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The interaction of gender marking and perspective-taking (based on joint work with Jesse Harris, UCLA)

The talk deals with a phenomenon regarding the interaction of perspective-taking with morphosyntactic gender that to the best of our knowledge has not been discussed so far: In Free Indirect Discourse (FID), there is a strong preference for a pronoun that refers to an individual whose thoughts or utterances are represented to match the gender identity/biological sex (by default) of that individual rather than the morphosyntactic gender of the DP functioning as its immediate antecedent in discourse. We propose that the preference for semantic agreement in FID is due to increased empathy with the individual functioning as the perspectival center, leading to the expectation that the gender features of the pronoun are compatible with the perspectival center's expressive self-concept.