DIALOGUE, MONOLOGUE, AND CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE –
THREE FORMS OF DIALOGICALITY

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ABSTRACT. Dialogicality is not a new topic in psychology. Recently, however, Hubert Hermans' conception of the dialogical self has contributed to a growth of interest in the issue. Some studies allow one to speculate that this broad phenomenon is not homogeneous. Within internal dialogical activity, at least 3 subgroups of processes can be distinguished: (1) the monologue, (2) the dialogue, and (3) a change of perspective. In this paper it is stated that, generally, there are seven meta-functions fulfilled by internal dialogicality, namely Support, Substitution, Exploration, Bond, Self-Improvement, Insight and Self-Guidance. Additionally, this study confirmed the legitimacy of the theoretical distinction between dialogue, monologue, and a changing point of view by showing their functional differentiation

Keywords: dialogical self, internal dialogue, monologue, changing perspective, imaginary interlocutor

According to Marková (1987; see also: Marková, 2005; Hermans, 2000), we think on the basis of Aristotelian logic even if we are not aware of this fact in our everyday lives. Aristotle's law of noncontradiction is especially ubiquitous in Western thinking. In accordance with this law, the same attribute cannot, at the same time, belong and not belong to the same thing and in the same respect. This means that when an object is attributed a certain feature (e.g. "it is hot"), it cannot, at the same time and in the same respect, have the opposite feature (e.g. "it is cold"). As long as we deal with static phenomena, this law of noncontradiction is certainly applicable (e.g. if we define a hot object as cold, we could burn our hands). However, the law runs into problems when we apply it to dynamic phenomena which are exemplified by human beings. Although Marková's statement seems to be improbable, Heraclitus and Hegel come to her aid.

Heraclitus' philosophy was founded on the belief that the world is in a state of constant change, and he reasoned that, when things appear to be stable, it is only because the opposites are present together in a state of dynamic balance. In other words, opposites always co-exist, and the tension between them keeps the world in this state of

constant change (Tatarkiewicz, 1981). Hegel, like Heraclitus, claims that "Contradiction is at the root of all movement and vitality" (quoted by Marková, 1987, p. 280).

In the twentieth century, this way of thinking as initiated by Heraclitus and continued by Hegel was reflected in psychology. Not only were the opposites of human nature begun to be discussed, but also the dialogue between them.

Mead (1934) and Vygotsky (1962, 1978, 1999) are recognized as the pioneers in the field of dialogicality in psychology. The functions of internal dialogues were also appreciated by Jung (1961), and by representatives of the Gestalt theory. Recently, Hermans has contributed to the growth of interest in this phenomenon. His concept of the dialogical self was based on the metaphor of the polyphonic novel.

The concept of the polyphonic novel was first proposed by Bakhtin in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (2003). The principal feature of the polyphonic novel is that it is composed of a number of independent and mutually-opposing viewpoints as embodied by characters involved in dialogical relationships. Each character in this novel is considered to be 'ideologically authoritative and independent', which means that each of them is perceived as the author of his or her own view of the world, and not as an object of Dostoevsky's all-encompassing artistic vision. The characters are capable of standing beside their creator, disagreeing with the author, even rebelling against him. It is as if Dostoevsky enters his novels wearing different masks, giving him the opportunity to present different, and even opposing, views of the self and of the world, representing a multiplicity of voices of the 'same' Dostoevsky. There is a plurality of consciousnesses and worlds instead of a multitude of characters and fates within a unified objective world, all organized by Dostoevsky's individual consciousness. As the characters enter into relationships of questions and answers, agreement and disagreement, multiple voices accompany and oppose one another in dialogical ways, like in a polyphonic musical work (Hermans, 1996, 2003, 2004; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2001; Hermans, Kempen & Van Loon, 1992).

Drawing inspiration from James' distinction between the two main components of the self, namely the I and the Me, and Bakhtin's metaphor of the polyphonic novel, Hermans conceptualized the self as a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions in an imaginal landscape. The I has the possibility to move, as in a space, from one position to another in accordance with changes in situation and time. At the same time, the I has the capacity to imaginatively endow each position with a voice, so that each of them has a story to tell about its own experiences from its own stance. In that sense, each position is like the author of its own story. Moreover, the voices function like interacting characters in a story, involved in a dialogical process of questions and answers, agreement and disagreement. (Hermans, 2003, 2004; Hermans & Hermans-

Jansen, 1995; Hermans et al., 1992). All these imaginary interactions between I-positions can be defined as internal dialogical activity.

This broad phenomenon does not seem to be homogeneous. Josephs' (1998) study, which focused on constructing the deceased's image and voice at the graveside, provided examples of imaginary communication which allowed us to speculate that, within internal dialogical activity, one can distinguish at least three subgroups of processes: (1) the monologue, (2) the dialogue, and (3) a change of perspective. 66-year-old Lena, who had lost her husband Max about one year before, had monologues and dialogues with him standing at his graveside, and she often took his point of view as well. Monologues, called by Josephs 'one-sided communication', were statements Lena addressed to Max though not expecting his answer (e.g. "Hello, here I am", "Something very good has happened to me. I must tell you" etc.). Dialogues, being two-sided conversations, were the expression of her own thoughts and emotions, but at the same time they included Max's imagined answers (e.g. she: "Oh boy, that went completely wrong, I spoiled everything", he: "Don't take it so seriously…it is not such a catastrophe"). Lena's ability to take Max's perspective found expression in her imagining her husband's standpoint or emotional reaction to a given situation (e.g. "In arranging the grave, I consider Max's taste (...). And I think: He would like it.") (Josephs, 1998, p. 187-188).

In terms of Hermans' theory, an internal monologue can be defined as a situation when only one I-position of the dialogical self is speaking, whereas the other one is a silent but active listener who has a great influence on the utterances of the first I-position. During the inner dialogue, at least two I-positions are voiced and interacting as interlocutors. A change of perspective means taking somebody else's point of view (I-position) without necessarily voicing it.

The dialogical self conception treats internal dialogical activity not only as a normal phenomenon, but also as a process that may stimulate human development. This suggests various positive psychological functions of dialogicality, but they are not specified within the theory. In that context, the following questions were posed:

What are the functions fulfilled by internal dialogical activity?

Are the three forms of internal dialogical activity differentiated by the functions fulfilled?

No hypotheses were formulated because of the exploratory nature of the study.

Method

Measures

Two questionnaires were administered in the study:

The Initial Questionnaire by Puchalska-Wasyl. This is based on the assumption that there are three forms of internal dialogical activity: (a) the monologue: addressing statements and comments to a silent listener, (b) the dialogue: not only an expression of one's own standpoint, but also the formulation of the imaginary interlocutor's answer, and (c) the change of perspective: taking a new point of view without necessarily voicing it. The purpose of the questionnaire is to induce the respondent's self-reflection, and determine which I-positions are his/her imaginary interlocutors, which are his/her internal listeners, and which of them give new and different points of view to the person. The method includes a list of potential I-positions (e.g. my mother, my father, my dear, my friend, my enemy/opponent, my guardian angel, a TV personality, my imaginary companion, somebody who is dead, a statue which comes to life, I as a pessimist, I as an optimist, I as an idealist, I as understanding, I as an observer, I as a child, my masculine side, my feminine side). Some of them stemmed from the Personal Position Repertoire by Hermans (2001). The participants can choose from these I-positions, and can add their own to the list. The Initial Questionnaire was a starting point for the other method exploring the phenomenon of internal dialogical activity, namely the D-M-P Questionnaire.

The Dialogue-Monologue-Perspective Questionnaire (D-M-P) by Puchalska-Wasyl. The D-M-P Questionnaire is used to determine the functions fulfilled by the imaginary 'partners' of the internal dialogical activity. The method includes a list of 24 potential functions related to inner dialogues (D), monologues (M), and changes of perspective (P). These functions were established by means of rational analysis and were formulated in colloquial language, e.g. *Dialogue with X: ... gives me a sense of being understood; ... is a form of seeking some new experiences; ...is the only way of telling the other person what I really think; ... is a form of preparation for new types of situations*. The D-M-P Questionnaire has three analogical versions (D, M and P), pertaining to the three forms of internal dialogical activity respectively. For each version there is a matrix in which the rows represent particular functions, while the columns correspond with the I-positions reported in the Initial Questionnaire as being 'partners' of the given form of inner activity. When focusing on their own internal figures, one by one, a respondent is requested to choose all the functions fulfilled by the figure during the internal dialogical activity of a particular form (he or she marks 'X' in a given box). The person is also allowed to add one or more specific functions that are not in the list. As a result, each I-position is described by a specific arrangement of functions, which are encoded as 1 or 0 for functions which are chosen or not chosen, respectively.

Participants

The study was carried out on a group of 94 people conducting internal dialogical activity (48 F and 46 M). They were between the ages of 19 and 32 (*M* = 22.89; *SD* =2.90). Of the respondents, 79 were university students and 15 were graduates. As far

as we know, they were not familiar with dialogical self theory. The total number of imaginary 'partners' in the internal dialogical activity as reported by the participants was 1503. On the individual level, their numbers ranged from 1 to 23 ($M = 10.32$; $SD = 5.26$) for dialogues, from 1 to 28 ($M = 9.44$; $SD = 5.98$) for monologues, and from 1 to 13 ($M = 4.73$; $SD = 2.42$) for changes in perspective. The differences suggest that some respondents focused on their main (regular) partners of dialogical activity, whereas others enumerated all the inner figures which they were able to identify.

Results

Firstly, a hierarchical cluster analysis of the functions for all the internal figures was performed. This means that 1503 arrangements of functions (encoded in the 0-1 system) specific to particular I-positions were analyzed, and seven meta-functions were differentiated. They were described as:

Support – a source of hope and feelings of safety; a way to give meaning to life.

Substitution – a substitute for contact that is impossible in real life; the only method of expressing one's own real thoughts; a way of testing one's own arguments.

Exploration – an escape from ordinary life; an attempt at seeking some new experiences, for example, the imaginary performance of a forbidden act.

Bond – a way to experience the certainty of being understood and of a close bond with somebody.

Self-Improvement – a scolding for one's own mistake; a warning not to make the same mistake again.

Insight – a new point of view, a piece of advice, standing back from one's own problem, perceiving advantages and disadvantages, and help with making a decision.

Self-Guidance – a criterion for self-esteem; a form of preparation for new types of situations, an incentive to work, to continue one's own work, to change it, or to give it up.

In the next step, the figures assigned to the groups of "Dialogue", "Monologue" and "Perspective" respectively, were compared in the range of the seven meta-functions. The number of functions chosen from all those which are elements of a particular meta-function was treated as a score for this meta-function characteristic of the given I-position. Thus, each figure was represented by seven scores. Since the numbers of the meta-functions' components were different, the intensity of the meta-functions fulfilled was defined on the z-scale ($M = 0$, $SD = 1$).

It was found that the three forms of internal dialogical activity differed in the range of the seven meta-functions on the general level (MANOVA: $F(14, 1320) = 5.84$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, ANOVA was performed. Due to correlations between the

means and the standard deviations, it was verified by the *H* Kruskal-Wallis test. The *T3* Dunett test was conducted as a *post hoc* analysis because of the heterogeneity of the variance (see Figure 1 and Table 1).

It was stated that in only one function, Bond, were there no differences amongst the three forms of dialogicality. This means that each of them, to the same extent, provide a person with the certainty of being understood and of feelings of contact with somebody else.

It is worth noting that only in the case of the dialogue were all the indices of the other meta-functions above average. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is twofold. Firstly, that particular dialogues may fulfill individual functions with the same frequency or, secondly, that the dialogue is the form of internal dialogical activity which fulfils the aforementioned meta-functions in the most comprehensive way.

In searching for the meta-functions which have the closest link with dialogue, and which, at the same time, differentiate it from the other two forms of dialogicality, Exploration should be noted. This means that dialogues, more frequently than monologues and changing perspectives, become a way of escaping from ordinary life, and an attempt at seeking some new experiences, e.g., by the imaginary performance of a forbidden act. The meta-functions which give the dialogue the advantage over the monologue are Self-Guidance and Insight. It follows that the dialogue, significantly more often, fulfils motivational functions; it is a kind of preparation for new types of situations or a criterion for self-esteem. Additionally, it is more conducive to stepping back from one's own problem, to perceiving advantages and disadvantages, and it more frequently facilitates making a decision.

The other meta-functions namely Bond, which was mentioned earlier, Support, Substitution, and Self-Improvement, make the internal dialogue similar to the monologue. Thus, they can to the same degree provide a person with hope, feelings of safety and of contact with somebody, they can be a stimulation to articulate one's own standpoint, a substitute for real contact, or a form of scolding for one's own mistake which forces a person to draw conclusions for the future.

The meta-functions of Support and Self-Improvement, while making the dialogue similar to the monologue, at the same time differentiate them from the third form of internal dialogical activity, that is, changing perspective. A new point of view is, comparatively, the option most rarely taken up in order to get hope, a sense of life, feelings of safety, a scolding, or instructions on how to act in a desirable way. However, the most frequent reason for which a perspective is changed seems to be Insight. As has been previously mentioned, dialogue fulfils this meta-function significantly better than

Table 1

Comparison of the Meta-functions in the Three Forms of Internal Dialogical Activity

Meta-Function		Forms of Internal Dialogical Activity			ANOVA			H Kruskal-Wallis		T3 Dunnett	
		Dialogue (N = 618)	Monologue (N = 589)	Perspective (N = 296)	$F_{(2,1500)}$	$p <$	η^2	$H_{(2,1503)}$	$p <$	Differences between forms	$p <$
Support	M	0.11	-0.02	-0.20	9.55	0.001	18.57	17.92	0.001	b	0.001
	SD	1.04	1.00	0.87						c	0.05
Substitution	M	0.07	-0.03	-0.09	3.20	0.05	11.96	6.09	0.05	b	0.05
	SD	1.03	1.01	0.92							
Exploration	M	0.14	-0.10	-0.10	10.33	0.001	53.94	18.8	0.001	a	0.001
	SD	1.09	0.90	0.96						b	0.01
Bond	M	-0.01	0.02	-0.02	0.22	n.s.	1.12	0.43	n.s.	-	n.s.
	SD	0.99	1.01	0.99							
Self-Improvement [1]	M	0.06	0.05	-0.23	4.30	0.05	4.94	11.37	0.01	b	0.05
	SD	1.00	1.01	0.95						c	0.05
Insight	M	0.07	-0.22	0.30	31.19	0.001	4.64	67.78	0.001	b	0.01
	SD	1.00	0.95	1.00						a, c	0.001
Self-Guidance	M	0.14	-0.15	0.00	12.88	0.001	4.83	24.85	0.001	a	0.001
	SD	1.01	0.98	0.98							

Note. Significant differences between the forms of internal dialogical activity: a) D – M; b) D – P; c) M – P; 1) 670 imaginary figures were taken into account; results are presented on the z-scale (M = 0, SD = 1).

Figure 1

Intensity of the Meta-functions for the Three Forms of Dialogicality
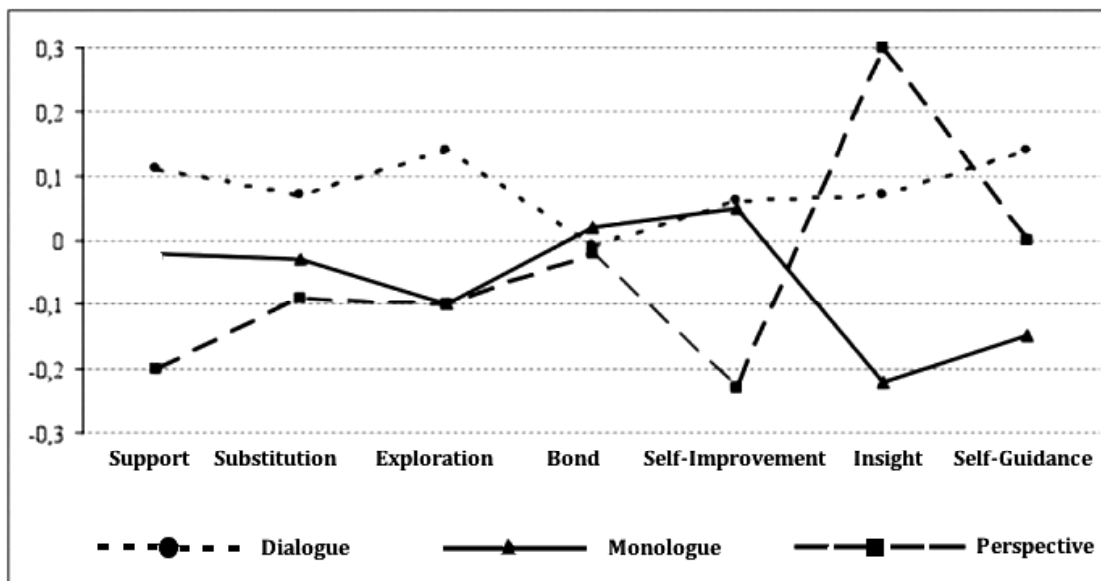
Note. Results are presented on the z-scale ($M = 0$, $SD = 1$).

the monologue, whereas it is fulfilled most frequently by an alteration in the point of view. It follows from this that the biggest probability of getting a piece of advice, of standing back from one's own problem, of perceiving the advantages and disadvantages of a difficult situation and of noticing its solution, is linked with the changing of perspective.

Discussion

We are aware of the fact that the results presented should be treated with caution since they come from pioneering research which is not devoid of shortcomings. The participants who volunteered for project were either university students or graduates. It follows from this that the results can be generalized only for an analogical group, that is, well educated people between the ages of 19 and 32. Moreover, the methods which were used are quite new and it would be desirable to check how they work in different projects on various populations. Thus, the study demands further verification. However, a preliminary conclusion which can be drawn from the research is that the legitimacy of the theoretical distinction among the three forms of internal dialogical activity was confirmed by the showing of their functional differentiation.

The dialogue differs from the monologue in the range of three meta-functions, namely Exploration, Self-Guidance, and Insight. Exploration means that an inner dialogue is frequently a way of escaping from ordinary life, a method of seeking and

testing new experiences. This creative function of internal dialogues should not take one by surprise in the light of the research which highlights the personality specificity of persons involved in imaginary talks in comparison with those who prefer monologues. People taking up internal dialogues are, *inter alia*, characterized by higher scores on Openness to Experience, Fantasy, Feelings and Aesthetics (Puchalska-Wasyl, 2005, 2006; Puchalska-Wasyl, Chmielnicka-Kuter, & Oleś, 2008). This means that people conducting imaginary dialogues in comparison with those having mainly monologues are characterized by a more vivid and creative imagination (Fantasy), a deep appreciation of art and beauty (Aesthetics), and a receptivity to inner feelings and emotions (Feelings). They are curious about both the inner and the outer worlds, and their lives are experientially richer. They are willing to entertain novel ideas and unconventional values, and they experience positive, as well as negative, emotions more keenly (Openness). In that context, they seem to be more creative persons in comparison with those who prefer monologues.

Self-Guidance, mentioned as the second meta-function, means that the internal dialogue can be a form of preparation for new types of situations, it can motivate a person to take up the given action as well, or it can provide him/her with criteria used for self-esteem. Thus, it seems to include three basic functions: (1) a cognitive function, which, in fact, consists in working out and preparing for various possible states, (2) a motivational function, and (3) a function modifying self-esteem. These functions are also attributed to the concept of the possible self, which suggests a certain similarity between both phenomena (Markus & Nurius, 1986; see also: Cross & Markus, 1991; Oleś, 2003).

The third meta-function characteristic of the internal dialogue in comparison with monologues is Insight. Unlike the two meta-functions previously discussed, which seem to be quite closely linked with an imaginary aspect of dialogue, Insight can be treated as a function shared by the imaginary, as well as the real, dialogues. Kharitonov (1991) emphasized that dialogue arises in situations with an 'information gap', that is, when a subject's knowledge is insufficient to solve a problem, and another person may be an actual, or merely a potential, source of such information. Thus, it is assumed that dialogue always offers a new point of view. If the problem considered is a personal one (which is typical of imaginary conversations), it is consistent with common sense that the dialogical exchange can fulfil the meta-function of Insight, since it can be conducive to standing back from the troublesome question, perceiving the advantages and disadvantages of the difficult situation, and, eventually, can facilitate the solving of the problem.

Substitution, Self-Improvement, Bond, and Support are the meta-functions fulfilled by the monologue to the same extent as by the dialogue. It is not surprising that a monologue can be a substitute for real contact, the only method of expressing one's own thoughts, a way of testing one's own arguments, or a scolding for one's own

mistake. It is not so easy, but it is possible, to understand that the monologue can establish a close bond with somebody. However, it was an unexpected result that the monologue, to the same degree as the dialogue, can also be a source of support, hope, meaning of life, and feelings of safety, whereas it is addressed to a silent listener. In trying to explain this fact, one can advance the interpretative hypothesis that the monologue fulfils this meta-function in those situations where it is the only, or the distinctly prevailing, form of internal dialogical activity which is taken up. In other words, if a person has difficulty entering into inner dialogues which are a more typical source of support, he/she tries to satisfy this need by speaking his/her mind as if somebody else was listening and understanding.

It is an unquestionable fact that people differ with regard to how easily they are able to get involved in internal dialogues. The aforementioned personality traits can be treated as one potential reason for it. The concept of the relational schema by Baldwin provides us with another explanation.

The relational schema consists of three elements linked in an associative network: an interpersonal script, a self-schema, and an other-schema (pertaining to the self or the other in a particular type of interaction, respectively) (Baldwin, 1992, 1994, 1995; Baldwin, Carrell, & Lopez, 1990; Baldwin & Sinclair, 1996). The interpersonal script is a cognitive structure representing a sequence of actions and events that defines a stereotyped relational pattern. It includes declarative knowledge as well as procedural. The latter, being the "if-then" nature of the script, can be used to generate interpersonal expectations (about the thoughts, feelings and goals of both the self and the other), and to plan appropriate behavior. Schemas for the self and the other are generalizations or theories about the self and the other in certain relational contexts that are used to guide the processing of social information.

In the light of Baldwin's concept, imaginary dialogues can be treated as a reconstruction of the utterances and internal states included in the interpersonal script. This means that every person is able to conduct inner dialogues, because everyone has some relational schemas. At the same time, it should be added that there are at least three levels of schematicity and three groups of people, respectively. A person may be considered truly aschematic if he or she has had no experience with, and has no representation of, a certain type of interaction. An individual may be considered highly schematic if he or she has a cognitive structure for a type of relationship, and often uses this schema to understand social situations. Between these two extremes are those people who have the targeted relational schemas available in memory, but for whom these schemas are not chronically accessible in their day-to-day processing of social information. If the context or stimulus characteristics are strong enough, they could activate the normally non-accessible schema, and may produce the same results as a group of highly schematic persons. That is why these people might be termed relatively schematic (Baldwin, 1992).

Assuming that the ability to conduct internal dialogues is a natural consequence of having relational schemas, one can conclude that people who are aschematic, or relatively schematic with respect to the majority of interpersonal scripts, may be less willing to take up imaginary conversations in comparison with highly schematic persons who may effortlessly generate possible scenarios for a further course of anticipated situations, and therefore enter into inner dialogues with ease.

Changing perspective is that form of dialogicality which mainly fulfils one meta-function, namely Insight. Its above-average intensity is the only case among the functions linked with an alteration in the point of view. As has been mentioned, the dialogues give an Insight significantly more often than the monologues; however, it is most frequently obtained by taking a new perspective. The fact that it is not so much voicing as seeing from the other perspective which results in Insight, can be treated as a challenge for the dialogical self theory. However, in the light of the study by Trzebińska and Dowgiert (2005), these findings do not seem to be accidental. It was stated that making a person aware of the multidimensionality of his/her self (a variety of I-positions), without a confrontation between these different aspects, led the person to attribute to himself/herself more potentially available ways of coping with a difficult situation. The authors were of the opinion that people gained a more complex and differentiated outlook regarding the problem, which is consistent with our understanding of Insight.

Besides the differences in the three forms of internal dialogical activity, at least one similarity should be emphasized. Dialogue, monologue and changing perspectives, to the same degree, fulfill the meta-function of Bond, providing the person with the certainty of being understood and of contact with somebody else. Maybe it is worth conducting further research in order to answer the question about the type of bond between the relationship partners, and its importance in the taking up of the three forms of dialogical exchange?

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