ER. Furthermore, given the contrastive focusing nature of the ER as we discussed in section 1.3 and a framework on intonation and meaning such as the one found in Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg (1990), I expect ERs consistently be associated with a L+H* accent.

2 Methods

2.1 Recording

To test our hypothesis on the pitch accent of the English ER, we have run a production experiment. There were three participants – BW, CC and KV. They are all female native speakers of English.

⁵For more discussion on this topic, see Tavano (2006).

⁶I interpret the ‘1m’ to mean that there was an iP level break intended, but not fully realized.

BW and CC are from the Los Angeles area, and KV is originally from Dallas, Texas.

Each recording session was conducted in the UCLA Phonetics Lab sound booth. Data was recorded digitally through head-mounted microphones to a computer and saved in WAV format. In each session, the participant read lines that were part of 48 short scripts that were approximately three or four lines a piece. Participants were asked to read the entire script first, as to fully understand the context, and then read the script twice, as naturally as possible. Participants were offered a short break halfway through the experiment.

The 48 scripts were composed of 24 fillers and 24 test conditions. The test conditions are summarized in Table 1. It should be mentioned that this set of conditions will force subjects to produce sentences which are predicted to be ungrammatical – namely the PVEs with an object promoting verb (cf. (8)-(10)).

	Adjacent (AE)	Post-VP (PVE)	Sentence Final
Transitive	x4	x4	x4
Object Promoting	x4	x4	x4

Table 1: Test Conditions

I will focus primarily on data regarding AEs and PVEs, as they are the most natural.⁷

The fillers and the test sentences were pseudorandomized such that the first and last two scripts were fillers. A sample script is given below in (13). For a complete list of scripts, please see the Appendix. Since each script required two speakers, I filled the role of the second speaker.

- (13) A: Did you hear about Perry?
 B: Yeah – about his bike, right?
 A: Well not only did his bike get hit by a car last week...
 B: Oh no, what happened now?
 A: He himself was hit just last night.
 B: Is he okay?
 A: Yeah, the car wasn't going very fast.

2.2 ToBI Transcription

The sentences containing the ER in each of the scripts were segmented and labelled in Praat. Labeling was done by two labelers who are native speakers of English, and who are familiar with MAE_ToBI.

2.3 Excluded Data

Fifteen cases (or about 11%) of the 137 recorded test sentences were discarded, where it was determined that the sentence is ungrammatical with an ER interpretation. This occurred when were either (a) the verb was possibly interpretable as a transitive verb, with the reflexive word as an argument, or (b) the speaker made performance errors such as misreading the script in such a way as to affect the status of the ER.

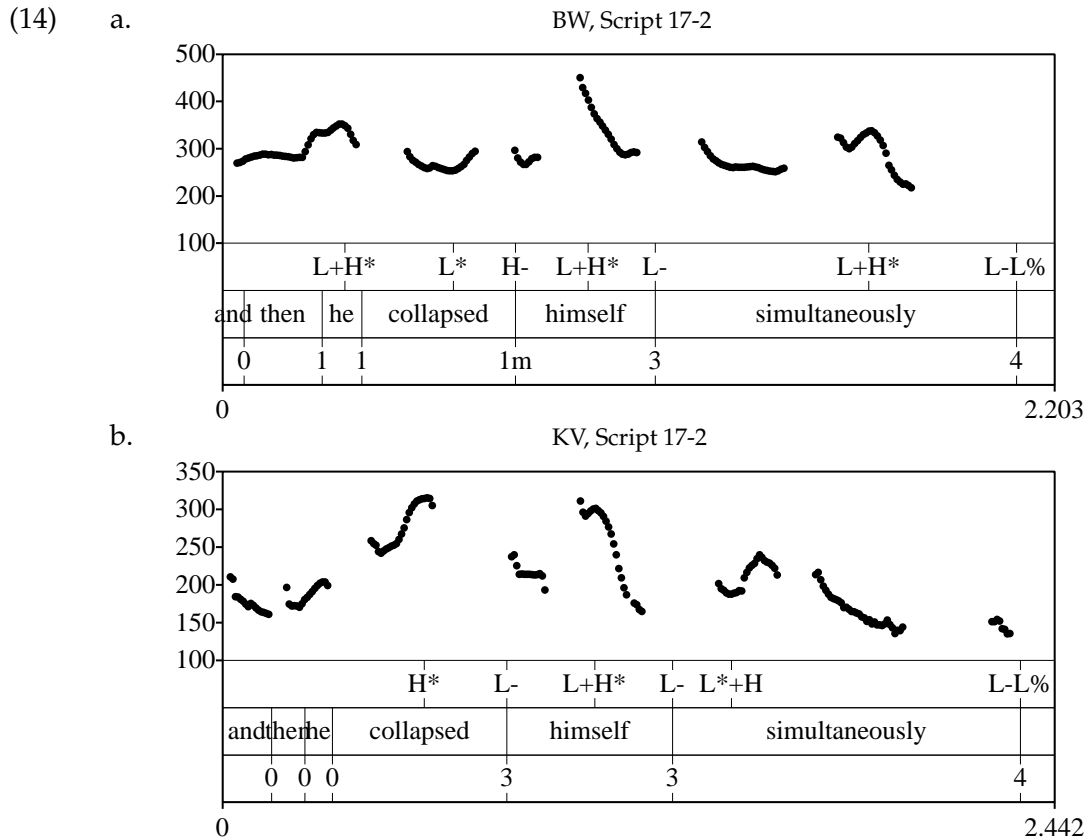
⁷Future work should be more in-depth in this regard.

3 Results

3.1 Generalizations

Most instances of ERs (103/122, or ~85%) have a L+H* pitch accent.⁸ The remaining approximate 15% of ERs, which were not marked with L+H*, will be discussed later on.

The accent on the antecedent varied much more – the most common being H* (~38%), no pitch accent (~25%), and L+H* (~18%). This suggests that there is no pitch accent requirement regarding the antecedent, and having one is more or less optional. An example of this seeming optionality is given in (14), below.

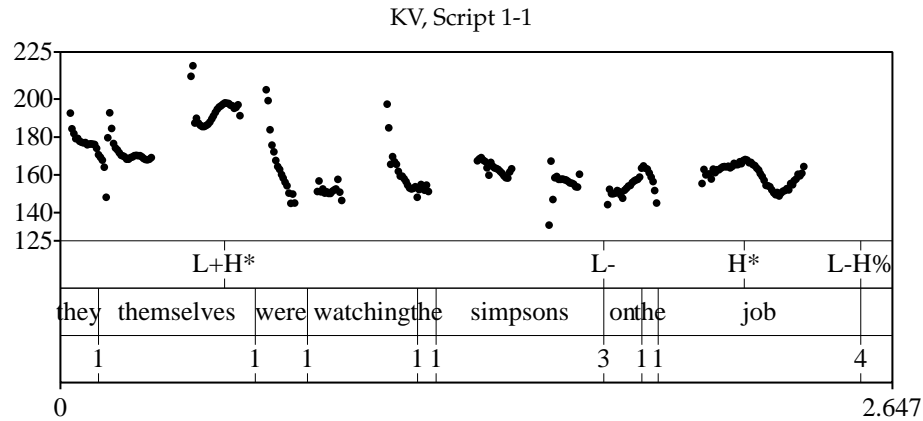


All of the L+H* marked ERs were also nuclear pitch accents (NPA) – the most prominent pitch accent in its intermediate phrase (which, in English, is the iP-final pitch accent). As a result, post-ER material in the same iP was deaccented, as we can see in (15).⁹

⁸When I refer to ERs having a L+H* pitch accent, I mean to say L+H* as well as L+¹H*. I assume that, underlyingly, the two are the same pitch accent.

⁹It might be that this is not deaccenting, but some other kind of pitch range reduction, as it seems there may be very weakly realized accent in the post-ER domain in certain cases.

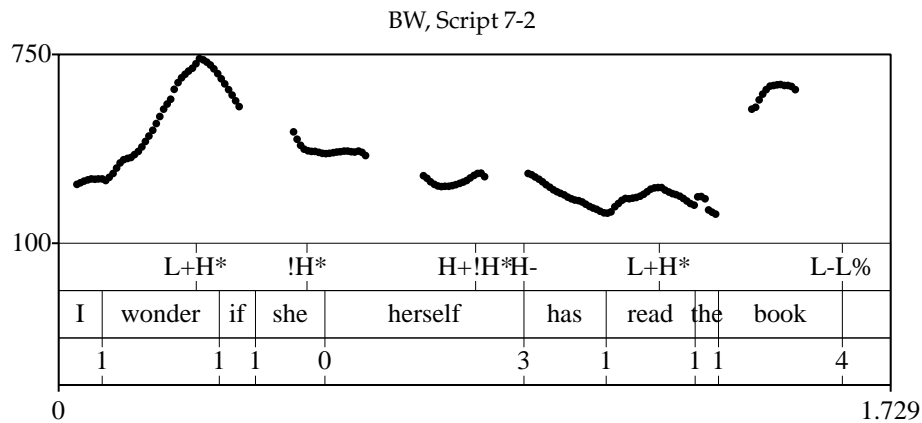
(15)



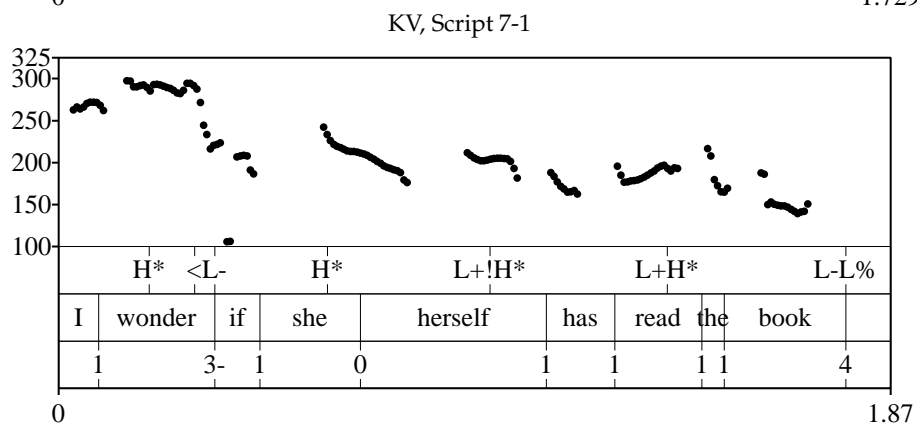
3.2 AEs

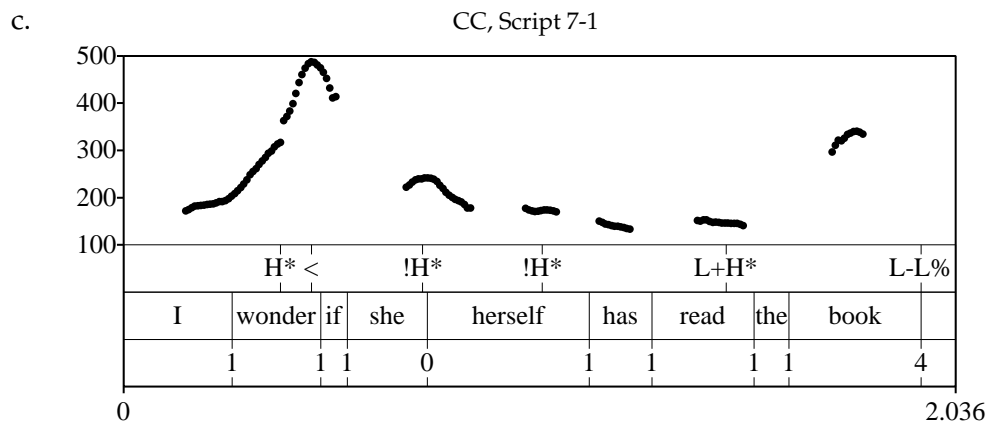
First, the AE can be marked L+H*, just as the rest of the ERs; but unlike other ERs, AEs can be marked with ^lH* or H+^lH*. Each of these can be seen in (16), which are all from the same script.

(16) a.



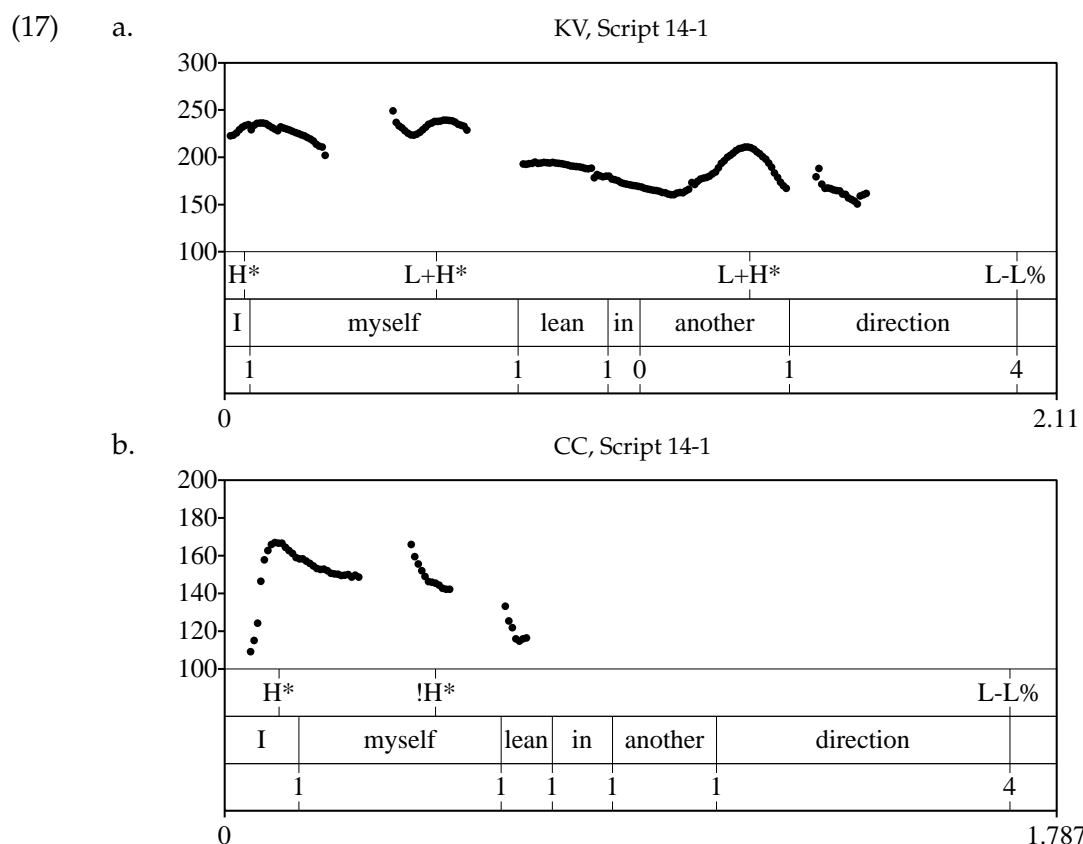
b.





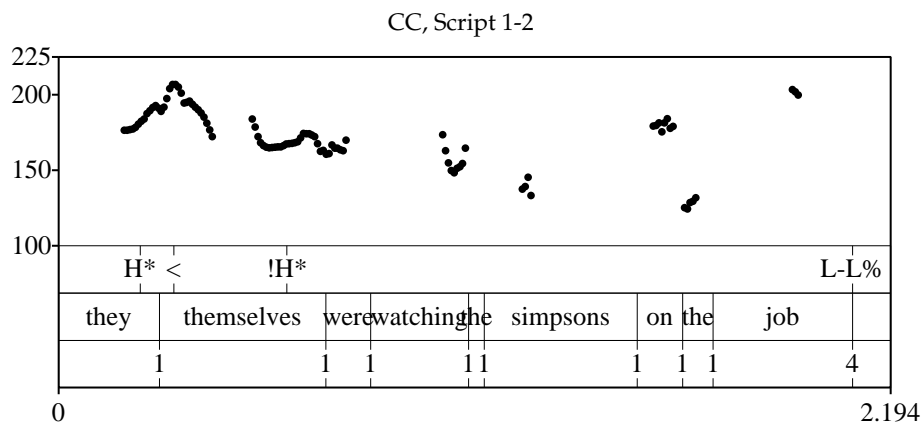
In fact, every ER that was not marked L+H* was an AE that was marked (H+)¹H*. The fact that the examples in (16) are all from the same script – while also varying with regard to L+H* or (H+)¹H* – suggests that AEs are not inherently different, but have multiple surface variants for a common underlying form.

Moreover, there does not seem to be any requirement that AEs be the NPA (unlike the L+H* ERs). An example of this lack of requirement is given in (17).

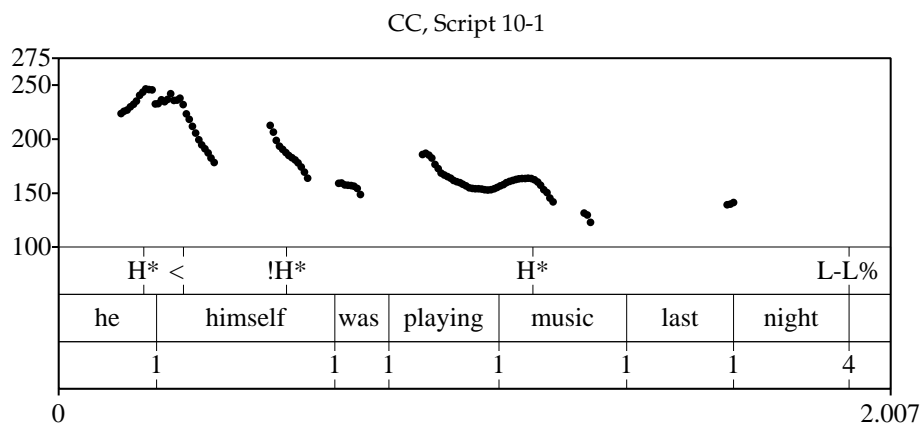


Next, on the AE's antecedent, the tone (if there is one) is sometimes delayed into the ER, as in (18a) and (18b). This pattern seems to show up most often when the subject is a shorter word such as a pronoun or one-syllable name.

(18) a.

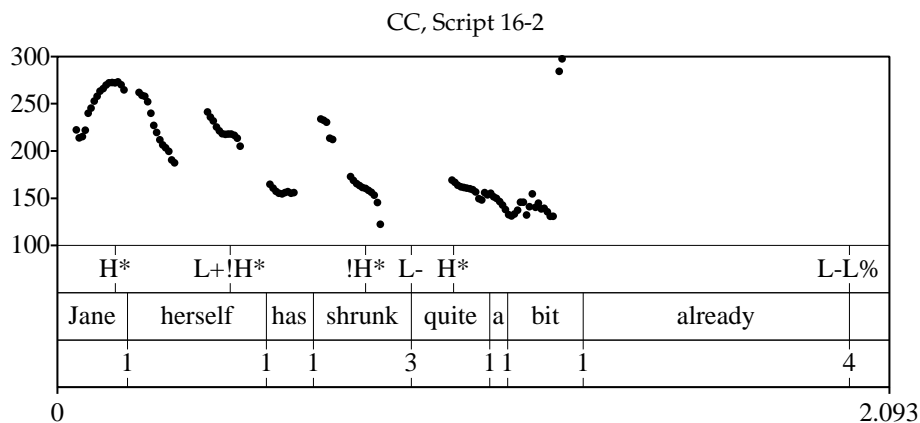


b.



Finally, as in (16b), (17a) and (19), the L dip on the ER can be often rather shallow (if not nonexistent).

(19)

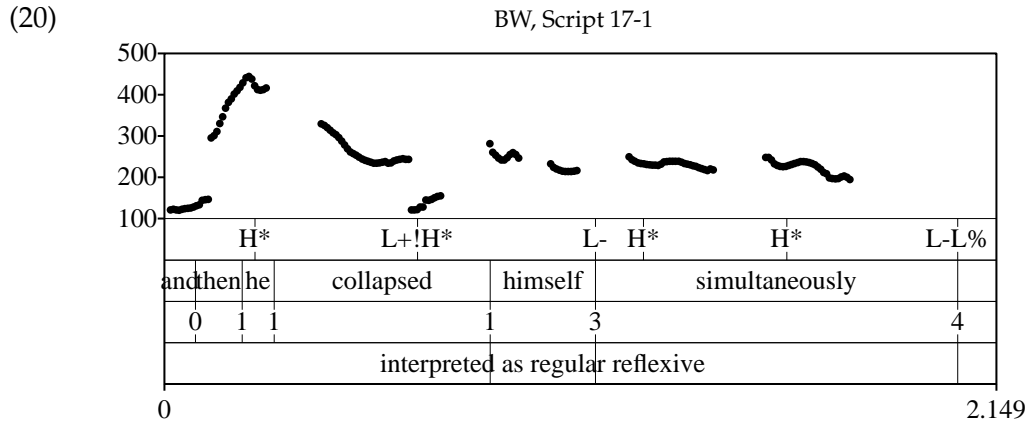


3.3 Necessary iP Breaks

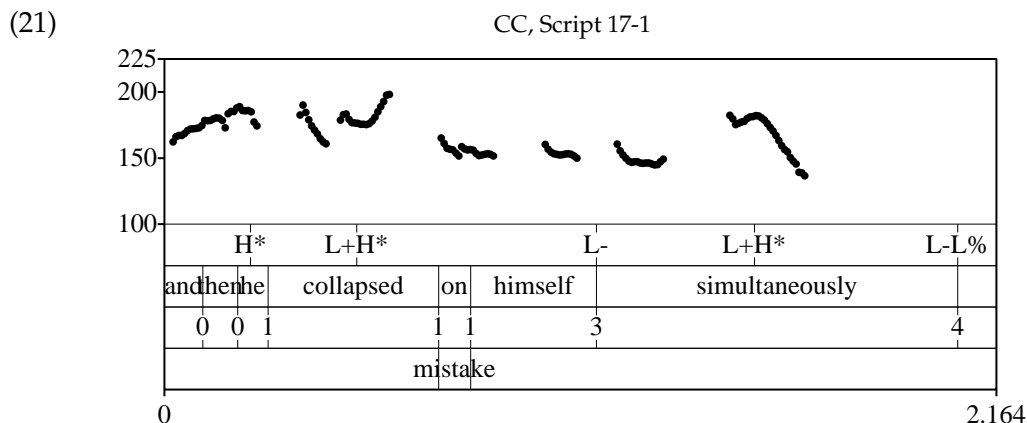
Thus far, nothing has been said about prosodic requirement on the kind of breaks that surround the ER. As mentioned earlier in section 2.1, subjects were asked to produce what is expected to be ungrammatical sentences in some of the scripts; namely those where there is a PVE with an object promoting verb. Often times, when given one of these sentences, the participant had difficulty pronouncing the sentence fluently, reading the script as it was written or interpreting the sentence correctly. Take, for example, the relevant section of script 17, below.

A: Well, I pushed over my voodoo doll of John...
 B: Uh huh...
 A: And then he collapsed himself simultaneously.

When it comes to reading the test sentence, “And then he collapsed himself simultaneously”, BW seemed to interpret the verb as a causative, as in “He collapsed the folding chairs.”



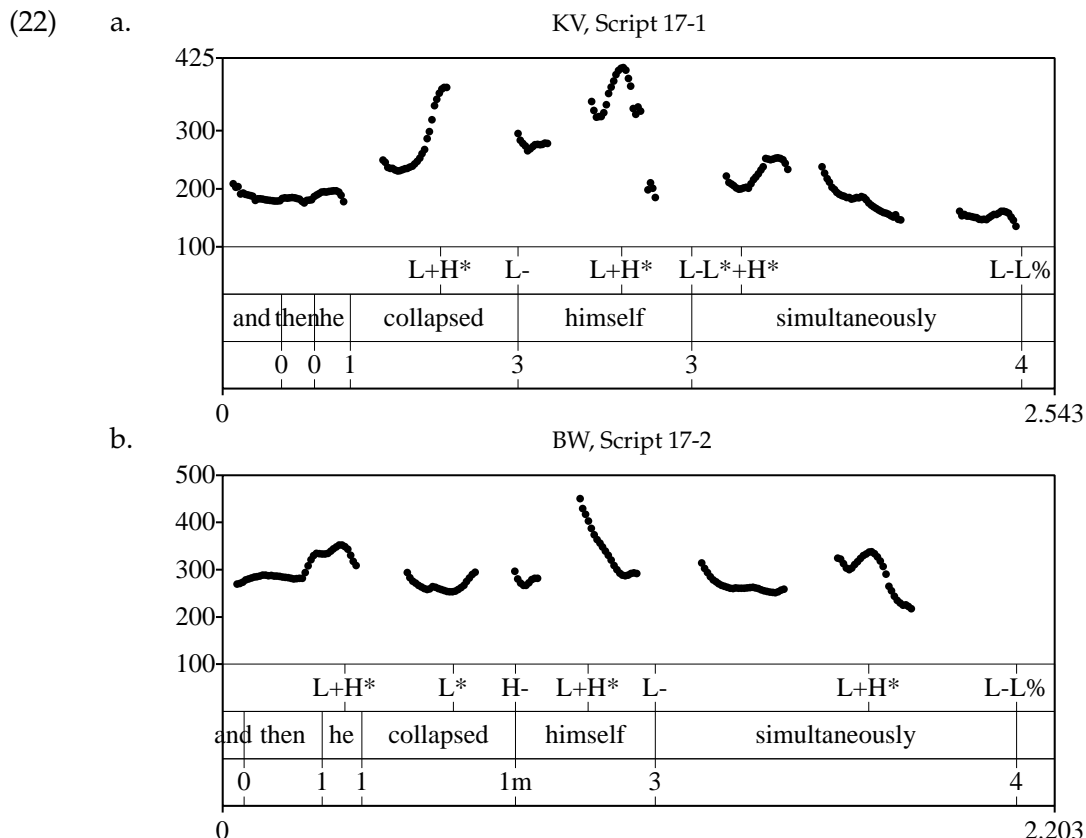
In this way, BW used “himself” non-emphatically, which is why there is no pitch accent on it. CC, on the other hand, inserted a preposition to make the sentence more straightforwardly grammatical.



In both examples above, the speaker is trying to interpret “himself” non-emphatically, and therefore there is no accent on it.¹⁰ However, some productions of the sentence were made in such a way that it sounded grammatical.¹¹

¹⁰It may seem circular, but the reason that these are interpreted as non-emphatic is that they have no accent; and they have no accent, because they are non-emphatic uses of the reflexive that are not focused in any way.

¹¹(22a) sounds somewhat more natural than (22b). Perhaps this is because the iP break target before the ER in (22b) is not fully realized, which degrades the naturalness.



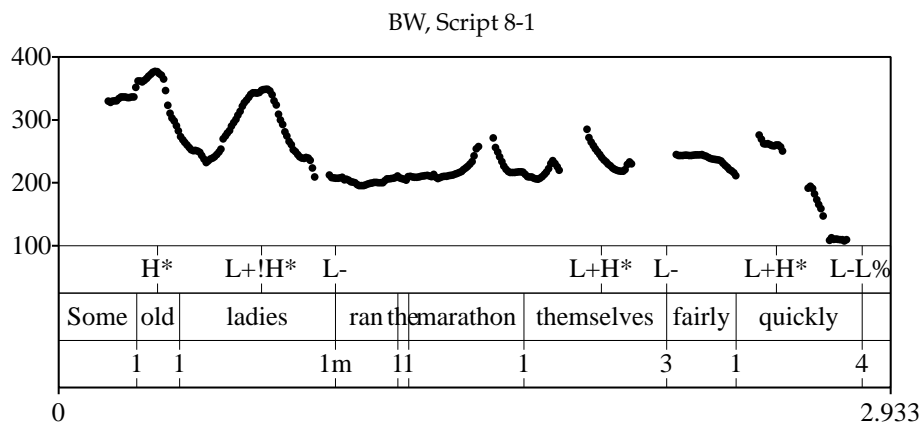
By inserting intermediate phrase breaks, the sentence sounds grammatical, and the ER is easily interpretable as emphatic.

3.4 QUIDs

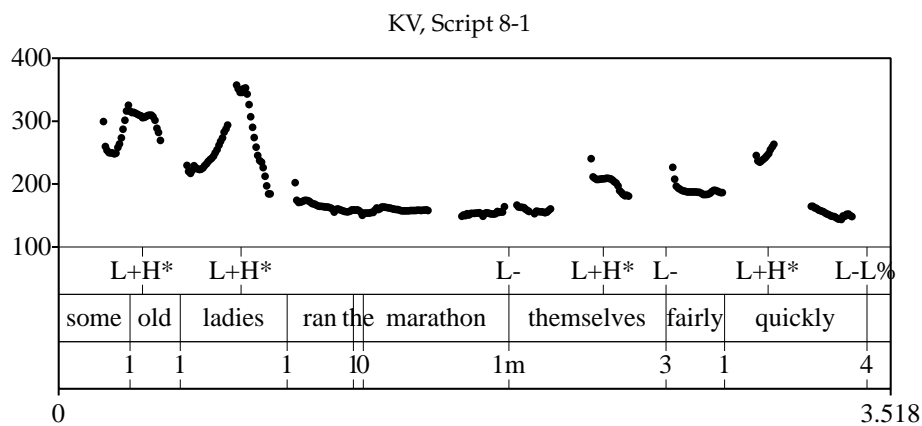
We sometimes find examples where there are unexpected low targets surfacing, as in (23), (24) and (25). This drop in pitch cannot be predicted in MAE.ToBI without the use of a boundary tone. For that reason, I use the term QUIDs (Quick Unexpected Intonational Drops) to refer to this phenomenon. QUIDs and their relation to MAE.ToBI will be discussed further in section 4.3. For conventions' sake, I have labelled these QUID examples with a '1m' bearing a L- tone, though I don't necessarily believe there was ever any iP break intended, given consistency across speakers, as in (23).¹²

¹²I mean this 1m to not be an underlying iP break, as opposed to (22b).

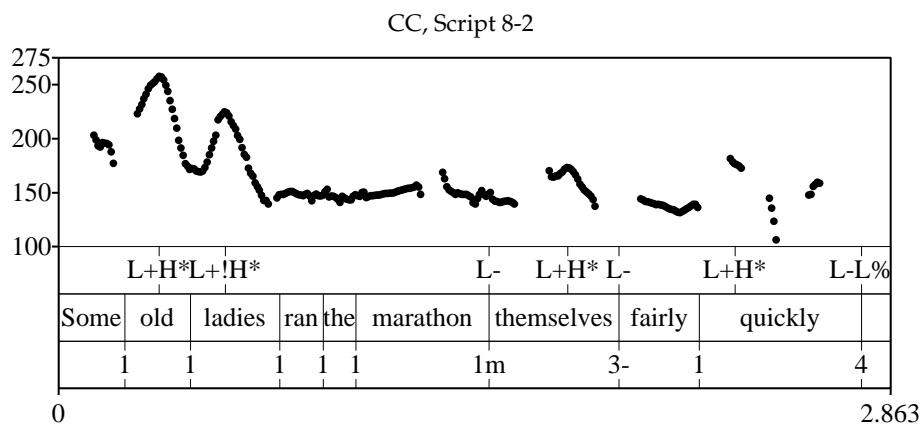
(23) a.



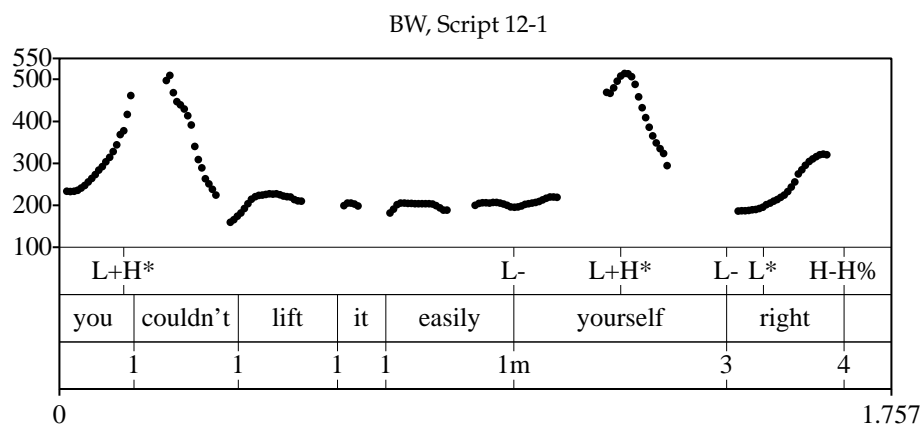
b.

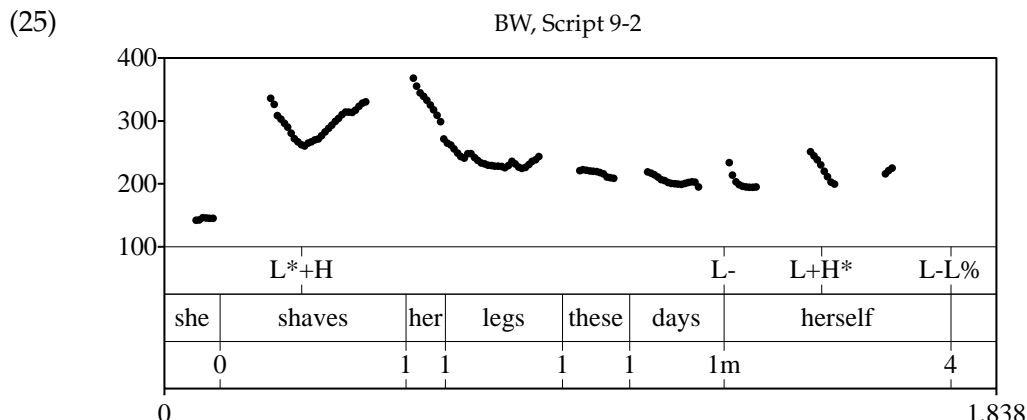


c.



(24)





4 Discussion

4.1 Pitch Accent

4.1.1 General

Our results generally confirm our hypothesis that ERs should always be accompanied by a L+H* pitch accent, which distinguishes ERs from simple reflexive pronouns. Furthermore, it seems that this pitch accent is largely consistent across semantic and syntactic classifications – even though AEs can be (H+)¹H*, they can also be marked L+H*. This consistency is likely due to the ER’s inherent contrastive interpretation.

4.1.2 (H+)¹H*

When it comes to the variations on the ER’s accent – namely in the AEs, where we find a surprising amount of variation (see section 3.2) – perhaps we can say this is because an AE cannot be interpreted any other way (e.g. not as a plain reflexive). In this way, we say that the work the L+H* pitch accent would normally do is being performed by the syntactic configuration.¹³

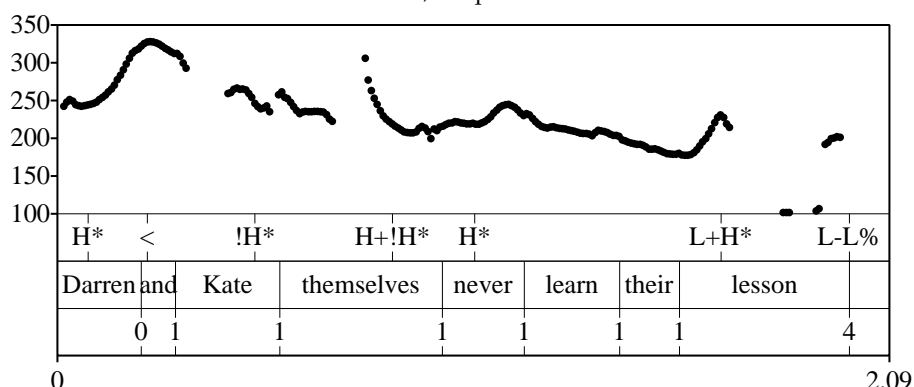
Furthermore, I believe there might be a phonological story behind these variations. AEs are often used with pronouns, which are monosyllabic words. We could imagine that if the pronoun were marked with some kind of high tone – antecedents in this study were found to be so ~60% of the time – and the ER is L+H* marked, there may not be enough time to fully realize both of these targets. Since the L of the L+H* is not attached to a stressed, syllable, it seems that this might be the first to be weakened – as we saw in the undershot L*s of (16b) and (17a).

From this weakened L, it is not hard to imagine that instead of being realized on its own, the L downsteps the H* – as is common in African tone languages for non-fully-realized Ls adjacent to Hs. This now yields a [H¹H*] sequence, with the H on the pronoun, as in (16c) and (17b). Since pronouns are often prosodically weak words, it might make sense that instead of a tone target on the pronoun, this sequence became one tone marking the ER, H+¹H*. I believe that this process has since become grammaticized such that you find H+¹H* with a prosodically stronger antecedent – for example (26).

¹³This is quite similar to the way in which morphologic cues can sometimes mark focus in place of prosodic ones. Furthermore, this seems like a nice idea in that it would also account for the fact that an emphatically used “himself” after “by” does not need to have a L+H* accent. E.g. ✓“He did it HIMSELF” and ✓“He did it BY himself”.

(26)

BW, Script 4-2



Given such a phonological story, I think it is important to mention that such a process might not be able to occur if not for the AE's unambiguous status as an ER, given the syntactic configuration.

4.2 Phrasing

Besides the results we have found with regard to pitch accent, there have also been some positive results on the ER and phrasing. First, non-AE ERs must be the nuclear pitch accent of the phrase.¹⁴

Second, and more interestingly, if the ER is in a non-grammatically licensed location in the sentence,¹⁵ such as the PVE position with an object promoting verb, one must insert iP boundaries on either side of the ER in order to rescue the grammaticality.

This proposal makes a prediction – wherever you use an iP boundary in producing an ER, that ER has a different status in the syntactic derivation than an ER without iP boundaries on either side. If this were not the case, PVEs after an object-promoting verb would *always* be ungrammatical, counter to fact. Furthermore, logically, you should be able to insert an ER with iP boundaries in any location.¹⁶

4.3 Correlate - QUID

As mentioned in section 3.4, the MAE_ToBI model cannot predict the existence of QUIDs. First, because they are seen without any boundary to which an L- tone could attach. I have brute-forced this into my ToBI transcription by way of using a mismatch boundary (1m). However, this is undesirable because, if this is a mismatch, why is it more or less consistent? In fact, for all of the people I have recorded saying “Some old ladies ran the marathon themselves fairly quickly”, every single one of them has a QUID on/after “ladies” – do we really want to say that everyone is just making mistakes? For that reason, I propose a new notation: superscript L on the tone that falls immediately after its realization, as in L+H*^L.¹⁷

¹⁴Why are AEs exempt from this generalization? Is it perhaps again due to their unambiguous status as ERs?

¹⁵This phrasing is purposefully vague – what is a grammatically licensed location? I expect that only PVEs (when not used with an object-promoting verb) and AEs can achieve such a status. That is to say, non-grammatically licensed locations include PVEs after an object-promoting verb, and the “freely” placed ERs. I have yet to identify the mechanism that allows for the relative freedom in placement of ERs. However, it does seem similar to parentheticals, on some level.

¹⁶Perhaps as long as a phonological break is licit at that location in the first place. This should be tested and compared to other things that look like they have been inserted (e.g., “I think” and “you know”).

¹⁷I do not propose adding X*+L, as we find QUIDs after L+H*, meaning we would have to posit L+H*+L – a tritone, which does not seem to have any cross-linguistic support. (Jun, P.C.)

Furthermore, the distribution of QUIDs is wider than just the examples in this paper. For more examples, we shall briefly look at aspects of Jun (2001), Ladd (1996) and Shilman (2006). Jun's work explores examples similar to (27).

- (27) a. John didn't hit Mary because she was yelling.
 $L+H^*L$ $L+H^*$ $L-H\%$
 \Rightarrow 'John hit Mary, but not because she was yelling.'
 b. John didn't hit Mary because she was yelling.
 H^* $!H^*$ $!H^*$ $(L-)$ H^* $!H^*$ $L-L\%$
 \Rightarrow 'John didn't hit Mary and that is because she was yelling.'

She shows that if there is a QUID on/after "John" and there is no iP boundary, the natural interpretation is that of (27a). However, without a QUID and with an iP boundary, the interpretation is that of (27b).

On page 96 of his book, Ladd briefly discusses the problem with "1m", and cites the following example.

- (28) Edinburgh is the capitol of Scotland.
 H^*L $L+H^*$ $L-L\%$

In (28), it is clear that there are no iP boundaries anywhere, yet the early drop is very natural (if not compulsory).

Finally, Shilman's work shows that, in Motherese, there is often a quick drop, fast than there should be with interpolation. An example of this is given below.

- (29) If you become a tree, said the bunny..
 $L+H^*L$ $L+H^*$ $(L-)$ $?*$ $L-$

It seems to me that the unification between all of these is a pitch accent later on in the same iP, when there "shouldnt be one." By that I mean, in the region where there should be deaccenting due to presence of focus, there is something else that should be prominent. That said, it is not clear exactly what the licensing conditions for a QUID are.¹⁸

4.4 Interpretation-Prosody Link

It should be apparent that the correct interpretation of ERs as emphatic seems to rely heavily on intonation and phrasing. This should suggest that prosody's role in interpretation is rather large; it should not be considered a simple reflex that plays no more than a supplementary function.

5 Future Work

Further research is unquestionably needed. Specifically, more than three subjects need to be put through the production task. Furthermore, a perception task explicitly testing the power of intonation and phrasing on interpretation would reinforce our conclusion that the interpretation requires certain things of the prosody, when it comes to ERs.

¹⁸Perhaps this might be a phonological effect on phonetic realization of the sort proposed in Ahn (2008).

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Appendix - Test Condition Scripts

- (1) A: I like watching the Simpsons.
B: Me too. I think it's a funny show.
A: But the babysitters don't like it.
B: Yeah, I know. They told the kids not to watch it.
→ A: Yeah, but guess what. They themselves were watching the Simpsons on the job.
B: Really?
A: Yeah, they shouldn't do that...
- (2) B: Guess who I saw today?
A: Who?
B: Ryan.
A: Oh yeah? Oh, you know how he runs an anti-steroid coalition?
B: Right.
A: Guess what I just heard.
B: What?
→ A: Ryan has used in the past himself.
B: But that just means he's matured and realized his mistakes.
A: That's probably true, I guess I didn't think of it like that.
- (3) B: What are you reading?
A: An article about racism in California today.
B: Yeah? What about racism?
A: "Who thinks Californians are racist?"
B: What did they find out?
→ A: Californians think so themselves apparently.
B: That's really surprising.
A: I thought so too.
- (4) A: Doesn't everyone think that you learn best from your mistakes?
B: Probably. Why do you ask?
→ A: Well, Darren and Kate themselves never learn their lesson, even though they always try to tell their kids that.
B: I think it's easy to say you need to learn from your mistakes...
A: ...but it's not easy to do it, huh.
B: Exactly.
- (5) A: I have the schedule of birthdays for our club.
B: What's on it, besides just dates?
A: It has who is baking for each event.
B: All of us aren't taking turns, are we?
→ A: Yes we are. You will bake one yourself for Amy's birthday.
B: Really? Even I'm baking? But I can't bake very well.
A: I know, but no one else can do it that week...

- (6) B: I don't really like our teachers this year.
 A: Oh, you know how they always criticize people who drink?
 B: Mhm.
 A: Well guess what I saw them doing last night.
 B: What?
 → A: They were drinking at a bar themselves.
 B: What hypocrits.
 A: I know.
- (7) A: That celebrity I don't like wrote a book.
 B: Is it selling well?
 A: I dunno. I doubt she even read it.
 B: What do you mean?
 → A: I wonder if she herself has read the book, despite supposedly having written it.
 B: Oh, like she had a ghostwriter.
 A: Uh huh...
- (8) B: I can't imagine running a marathon.
 A: What do you mean? Anyone can run a marathon.
 B: I don't know about that...
 → A: Some old ladies ran the marathon themselves fairly quickly. I read it in the paper.
 B: Wow. So even they could do it, huh.
 A: Yeah. So you could too, I would think.
 B: I guess so.
- (9) B: Do all women shave their own legs?
 A: No, some go to salons to get them done.
 B: Does your wife go to a salon for it?
 → A: She shaves her legs these days herself. She won't go to a salon for it any more.
 B: Do you know if it's hard to do?
 A: No, but you do have to be careful not to cut yourself.
- (10) A: So have you met my upstairs neighbor?
 B: No, I don't think I've met him – but I have heard him.
 A: Oh right, isn't he so noisy?
 B: Definitely.
 A: Well, I woke up at 2 AM thinking he was playing a CD loudly, as usual...
 B: Right...
 → A: But it turns out that he himself was playing music last night.
 B: At 2 AM?
 A: Yes!
 B: Well, I hope he was good.
 A: Not really...

- (11) B: I'd really like it if my mom would do my laundry still.
 A: Well, now you're living on your own, and we're adults now.
 B: I know.
 → A: You have to do that yourself after you leave home. You can't rely on others for these kinds of things any more.
 B: But I'm so lazy.
 A: I know, I'm so lazy too.
- (12) A: Sometimes I think of conundrums that have no answer.
 B: Oh yeah? Like what?
 A: Like... if you were all powerful, you would be able to create a stone so heavy that no one can lift it right?
 B: I guess so.
 → A: But then you could make stone so heavy that you couldn't lift it easily yourself. Right?
 B: You're weird.
 A: Yeah, that's true.
- (13) A: Ugh, I hate radios.
 B: What happened?
 A: Well you know how the antenna has been on the fritz?
 B: Uh huh...
 → A: Well, the radio broke itself last night, and I don't know what to do now.
 B: Are you going to buy a new one?
 A: I guess I have to...
- (14) A: I hear that Europeans, in general, don't trust their governments very much.
 B: Well, they've had lots of deceitful governments in their past.
 → A: Right, but, as an American, I myself lean in another direction.
 B: In what way?
 A: I think that, for the most part, governments exist to help their citizens.
 B: Well, you don't want to be too naive.
- (15) A: Did you hear that it was 20 degrees last night?
 B: That's really cold for L.A.
 A: I know.
 B: Did the citrus fruit all freeze like it did last year?
 → A: The citrus trees froze last night themselves - it wasn't just the fruit.
 B: Does that mean they'll have to plant whole new trees?
 A: I'm not sure, but I'd think so.
 B: That's awful.
- (16) A: Have you seen Jane in the past few years?
 B: No, why?
 A: Well, you know how her mother didn't lose much height in her old age?
 B: Mhm.
 → A: Jane herself has shrunk quite a bit already.
 B: How much shorter has she gotten?
 A: A few inches so far.

- (17) A: Did you know I do voodoo?
 B: Really? Does it actually work?
 A: Yeah, it worked just last night.
 B: What happened?
 A: Well, I pushed over my voodoo doll of John...
 B: Uh huh...
 → A: And then he collapsed himself simultaneously.
 B: Really?
 A: Yeah, you can ask John.
- (18) A: I feel like I'm losing everything.
 B: Literally?
 A: Yeah, so, first I lost my bike lock yesterday.
 B: Right, I remember.
 → A: Now, the lock's keys have disappeared completely themselves.
 B: I bet they're both in the same place.
 A: If only I knew where that place was.
- (19) B: The chancellor never comes to these kinds of events.
 A: Right, he usually just sends someone from his office.
 B: That's lame.
 → A: Oh, but I heard he was seen at the last one himself.
 B: I wonder why he went to that one.
 A: Ya, I don't know. Maybe someone special was there.
 B: Maybe.
- (20) B: I hear that our senator's advisors are upset with what he's doing.
 A: What's going on now?
 B: I dunno, I only read that in a headline; but he should listen to his advisors, right?
 → A: Well the senator himself was elected to the senate; his advisors weren't.
 B: But it seems silly to have advisors if you don't listen to them.
 A: I think everyone needs to think for themselves sometimes.
- (21) B: Are you part of the game of Assassins?
 A: Yeah, I've gotten 5 people so far.
 B: Has anyone shot anyone from John's team yet?
 → A: Uh-huh, in fact, John was shot himself recently.
 B: Oh, too bad for him.
 A: Well, that's how the game goes.
- (22) B: Did you hear about the scandal at the business school?
 A: Yeah, the president was embezzling.
 B: Isn't that pathetic?
 → A: Mhm. If you are fined for unethical behavior yourself, I wonder if you can teach ethics.
 B: You'd have to if it's your job.
 A: Yeah, I guess so.

- (23) A: Did you hear about Perry?
B: Yeah – about his bike, right?
A: Well not only did his bike get hit by a car last week...
B: Oh no, what happened now?
→ A: He himself was hit just last night.
B: Is he okay?
A: Yeah, the car wasn't going very fast.
- (24) A: I feel really bad for Tracy.
B: Why, what happened?
A: You know how her publisher was sued last week?
B: Uh-huh...
→ A: Well, she is being sued herself now.
B: Wow, what for?
A: I'm not sure, something about copyright infringement.