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## The availability of protagonists as perspectival centers for Free Indirect Discourse in the context of narrated texts by a perspectively prominent narrator

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We present the results of several experiments investigating the effect of different narrative situations on the availability of locally prominent protagonists as anchor for Free Indirect Discourse (FID). FID relies on its content, context and certain linguistic cues for its interpretation and is dependent on having a prominent protagonist in the preceding discourse to function as its perspectival anchor. Although the narrator may be prominent on a global level, a protagonist can become prominent locally, with respect to a single sentence or text segment. According to Zeman (2020), this feature of narrative texts installs them with a potential for multiperspectivity absent from everyday conversation. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the influence the narrator's perspectival prominence has on the availability of protagonists as perspective takers, we conducted an acceptability rating study and created items in three conditions:

Condition A featured a neutral third-person narrator, condition B a homodiegetic first-person narrator and condition C a prominent, evaluative third-person narrator. All items ended with FID from a locally prominent protagonist's point of view. Participants had to rate the acceptability of the FID sentence on a scale from 1–7. Condition B received significantly lower ratings than the other two conditions, whereas there was no significant difference between conditions A and C. This indicates that a prominent third-person narrator does not have a strong effect on the protagonists' availability as anchor for FID, while a homodiegetic first-person narrator does. An additional study, in which participants had to choose if the thought expressed by FID belonged to the narrator or the protagonist, proved that there was a strong tendency to choose the protagonist as perspectival center in all three conditions. In a follow-up study we will investigate why first-person narrators strongly affect protagonists' availability as perspectival anchors for FID.

Our experiments so far confirm that locally prominent protagonists can function as potent perspectival anchors for FID even in the context of a globally prominent narrator and provide further evidence that narrative texts indeed possess an inherent potential for multiperspectivity.

**References:** • Zeman, S. (2020). Parameters of Narrative Perspectivization: The Narrator. *Open Library of Humanities* 6 (2), 28.