
When *Somebody Else* is Speaking: Free Indirect Discourse

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will consider the properties of the so-called Free Indirect Discourse, henceforth FID, which is a peculiar literary style—hence, something ‘artificial’—created with the precise purpose of giving rise to a particular narrative effect. The aim of this chapter is to show that it is possible to assign the correct interpretation to these contexts without resorting to *ad hoc* hypotheses having the sole purpose of describing this style.

I will show that FID sentences can be interpreted by means of the same grammatical apparatus needed in ‘normal’ sentences, once we understand and describe the grammar underlying this literary device. I will show that the semantics of these contexts can be read directly off their syntax, as in the other cases discussed in this book. I argue that, in a way, FID sentences constitute the mirror image of the dependencies from the future discussed in the previous chapter. In that case, the future has the role of relocating the speaker in the subject’s (temporal) location, so that the speaker’s coordinate is no longer provided by the utterance event but by the superordinate, future, event. The FID device, conversely, might be taken to *promote* the subject, that is, the character of the story, to speaker. Consequently, an embedded eventuality must be located twice—Italian and English being DAR languages—with respect to the subject’s coordinate: once in T and once in C. This shifting, however, will be shown to have effects on the distribution of the embedded verbal forms. According to this proposal, in fact, the embedded verb cannot

explicitly require anchoring to the speaker, given that the latter in FID contexts has disappeared from the embedded clause and been substituted by the subject.

Finally, I will posit an additional root syntactic layer, the *informational layer*—already briefly discussed in Chapter 3—which accounts for word order phenomena observed in the distribution of what I call here the *introducing predicate*. The presence of this layer is also justified on the basis of observations concerning a variety of root phenomena, such as vocatives (Moro 2003) and exclamatives (Zanuttini and Portner 2003).

6.2 Free Indirect Discourse: properties

In the FID the narration, in the third person, proceeds from a source internal to the narrated text, i.e., one of the characters. The result of this technique, as will be clear from the examples, is that the reader has the impression of listening directly to the character's thoughts or speech. As an illustration, consider the following example:

- (1) It was, he now realized, because of this other incident that **he** had suddenly decided to come home and begin the diary today (Orwell, *1984*, ch. 1)

Consider also the following example, discussed in the previous literature (Banfield 1982: 98; Schlenker 2004):

- (2) Where was he this morning, for instance? Some committee, **she** never asked what (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*)

In this example the narrating character is identified by means of the third person pronouns *he* and *she* and we are listening to this character's thoughts. Consider also the following case in Italian:¹

- (3) Lo ricordò dopo uno sforzo di memoria anzi di ragionamento: [**pro**] doveva essere passata per quella via essendo giunta a quell'altra da casa **sua**. Il giovinotto era un **suo** cugino ritornato dagli studii. Un ragazzo

¹ All the translations of the Italian examples are mine. Sources of literary examples are listed on p. 210.

cui non bisognava dare importanza (Italo Svevo, *La novella del buon vecchio e della bella fanciulla*, ch. 8)

She remembered it with an effort of memory, or better to say of reasoning: she should have passed through that street to reach that other one from her home. The young man was her cousin, who had come back from school. A young man who should not be given importance (Svevo, *The short story of the old man and the pretty girl*, ch. 8)

In this case, analogously to the previous one, we are listening to a speech by one of the characters—the ‘pretty girl’. The character is identified by means of third person pronominal forms—in this case the null pronoun, *pro*, and the possessive pronouns *suo/sua* (her).

In what follows, therefore, I will distinguish 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. I will also dub phrases such as *he now realized* in example (1), or *Lo ricordò dopo uno sforzo di memoria anzi di ragionamento* (She remembered it with an effort of memory, or better to say of reasoning) in (3), *introducing predicates* (for a discussion see section 6.4 below).

These contexts exhibit several interesting peculiarities, which I will analyse shortly. The most striking one concerns the distribution of indexical temporal (and spatial) adverbials.

As noted in the linguistic literature on the topic, in the FID, temporal indexicals refer to the time coordinate of the internal source. In example (1), for instance, the indexical *now* is interpreted on the basis of the temporal coordinates of the character and not of the utterer, in this case the *writer*. Consider also in the following example:

- (4) The thing that **now** suddenly struck Winston was that his mother’s death, **nearly thirty years ago**, had been tragic and sorrowful in a way that it was no longer possible. Tragedy, he perceived, belonged to the ancient time [...]. Such things, he saw, could not happen **today**. **Today** there were fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion (Orwell, 1984, ch. 3)

In this example, *now* and *today*, as well the indexical locution *thirty years ago*, take their reference from the temporal coordinates of

Winston—i.e., from the internal source of the narration. Consider now the following example (already discussed in Banfield 1982, Doron 1991, and Schlenker 2004):

- (5) Tomorrow was Monday, Monday, the beginning of another school week!
(Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 185)

This characteristic concerning the interpretation of temporal indexicals can be found in Italian as well:

- (6) Ah, Ecco perchè era così, **oggi**. Piangeva (Deledda, *Le colpe altrui*, p. 76)
Ah, this was why she was like that, today. She was crying

- (7) Era la sua forza—commentava Baudolino a Niceta—e in questo modo lo aveva menato per il naso una prima volta, lo stava menando **ora** e lo avrebbe menato per alcuni anni ancora

This was his strength—Baudolino was commenting to Niceta—and in this way he had taken him by the nose once, he was leading him by the nose now, and he would take him by the nose for some years still (Eco, *Baudolino*, p. 264)

The properties of the temporal indexical forms show that the FID is not just a variant of indirect discourse. In indirect discourse, indexical temporal locutions take their value from the temporal coordinate of the speaker:

- (8) Gianni disse che sarebbe partito domani/il giorno dopo
Gianni said that he would leave the next day/tomorrow

In indirect discourse, the interpretation of the indexical *tomorrow* is crucially different from the interpretation of *the next day*. The anaphoric temporal locution *il giorno dopo* (the next day) identifies the day after Gianni's speech, whereas *tomorrow*—an indexical temporal location—only identifies the day after the day of the utterance—i.e., it takes its value from the speaker's coordinates. This is the 'normal' behaviour of temporal indexical expressions.

I will consider this point in more detail below. For the time being, let me point out that FID phenomena on the one hand could be analysed from a purely stylistic point of view—namely, one could consider when and why an author should use FID and exactly what narrative

nuances it produces.² On the other hand, one could wonder what exactly creates this particular effect in the syntax of these sentences. Native speakers have very clear and consistent intuitions, as discussed also in Guéron (2006a, 2007), about the syntax of these sentences and know exactly how they should be structured and what their grammar is. For instance, an Italian speaker finds a very clear contrast between a sentence such as (7) above and the following one:

- (9) #E' / È STATA la sua forza [commentava Baudolino a Niceta] e in questo modo lo HA MENATO per il naso una prima volta, lo STA MENANDO ora e lo MENERA' per alcuni anni ancora.

This is/has been (PRES/PRES PERF) his strength—Baudolino was commenting to Niceta—and in this way he has(PRES/PERF/PAST) taken him by the nose once, he is(PRES) leading him by the nose now, and he will(FUT) take him by the nose for some years still

In sentence (9) the imperfect indicative verbal forms have been substituted by other indicative verbal forms. While the result of such a substitution is otherwise not particularly problematic in normal contexts, in this case it gives rise to a deviant sentence. Compare the contrast between (7) and (9) with the following pair:

- (10) Gianni ha detto che Maria è partita
Gianni said that Maria left(PRES PERF)
- (11) Gianni said that Maria era partita
Gianni said that Maria had left(IMPF)

With respect to Sequence of Tense, in both (10) and (11) the leaving is located before the saying and, as far as this simple case goes, the two sentences are more or less equivalent.³

² Note, however, that FID is not only a narrative *literary* style, but it is also sometimes adopted in normal *everyday* speech. I recommend the reader to try an experiment and keep notice of its occurrences in his/her own conversation: the outcome might be surprising! For instance, one might reproduce somebody's speech using the third person, but making gestures and using a tone of voice resembling the person's. This actually happens quite frequently and the properties of the sentences so produced are those observed in the FID.

³ The issue—i.e., the usage of the present perfect/past vs. the imperfect—in Romance is actually quite a complex one. See Giorgi and Pianesi (2004b) and references cited there for a discussion. See also Chapter 4 above.

This does not happen with examples (7) and (9), however. In particular, for instance, *lo sta menando ora per il naso* (he is leading him by the nose now) can be temporally interpreted only with respect to the external source's coordinates, meaning that at the time the writer is writing Baudolino is being taken by the nose. Analogously, *lo menerà* (he will lead him by the nose) can only mean that at a time lying in the future with respect to time of the writing, Baudolino will be taken by the nose.

The fact that native speakers have intuitions and grammaticality judgements in relation to these contexts is important because it contributes to dismantling a prejudice we might have with respect to written texts. The prejudice can be more or less stated as follows: an author *creates* her language *and* grammar; therefore we cannot expect grammatical rules to be *obeyed* as they are in non-literary everyday language. All sorts of violations are permitted. The language of literary texts is therefore qualitatively different from *real* language and a theoretical, formal linguist has nothing to say about it.

On the contrary, linguists have shown, as a basic *tenet* of a Theory of Grammar, that it is possible to give a formal account of the various phenomena of FID. In other words, FID facts follow from the rules of grammar as they are established for non-literary contexts. The aim of this chapter therefore is to provide a grammar for FID and to show that the hypothesis illustrated in previous chapters concerning the syntactic representation of the speaker's coordinate provides an explanation for native speakers' intuitions in these cases as well.

As I briefly illustrated in the previous examples, in these contexts it is possible to observe a sort of dissociation between the interpretation of pronouns, indexicals, and tenses. In what follows I introduce these properties one by one.

6.2.1 Pronouns

In the previous section I already pointed out the peculiarity concerning the distribution of the third person pronoun. Summarizing the observations proposed above, it is possible to say that *normally* a sentence expresses the thoughts of the speaker, and when the speaker introduces

herself in the sentence in languages such as Italian and English she does so by means of a first person pronoun. A third person pronoun identifies *somebody else*. This is not the case in FID, where a third person pronoun identifies the thinker or *internal source*.⁴

In this section I consider the properties of the first person pronoun in such contexts. The basic observation is that when a first person pronoun appears in a FID text, it *must* refer to the external source. Consider for instance the following example, built on example (3) above:

- (12) Lo ricordò dopo uno sforzo di memoria anzi di ragionamento: [**pro**] doveva essere passata per quella via essendo giunta a quell'altra da casa **mia**

She remembered it with an effort of memory, or better to say of reasoning: (she) should have passed through that street to reach that other one from **my** home

In this example, I substituted the first person possessive form *sua* (his/her) from example (3) above with a first person possessive *mia* (my). This sentence can only be understood as expressing the following meaning: the main character in the story—the *internal source*—is telling something that identifies the owner of the house as the *external source*. Notice, incidentally, that the same effect arises when using second person pronouns:

- (13) Lo ricordò dopo uno sforzo di memoria anzi di ragionamento: [**pro**] doveva essere passata per quella via essendo giunta a quell'altra da casa **tua**

She remembered it with an effort of memory, or better to say of reasoning: (she) should have passed through that street to reach that other one from **your** home

In this case the presence of a second person possessive suggests that the external narrator is telling the story, adopting the FID style, to another

⁴ Notice that it is not always true that a third person pronoun identifies somebody other than the speaker. There are several cases in the literature where the speaker might refer to herself in the third person. Consider for instance the following sentence, where the speaker is Maria:

- i. Chi ha detto che Maria non vincerà la gara? Vincerò sicuramente invece!

Who said that Maria will not win the race? I will certainly win, on the contrary!

There are several questions connected to this issue, which however are not crucial to the present investigation and I will not discuss them further.

external participant.⁵ This is relevant because it shows that the internal source is identified as a third party *from the outside*. This peculiarity has already been noted in the literature and discussed by Banfield (1982) and Schlenker (2004). I will return on this property in section 6.3 below.

Recall also that a first person pronoun does not necessarily identify the actual utterer. For instance, it identifies a third party in direct speech:

- (14) Gianni **mi** ha detto: '**Io** voglio comprare quella casa'
Gianni told **me**: 'I want to buy that house'

In this example the two occurrences of the first person pronoun identify two different speakers—the *actual* speaker, and the *reported* speaker—in the course of the same speech act.

In literary contexts, first person narration constitutes another obvious case:

- (15) Oggi [**pro**] scopro subito qualche cosa che piú non [**pro**] ricordavo. Le prime sigarette ch'**io** fumai non esistono piú in commercio (Svevo, *La coscienza di Zeno*, ch. 3)⁶

Today I immediately find out something that I did not remember anymore. The first cigarettes that I smoked are no longer sold.

The first person pronouns here identify the character, *Zeno*, and not the actual writer, Svevo.

This observation leads us to conclude that a first person pronoun refers to the *speaker*; the speaker in most cases is the actual utterer, but in some cases it is not. The two examples given above, where the first person pronoun does not identify the *utterer*, illustrate this view:

⁵ The same happens with plural pronouns:

- i. Lo ricordò dopo uno sforzo di memoria anzi di ragionamento: [**pro**] doveva essere passata per quella via essendo giunta a quell'altra da casa **nostra/vostra**.
She remembered it with an effort of memory, or better to say of reasoning: (she) should have passed through that street to reach that other one from our/your home.

The effect given by means of the plural pronouns is the same as the one discussed in the text.

⁶ Note that in this example the temporal indexical expression *oggi* (today) appears. From the passage of the novel it is clear that it identifies the day in which the author is writing that particular chapter, since the whole novel is conceived as a day-by-day diary. In this sense therefore, *oggi* (today) takes its value from the same context that assigns the correct interpretation to the first person subject.

in these sentences the first person pronoun, though not the *utterer*, is the *speaker*, namely, the person performing the speech act reported in the sentence.

In conclusion, these observations show that it is necessary to distinguish the *utterer* from the *speaker*. The first person pronoun must always refer to a speaker/writer, who might or might not be the utterer as well.⁷

6.2.2 *Indexical temporal expressions*

6.2.2.1 *The internal source* As I briefly pointed out above, temporal indexicals in FID texts take their reference from the internal source. Examples (1) and (4) above illustrate this point with respect to past and present indexical expressions—such as *thirty years ago*, *today*, *now*. The following example illustrates it with respect to a future temporal indexical, *tomorrow*:

- (16) The new ration did not start till **tomorrow** and **he** had only four cigarettes left (Orwell, 1984, ch. 5)

⁷ When the speaker is identified by means of a first person pronoun and the utterer is not the speaker—as in the examples given—then the utterer is not identifiable by means of a pronoun, but only by means of a set of spatial and temporal coordinates. This might be viewed as a lexical gap, or as a principled property of language. If a lexical gap, we expect languages to exist with a different pronoun for the two cases: one for the speaker and one for the utterer, to be used at least in those contexts where the two do not overlap. If the second option is the correct one, then a principled explanation should be found for this fact. So far, I do not have suggestions on this particular issue.

Consider also that, trivially, in languages like Italian and English, not all the speakers are identified by means of first person pronoun—namely all first person pronouns identify speakers, but not vice versa. This might not be the case in languages like Amharic, though, if the data discussed in Schlenker (2003, 2004) are consistent. Here I report Schlenker's example (2003, ex. 3):

- i. Situation to be reported: John says: 'I am a hero.'
- ii. Amharic (lit.): John_i says that I_i am a hero.
- iii. English: John_i says that he_i is a hero / *John_i says that I_i am a hero

Moreover, an analysis of languages having logophoric pronouns with respect to their usage in these contexts would also be relevant to the present discussion. For an introduction to phenomena concerning logophoric pronouns see, among others, Clements (1975) and Hagège (1974). I will not discuss this issue any further and I refer the reader to the quoted reference.

In sentence (16), we understand the eventuality of having only four cigarettes left as holding at the internal source's *now*. The indexical *tomorrow* refers to the day following the day in which the subject *he*, the internal source, is located. With respect to the temporal coordinate of the internal source, the eventuality of having four cigarettes is interpreted as holding presently, and the starting of the new ration is understood as being located in the future.

In other words: in this example, as well as in those given above, the temporal coordinates permitting the interpretation of the indexical temporal expressions are those pertaining to the internal source, identified by means of a third person pronoun. Consistently, the various eventualities appearing in the sentence are understood as located along the temporal continuum on the basis of the internal source's coordinates.

In this sense, the interpretation of example (16) would not differ from the interpretation of the corresponding sentence given in the normal, non-FID style:

- (17) The new ration will not start till **tomorrow** and **I** have only four cigarettes left

In (17), as is usually the case, the speaker refers to himself by means of a first person pronoun, *I*, and the indexical *tomorrow* identifies the day which follows the day of the utterance—i.e., the day in which the speaker is temporally located. The future tense and the present tense order the events with respect to each other and with respect to the speaker's coordinates.

Concluding these brief remarks: the interesting property of the FID exemplified by the examples given above is that temporal indexicals do not identify a temporal location of the event with respect to the external source—the writer/speaker—but with respect to the internal one—the thinker. In this sense, therefore, it looks like they cease to be real *indexicals*, in that the context that is relevant for their interpretation is not provided by the actual utterance event, but by the literary, created context.

6.2.2.2 *Indexical temporal expressions and pronouns* In the light of the discussion in the previous section and in section 6.2.1 above,

consider now what happens by adding an introducing predicate with a first person pronoun to example (17):

- (18) The new ration did not start till **tomorrow** and **he** had only four cigarettes left, *I thought*

The first person refers to the internal source—i.e., to the person thinking. As a result, the indexical *tomorrow* refers to the day after the day of the thinking.⁸

The same happens in Italian. Consider the following translation of the example in (17):

- (19) Il nuovo razionamento sarebbe cominciato **domani** e (**egli**) aveva solo altre quattro sigarette, *pensai*
The new ration did not start till **tomorrow** and **he** had only four cigarettes left, *I thought*

In these cases the internal source and the external one coincide, in that the *thinker* must also be the *speaker*. Therefore, it is not surprising that temporal indexicals and events are interpreted on the basis of the coordinates of the speaker/thinker. The only interpretation for this sentence is the following one: *I, the speaker, thought that tomorrow the new ration would start and he had only four cigarettes left*. Therefore, for the sentence to hold—that is, in order to interpret *tomorrow* correctly—the thinking must be located *today* in both English and Italian, as exemplified by the following examples:⁹

- (20) The new ration did not start till **tomorrow** and **he** had only four cigarettes left, *I thought this morning*
- (21) Il nuovo razionamento sarebbe cominciato **domani** e (**egli**) aveva solo altre quattro sigarette, *pensai questa mattina*

In these examples the speaker is explicitly identified with the thinker and the behaviour of the temporal indexical does not exhibit any special features.

⁸ The speaker might be the *writer* of the story, or a first person narrator. Since the specific interpretation is not particularly relevant to the point I am making here, I will leave it unspecified.

⁹ For observations in the same vein, see also Banfield (1982), who talks about the *priority of the speaker*, and Schlenker (2004).

Let's consider, however, some cases in which the first pronoun appears as a participant in the FID context. I discuss here an example proposed in Schlenker (2004, ex. 16):¹⁰

- (22) Oh how extraordinarily nice I was, she told my father, without realizing that I was listening to the conversation

Let's consider now what happens in this case when we add a temporal indexical, both in English and Italian:

- (23) Oh how extraordinarily nice I was **yesterday morning**, she told my father **last night**, without realizing that I was listening to the conversation
- (24) Oh, come ero (stato) meraviglioso **ieri mattina**, Maria disse a mio padre **ieri sera**, senza rendersi conto che io stavo ascoltando la conversazione

In these sentences, which are examples of the FID style, the first person *I* refers to the speaker—namely, the *external source*, the person uttering the sentence. The intuition of native speakers, both in English and Italian, is that the days in question cannot be two different ones—namely, the two temporal indexicals refer to the morning and the night of the same day. Moreover, the specific day is identified on the basis of the location of the speaker—the first person *I*—and not of the location of the internal source, Maria.

For the same reason, the following sentences are infelicitous:

- (25) Oh how extraordinarily nice I was **yesterday night**, she told my father **last morning**, without realizing that I was listening to the conversation
- (26) Oh, come mi ero comportato bene **ieri sera**, Maria disse a mio padre **ieri mattina**, senza rendersi conto che io stavo ascoltando la conversazione

¹⁰ Schlenker (2004) proposes this example while discussing a similar one by Banfield (1982). Here I am not pursuing the same line of reasoning, so I will not summarize that particular discussion. Let me only point out that I am proposing this example because it permits us to analyse the properties of the first person in an FID context, making the first person character a participant in the *situation*, though not a participant in the actual *conversation*, thanks to the phrase *without realizing that I was listening to the conversation*. This *escamotage* is important to avoid side issues which might invalidate the discussion, as remarked in Schlenker (2004).

This is due to the fact that the temporal reference of *yesterday night* and *yesterday evening* in these cases is not compatible with the requirement that the day be the same.

It seems therefore that a first person attracts the indexical: when a first person appears in FID contexts, the temporal indexicals must be interpreted according to the coordinates associated with it.

Note that the same is true with spatial interpretation:

- (27) I showed **her this** room, Maria told my father without realizing that I was listening to the conversation
- (28) **Io le** avevo mostrato **questa** stanza, Maria disse a mio padre, senza rendersi conto che io avevo sentito la conversazione

The room in question is the one where the first person speaker is, and not the one where the referent of the third person is.

Given these considerations, it is possible to formulate the following generalization:

- (29) When the speaker is introduced in a given context, her temporal and spatial coordinates determine the interpretation of spatial and temporal indexicals.

In normal, non-FID contexts this generalization applies as a *default*, in the sense that it might seem to be a property of indexicals in themselves and not of a peculiar context.

The first person's coordinates—i.e., in this case the speaker's—constitute the reference set which permits the interpretation of the indexicals. The hypothesis I will develop below is that the value of the temporal and spatial coordinates is set in the C-layer. Once they refer to the speaker, they cannot be modified by means of the resetting operation I will discuss in section 6.3 below.¹¹

Several scholars have studied the double perspective of these contexts—namely, the presence of a centre of indexicality differing from the first person speaker. In order to account for the observations above, Schlenker (2004), elaborating on proposals by Banfield (1982) and Doron (1991), argues in favour of a distinction between

¹¹ In section 6.4 below I will show that the informational layer, the INF-layer, also plays an important role in accounting for these phenomena.

the context of utterance—i.e., an uttering event—and a context of thought—i.e., an event of thinking. He suggests that, whereas in everyday speech the two contexts are perfectly overlapping, because the thinker and the speaker are the same person, in FID they are dissociated.¹²

The result of the dissociation is that part of the sentence is interpreted according to one context and part according to the other. Schlenker (2004) argues that, given the peculiarities of FID sentences, indexicals are interpreted with respect to the context of thought—i.e., they identify temporal and spatial locations according to the coordinates of the thinker—in my terminology, the internal source. Pronouns, by contrast, take their reference from the context of utterance—i.e., in my terminology, the external source. Finally, tenses in FID are interpreted in the context of utterance, along with pronouns.

Schlenker's main argument to this effect follows the proposal originally suggested by Partee (1973), who argued that tenses behave as *temporal* pronouns. In this sense, therefore, Schlenker suggests that pronouns and tenses form a natural class.

In the next section I will show that a more fine-grained analysis of verbal morphology appearing in these contexts permits a better understanding of FID phenomena, leading to a different, and perhaps simpler, account.

6.2.3 *The past tense*

As noted in the literature on the topic, in English FID verbs consistently appear in the past form, even when combined with future or present indexicals. This is illustrated in examples (16) and (4), repeated here for simplicity:

- (30) The new ration **did** not start till **tomorrow** and he **had** only four cigarettes left (Orwell, 1984, ch. 5)
- (31) The thing that **now** suddenly **struck** Winston was that his mother's death, nearly thirty years ago, had been tragic and sorrowful in a way that it was no longer possible. Tragedy, he perceived, belonged to the

¹² For development of a proposal in the same vein, see also Sharvit (2004, 2008).

ancient time [...]. Such things, he saw, **could** not happen **today**. **Today** there **were** fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion (Orwell, 1984, ch. 3)

In these examples the verb bears past morphology, irrespective of the location that the indexical temporal locutions assign to the events. For instance, in (30) the first event, *the starting of the ration*, has a future location, provided by *tomorrow*, whereas the verb is in the past form, *did start*.

These facts constitute a puzzle, given that in normal language indexicals must agree with the verbal tense:

(32) Tomorrow/*Yesterday Mary will leave

(33) Yesterday/*Tomorrow Mary left

The solution proposed in the literature so far (Banfield 1982; Doron 1991; Schlenker 2004) is that tenses receive their interpretation according to the speaker's coordinates. Namely, there is a dissociation between indexicals on one side and tenses and pronouns on the other, so that indexicals are interpreted with respect to the subject's temporal location, whereas tenses and pronouns are centred in the speaker's *here* and *now*.

As it turns out, all the sentences in question feature a past tense. Therefore, according to this approach, all the eventualities are placed in the past with respect to the utterance time. Why are they located in the past? The authors mentioned above do not provide a clear-cut answer to this question. However, pursuing their line of reasoning, one might say that for stylistic reasons the narrator demotes the action to some unspecified past because people think of a narrated event as an event which has *already* occurred sometime somewhere. In other words, from this point of view there is no interesting theoretical reason concerning the selection of the verbal form.

On the other hand, however, given that according to this account the choice of the past form is not determined by grammar, but is a mere stylistic device, a different choice should not give rise to ungrammaticality, but should simply be an instantiation of a different literary style.

As pointed out in section 6.1 for Italian—cf. example (9)—the adoption of a different verbal form does determine ungrammaticality. The same holds in English. Consider for instance the following example:

- (34) It **was**, he *now realized*, because of this other incident that he **had** suddenly **decided** to come home and begin the diary *today* (Orwell, 1984, ch. 1)
- (35) *It **is**, he *now realizes*, because of this other incident that he **has** suddenly **decided** to come home and begin the diary *today*

In principle, sentence (35) should be a variant of the FID example in (34), in which the external source decided not to demote the action to the past. Sentence (35) cannot be interpreted as an FID example, but only as a normal assertion, where the pronoun *he* refers to a third person, different from the speaker (and hearer).

In other words, if the explanation of the presence of the past tense is just that the external narrator wants to demote the action from her present, we would expect a possible variant of this style to exist, in which no such a demotion takes place. In other words, if it were just a stylistic choice, one would expect it not to be *obligatory* and hence sentence (35) to be grammatical.

There is another observation concerning examples like (30) above. In that example, two past forms appear—*did start* and *had*. According to the theory I am reviewing here, the past tenses are the grammatical effect of the location of the corresponding eventualities in the past of the external narrator. However, in the example in question the two events are ordered with respect to each other: the event expressed in the first part of the sentence follows the event in the second one, as made clear by the presence of *tomorrow*. The two events, however, are not ordered with respect to the temporal coordinates of the external source, but with respect to the coordinates of the internal one: the second event—the starting of the ration—is future with respect to the temporal location of the internal source and the first one—having only four cigarettes left—is simultaneous with it. This means that there must be somehow an anchoring of the events with respect to the internal source. Note also that this ordering could be obtained

even without the intervention of indexical temporal expressions. Consider for instance the following sentence, based on Orwell's example above:

- (36) The new ration would start soon and he had only four cigarettes left, he thought

In this case, the future orientation of the first sentence is provided by the presence of the future-in-the-past *would start*. The same holds in Italian:

- (37) Il nuovo razionamento sarebbe iniziato presto e lui aveva solo quattro sigarette, pensò
The new ration would start soon and he had only four cigarettes left, he thought

The first sentence contains a future-in-the-past, *sarebbe iniziato* (would start), and the English simple past verbal form *had* is translated by means of the Italian imperfect form *aveva* (see section 6.3.1 below).

In a way, therefore, the analysis provided so far in the literature is unsatisfactory. According to that view, the verbal morphology appearing in FID sentences locates the eventualities only with respect to the temporal location of the external source. In the examples illustrated above, on the contrary, the eventualities do not seem to be temporally located with respect to the external source, but with respect to the internal one. Their temporal location can be achieved by means of temporal indexicals, but also, importantly, by means of verbal morphology—for instance, future-in-the-past vs. simple past.

To solve this puzzle, I will argue that FID sentences are not different from the other contexts analysed so far, in that they resort to two sets of coordinates. In non-FID texts the two sets of coordinates pertain to the subject and the speaker. In FID texts the two sets are identified by the internal source—analogue to the subject—and the external one—analogue to the speaker.

As in all the other contexts, the internal source/subject is identified by means of a third person pronoun and the external source/speaker

by means of a first person one. This is true in both normal prose and FID.¹³

I also propose, contrary to the previous accounts, that there is no dissociation between indexicals on one side and tenses on the other. A cross-linguistic analysis of FID sentences might shed some light on these questions.

6.3 A theoretical proposal for Free Indirect Discourse

6.3.1 *Italian*

On one hand, Schlenker and the other scholars are certainly correct in proposing that the verbal forms appearing in FID texts have the stylistic effect of locating the action in some *unspecified* temporal point. I want to argue however that this point is *not* in the *past* and certainly not in the past with respect to the external source/speaker's coordinates.

My proposal is that the tense is not an ordinary past, but is the form used in fictional contexts, among which there are *dreams*, as discussed in Chapter 4. As should be clear at this point, the main idea of this work is to distinguish the *subject's* coordinates from the *speaker's* coordinates. Both sets play a role in the syntax and interpretation of sentences.

The first important consideration, drawn on the basis of the examples given above, is that in Italian in FID contexts the verb never appears with simple past morphology, and not even with the present perfect one, but always appears in the imperfect form.

¹³ The *subject* can either be a second or third person, as in the following examples:

- i. You believed that Mary had left
- ii. He believed that Mary had left

In the FID second person pronouns cannot work as *subjects* for reasons that will be made clear below.

As I pointed out above in section 6.1, in fact, in Italian FID contexts it is not possible to substitute the imperfect with other tenses of the indicative. I reproduce here the relevant examples:¹⁴

- (38) Era la sua forza [commentava Baudolino a Niceta] e in questo modo lo aveva menato per il naso una prima volta, lo stava menando **ora** e lo avrebbe menato per alcuni anni ancora (Eco, *Baudolino*, p. 264)
 This was(IMP) his strength—Baudolino was commenting to Niceta—and in this way he had(IMP) taken him by the nose once, he was(IMP) leading him by the nose now, and he would(FUT-IN-PAST) take him by the nose for some years still
- (39) # È/ È STATA la sua forza [commentava Baudolino a Niceta] e in questo modo lo HA MENATO/ MENÒ per il naso una prima volta, lo STA MENANDO ora e lo MENERÀ per alcuni anni ancora
 This is/has been (PRES/PRES PERF) his strength—Baudolino was commenting to Niceta—and in this way he has(PRES/PERF/PAST) taken him by the nose once, he is(PRES) leading him by the nose now, and he will(FUT) take him by the nose for some years still

The impossibility of having other indicative tenses is reminiscent of the contrast illustrated in English between the sentences (34) and (35).

Giorgi and Pianesi (2001b, 2004a) pointed out that the imperfect of the indicative is the form used in peculiar contexts such as narration and dreams. I proposed in Chapter 4 that the imperfect is marked as a [–speaker] tense. Here I will develop this proposal and show that the imperfect, due to this property, fits the requirements posed by FID.¹⁵

The starting point is the idea that FID is characterized by the resetting of the speaker's coordinates to those of the subject. In FID sentences the internal source/subject provides the coordinates that permit the temporal location of events, whereas in non-FID sentences, as illustrated in the previous chapters, this role is played by the speaker's coordinates. In other words, the external source decides, as a

¹⁴ The sentence cannot appear with the subjunctive either, given that the subjunctive in whatever context cannot be a main, independent verbal form. For an analysis of tense in fiction, see also Zucchi (2001).

¹⁵ On the usage of the imperfect as a narrative non-past, see also Kamp and Rohrer (1983) and Vet (1985).

literary device, to use the subject's coordinates as the centre of indexicality. The first person, however, both in Italian and English, is reserved to the external source, hence it cannot be used to refer to the subject.

If we look at the facts in this perspective, there is no need to hypothesize a double set of coordinates and a dissociation between tenses and indexicals, as in the previous literature.

Let's consider how this idea applies to actual examples. Consider for instance the following FID sentence:¹⁶

- (40) Era finalmente partita, pensò
She had(IMPFF) finally left, she thought

For simplicity, let's hypothesize that in this sentence, the person *thinking* is the same person who *left*—though this is not necessary. In non-FID clauses, the coordinates represented in C are the speaker's; in FID clauses, according to my hypothesis, they are reset to the subject/internal source's. After resetting the temporal coordinates in C, example (40) corresponds to the following structure:

- (41) [C_{INT SOURCE} ... [T_[-speaker] ... V]]

The features in T are then raised to C. Recall that the imperfect bears the feature [-speaker], but in this case the speaker is no longer represented in C. Therefore, the imperfect can be anchored to the temporal location of the internal source, giving rise to a reading in which resultant state of being left is simultaneous with the thinking.¹⁷

The same happens with a stative predicate:

- (42) Finalmente era felice, pensò
Finally she was happy, she thought

In this case, the state of happiness overlaps with the thinking. As in the example considered above, the left-most position in the C-layer contains the *internal source's* coordinates, due to the resetting of the speaker's coordinates to those of the internal source.

¹⁶ I will discuss the role of the introducing predicate, *pensò* (she thought), in section 6.4.

¹⁷ Therefore, as illustrated above in Chapter 4, the event is interpreted as preceding the thinking.

Consider now what happens when the sentence also contains a temporal indexical:

- (43) *Era partita solo ieri e già le sembrava un secolo, pensò*
 She had(IMP)F left only yesterday and it already seemed a century, she thought

The indexical *ieri* (yesterday), analogously to what I discussed in Chapter 5, must combine with the event. This locates it in the past of the speaker, and precisely in the day before the day of the speaking event. However, in this case the temporal coordinate of the speaker is reset to the temporal coordinate of the internal source. Consequently, the temporal indexical locates the resultant state of the leaving event in the past of the internal source, and precisely in the day before the thinking event.

The imperfect verb then moves to C, as illustrated above, giving rise to the following interpretation: there is a resultant state of a leaving event—which took place the day before the day in which the internal source is thinking—holding at the time of the thinking by the internal source.

The future-in-the-past has the same property as the imperfect, under the hypothesis sketched in Chapter 4. Consider the following example:

- (44) *Finalmente domani sarebbe partita, pensò*
 Finally tomorrow she would leave, she thought

The temporal indexical locates the event in the future of the internal source and the verbal morphology instantiates a modality, expressing futurity, holding at the internal source's temporal location. The interpretation then obtains as above.

Other tenses, such as the past, present perfect, and future indicative, are incompatible with FID, because in that case the event *must* be located with respect to the speaker's coordinate and no resetting is allowed. In other words, in FID contexts, the speaker's coordinate disappears and its role is played by the subject's, repeated twice—once in T and once in C. If the verbal form explicitly encodes reference to the speaker's coordinate, then its presence causes ungrammaticality. On the contrary, the presence of the imperfect,

specified as [–speaker] as discussed in Chapter 4, does not yield ungrammaticality.

Consider now the distribution of the temporal topic. As discussed above, with an imperfect the presence of the temporal topic, either realized in the sentence or present in the context, is obligatory. Consider for instance the following case:

- (45) #Gianni era in giardino
Gianni was (IMPF) in the garden

A sentence such as (45) uttered out of the blue is unacceptable, because the imperfect cannot be properly anchored. The only available anchor in fact would be the utterance time. If anchored to this point, however, the anti-speaker requirement of the imperfect would not be satisfied. As a consequence, an additional anchoring point must be introduced by means of a temporal topic:

- (46) Alle 4, Gianni era in giardino
At four, Gianni was in the garden

If however a sentence such as (45) is an FID sentence, the topic is not necessary:

- (47) Gianni era in giardino, pensò
Gianni was in the garden, she thought

This fact is predicted by my hypothesis. As I said above, in this case the eventuality is interpreted as simultaneous with the temporal coordinate of the internal source. Given that the internal source is not the speaker, the anti-speaker requirement posed by the imperfect is satisfied, even in absence of a temporal topic.

Notice that the same situation arises when the imperfect appears in an embedded clause in non-FID contexts:

- (48) Maria ha detto che Gianni era in giardino
Maria said that Gianni was (IMPF) in the garden

In this case no embedded temporal topic is present and the sentence is felicitous. The reason is that the anchor is provided by the superordinate predicate *ha detto* (said) and therefore it does not coincide with the temporal coordinate of the speaker.

These observations constitute a strong argument in favour of the hypothesis developed in this book with respect to the feature specification of the imperfect in Italian.

6.3.2 *English*

In this section I consider the fact that in English the past tense appears. The explanation is quite trivial at this point, given the analysis provided in Chapter 4 above. In English the past tense can either be a two-place predicate form—i.e., $e > e'$, where e' in main clauses is interpreted as u —or can be a temporal form like the imperfect, namely a one-place predicate which needs to be anchored to a context. The difference between the Italian imperfect and the English past is that the latter does not bear the [–speaker] specification and therefore never needs a temporal topic. Therefore, the English form compatible with FID contexts is the past tense. Moreover, in both languages, the only kind of future that can appear is the future-in-the-past, being the only one not requiring the presence of the speaker's temporal coordinate. Descriptively, the past tense—i.e., the two-place predicate—needs to be anchored in a way analogous to the Italian past, as briefly illustrated in Chapter 4 (see also Giorgi and Pianesi 1997, 2001a). This process is sensitive to the aspectual nature of the predicate—i.e., eventive vs. stative—whereas in dream and FID contexts it is not. This consideration also fits well with what I said so far: in FID contexts there is no anchoring to a superordinate predicate, or to the utterance event. The eventuality in question is simply interpreted as the content of the thought, in a way analogous to dream contexts.

6.4 The syntax of FID sentences

6.4.1 *The distribution of the introducing predicate*

As illustrated by Banfield (1982), FID sentences do not have the syntax of subordinate sentences. For instance they are never introduced by an overt Complementizer:

- (49) (*che) era la sua forza—commentava Baudolino a Niceta
 (That) this was his strength—Baudolino was commenting to Niceta
 (Eco, *Baudolino*, p. 264)

Moreover, FID sentences show the presence of items that could not appear in embedded contexts:

- (50) Ah, Ecco perchè era così, oggi (Deledda, *Le colpe altrui*, p. 76)
 Ah, this was why she was like that, today
- (51) *Pensò che ah, ecco perchè era così, oggi
 He thought that ah, this was why she was like that, today

I am not going to reproduce here the relevant discussion by Banfield (1982)—which I think is quite convincing—but will take for granted that the sentences in question cannot simply be considered syntactically subordinate clauses.

On the other hand, they admit the presence of a main predicate in post-sentential position, as shown in the examples above and in the following one:

- (52) Sarebbe partita domani, pensò
 She would leave tomorrow, she thought

The verbal predicate *pensò* (she thought) cannot appear in pre-sentential position, with an FID interpretation:

- (53) #Pensò sarebbe partita domani
 She thought she would leave tomorrow

In this case, the indexical temporal expression can only be understood as the day after the utterance time—i.e., it is evaluated with respect to the external source's coordinates—and the embedded clause is interpreted as a normal complement clause, with no Complementizer, i.e., where Complementizer Deletion phenomena take place (see Chapter 2). In this sense, it is analogous to the following example, where *domani* (tomorrow) is substituted by an anaphoric expression:

- (54) Pensò sarebbe partita l'indomani/il giorno dopo
 She thought she would leave the next day/the day after

Both *l'indomani* (the next day) and *il giorno dopo* (the day after) are anaphoric temporal locutions. In that case the clause is simply interpreted as a subordinate one, with CD.

Notice that among the examples above only in example (3) does the introducing predicate precede the FID sentences. In that case, however, it is separated by a long pause, represented in the written text by a semicolon. The issue at this point concerns the syntactic position of the introducing predicate, when realized.¹⁸

Consider first that the realization of such a predicate is a root phenomenon, in the sense that, more generally, FID clauses cannot be embedded:

- (55) Gianni, pensò, sarebbe partito domani
Gianni, she thought, would leave tomorrow
- (56) *Luigi disse che Gianni, pensò, sarebbe partito domani
Luigi said that Gianni, she thought, would leave tomorrow

Example (55) has an FID interpretation; example (56) does not. In other words, an FID structure cannot be embedded under another predicate.

Consider now the nature of the phrases preceding the introducing predicate. It is possible to have the whole sentence, the subject, an adverb, or whatever other constituent from an internal position. Therefore, besides (55) above, the following word orders are available:

- (57) Gianni sarebbe partito domani, pensò
Gianni would leave tomorrow, (she) thought
- (58) Francamente/sicuramente/probabilmente, pensò, Gianni sarebbe partito domani
Frankly/surely/probably, she thought, Gianni would leave tomorrow
- (59) Domani, pensò, Gianni sarebbe partito
Tomorrow, she thought, Gianni would leave
- (60) A Maria, pensò, Gianni non avrebbe più fatto regali
To Maria, (she) thought, Gianni would give no more presents

In all the cases listed above, the phrase preceding the introducing predicate is interpreted as a topic—i.e., as given information, *with respect to the context relevant to the internal source*. This observation

¹⁸ Recall that the introducing predicate is not obligatory, even if in literary texts it is most often expressed, as exemplified by the examples provided above.

is important, because it shows that the setting of the context with respect to the coordinates of the internal source affects the whole interpretive process, including the phrases appearing linearly on the left of the introducing predicate.

Notice that if the preposed phrase is a focus, the FID sentence is still possible but quite marginal:

- (61) ??A MARIA (non a Luisa), pensò, Gianni non avrebbe fatto più regali
TO MARIA (not to Luisa), (she) thought, Gianni would give no more presents

Even in this case, for those who accept the sentence, the only possible interpretation is that the focused phrase is new information *in the context relevant to the internal source*.

Finally, the introducing predicate can be simultaneously preceded and followed by a topic or multiple topics:

- (62) Domani, pensò, quel libro, l'avrebbe finalmente venduto
Tomorrow, (she) thought, that book, (she) it-CL would eventually sell
- (63) Domani, a Gianni, pensò, quel libro, gliel'avrebbe finalmente venduto
Tomorrow, to Gianni, (she) thought, that book, (she) to him-it-CL would eventually sell

Consider that the introducing predicate can be a complex expression, as in the literary examples given above: *he now realized*, in example (1); *Lo ricordò dopo uno sforzo di memoria anzi di ragionamento* (she remembered it with an effort of memory, or better to say of reasoning), in example (3); *he perceived, he saw*, in example (4), etc. Therefore, it is not a simple head, but a whole phrase. The issue is to establish what syntactic position it occupies. In the next section I address this issue.

6.4.2 *The syntactic structure*

Let me summarize the properties observed so far:

- The syntactic realization of the introducing predicate appears to be a root phenomenon.
- When preceding the FID sentence, the introducing predicate is followed by a long pause.

- It can follow a topic phrase—and more rarely and marginally a focus phrase. This, however, is interpreted in the scope of the introducing predicate—i.e., as pertaining to the context created around the internal source.

These characteristics closely resemble the properties observed for exclamative sentences—see Zanuttini and Portner (2003)—and vocative structures—see Moro (2003).¹⁹

In particular, Moro (2003: examples (12b) and (13b)) observes the following contrast in vocative sentences between topic and focus:

- (64) ?I ragazzi, o Maria, li aiuta Gianni
 The boys, o Maria, them-CL helps Gianni
 The boys, o Maria, Gianni helps, not the rabbits
- (65) *I RAGAZZI, o Maria, Gianni aiuta, non i conigli
 The boys, o Maria, Gianni helps

This contrast is reminiscent of the one illustrated above between the sentences (60) and (61).

In all these cases, it seems reasonable to hypothesize a position external to the C-layer of the clause, therefore accounting for the root properties of these phenomena.

In particular with respect to FID sentences, I propose that there is a root layer, at the left of the C-layer, which can be characterized as an

¹⁹ Zanuttini and Portner (2003) actually conclude that to characterize exclamative clauses, the notion of *illocutionary force* is not appropriate, whereas the notion of *semantic force* is. Their crucial point is that according to their analysis no single element is present in all and only exclamative clauses, but that instead this clause type is defined by the co-occurrence of two distinct semantic characteristics. In general, the authors question the basic assumption of whether a *syntactic* representation of sentential—root—force is necessary, or whether it just comes out as an implementation from the semantic and pragmatic component.

The perspective of my work is of course different: the central hypothesis, in its strongest formulation, of this monograph is that the semantic interpretation is directly read off the syntax.

Following this perspective, based on their observations, it seems to me that it can safely be concluded that the component(s) marking exclamative clauses are very high in the C-layer, preceding all the other items which can appear there. Further investigation would be necessary, however, to reach a final assessment of this clause type according to the point of view developed here.

informational layer, let's call it INF-layer. The phrase containing the introducing predicate occurs in this layer—say, in the projection of the head INF—and the FID clause follows. INF has the role of resetting the context coordinates to those pertaining to the internal source. It might be the case that Vocatives and Exclamatives have components involving this layer as well, but in this work I will not pursue this particular issue.²⁰

The fact that topics—and only topics—can precede the introducing predicate giving rise to a fully grammatical sentence can be explained exploiting Rizzi's (2002) suggestion that *topics are special*, being neither argumental, quantificational, or modificational. In a sense, therefore, they might appear freely in various contexts, without showing intervention effects. This suggestion might also explain the contrast between topics and focus.²¹

6.5 Conclusion

The proposal developed in this chapter follows the main lines illustrated through the book. Namely, the semantics of indexicality is read off the syntax, which contains all the information relevant to the interpretation.

The literary device of FID consists precisely in a manipulation of the temporal coordinates, in a way analogous to what I illustrated in Chapter 5 with respect to the dependencies from a future. The difference is that in this case the manipulation is *intended* by the narrator, the external source, to create a peculiar stylistic effect. The external

²⁰ Notice that in English the *introducing predicate* can undergo inversion, as discussed by Guéron (2007), as for instance in the following example:

- i. He had never seen a thing like that, *said John*

This might be taken as evidence that the level in question precedes the sentence, as hypothesized here, and that the final word order is due to movement of the whole clause to the left. Further analysis is required, however.

²¹ Actually, Rizzi (2002) advances this proposal only tentatively, among other suggestions, to explain the immunity of topics from locality effects. The proposal seems promising to me, however, and I think it might be interesting to investigate it further.

source decides to substitute the speaker's temporal coordinate with the subject's. The distribution of all indexical items is affected by this modification.

Theoretically, the starting point of my analysis is the observation that the use of this artificial device is *possible*, which in generative grammar reasoning implies that *its results must be compatible with Universal Grammar and compatible with the speaker's competence*. Hence, the manipulation in question must yield as a final result something which is recognized by the native speaker as belonging to her language. This is actually the case, as already explicitly recognized in the literature, and as discussed above, because native speakers do make grammaticality judgements about these sentences, even if the FID is the effect of a literary manipulation.

The other important conclusion from this analysis of FID contexts is that it is necessary to hypothesize a further layer—the *informational layer*—realized only at root level. This layer hosts the introducing predicate, which defines what set of spatial and temporal coordinates will be relevant for the interpretation of the following sentence. In FID structures, the introducing predicate identifies as relevant the spatial and temporal coordinates of its subject. I have already pointed out in Chapter 3 the need for such a level, hosting items such as *frankly*, but here I think that the evidence to this end is even more compelling.

Note that I follow Banfield (1982) in claiming that these structures are not subordinate clauses, and as a matter of fact, they do not exhibit any of the syntax of subordinate contexts. On the other hand, however, in a way they are subordinate to *something*, because it must be clear to the native speaker—in this case the *recipient* of the literary work—that the FID device is at work and that the coordinate shift must take place.

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