

Inner Speech in Action

Final Workshop

June 10, 2026

Room 23.103
Building Mercè Rodoreda
Campus Ciutadella
Pompeu Fabra University
c/ Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-27
08005 Barcelona

9,45h Welcome *Marta Jorba*

Session 1. Chair: Pol Herrero

10,00h—11,15h: **Johanne S. K. Nedergaard** (University of Copenhagen): The absence of an inner voice: Evidence, open questions, and the road ahead.

Abstract: Variation in the experience of inner speech has in recent years received more serious research attention, both in terms of how to measure such variation reliably and what the potential consequences could be of trait-level individual differences in the experience of inner speech. Both in the public sphere (on social media, etc.) and in academic publications, the claim that some people do not have an inner voice has circulated. We have termed this phenomenon anendophasia. In this talk, I will discuss the evidence for such a claim with a basis in questionnaire data, behavioural data, and experience sampling data. I will argue that while there is good reason to take the reported experiences of people with anendophasia seriously, there are still many questions that we do not have the answers to, such as: Is the experience of very little inner speech continuous with a complete absence of inner speech experience? How is anendophasia related to phenomena like aphantasia, the weakness or absence of visual imagery? What positive and negative consequences does anendophasia have in domains such as social cognition, problem-solving, reading and writing, and mental health? In the talk, I will explore these unanswered questions and potential answers based on detailed, but informal, reports from people with anendophasia as well as possible concrete hypotheses and ways of empirically testing them in future studies.

11,15h—11,30h: *Coffee break*

Session 2. Chair: Adriana Alcaraz-Sánchez

11,30h—12,45h: **Ben Alderson-Day** (Durham University): Where next for inner speech?

Abstract: In this talk I will reflect on recent research and new directions in the study of inner speech, incorporating the question of anendophasia, lessons from aphantasia research and the relevance of inner speech to AI. I will argue that inner speech is going through a transformative phase of re-expansion as we move into new kinds of

dialogues with others, and I will consider the implications of this move for psychopathology and mental health.

12,45h—14,00h. **Daniel Gregory** (University of Valencia): Inner speech, fragmentation, and metacognition.

Abstract: At least since Vygotsky, it has been said that inner speech is somehow condensed or fragmented, but there have been few clear suggestions as to exactly what this might mean. I suggest that, on most interpretations, it is either not true that inner speech is condensed / fragmented or true but not in a philosophically interesting way. I point towards some possible ways that inner speech might be condensed / fragmented in philosophically interesting ways, especially regarding metacognition.

14h—15,30: *Lunch at the Cantine*

Session 3. Chair: Víctor Verdejo

15,30h—16,45h. **Tom Frankfort** (University of London): Reflections on the following claim: the words ‘thought’ and ‘language’ pick out a single natural kind.

Abstract: Some linguists have recently made the claim that “...for the kind of thought expressed in human language, the words ‘thought’ and ‘language’ do not and cannot pick out different natural kinds” (Hinzen, W., Txuss, M., Wiltschko, M. (2024) “A new argument for linguistic determinants of human thought,” *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 47:1027–1043.) My talk takes the claim seriously, without arguing either for or against it. The talk has three parts. (1) I consider how we should understand the claim: what kind of identity is being claimed? (2) I look briefly at trends in developmental psychology, and in the philosophy of inner speech, which might be thought to cohere with it. (3) The main part of the talk explores the implication of the claim (should it be true) for the nature of two so-called ‘propositional attitudes’. Specifically, I argue that the claim should encourage us to take more seriously two currently unorthodox philosophical theses, one concerning the attitude of belief, the other concerning the nature of intentions.

16,45h—17,00h: *Coffee break*

Session 4. Chair: Daphne Bernués

17,00h—18,15h. **Zachary Irving** (University of Virginia; *online*): The Problem of Inner Speech for the Dynamic Theory of Mind-Wandering

Abstract: William James said that “the natural tendency of attention when left to itself is to wander to ever new things”. He was right. Mind-wandering is pervasive during nearly every human activity, occupying up to half our waking thoughts. Any complete theory of attention—indeed, any complete theory of mind—must therefore explain its “natural tendency to wander.” Our dynamic theory argues that attention wanders when it is free from two kinds of mechanisms—executive control and salience—that guide attention to focus for extended periods of time. Because mind-wandering is free from these forms of guidance, attention wanders between topics unchecked. The dynamic theory has major advantages: it is a unified philosophical and scientific model of mind-wandering, which makes predictions that we confirm using a novel

instrument. Yet inner speech poses an unsolved problem for the dynamic theory: mind-wandering often involves inner speech; yet inner speech is guided by syntactic and semantic norms; therefore, mind-wandering can be guided (contra the dynamic theory). To solve the problem of inner speech, I appeal to the description-dependence of guidance. Mind-wandering is unguided attention, so it is (by definition) not guided under the description attention. Yet it can be guided under the description inner speech. This solution is not ad hoc, but rather points to a general truth: although mind-wandering's dynamics are unguided and pseudo-random, its contents are typically guided and sensible. Concretely, this means that a wandering attention meanders between disparate, but coherent and sensible thoughts.

20h: *Dinner*

Free attendance, but please **register** by writing an e-mail to daphnececilia.bernues@upf.edu and marta.jorba@upf.edu

Funded by the project "Inner Speech in Action: New Perspectives" (PID2020- 115052GA-I00/MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033), Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities/Research State Agency, and with the collaboration of the project "Communication, Inner Speech, and Mental Health" (CIHPD4A7507), funded by Fundación Ramón Areces.