Linguistic Shifts: A Relatively Effortless Route to Emotion Regulation?

Ariana Orvell[1] , Özlem Ayduk[2], Jason S. Moser[3], Susan A. Gelman[1], and Ethan Kross[1]

[1]Department of Psychology, University of Michigan; [2]Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley; and [3]Department of Psychology, Michigan State University

Abstract

Prior research indicates that psychological distance facilitates emotion regulation. Here, we propose that the ability to transcend one's immersed perspective may be hidden in plain sight, within the very structure of language. We review evidence regarding two linguistic mechanisms, distanced self-talk and generic "you," that promote emotion regulation by allowing speakers to shift from an immersed to a more distanced perspective through the words they use to reflect on the self (e.g., shifting from "I" to their own name or other non-first-person-singular pronouns). We conclude by suggesting that these linguistic shifts occur relatively seamlessly and thus may provide a less effortful route to emotion regulation.

Keywords

psychological distance, emotion regulation, language, self-control, emotion

> Grief had made him novel, and he called himself
> 'you.'
>
> —V. S. Pritchett (1989, p. 77)

In the summer of 2012, 14-year-old Malala Yousafzai learned arguably the most frightening news that any teenager could receive: The Taliban had vowed to assassinate her in response to her outspoken opposition to their efforts to restrict girls' access to education. When asked how she responded to news of the terrorists' plot, Malala said, "I asked myself, 'What would *you* do *Malala*? *Malala*, just take a shoe and hit him.'" She went on: "'But then I said 'If *you* hit a Talib with *your* shoe, then there will be no difference between *you* and the Talib'" (O'Neil, 2013, 4:30 into interview, italics added). She talked to herself in the second person, using "you" and her own name.

Several months later, Malala's fears were realized: She was shot in the head while riding the bus to school. Malala survived, but the injury caused nerve damage, making it difficult for her to smile. Reassuring her mother that it did not matter, Malala said, "When *you* see death, things change" (Yousafzai & Lamb, 2013, p. 292, italics added). She again used "you," but not to address herself as she did in the quote above or to refer to a specific person. Instead, she extrapolated from her own experience, using "you" to refer to people in general.

Both of these examples highlight the unexpected ways people use their own name and non-first-person pronouns to reflect on their own deeply personal negative experiences. In this article, we propose that these linguistic shifts serve the same overarching function: They promote psychological distance, which facilitates emotion regulation in a variety of contexts (e.g., Bernstein et al., 2015; Finkel, Slotter, Luchies, Walton, & Gross, 2013; Fujita, Trope, Liberman, & Levin-Sagi, 2006; Gross, 1998; Kross & Ayduk, 2017; White & Carlson, 2016). We further suggest that these linguistic shifts occur seamlessly and thus may provide people with a relatively effortless route to the regulation of their emotions.

How Linguistic Shifts Promote Psychological Distance

One of the most distinctive properties of human language is that it requires people to take a stance on any given experience (Slobin, 1996). Language does not permit a speaker to represent the full complexity of a

Corresponding Author:
Ariana Orvell, University of Michigan, Department of Psychology, 530 Church St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1043
E-mail: aorvell@umich.edu

moment. Rather, it requires boiling down a richness of percepts, thoughts, and emotions into a mere handful of words—hence the idiom, "A picture is worth a thousand words." With language, a speaker is forced to be selective, making choices regarding vocabulary, syntax, and perspective within milliseconds (Traxler & Gernsbacher, 2011). For example, a person on stage in front of an audience could say either, "I looked out at the crowd" or "The crowd looked at me." Both sentences express a person's experience of the same event, but they convey dramatically different ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving in the moment.

In line with this idea, our proposal is that two linguistic mechanisms—*distanced self-talk* and *generic "you"*—can alter people's perspective as they reflect on negative experiences in ways that promote psychological distance. The psychological distance afforded by these linguistic shifts allows people to think differently about their situation, promoting emotion regulation. *Distanced self-talk* involves taking an outsider's perspective by using one's own name and non-first-person pronouns (e.g., "you," "she") to address the self. As illustrated above, for example, Malala said to herself, "Malala, just take a shoe and hit him." Given that first-person pronouns are commonly used to refer to the self, whereas names and non-first-person pronouns are habitually used to refer to others, we suggest that reflecting on the self using language typically reserved for others should promote emotion regulation by allowing people to reflect on their experiences from a distance (Kross et al., 2014).

Whereas distanced self-talk involves reflecting on the self from an outside perspective, *generic "you"* involves broadening one's perspective to refer to people in general (similar to how one might use "people" or "one"). Prior work demonstrates that generic noun statements (e.g., "Cats chase mice") express generalizations that apply broadly, beyond any specific time or place (Gelman, Ware, & Kleinberg, 2010; Rhodes, Leslie, & Tworek, 2012). Similarly, using generic "you" to reflect on one's own negative experiences allows a person to craft a generalization but, in this case, one that is deeply self-relevant. For example, consider Malala's use of the word "you" as she reflected on her own near-death experience: "When you see death, things change." We suggest that viewing one's experience in this way, as part of a broader phenomenon that is not restricted to the self, should facilitate emotion regulation by promoting psychological distance (Orvell, Kross, & Gelman, 2017). Figure 1 illustrates these linguistic mechanisms compared with the default mode of reflecting on the self from an immersed perspective, using "I."

Do Distanced Self-Talk and Generic "You" Promote Emotion Regulation?

Experimental research indicates that reflecting on negative personal events using distanced (vs. immersed) self-talk leads people to consider their experiences akin to the perspective of an outside observer (Kross et al., 2014) and promotes emotion regulation in a variety of contexts (Dolcos & Albarracin, 2014; Kross & Ayduk, 2017; Kross et al., 2014; Leitner et al., 2017). When preparing for an anxiety-eliciting speech task, for example, individuals who were cued to use distanced self-talk were more likely to view the upcoming speech as a challenge that they could cope with rather than as a threat over which they had no control (Kross et al., 2014; Streamer, Seery, Kondrak, Lamarche, & Saltsman, 2017). They also reported lower levels of anxiety (Kross et al., 2014) and reduced physiological reactivity (Streamer et al., 2017).

Generic "you" likewise promotes psychological distance, helping people make meaning from negative experiences (Orvell et al., 2017). Experimental evidence demonstrates that increased usage of generic "you" leads people to perceive a negative event as farther away from the self in time and space (Orvell et al., 2017). This increased psychological distance is associated with higher levels of reconstrual (i.e., thinking about the event differently) and lower levels of emotional reactivity when people try to make meaning from negative experiences (Orvell et al., 2017).

Individual-differences research indicates that people spontaneously draw on both of these linguistic mechanisms when placed in situations in which they need to control their thoughts, feelings, or behaviors (Orvell et al., 2017; Zell, Warriner, & Albarracin, 2012). For example, people use "you" to address the self (i.e., distanced self-talk) when working through hypothetical situations that require self-control (Zell et al., 2012), and people are nearly five times more likely to spontaneously use generic "you" when prompted to make meaning from, as opposed to relive, negative experiences (Orvell et al., 2017). These studies demonstrate that people shift from their default, immersed perspective to a more distanced one intuitively in situations that involve emotion regulation.

Both of these linguistic mechanisms are also available to young children, highlighting how the capacity to switch from an immersed to a distanced perspective through language is potentially fundamental. For example, instructing 4- and 5-year-olds to use distanced self-talk increases their performance during an executive-function task and their persistence during a boring work task (White & Carlson, 2016; White et al.,

Jeff's Manuscript Was Just Rejected From a Journal for the Third Time. He Could Think to Himself . . . .

From a Default, Immersed Perspective		From a Distanced Perspective Using Distanced Self-Talk		From a Distanced Perspective Using Generic "You"	
Question to Self	Resulting Construal	Question to Self	Resulting Construal	Question to Self	Resulting Construal
How do **I** feel about being rejected?	**I'll** never get better. **I'm** a terrible academic.	**Jeff**, how do **you** feel about being rejected?	Well, **Jeff**, **you** can make this paper even better now.	How do **you** feel when **you're** rejected?	Well, **you** learn more from failure than from success.
Here, Jeff Is Maintaining a Default, Immersed Perspective by Thinking About Himself Using "I."		Here, Jeff Is Switching Perspectives by Talking to Himself Directly Using His Own Name and "You."		Here, Jeff Is Switching Perspectives by Generalizing From His Own Experience and Referring to People in General Using Generic "You."	

OR · OR

Fig. 1. Three perspectives that individuals can take when reflecting on the self. The orange text represents how the same content can be expressed using immersed self-talk, distanced self-talk, and generic "you," respectively. The blue text represents the theorized implications of adopting each of these perspectives when reflecting on one's negative emotions. Pronouns are boldfaced for clarity. Whereas immersed self-talk typically leads to increased negative thoughts about the self, distanced self-talk and generic "you" promote psychological distance, which should in turn allow people to more adaptively reconstrue their situation. The distinction between distanced self-talk statements in the second person and generic "you" statements in the second person primarily lies in the identity of the referent. For distanced self-talk statements in the second person, the referent is the self; for self-relevant generic "you" statements, the referent is people in general. Generic "you" statements are further characterized by "you" accompanied by a verb in the present tense, which is not marked by a temporal aspect.

2017). Children as young as 5 years old also spontaneously use generic "you" when instructed to make meaning from (vs. relive) negative hypothetical events, demonstrating that they are able to generalize from negative experiences by understanding them as representative of broader phenomena (Orvell, Kross, & Gelman, 2019).

In sum, distanced self-talk and generic "you" provide adults and children with a way to shift from an immersed to a more distanced perspective through the words they use to reflect on the self. In this way, both of these linguistic shifts serve as levers that promote emotion regulation by enhancing psychological distance. At the same time, because these linguistic mechanisms are readily observable, they also function as windows, providing insight into when people are regulating their emotions. In this vein, these mechanisms add to a growing body of research on other linguistic indices of distance that provide insight into emotion-regulation processes (e.g., Chung & Pennebaker, 2007; Doré, Morris, Burr, Picard, & Ochsner, 2017; Nook, Schleider, & Somerville, 2017; Tackman et al., 2019).

A Relatively Effortless Route to Emotion Regulation?

We began by proposing that the structure of language allows people to gain psychological distance through the words they use when reflecting on the self. Here, we advance the hypothesis that these linguistic shifts occur relatively seamlessly and may thus provide people with a less effortful route to emotion regulation compared with traditionally studied cognitive emotion-regulation strategies that involve, for example, assuming the perspective of a detached observer when reflecting on negative experiences.

Traditionally studied cognitive emotion-regulation strategies directly cue participants to think differently about an emotional experience. For example, participants may be instructed to positively reinterpret the stimulus itself or the nature of the situation, or to adopt the perspective of a detached observer (Ochsner, Silvers, & Buhle, 2012). Meta-analyses reveal that implementing these types of reappraisal tactics is cognitively effortful, relying on frontoparietal circuitry to effectively downregulate affective processing in other areas of the brain, principally those that are involved in generating emotional responses (e.g., Braunstein, Gross, & Ochsner, 2017; Buhle et al., 2014). In contrast, distanced self-talk and generic "you" rely on shifting the parts of speech that a person uses to reflect on the self to promote psychological distance and hasten cognitive change. We therefore suggest that distanced self-talk and generic "you" may be less cognitively demanding than

traditionally studied routes to reappraisal, including those that aim to promote psychological distance (such as assuming the perspective of a detached observer).

This hypothesis is supported by the linguistic concept of *shifters*, which are words whose meaning changes depending on the identity of speakers or their location (a phenomenon also known as *deixis*; e.g., Jakobson, 1957). These include personal pronouns (such as "I" and "you") and other words (e.g., "here," "there," "this," "that") that situate a speaker in a given context. The hallmark of deixis is that the words' referents change as a function of context. For example, if Maya asks, "Can you pass me the cookies?" and Dani replies, "Here you go," the referent of "you" changes, referring to Dani first and Maya second. By age 2, most children grasp the shifting nature of pronouns—using "me" to refer to the self and "you" to refer to others—and understand that other people do the same. Moreover, at this young age, children flexibly shift between canonical and generic uses of "you" (Orvell, Kross, & Gelman, 2018). This sensitivity reveals an early appreciation that perspective is fluid and context sensitive. Starting early in development and continuing into adulthood, then, individuals repeatedly and flexibly shift perspective to communicate. Furthermore, they do so habitually and extremely quickly—within milliseconds (Filik, Sanford, & Leuthold, 2008).

We suggest, therefore, that adopting different perspectives on the self is intrinsic to language use, highly practiced, and entrenched in everyday communicative practices, providing people with the ability to seamlessly shift from an immersed to a distanced perspective. The psychological distance afforded by these linguistic shifts may thus facilitate emotion regulation relatively effortlessly.

Empirical Evidence

Three lines of evidence provide initial support for the hypothesis that these linguistic shifts may provide people with a relatively effortless route to emotion regulation.

First, a pair of event-related-potential (ERP) and functional MRI experiments illustrates that reflecting on negative emotions using distanced (vs. immersed) self-talk reduces self-reported negative affect and neural activity associated with self-referential emotional processing without leading to increased brain activity in regions identified a priori as being associated with the effortful control of emotion (Moser et al., 2017). These findings stand in contrast to a large body of research linking the efficacy of traditionally studied cognitive reappraisal strategies (including those that target enhanced psychological distance, such as adopting the perspective of a detached observer) to increased

activation in these same cognitive control networks (for a review, see Buhle et al., 2014; note that this meta-analysis did not include studies examining the neural correlates of distanced self-talk or generic "you").

Another way to examine the role of effort as it relates to distanced self-talk and generic "you" is by examining how they operate under stress, which taxes the same cognitive control networks needed to successfully implement traditionally studied reappraisal strategies (Arnsten, 2009). In this vein, several studies have found that reappraisal is less effective under highly stressful conditions (Raio, Orederu, Palazzolo, Shurick, & Phelps, 2013; Shafir, Schwartz, Blechert, & Sheppes, 2015; Sheppes, Brady, & Samson, 2014). To the extent that linguistic shifters rely less on cognitive control networks when used in the context of emotion regulation, we would not expect emotional intensity to influence their effectiveness. Consistent with this idea, findings from three experiments demonstrated that distanced self-talk is effective for downregulating negative affect, even when people reflect on highly stressful experiences (Kross et al., 2017; Orvell et al., 2019).

Finally, a third way to examine the issue of effort is by considering how these linguistic mechanisms operate developmentally when cognitive control networks such as the frontoparietal network are still developing (Anderson, 2002). Several studies indicate that young children, including those with low levels of executive function and effortful control, benefit from distanced self-talk in situations that require emotion regulation (Grenell et al., 2019; White & Carlson, 2016; White et al., 2017; also see Kaplow et al., 2018). Furthermore, children as young as 5 years old spontaneously use generic "you" to generalize from negative experiences when cued to make meaning (Orvell et al., 2019). Given that young children can flexibly use these linguistic mechanisms, these findings are consistent with the possibility that using these linguistic devices to reflect on the self is a relatively effortless process that promotes emotion regulation by enhancing psychological distance.

In sum, several lines of evidence support the possibility that these linguistic devices may provide people with a relatively effortless route to emotion regulation. These findings contribute to a growing body of research on effortless, automatic, and habitual routes to self-regulation (e.g., Braunstein et al., 2017; Fishbach & Shah, 2006; Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2004; Fujita & Han, 2009).

Future research should continue to interrogate the extent to which distanced self-talk and generic "you" promote emotion regulation relatively effortlessly and should directly compare them with other emotion-regulation strategies, including cognitive reappraisal, distraction, and suppression. Future research should also examine their implications for regulating a wider range of emotions and their efficacy among vulnerable populations who struggle to implement traditional reappraisal strategies (e.g., children or individuals with clinical depression).

Concluding Comment

Decades of research have focused on identifying how people can effectively control their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. We suggest that one solution may lie in the structure of language and, more specifically, in the words people use to reflect on the self. In this way, linguistic routes to emotion regulation may be more basic and foundational than previously recognized.

Recommended Reading

Buhle, J. T., Silvers, J. A., Wager, T. D., Lopez, R., Onyemekwu, C., Kober, H., . . . Ochsner, K. N. (2014). (See References). A meta-analysis of the brain regions involved in the cognitive control of emotion.

Kross, E., & Ayduk, O. (2017). (See References). A thorough review of the theory and research on self-distancing.

Moser, J. S., Dougherty, A., Mattson, W. I., Katz, B., Moran, T. P., Guevarra, D., . . . Kross, E. (2017). (See References). An empirical article providing evidence suggesting that distanced self-talk promotes emotion regulation without relying excessively on cognitive control networks.

Orvell, A., Kross, E., & Gelman, S. A. (2017). (See References). A representative article illustrating research on the psychological functions of generic "you."

Raio, C. M., Orederu, T. A., Palazzolo, L., Shurick, A. A., & Phelps, E. A. (2013). (See References). An empirical article demonstrating that experiencing high levels of stress impairs traditionally studied routes to cognitive reappraisal.

Action Editor

Randall W. Engle served as action editor for this article.

ORCID iD

Ariana Orvell https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2574-2951

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared that there were no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship or the publication of this article.

References

Anderson, P. (2002). Assessment and development of executive function (EF) during childhood. *Child Neuropsychology*, *8*(2), 71–82.

Arnsten, A. F. (2009). Stress signalling pathways that impair prefrontal cortex structure and function. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, *10*, 410–422.

Bernstein, A., Hadash, Y., Lichtash, Y., Tanay, G., Shepherd, K., & Fresco, D. M. (2015). Decentering and related constructs: A critical review and metacognitive processes model. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 10*, 599–617.

Braunstein, L. M., Gross, J. J., & Ochsner, K. N. (2017). Explicit and implicit emotion regulation: A multi-level framework. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 12*, 1545–1557.

Buhle, J. T., Silvers, J. A., Wager, T. D., Lopez, R., Onyemekwu, C., Kober, H., . . . Ochsner, K. N. (2014). Cognitive reappraisal of emotion: A meta-analysis of human neuroimaging studies. *Cerebral Cortex, 24*, 2981–2990.

Chung, C. K., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2007). The psychological function of function words. In K. Fiedler (Ed.), *Social communication: Frontiers of social psychology* (pp. 343–359). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Dolcos, S., & Albarracin, D. (2014). The inner speech of behavioral regulation: Intentions and task performance strengthen when you talk to yourself as a You. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 44*, 636–642.

Doré, B. P., Morris, R. R., Burr, D. A., Picard, R. W., & Ochsner, K. N. (2017). Helping others regulate emotion predicts increased regulation of one's own emotions and decreased symptoms of depression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 43*, 729–739.

Filik, R., Sanford, A. J., & Leuthold, H. (2008). Processing pronouns without antecedents: Evidence from event-related brain potentials. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, 20*, 1315–1326.

Finkel, E. J., Slotter, E. B., Luchies, L. B., Walton, G. M., & Gross, J. J. (2013). A brief intervention to promote conflict reappraisal preserves marital quality over time. *Psychological Science, 24*, 1595–1601.

Fishbach, A., & Shah, J. Y. (2006). Self-control in action: Implicit dispositions toward goals and away from temptations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 90*, 820–832.

Fitzsimons, G. M., & Bargh, J. A. (2004). Automatic self-regulation. In R. F. Baumeister & K. D. Vohs (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation: Research, theory, and applications* (pp. 151–170). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Fujita, K., & Han, H. A. (2009). Moving beyond deliberative control of impulses: The effect of construal levels on evaluative associations in self-control conflicts. *Psychological Science, 20*, 799–804.

Fujita, K., Trope, Y., Liberman, N., & Levin-Sagi, M. (2006). Construal levels and self-control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 90*, 351–367.

Gelman, S. A., Ware, E. A., & Kleinberg, F. (2010). Effects of generic language on category content and structure. *Cognitive Psychology, 61*, 273–301.

Grenell, A., Prager, E., Schaefer, C., Kross, E., Duckworth, A., & Carlson, S. M. (2019). Individual differences in the effectiveness of self-distancing for young children's emotion regulation. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 37*, 84–100.

Gross, J. J. (1998). Antecedent-and response-focused emotion regulation: Divergent consequences for experience, expression, and physiology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 224–237.

Jakobson, R. (1957). *Shifters, verbal categories and the Russian verb*. Cambridge, MA: Russian Language Project, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University.

Kaplow, J. B., Wardecker, B. M., Layne, C. M., Kross, E., Burnside, A., Edelstein, R. S., & Prossin, A. R. (2018). Out of the mouths of babes: Links between linguistic structure of loss narratives and psychosocial functioning in parentally bereaved children. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 31*, 342–351.

Kross, E., & Ayduk, O. (2017). Self-distancing: Theory, research, and current directions. In J. M. Olson (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 55, pp. 81–136). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Kross, E., Bruehlman-Senecal, E., Park, J., Burson, A., Dougherty, A., Shablack, H., . . . Ayduk, O. (2014). Self-talk as a regulatory mechanism: How you do it matters. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 106*, 304–324.

Kross, E., Vickers, B. D., Orvell, A., Gainsburg, I., Moran, T. P., Boyer, M., . . . Ayduk, O. (2017). Third-person self-talk reduces Ebola worry and risk perception by enhancing rational thinking. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 9*, 387–409.

Leitner, J. B., Ayduk, O., Mendoza-Denton, R., Magerman, A., Amey, R., Kross, E., & Forbes, C. E. (2017). Self-distancing improves interpersonal perceptions and behavior by decreasing medial prefrontal cortex activity during the provision of criticism. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 12*, 534–543.

Moser, J. S., Dougherty, A., Mattson, W. I., Katz, B., Moran, T. P., Guevarra, D., . . . Kross, E. (2017). Third-person self-talk facilitates emotion regulation without engaging cognitive control: Converging evidence from ERP and fMRI. *Scientific Reports, 7*, Article 4519. doi:10.1038/s41598-017-04047-3

Nook, E. C., Schleider, J. L., & Somerville, L. H. (2017). A linguistic signature of psychological distancing in emotion regulation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 146*, 337–346. doi:10.1037/xge0000263

Ochsner, K. N., Silvers, J. A., & Buhle, J. T. (2012). Functional imaging studies of emotion regulation: A synthetic review and evolving model of the cognitive control of emotion. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1251*(1), E1–E24. doi:10.1111/j.1749-6632.2012.06751.x

O'Neil, C. (Director). (2013). Malala Yousafzai [Television series episode]. In J. Stewart (Producer), *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*. New York, NY: NEP Studio 52.

Orvell, A., Kross, E., & Gelman, S. A. (2017). How "you" makes meaning. *Science, 355*, 1299–1302.

Orvell, A., Kross, E., & Gelman, S. A. (2018). That's how "you" do it: Generic *you* expresses norms during early childhood. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 165*, 183–195. doi:10.1016/j.jecp.2017.04.015

Orvell, A., Kross, E., & Gelman, S. A. (2019). Lessons learned: Young children's use of generic-you to make meaning from negative experiences. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 148*, 184–191. doi:10.1037/xge0000445.

Orvell, A., Vickers, B., Drake, B., Ayduk, O., Moser, J., Verduyn, P., & Kross, E. (2019). *Promoting emotion regulation under high intensity conditions: The role of distanced self-talk*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Pritchett, V. S. (1989). A trip to the seaside. In *A careless widow and other stories* (pp. 69–88). New York, NY: Random House.

Raio, C. M., Orederu, T. A., Palazzolo, L., Shurick, A. A., & Phelps, E. A. (2013). Cognitive emotion regulation fails the stress test. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA, 110*, 15139–15144.

Rhodes, M., Leslie, S. J., & Tworek, C. M. (2012). Cultural transmission of social essentialism. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA, 109*, 13526–13531.

Shafir, R., Schwartz, N., Blechert, J., & Sheppes, G. (2015). Emotional intensity influences pre-implementation and implementation of distraction and reappraisal. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 10*, 1329–1337.

Sheppes, G., Brady, W. J., & Samson, A. C. (2014). In (visual) search for a new distraction: The efficiency of a novel attentional deployment versus semantic meaning regulation strategies. *Frontiers in Psychology, 5*, Article 346. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00346

Slobin, D. I. (1996). From "thought and language" to "thinking for speaking." In J. J. Gumperz & S. C. Levinson (Eds.), *Rethinking linguistic relativity* (pp. 70–96). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Streamer, L., Seery, M. D., Kondrak, C. L., Lamarche, V. M., & Saltsman, T. L. (2017). Not I, but she: The beneficial effects of self-distancing on challenge/threat cardiovascular responses. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 70*, 235–241. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2016.11.008

Tackman, A. M., Sbarra, D. A., Carey, A. L., Donnellan, M. B., Horn, A. B., Holtzman, N. S., . . . Mehl, M. R. (2019). Depression, negative emotionality, and self-referential language: A multi-lab, multi-measure, and multi-language-task research synthesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 116*, 817–834.

Traxler, M. J., & Gernsbacher, M. A. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of psycholinguistics*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

White, R. E., & Carlson, S. M. (2016). What would Batman do? Self-distancing improves executive function in young children. *Developmental Science, 19*, 419–426.

White, R. E., Prager, E. O., Schaefer, C., Kross, E., Duckworth, A. L., & Carlson, S. M. (2017). The "Batman effect": Improving perseverance in young children. *Child Development, 88*, 1563–1571. doi:10.1111/cdev.12695

Yousafzai, M., & Lamb, C. (2013). *I am Malala: The girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.

Zell, E., Warriner, A. B., & Albarracín, D. (2012). Splitting of the mind: When the *you* I talk to is me and needs commands. *Social Psychological & Personality Science, 3*, 549–555.