

## Expressing the selves: subject splits and viewpoint hierarchies in multiple-perspective constructions

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## Expressing the selves

### *Subject splits and viewpoint hierarchies in multiple-perspective constructions*

SONJA ZEMAN

Every time we try to see ourselves as others see us, we are conceptualizing ourselves as split in two...

(Lakoff 1996: 102)

#### 8.1 The self as a blank space

There is a famous drawing by Ernst Mach in his ‘Antimetaphysische Vorbemerkungen’ (Mach 1900) which conceptualizes the self-image of the ‘I’. What is striking about this picture is that, though being titled as a picture of the ‘I’ (‘die Selbstschauung des “Ich”’, Mach 1900: n. 10), it actually does not show it. We do see what the self sees: the surroundings of the room, the walls, and a window frame, delimited by the boundaries of his visual field: the moustache, the bow of eye brows, and the nasal wing. What remains unseen are the subject’s eyes and face as the origin of the perspectival view at the room. This observation holds not only for the ‘I’ in Mach’s picture but also for the self in a more general sense, which remains a blank space within our daily experience, cf. Sass (2014):<sup>1</sup>

This ‘central nucleus of the Self’ (William James, 1981), grounded in the lived body (Merleau-Ponty, 2012) and implicit temporality (Fuchs, 2013), is experienced not as an entity in one’s field of awareness, but as the unseen point of origin for experience, thought, and action, as a medium of awareness, source of activity, or general directedness towards the world (Sass, 1998). It grounds the first-person givenness or for-me-ness of subjective life. (Sass 2014: 6)

<sup>1</sup> See similarly also Zahavi (2014: 21) with reference to Searle (2005) and Bermúdez (1998: 104) discussing Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein.

As pointed out in Bühler's *Sprachtheorie* (2011 [1934]), this 'givenness... of subjective life' is also one of the most basic presuppositions of conceptualization in language. According to Bühler, every linguistic utterance is linked to a deictic origo as the zero point of a coordinate system constituted by a spatial, temporal, and personal axis, i.e. to the three deictic parameters 'here, now, and I' (p. 117). As basic presuppositions these coordinates do not have to be marked explicitly in the linguistic structure (cf. Leiss 1992), as seen in cases like (1), left on a note at an office door.

(1) Be right back.

In (1), there is neither a personal pronoun indicating the 'I' behind the utterance nor a tense marker locating the event in time. The subject's origo remains unseen in the linguistic structure, as it is unseen in Mach's drawing. In both cases, the conceptualization of oneself is nothing other than an unquestioned premise.

On the other hand, it is well known that beyond this blank space, different dimensions of self-reference have to be distinguished (cf. e.g. Recanatì 2007; Kockelman 2013: 171; Hinzen and Sheehan 2013: 43; Jaszczolt 2013a, 2016: ch. 5). Yet less is known about how these different dimensions interact and how the impression of a holistic self emerges on the discourse level, since they are neutralized behind the first-person pronoun and hence hardly visible in the linguistic structure.

In order to examine more closely the linguistic selves and their mutual dependencies, this chapter aims to look beyond the first-person perspective, and is based on the following main idea. If the self is a blank space and the first-person perspective is just a label that covers different dimensions of the (linguistic) self, it seems reasonable to look for linguistic instances where the holistic unity of the first-person pronoun is split up in more than one dimension of the self. As will be shown, the epistemic use of modal verbs, Free Indirect Discourse (FID), and 'Future of Fate' (FoF) constructions are such instances, since they integrate more than one perspective on the self. The analysis of these 'multiple-perspective constructions' (MPCs) will offer insights with respect to (i) the mechanism of how the unity of the first person is split up in more than one dimension, (ii) the interaction between the hierarchical relations of the different dimensions of the self, and (iii) the question of how the impression of a holistic self emerges on the discourse level.

In order to address these questions, the chapter is organized as follows. In section 8.2, a synoptic overview of accounts of the self in natural language will show that the first-person perspective is a notion that comprises different dimensions of the self. Section 8.3 addresses the question of how these different dimensions emerge in the epistemic usage of modal verbs as covert realizations of the first-person perspective. This will lead to a dissection of the different instantiations of the speaker's selves that arise via 'subject splits' and whose integration requires monitoring from a global level. A similar mechanism of the emergence of the selves can also be observed on the macro-level, as shown in section 8.4 with respect to FID and FoF constructions. As a result, it is argued that the linguistic structure of self-reference does not reflect the self as a unique subject of consciousness, but rather as a set of different parameters of different 'selves' whose holistic impression is based on the integration of the hierarchical relations between (i) an 'internal' and 'external' self with respect to the mental content and (ii) 'outside' and 'inside' perspectives with

respect to the communicative roles. This is supported by a look at infelicitous cases of grammar that violate the dependency relations between the different dimensions of the self. In the final section (§8.5), the conclusions are set in parallel to neuro-philosophical approaches to self-consciousness that give up the notion of an a priori psychological self and regard subjectivity instead as resulting from information processing and representational activities (Metzinger 2006, 2009; Singer 2006).

## 8.2 First-person perspective(s) and the self

Linguistic studies of the conceptualization of the self reflected in natural language are commonly based on the premise that the self is ‘identical to living human beings and that “I”, either in speech or in thought, is a genuinely referential expression’ (Coliva 2012: 22). As a result, the self has often been identified as what is referred to by ‘I’, and the first-person perspective has become a main object of investigation. Yet, the reference between ‘I’ and the self is not a unidirectional relation (see e.g. Recanati 2007; Kockelman 2013: 171; Hinzen and Sheehan 2013: 43; Jaszczolt 2013a, 2016: ch. 5; Christofaki, this volume; Huang 2016). On the one hand, there are different dimensions of self-reference that can be addressed. Jaszczolt (2013a: 66, n. 19) distinguishes here (i) self-ascription of properties as a linguistic semantic notion, (ii) self-reference as a pragmatic notion, (iii) self-attribution of mental states, (iv) self-knowledge as an epistemic notion, and (v) self-awareness as a cognitive notion. Second, non-indexicals can display properties of first-person pronouns, as for example in child-directed speech (Jaszczolt 2013a: 65), and the first-person pronoun can behave as a ‘fake indexical’ in admitting non-indexical uses (Kratzer 2009).

Furthermore, a distinction is often drawn between two uses of ‘I’: the use as object and the use as subject. This differentiation can be traced back to Wittgenstein, and accounts for the fact that it is possible to be wrong about the ‘objective’ but not about the ‘subjective’ use of ‘I’ (Wittgenstein 1964 [1933–5]: 66f.). In modern terminology, this is known as ‘immunity to error through misidentification’ (IEM) (Shoemaker 1968; Recanati 2012d; see also Jaszczolt and Witek, this volume); it is exemplified in (2), where (2a) displays IEM in contrast to (2b) that does not.

- (2) a. I am in pain. (‘use as subject’, ‘internal’)  
 b. I suffer from cornea dystrophy. (‘use as object’, ‘external’)

Both (2a) and (2b) are self-attributions. Yet only (2a) would be subject to IEM, since, under normal circumstances, I cannot be mistaken with respect to me experiencing pain, while I can be wrong about the medical diagnosis about myself. The distinction is closely related to the difference between an ‘internal’ and an ‘external’ view of oneself. Mental, kinesthetic, and somatic proprioceptive experiences like in (2a) are seen as displaying IEM since they can be accessed directly via introspection, whereas attributions like (2b) are only possible if the ‘I’ is seen from an external perspective. The latter use has often been illustrated by examples where the self is seen from outside like in a mirror, a photograph, or a film scene; in these cases, one can be mistaken about both identifying himself (misidentification) as well as self-ascriptions (mispredication; cf. Seeger 2015).

With respect to the concept of the self, two distinct features are thus seen as crucial: (i) whether the access to oneself is direct via proprioception and introspection or based

on indirect observation (access), and (ii) whether the *de re* content is identified as the self or not (identification). Both properties are at the basis of the classification by Recanati (2007), who differentiates between ‘a *de re* belief about an individual *x* who happens to be oneself’ (p. 191) and a true *de se* belief where the individual *x* is identified as being so. *De se* beliefs are further differentiated as (i) ‘implicit’ *de se* beliefs that are linked to the first-person perspective, whereby the subject is the experiencer and (ii) explicit *de se* beliefs that are, in contrast, (like *de re* beliefs) tied to a third-person perspective where the subject ‘sees himself from outside, as a spectator does’ (p. 193); cf. Fig. 8.1.

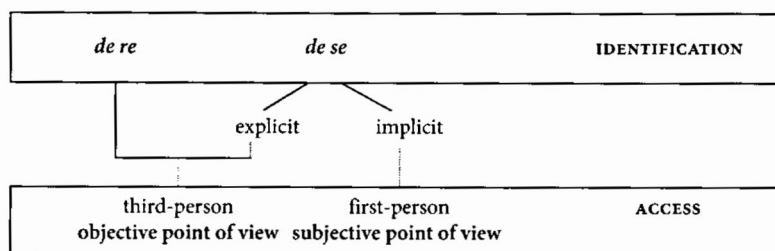


FIG. 8.1 Conceptualizing the self (adapted from Recanati 2007: 193)

To take Recanati's example, if I see a film exposure of myself, this would constitute a third-person view since I observe myself from outside as an object. There is a chance that I recognize myself (explicit *de se*) or that I don't (*de re*). Both third-person views are distinguished from a first-person perspective, where the subject has direct access to himself. Implicit *de se* thoughts are hence 'identification-free', i.e. 'they "concern" the subject without being about him or her' (Recanati 2007: 260).

The classification in Fig. 8.1 requires supplementation in the following two aspects. First, the difference between 'subjective' and 'objective' does not constitute a contradistinctive opposition. As Recanati (2007: 193) states, with reference to Vendler (1979), both explicit and implicit *de se* thoughts are in a way 'intrinsically subjective' and perspectival as they are both linked to the subject's experience, so that the 'objective' perspective could also be seen as a special case of the 'subjective' one (Recanati 2007: 196). Second, the distinction between explicit and implicit *de se* reports (and hence the difference between 'objective' and 'subjective') is grounded in two distinct features: (i) the difference between direct access to oneself via proprioception and introspection (implicit *de se*) vs indirect access to oneself (explicit *de se*) and (ii) the difference between whether the self is observed (ii.a) from a detached, 'external' point of view, i.e. as a representational view of the self as an 'object' whereby the content of the thought involves oneself as a constituent, or (ii.b) as 'identification-free'.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the binary distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective' as a

<sup>2</sup> Both features seem, at first sight, to be intricately linked. Yet this is not necessarily the case, since implicit *de se* thoughts exhibit IEM, but explicit *de se* thoughts do not necessarily do so (cf. Recanati 2012d: §2.1, p. 7, in revision of Recanati 2007). It follows that IEM is not a sufficient criterion for distinguishing between explicit and implicit *de se* thoughts.

whole becomes problematic, since it neither captures the difference between implicit and explicit *de se* reports precisely enough nor constitutes proper antonymy.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the different conceptualizations are not independent, as seen in the fact that reflective identification about *me being the subject* requires that this must be ‘a fully conscious state’ (Recanati 2007: 182, his emphasis) that integrates both perspectives: ‘The subject must not only be conscious of the state, he must be conscious of being the subject of the state (the “owner” of the thought)’ (p.184). The ‘objective’ perspective is thus always dependent on a ‘subjective’ perspective, leading to a hierarchy of dependencies between the different dimensions of the self.

Within the linguistic representation, these different dimensions as well as their relations to each other remain implicit on the surface structure, as has been seen in (2a,b), since the first-person pronoun neutralizes the different uses of ‘I’. As a result, the first-person perspective should not be seen as an ‘unanalyzed primitivum’ (Metzinger 2006: 421), but requires an inquiry that goes beyond the first-person pronoun. In this respect, the following two sections will focus on the epistemic use of modal verbs, Free Indirect Discourse, and the ‘Future of Fate’ construction as linguistic structures where the unity of the first-person pronoun is ‘broken down’ in more than one dimension of the self.

### 8.3 The emergence of ‘selves’ via subject split

With respect to the linguistic conceptualization of the self beyond the first-person pronoun, modal verbs constitute an interesting object of investigation, since their epistemic use ‘adds’ a first-person perspective that is not explicitly marked in the linguistic structure, as in (3).

- (3) He must be in Cambridge.
- a. deontic (DMV):  
‘He<sub>PROP-SUBJ</sub> is obliged to be in Cambridge.’
  - b. epistemic (EMV):  
‘I<sub>ILLOC-SUBJ</sub> assume that p[he<sub>PROP-SUBJ</sub> is in Cambridge].’  
→ there is certain evidence for *p*, but I have not gained any first-person experience about it (e.g. I have not seen him yet), so I actually do not know for certain

Example (3) has two readings. In the deontic sense, the subject is obliged to be in Cambridge. Example (3a) is hence an assertion about the modal state of the propositional subject (PROP-SUBJ). In (3b), in contrast, the necessity does not refer to the state of the subject, but to the whole proposition *p*[he is in Cambridge]. In addition, the emergence of a speaker (*I*) that is not marked explicitly in the linguistic structure results in a subject split between an illocutionary subject (ILLOC-SUBJ) (i.e. the attitude-holder of the modal verb) and the propositional subject (PROP-SUBJ) (cf. Leiss 2009, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> See from a broader perspective on this point Deely (2009); see Sonnenhauser (2008, 2012) for a linguistic revision of the term ‘subjectivity’.

In (3b), it becomes clear by the use of the pronouns (*I* vs *he*) in the paraphrase that both subjects are referentially different. Yet the same subject split can also be elicited for the first person (cf. (3')).

(3') I must be in Cambridge.

a. deontic (DMV):

'I<sub>PROP-SUBJ</sub> am obliged to be in Cambridge.'

b. epistemic (EMV):

'I assume that I am in Cambridge'

'I<sub>ILLOC-SUBJ</sub> assume that p[I<sub>PROP-SUBJ</sub> am in Cambridge]'

? there is certain evidence for *p*, but I have not gained any first-person experience about it, so I actually do not know for certain

Under normal circumstances, (3'b) is infelicitous, since the 'I' is normally aware of his/her present being somewhere, so there is no need to theorize about it. The epistemic reading would be appropriate, though, in a kidnapping scenario, where the 'I' is brought unconsciously to a place and infers from evidence given by context that 'I' must be in Cambridge. Example (3'b) thus falls under Abraham's (2012: 96) Epistemic Universal Hypothesis (EUH), which states that '[i]f the speaker/truth value assessor and clausal subject collapse referentially, the E[pistemic]-reading is excluded' and does not allow for an epistemic reading except for cases of 'depersonalization'. Depersonalization means 'that the Speaker is able to truth-assess *p* embedded under M[odal]V[erb] even when identical with the *I*-subject superficially, this being the case if Sp[earer] reports about *I* (as in a dream) as a detached object' (p. 96). With respect to the linguistic conceptualization of the self, the analysis of example (3) thus allows for the following observations:

- (i) The speaker-'I' arises as the result of a subject split between illocutionary and propositional subject. This holds also for the first person, where the distinction is formally neutralized by the first-person pronoun.
- (ii) If illocutionary and propositional subject are referentially the same, the epistemic reading is possible in case of depersonalization. This presupposes that the split is not linked to the referential person as a bodily entity, but to the functional dimensions of the self.
- (iii) Depersonalization is only available if the propositional subject is not conscious of his first-person experience and 'a *fully conscious state*' (Recanati 2007: 182) is dissolved.

The grammatical split elicited by modal verbs reveals two different functional dimensions of the self: the 'I' as the illocutionary subject which is potentially conscious about his state of being (first-person perspective) and the propositional subject-'I' conceptualized as a detached constituent of thought in the self-attribution from a third-person perspective. The subject split between illocutionary and propositional subject thus seems to reflect the difference between first- ('internal') and third-person ('external') perspective as defined in section 8.2. But while the propositional subject as the 'object' of the self-attribution is linked to a third-person

perspective, as seen in analogy to the correspondent third-person pronoun in (3b), the case with respect to the illocutionary subject is not so clear, since there are two aspects which the illocutionary subject can be wrong about: (i) his being in Cambridge and (ii) whether he makes such a claim or not. These two contents are accessed in two different ways, as seen in the fact that only the latter exhibits IEM. The subject can be wrong about his/her self-attribution of being in Cambridge but he/she normally cannot be wrong about identifying the commitment as a commitment of himself/herself: I usually have direct access to the knowledge whether I am committed to a statement or not.

This difference is relevant with respect to cases of grammar, where depersonalization is ruled out, as seen in comparison with German *wollen* ('want') vs *sollen* ('shall'). Both modal verbs can display evidential readings (4a,b, 5a). For *wollen*, however, this reading is infelicitous in the first person (5b) (examples from Leiss 2009, 2012; Abraham 2012).

- (4) a. Er soll in Cambridge gewesen sein.  
he shall in Cambridge have been  
'I report: Someone<sub>i</sub> is committed to the claim: he<sub>j</sub> was in Cambridge.'
- b. Ich soll in Cambridge gewesen sein.  
I shall in Cambridge have been  
'I<sub>i</sub> report: Someone is committed to the claim: I<sub>i</sub> was in Cambridge.'
- (5) a. Er will in Cambridge gewesen sein.  
he wants in Cambridge have been  
'I report: He<sub>j</sub> is committed to the claim: he<sub>j</sub> was in Cambridge.'
- b. Ich will in Cambridge gewesen sein.  
I want in Cambridge have been  
# 'I<sub>i</sub> report: I<sub>i</sub> am committed to the claim: I<sub>i</sub> was in Cambridge.'

In (4) and (5), the evidential reading is triggered by the infinitive perfect which facilitates the split between an illocutionary subject located in the actual present and a propositional subject located in a past temporal frame. Yet such 'I-Reference Detachment' (Abraham 2012: 96) is problematic for (5b). Here, the subject split is more unnatural, since the evidential reading takes the illocutionary subject as the modal source (cf. Leiss 2009, 2012) and thus presupposes conscious knowledge about the subject's commitment to the proposition.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, three different dimensions of the 'I' emerge, as made explicit in the paraphrase of (5b). As a result, an inherent contradiction arises: I cannot have knowledge about me being

<sup>4</sup> At first sight, (5b) seems to be ruled out because volitional states can be accessed directly by the self and are, as such, immune to error: since 'I' is the ultimate authority, it seems odd to speculate about one's own will. Yet, as seen before, the prerequisite for depersonalization is a fully conscious state. This would predict also that volitional states would allow for a subject split if the 'I' is unconscious about his/her own will (which is not that uncommon as seen e.g. in many romantic novels whose gist is based precisely on an unconscious state of volition). Furthermore, the volitional state does not refer to the propositional content but to the proposition itself, as is made clear by the paraphrase in (5b).

committed to an assertion of mine and, at the same time, not know about it. In order to make such a split possible, the context would require that the illocutionary subject and its source are kept apart; cf. e.g. the construed scenario in (6) as describing a film scene that shows the *I* being committed to a claim made at a certain past time.

- (6) Hier will ich den Tony-Award gewonnen haben.  
 here want I the Tony-Award won have.  
 'I report that, at this point of the story, I claim for myself to have won the Tony award.'

What the evidential reading in (6) requires is that at the moment of the utterance, there is not only a split between the illocutionary and the propositional subject, but also a second split between the 'I' in its illocutionary force concerning the assertion and the source of information.<sup>5</sup> In the *sollen* example (4b), this split is demonstrated by the fact that *sollen* takes as a rule the third person (and not the 'I') as the information source. As a result, the subject is detached from his/her own commitment to the proposition. In the *wollen* example, in contrast, the split between conscious self-knowledge about the 'I's commitment and the access to the propositional content is blocked, since both the attitude holder and the source of information refer to the first person, which leads to a contradiction: I cannot be committed to a proposition and not committed to it at the same time.

The case in (5b) thus reflects the effects of two distinct splits, i.e. the split between an illocutionary and a propositional subject and the split between the attitude holder and the information source. The first split is made possible by the dissolution of conscious self-knowledge about the *propositional content*, as seen in the kidnapping scenario. The second split is made possible by the dissolution of the *commitment to the proposition*. As a result, the distinction between the first- and third-person perspective does not simply correlate with an 'internal' vs 'external' access, since the access can be 'internal' on the level both of the illocutionary and of the propositional subject. Rather, the difference between whether the 'I' is conceptualized as a detached constituent of *de se* thoughts and, as such, seen from 'outside', and whether the knowledge about the self is based on direct ('internal') or indirect ('external') access, have to be seen as two distinct features. This claim will be further substantiated in the next section, which takes a closer look at the relationship between the 'inner' and 'outer' selves in the linguistic macrostructure.

#### 8.4 The 'inner' and 'outer' selves

Investigations of the self are commonly grounded in the assumption that the access to first-person perspective is fundamentally different from third-person reference. As seen in section 8.2, self-knowledge is seen as based on direct access to proprioceptive, kinesthetic, volitional, and mental states which are subject to IEM. This is linked to the more basic claim that such inner states are experienced as groundless,

<sup>5</sup> On this kind of 'double displacement' of modal verbs, see Leiss (2009, 2012).

non-inferential knowledge, and that the 'I' is the ultimate authority on these experiences as in (7).

- (7) groundless: *I'm tired.* – # How can you tell?  
 strongly authoritative: *I'm tired.* – # You are not!  
 transparent: *I'm tired.* – # I don't know whether I am tired.  
 (from Wright 1998: 14f.)

This special access plays a major role in Cartesian accounts of the self that see self-awareness as the result of the immediate access to one's own thoughts. Under normal circumstances, one is certain about one's own existence, since one has conscious knowledge about one's own thoughts and mental states. This basic proposition, and subsequently, the Cartesian account of the self, is challenged in the novel *The Eye* (1965) by Vladimir Nabokov.<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of the story, the main protagonist commits suicide and assumes that he is dead while still being alive. After his 'death', he becomes 'an onlooker' (Nabokov 2010 [1965]: 27) and is observing himself as 'watching the existence of a person whose inner lining, inner night, mouth, and taste-in-the-mouth, he knew as well as that person's shape' (p. 23). In other words: both implicit and explicit *de se* thoughts are ruled out. The subject is describing a certain 'Smurov' *de re* without identifying this character as a version of himself, as seen in the epistemic use of modal verbs in (8).

- (8) Yes, he must be a former officer, a daredevil who liked to flirt with the death  
 [...]  
 (Nabokov 2010 [1965]: 33)

In the course of the story, the reader becomes aware that the person Smurov is none other than the alter ego of the narrator-*I*, but the protagonist within the story remains split between an internal and external self. The *de re* version of the self is furthermore enriched by various assumptions about Smurov that are made by different characters within the story. So what the reader gets is not a homogeneous perspective, but a fragmented polyphonic picture of different selves. At the end, the disintegration of different selves leads the protagonist to the conclusion that he himself does not exist; what exists is only the distinct third-person reflections of his alter ego Smurov:

- (9) I alone do not exist. Smurov, however, will live on for a long time.  
 (Nabokov 2010 [1965]: 88)

With respect to the degree of disintegration, the split between the observing 'eye' and the observed third person illustrates a subject split that leads to a loss of a holistic integration of the different selves under a homogeneous perspective. What the novel shows in addition is that the differentiation between an 'internal' vs 'external' view on the self induces a split between different functional roles of narrative discourse,

<sup>6</sup> The novel was first published in Russian under the title *Ssogljadataj* ('spy', 'watcher') in the journal *Ssowremennaja Sapisski* 44 (1930).

whereby the 'observing I' corresponds to the narrator's perspective, the 'observed me' to the character (i.e. Smurov).<sup>7</sup>

This binary distinction is complemented by a further subject split, as seen in the fact that the 'I' appears not only as the narrator-I and the third-person character, but also as a character-I on the story level; cf. (10).

- (10) They were saying goodbye to Mukhin. Wouldn't he come in for a minute? No, it was late, he would not. *Late? Had my disincarnate flitting from room to room really lasted three hours?* Somewhere in a theater one had had time to perform a silly play [...]
- (Nabokov 2010 [1965]: 52, my emphasis)

(10) is an instance of Free Indirect Discourse (FID) in first-person perspective. FID is characterized by the fact that the 'internal' view of the character is foregrounded. In (10), the question *Late?* indicates that the 'story now' serves as the reference point of the utterance, and that the emphasized passage is linked to the perspective of a character in the story world. The first-person pronoun signals that it is not Smurov's viewpoint that is reported, but the viewpoint of the 'I' on the story level (which are referentially the same from the viewpoint of the reader, but not of the narrator-I). The I is thus split into not only two but three functional dimensions: the *de re* character of Smurov, the character-I, and the narrator-I. These different roles are dependent on each other, as seen with respect to the different access conditions that lead to a hierarchy of control structures. The narrator *qua* his functional position at the discourse level has access to the mental contents of the characters in the story world. So he can talk about 'internal' contents of the character that naturally cannot be accessed from the 'outside', whereas the reverse case does not apply. This access hierarchy allows for a simultaneous activation of the first- and third-person perspective, as it is more obvious in cases of FID in third person;<sup>8</sup> cf. (10').

- (10') They were saying goodbye to Mukhin. Wouldn't he come in for a minute? No, it was late, he would not. *Late? Had his disincarnate flitting from room to room really lasted three hours?* Somewhere in a theater one had had time to perform a silly play [...]

As in (10), (10') offers an 'internal' view on mental contents grounded in direct access of the character-I. At the same time, this 'internal content' is presented from a third-person perspective, i.e. 'from the outside', which presupposes the level of the narrator. This is seen in the fact that the personal pronoun and the past perfect take as a temporal reference point the viewpoint of the narrator outside the story world. The linguistic structure of FID thus activates not only the 'internal' character's viewpoint but also the narrator's perspective from the 'outside'. For this reason,

<sup>7</sup> Note that the distinction between narrator and character does not refer to persons of flesh and blood but to semiotic functions in narrative discourse, as argued analogously for the function of the speaker-I in §8.3. See also approaches to (narrative) discourse structure in terms of enunciative theory in the tradition of Jakobson and Bakhtin (e.g. Bally 1950; Benveniste 1966; Ducrot 1985; Zeman forthcoming).

<sup>8</sup> There has been a discussion in the literature whether FID is restricted to the 3rd-person perspective. Clearly, as (10) shows, this is not the case (see the supporting evidence in Fludernik 1993: 88).

FID has been characterized both as ‘univocal’ and ‘bivocal’ (see Vandelanotte 2009: 246–51). ‘Univocal’ accounts foreground the criterion that FID offers access to mental contents which are normally only accessed by introspection and hence linked to one (i.e. the character’s) perspective only. ‘Dual-voice’ accounts (e.g. Pascal 1977; Fludernik 1993; Schlenker 2004; Sharvit 2008; Eckardt 2014; Maier 2015; see also Vandelanotte 2009: 246–51 for a discussion), on the other hand, foreground the criterion that FID integrates two perspectives. Eckardt (2014), for example, describes FID as a ‘double context’ ( $C,c$ ) in the sense that FID has to be evaluated relative to two utterance contexts  $\langle C,c \rangle$ , i.e. the External Context  $C$  of the narrator vs the Internal Context  $c$  of the character. For Schlenker (2004), the difference is correlated with the distinction between the Context of Thought ( $CoT$ ,  $\theta$ ) vs the Context of Utterance ( $CoU$ ,  $u$ ), whereby  $CoT$  is ‘the point at which a thought originates’, whereas  $CoU$  is ‘the point at which the thought is expressed’ (Schlenker 2004: 279). Recanati (2010: 201), in contrast, argues that it is not the distinction between  $CoU$  vs  $CoT$ , but the difference between locutionary context (i.e. the context of utterance) and illocutionary context (i.e. the context of assertion) (see for discussion also Zeman forthcoming). Giorgi (2010: 184) integrates both aspects by differentiating between ‘the *internal source*—i.e. the character whose thoughts are being expressed—from the *external source*—i.e. the writer or speaker, in other words, the creator of the text’.

So the discussion shows once again that the distinction is grounded in two different properties, namely (i) the communicative level of discourse, whereby the narrator has naturally an ‘outside’ view on the character on the discourse level (whether this character is referentially himself or not) and (ii) whether the contents on the propositional level are ‘thoughts’ that can be accessed directly (‘internally’); in other words, whether the authority on the reported contents is grounded in the communicative role within discourse structure or in direct access (the ‘internal’ self). This distinction is crucial, since it implies different access hierarchies: due to its functional position outside the described situation, the perspective of the narrator allows for simultaneous knowledge about his/her commitment to the proposition and the course of the story which can include the mental contents of the protagonists. The narrator knows what the protagonist knows, while the reverse would lead to metaleptic structures. As such, the narrator has access to two different ‘internal’ contents: (i) the mental contents of the protagonist (*qua* his ‘external’ perspective) and (ii) his/her commitment to his/her assertions (*qua* direct access), while the character (i) is restricted to his own mental contents and (ii) has no authority over the discourse structure.

The interplay of these two different control structures can also be observed in another linguistic construction which is complementary to FID. As seen above, FID simulates a direct access to the ‘internal’ content of the protagonist, whereas the narrator level can only be reconstructed indirectly within the grammatical structure. The reverse can be observed in proleptic structures called ‘Future of Fate’ (FoF), where the narrator takes an outlook on the narrative future; cf. the German modal verb construction *sollte* (‘should’) + infinitive in (11). In this case, the ‘internal’ content of the protagonists remains unknown, while the narrator’s knowledge about the events to come is foregrounded.

- (11) Später sollte er herausfinden, wer er wirklich war.  
 later should he find out who he really was  
 'Later he was to find out who he really was.'

Like FID, the construction is univocal in foregrounding one perspective, namely that of the narrator. At the same time it is bivocal, since it structurally integrates both the character's and the narrator's viewpoints, as seen in the fact that the construction relates two different temporal planes: the 'story now', which constitutes the reference point for the future realization of the denoted event, and the narrator's viewpoint, which constitutes the reference point for its pastness. Semantically, this split becomes obvious by the contrast of knowledge systems: while the narrator on the discourse level knows what happens next, the protagonist on the story level is unaware of it. Note that this also holds if the subject is a first-person pronoun as in (11').

- (11') Später sollte ich herausfinden, wer ich wirklich war.  
 later should I find out who I really was  
 'Later I was to find out who he really was.'

In (11'), the character-*I* is subordinate to the integrating force of the narrating 'I' whose controlling authority is grounded in its functional role within the narrative discourse. Due to the authority of the narrator, the event realization is highly certain and rules out any intervention of the character on the story level. This hierarchy of control is also seen in the fact that FoF is blocked in FID. As seen above, narratives allow for the potential actualization of both the narrator and the character level. If *sollte* + infinitive is inserted in a narrative context, the perspective of the character is ruled out:

- (11') Später sollte ich herausfinden, wer ich wirklich war.  
 later should I find out who I really was.  
 a. narrator-*I*: 'Later I was to find out who (event realization certain)  
 I really was.'  
 b. character-*I*: 'Later I ought to find out who (event realization uncertain)  
 I really was.'

In (11'), the FoF reading is only possible if *ich* in the matrix clause refers to the narrator which has knowledge about the further course of the story. If the viewpoint is constituted by the character, the FoF reading is blocked and restricted to a deontic reading of the modal verb, which leaves the event realization as uncertain. In the case of (11'b), the narrator-*I* remains invisible. The emergence of the narrator-*I* is thus comparable to the emergence of the 'I' in the epistemic use of modal verbs (see §8.2), where the prerequisite for depersonalization has been seen in the dissolution of a fully conscious state. Again, the emergence of the 'I' is grounded in a subject split that leads to the actualization of a covert viewpoint potential. In other words, if the conscious state of the propositional subject is ruled out, the higher level of the narrator takes control.

These control mechanisms are also at play in instances where the 'I' is the addressee, as in (12) and (13), examples of self-talk from Holmberg (2010), who

draws attention to the fact that when talking to oneself, some combinations are odd.<sup>9</sup>

- (12) a. Pull yourself together!
- b. \*Pull myself together!
- (13) a. I knew I could do it!
- b. I knew you could do it!
- c. \*You knew you could do it.
- d. \*You knew I could do it!

Holmberg argues that (12b) as well as (13c,d) are infelicitous due to the fact that two different selves are involved, a self 'controlled by the mind' and a 'mindless' self:

one is 'controlled by the mind', with thoughts and feelings, and engaging in activities that are wholly transparent and predictable. We might even want to say that it is the mind. The other is not under direct control by the mind; it doesn't think, but does act, engaging in activities which are not wholly transparent or predictable, and it is typically in need of either reproach or encouragement. The 'mindless self' can be referred to by either you or I. The thinking and feeling self (the mind) can only be referred to by I. (Holmberg 2010: 60)

The previous observations I presented offer an explanation for Holmberg's generalization. Since the subject split invokes an asymmetric structure of dependency, the split versions of *I* are not equivalent but in control of each other. As before, the infelicitous cases are caused by a violation of control relations. This concerns both the 'internal' vs 'external' distinction where only the illocutionary 'I' has direct access to the mental contents, and the control structure on communicative levels, which involves the tenet that 'I' (i.e. Holmberg's 'the mind') can talk about or to 'me'—but not the reverse.

In sum, comparison of the different cases of MPCs like FID, FoF, and self-talk shows that the linguistic conceptualization is based on different subject splits, leading to hierarchical dependencies between the different dimensions of the self. What we find behind the first-person perspective is thus a concept of the self, not as a holistic entity, but as grounded in the integration of different selves linked together via hierarchical dependency relations. As such, the linguistic conceptualization of the self is based on:

- (i) the differentiation between an 'internal' and 'external' conception of the self with respect to the mental content (i.e. direct vs indirect access);
- (ii) the differentiation between 'inside' and 'outside' perspectives as the result of the structural dependency between the communicative roles within the discourse structure;
- (iii) the integration of different features of selves into a holistic concept, leading to a hierarchy of control structures.

<sup>9</sup> Readers who are disinclined to talk to themselves might prefer: 'Some combinations are even odder than others.'

In Nabokov's *The Eye*, this integration fails, since the different 'I'-versions are not identified as belonging to the same ensemble of selves, which leads to the dissolution of hierarchical relations. In a comparable way, grammar becomes infelicitous if the relational architecture between the different linguistic selves is disrupted. The linguistic conceptualization of the self can thus be disordered by the disintegration of the different dimensions of the self.

### 8.5 Concluding remarks: beyond the first-person perspective

With respect to the linguistic conceptualization of the self, the look beneath the surface of the first-person perspective has shown that the first-person pronoun makes reference to different functional dimensions of the 'I'. As such, the self as conceptualized in language neither is a holistic entity nor does it refer to a person of flesh and blood. Rather, the personal pronoun formally neutralizes different semiotic dimensions of the self that arise via the mechanism of subject split.

The look at MPCs has furthermore shown that the holistic impression of the self is assured by an integrating mechanism of control structures. As seen above, the first-person perspective can integrate simultaneously both an internal and an external look at the 'I', as it is possible to have an external and internal experience of oneself at the same time (cf. Vendler 1979). This chapter has thus also shown that descriptions of the linguistic conceptualization of the self that are based on a binary opposition between the 'subjective' and the 'objective' are in need of revision. A similar claim has also been made in approaches that go beyond the Cartesian dichotomy of 'self' and 'other' by arguing that the first-person perspective requires 'the immediate availability of thoughts to a thinker with the public and external dimension of thought (Smith 1998: 404).<sup>10</sup> In addition, simultaneous activation requires a monitoring stance at a global level from which the different dimensions of the self can be evaluated as a holistic unity (with respect to the meta-representational dimension of perspectivization see Zeman 2017).

Such a view is also in line with neuro-philosophical approaches which argue that the experience of being a self is a persistent illusion, resulting from the fact that we infer from our perceptual self-experience and our representational concept to the existence of a real entity (cf. Metzinger 2006, 2009; Singer 2006; Albahari 2009; see Zahavi 2014: 3). According to Metzinger (2004: 37), what is frequently called 'the self' is merely 'the content of self-consciousness, as given in subjective experience' and, as such, a dynamic holistic representation without any correspondence within reality.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, we have seen with respect to the conceptualization of the self in

<sup>10</sup> See in this spirit also Dialogical Self Theory by Hermans and Kempen (1993) and the semiotic account of subjectivity by Sonnenhauser (2012).

<sup>11</sup> It is controversially discussed whether the self can be disturbed completely, or whether an experience of ownership of having thoughts and mental states and thus a pre-reflective sense of experientiality is conserved that constitutes a robust nucleus of the self (see Proust 2013 and Zahavi 2014). Either way, the self is conceptualized as a minimal self whose constitution is not a given but is grounded in the architecture of control relations.

language that 'I' does not directly refer to the self itself but only to its different dimensions. The self itself is thus not directly referred to by grammatical means, but comes into being at the discourse level as the zero point of perspectivization. In this sense, it is present as a covert potential that emerges as a discourse effect (see Sonnenhauser 2008, 2012), but as a blind spot is never directly observed.

This view is not so far from the picture of the 'I' drawn by Mach, who considered the self in tradition of James (1892) as a more or less continuous group of sentimental elements. As such, the self is a blank space as in Nabokov's novel, in which the protagonist does not exist as 'I', but only as an observing 'eye'—which can integrate the different dimensions from 'outside' by identification and can be experienced as such, but remains the blind spot that as the zero point of perspectivization cannot be seen by itself.