

### ***EDITORS' INTRODUCTION***

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We have a great pleasure to introduce to the IJDS readers a new special issue, which is entirely devoted to the empirical approach to the dialogical self (DS). We believe that testing a theory through empirical investigations lies in a very heart of the science and this of course holds true for the dialogical science as well. However, on the ground of the dialogical; approach the empirical challenge is particularly hard because there are described here the phenomena that are so complex, multiaspectual and subtle at the same time, that it becomes extremely difficult to grasp them empirically in a methodologically rigorous way.

Nevertheless we think we succeeded as guest editors in collecting valuable papers that are sound in their meaning and meet high criteria of scientific research. Actually, this success was even bigger than expected: in a response to our invitation we received so rich collection of articles that it seemed reasonable to arrange it into two parts, each of which being a separate special issue of IJDS. They are named respectively “Empirical Approach to the Dialogical Self: Expanding on the Theory” (Volume 4, Issue 1 of IJDS, 2010) and “Empirical Approach to the Dialogical Self: Applications” (Volume 4, Issue 2 of IJDS, 2010). However, one should not infer from this division that papers included in the first part (“Expanding on the theory”) have no application value and those classified to the second part (“Application”) do not develop the theory itself. By dividing the body of articles into these two parts we rather intended to highlight their main implication and their relation to Dialogical Self Theory (DST). It should be noted yet that by “application” we meant not only using the DST to describe or resolve some practical problems but also bringing new dialogical insights into other theoretical domains or approaches. In turn, “expanding of the theory” is our etiquette for those investigations that have a potential to broaden the DST itself or to elaborate a given part of it in more detailed levels. Yet we think that all of the articles gathered in these two special issues enrich theoretical perspective of dialogical science as well as contribute to its impact on other perspectives or ways of practice.

The articles gathered in each of these special issues have their separate focuses mentioned in the issues' titles. However, they also share more than solely being

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empirically grounded. The predominant majority of the studies presented here adopt some idiographic elements in their basically nomothetic procedures. Therefore they are able to formulate some generalizations as a result of data analysis, but these data stem from recognizing of the particular world of the individual. Integration – in the same study - of nomothetic and idiographic research methods is the guiding idea of these special issues.

*Personality psychology can benefit from a combination of nomothetic and idiographic research methodologies. This creates a need for new theoretical frameworks that incorporate both nomo-concepts, enabling the study of people in general and idio-concepts, enabling the psychologist to understand the particular world of the individual* (Hermans, 1988, p. 785).

These words were written more than twenty years ago by Hubert Hermans, who later created the DST being an embodiment of these ideas. Another way of embodying them in a psychological theory is KAPA model by another recognized psychologist Daniel Cervone (2004), who – as can be guessed from his writing (Shadel, Cervone, Niaura and Abrams, 2004) – probably could agree to set his own name under the above-quoted words of Hermans. This is not an accident then that a paper by Daniel Cervone, co-authored by E. Samuel Winer, opens the first of the two special issues. The articles gathered in both issues truly constitute a set of diversified examples of how to conduct a research, that is methodologically correct (in terms of neopositivistic correctness) and at the same time is thorough and open to the unique system of meanings maintained by a person.

In the special issue “Empirical Approach to the Dialogical Self: Expanding the Theory” we introduce few articles showing possible directions of research inspired by narrative and dialogical approach in personality psychology. Each article represents a unique way of theoretical and empirical exploration of the phenomena which can be explained on the basis or in reference to the dialogical theory of the self by Hubert Hermans (2001, 2002). Variety of topics under investigation gives an impression of an inspiring and seminal power of the theory. Moreover, the authors make endeavors to confront the theory with other approaches present in main stream psychology and to look for common or specific aspects of the theory under consideration, as well as they try to conduct empirical investigations not only based on phenomenological approach but – most important – using experimental or correlation approach. Both ways of connecting dialogical self with empirical studies done in frames of social-cognitive, cognitive, experimental or questionnaire approach seem fruitful and worth further development. Thus, introducing this set of articles we intend not only to show what has been done up till now, or what is under investigation just now, but to propose some trails leading to future even more interesting research.

## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Six articles constitute the contents of this issue. In the first article Daniel Cervone and E. Samuel Winer on the one hand discuss two modern approaches in contemporary psychology arguing that social-cognitive and narrative-dialogical analyses are complementary; on the other hand, using novel analyses of dataset, they show, how variations in the complexity of dialogues describing personal features predict item-to-item variance on self-efficacy measure. Thus the article aims at introducing a link of the knowledge structures studied in frames of social-cognitive approach and the discursive processes studied in frames of dialogical approach. The article written by Piotr Oleś, Elwira Brygola and Malgorzata Sibinska is focused on the dialogues initiated between I-positions located in two different points of life span. The authors call them temporal dialogues, and they check if such dialogues connecting present with the past or/and present with the future change affective state and influence meaning of life also measured as a state. In the next article Anna Batory argues that identity organization is shaped by two factors, i.e. dialogical functions of the self as well as fulfillment of the basic motives underlying identity formation: self-esteem, efficacy, continuity, distinctiveness, belonging and meaning; and empirical findings support such expectations. In her article Małgorzata Puchalska-Wasył distinguishes three forms of an internal dialogical activity – monologue, dialogue, and a change of perspective – and compares them on the angle of seven general functions of internal dialogues, namely: support, substitution, exploration, bond, self-improvement, insight and self-guidance. The last two articles are devoted to explorations of cognitive architecture of the dialogical self. In the first of them Katarzyna Stemplewska-Żakowicz, Dorota Kobylńska, Hubert Suszek and Bartosz Szymczyk introduce their model of the discursive mind, which describes the presumable structural basis of DS in terms of social-cognitive approach to personality. The second article of the same group of authors describes a series of experiments aimed at the empirical verification of the model. Although not all theoretical expectations were confirmed by the results obtained, the main concepts of DST – such as I-position and positioning – has been given empirical support and can be regarded now as not only interesting ideas, but as actual phenomena.

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