# Grammar constrains the way I talk to myself
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**Problem:** According to Holmberg (2010), people who talk to themselves can do so either with the use of *you* or *I*.

(1)      Context: Louise is talking to herself.
      a.      **You** are an idiot.
      b.      **I** am an idiot.

We observe that vocatives naming the *self* can only be used in *you*-centered self-talk:

(2)      Context: Louise is talking to herself.
      a.      Louise, **you** are an idiot.
      b.      *Louise, **I** am an idiot.

The goal of this paper is to develop an analysis for the contrast in (2).

**Proposal:** We propose that the impossibility for vocatives in *I*-centered self-talk is structurally conditioned. Following Wiltschko & Heim (2016), we assume that there is an articulated layer of structure consisting of Ground$_{Spkr}$P and Ground$_{Adr}$P dedicated to regulating the interaction between speaker and addressee. We further propose that vocatives are realized in Spec,Ground$_{Adr}$, as shown in (3).

(3)      [$_{GroundAdrP}$ **Louise** [$_{GroundSpkrP}$  [$_{CP}$ [$_{TP}$ you are an idiot]]]]

We argue that when an individual engages in *you*-centered self-talk, they are simultaneously both the speaker and the addressee. Hence, *you*-centered self-talk has the same representation as any dialogue with an individual other than the self. In particular, *you*-centered self-talk allows for a vocative in Spec,Ground$_{Adr}$P, as in (3). However, *I*-centered self-talk is qualitatively different. More specifically, we hypothesize that in *I*-centered self-talk the individual bears only one interactional role, namely that of speaker. Consequently, *I*-centered self-talk lacks Ground$_{Adr}$P, and concomitantly a position for the vocative, as illustrated in (4).

(4)      [$_{GroundSpkrP}$  [$_{CP}$ [$_{TP}$ I am an idiot]]]

**Predictions: The (un)availability of sentence-final particles**. The assumption that *I*-centered self-talk lacks Ground$_{Adr}$P predicts that material that is associated with Ground$_{Adr}$P cannot appear in *I*-centered self-talk. It should however be possible to include such material in *you*-centered self-talk. We show that these predictions are borne out for the sentence-final particles, *eh* and *huh*, which are realized in Ground$_{Adr}$P (Wiltschko & Heim 2016). Representative examples are given in (5).

(5)      a.      *I'm too tired to do this, eh/huh?
      b.      You're too tired to do this, eh/huh?

**Consequence: Representing what you and I know.** On the model we assume, Ground$_{Adr}$P represents the speaker's assumption about what the addressee knows, and not the addressee's actual knowledge state. Self-talk provides us with evidence that this is in fact a grammatical constraint on what can be represented. Specifically, as Holmberg 2010 observes, "*you* can't refer to the self in assertions about the self's state of mind … only *I* can." In other words, when we talk to ourselves, we clearly know what is in the addressee's mind. Nevertheless, as shown in (6-7), grammar still treats the addressee ground as representing a knowledge state that is inaccessible to the speaker

(6)      a.      **I** can't take this anymore.      (7)      a.      You're driving **me** mad.
      b.      ***You** can't take this anymore.                 b.      *I'm driving **you** mad.

**Conclusion:** Self-talk provides evidence that speaker and addressee are grammatically represented as distinct parts of a single individuals' knowledge state and not as distinct individuals. In other words, grammar represents what the speaker knows and what they think they know about others.

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