

**International Journal  
for  
Dialogical Science**

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## International Journal for Dialogical Science

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

Katarzyna Stemplewska-Żakowicz  
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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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**ON SOCIAL-COGNITIVE AND DIALOGICAL MODELS OF PERSONALITY:  
THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL STEPS  
TOWARD AN INTEGRATIVE VIEW**

Daniel Cervone

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**ABSTRACT.** Social-cognitive and dialogical perspectives are two of the primary ways of conceptualizing persons in contemporary psychology. The present paper endeavors, in two ways, to advance a dialogue between these theoretical viewpoints. At the level of theory, we explore issues for which social-cognitive and dialogical analyses may be mutually complementary. Regarding empirical research, we report novel analyses of a dataset involving idiographic measures of self-knowledge and self-efficacy appraisals. Results of this analysis indicate that variations in the complexity of dialogues in which people describe their personal attributes predict item-to-item statistical variance on a multidomain self-efficacy measure. We conclude with a discussion of how methodological advances may help to link the knowledge structures studied in social-cognitive theory to the discursive processes studied by narrative and dialogical theorists.

Throughout its history, psychology has been home to multiple theoretical perspectives on human nature and individual differences (Cervone & Pervin, 2008). Some differ so deeply that they have little to say to one another. Others, however, offer insights and empirical tools that may prove to be complementary.

**On Social-Cognitive and Dialogical Perspectives**

Two contemporary views of the person that have particularly promising synergistic potential are social-cognitive and dialogical perspectives (cf. Cervone & Lott, 2007; Hermans, 1996). They share three critical features. Both address processes of meaning construction; social-cognitive and dialogical theorists agree that, to understand individuals' experiences, one must explore the meanings that people assign to the occurrences of their lives. Secondly, they both address social context; they recognize that meaning construction occurs in socially, culturally, and historically situated contexts, and a psychology of the individual thus must address both individuals and the contexts in which they live (cf. Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Shoda, Cervone, & Downey, 2007). Thirdly, both are sensitive to idiosyncrasy and the need for idiographically-tailored assessments of the individual (cf. Cervone, 2004; Hermans, 1988).

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Social-cognitive and dialogical perspectives do differ markedly, as Hermans (1996) has explained. In these differences, however, may lay the synergistic potential. In principle, social-cognitive theory and research on the organization of knowledge may answer questions that are raised, but not fully answered, in dialogical theory. These include questions about the cognitive skills and knowledge underlying people's capacity to construct multivoiced dialogues, as well as individual differences in that capacity. Conversely, the insights of dialogical self theory (Hermans & Konopka, 2010) may enable social-cognitivists to expand their conceptual scope by addressing questions about subjectivity and individual development to which they previously have devoted insufficient attention.

Although this potential for theoretical gain has been recognized, it has not been fully realized. When Hermans reviewed social-cognitive investigations of the organization of knowledge and subparts of the self while advancing his dialogical self theory more than a decade ago, he concluded that social-cognitive analyses that were built on an information processing model of mind had "dealt neither with voice nor with the dialogical relationship between the subparts [of the self]" (Hermans, 1996, p. 34). Hermans judged that computer scientists had shed more light on the multivoiced nature of self than had social and personality psychologists working in a social-cognitive information-processing tradition.

One can see signs of progress in the years since Hermans' (1996) review. Hong and No (2005) have related their model of self processes in bicultural individuals to Hermans' analyses of multivoiced dialogue. Oleś (2005) has explored the dialogical nature of social-cognitive self-guides (the ought and ideal self; Higgins, 1987). Both Andersen (2007) and Baldwin (1999) have advanced lines of research that reveal how social-cognitive knowledge structures are inherently relational in nature; that is, knowledge structures combine beliefs about personal attributes with beliefs about interpersonal relationships.

Yet, even these admirable scientific contributions do not fully capitalize on possibilities for integration. To a significant degree, Hermans' assessment of the literature circa 1996 is still relevant. If one were to view contemporary social-cognitive research from a dialogical perspective, one might judge that Hermans' (1996) original conclusion still applies: There is "multifacetedness but not multivoicedness" (p. 38). Social-cognitive research has long recognized the multifaceted nature of self-representations (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Yet, to the present day, it is rare in laboratory research on social-cognitive processes that participants are allowed to give voice, in their own chosen terms, to multiple features of the self, as they are expressed in multiple contexts and construed from multiple positions.

If one were to switch perspectives, and to evaluate the dialogical literature from the perspective of social-cognitive theory, one might again conclude that there exists

## MODELS OF PERSONALITY

potential for integration that remains unfulfilled. From this stance, the untapped potential includes points of theory. Social-cognitive psychologists strive to relate their research findings to broad theoretical questions about human nature that have been asked, for nearly a century, in the psychology of personality (Stern 1918; see Lamiell & Deutsch, 2000). Much of the social-cognitivists' theoretical writing advances this goal (e.g., Bandura, 1968, 1999; Cervone & Pervin, 2008; Mischel, 2004; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). Dialogical self researchers might have been valuable partners in the social-cognitivists' efforts to direct personality psychology to questions of meaning construction, social context, and individual idiosyncrasy. However, that partnership has not fully developed (but see Hermans, 1988). It is noteworthy that when Oleś (2005) recently posed the question, "What are the consequences of a dialogical approach to the general theory of a person?" (p. 180), he did so at the *conclusion* of a chapter on the dialogical self. The question, in other words, was a challenge to be taken up in the future, rather than an issue that previously had been adequately addressed.

We will consider here one example of how dialogical self theory can speak to questions of longstanding interest in personality science (Cervone & Mischel, 2002). It is a case in which, to our knowledge, the insights of dialogical self theory have not previously been exploited. We hope that our discussion is the type of extension of dialogical self theory to "the general theory of a person" that Oleś had in mind.

### *An Example Case: Variability in Experience and Action*

In personality science (Cervone & Mischel, 2002), investigators have long debated a fundamental question: What are the psychological qualities that constitute – in other words, that can be interpreted as – indications of an individual's personality? Since the writings of Allport (1937), one theoretical position is that these qualities consist of average-level behavioral tendencies. A person's thoughts and action may vary from time to time, and place to place. The variations, however, are mere statistical "noise." It is the arithmetic mean – the average tendency – that is interpreted as the marker of personality structure. This perspective is pervasive in trait theories of personality; in an Allportian spirit, the traits (e.g., conscientiousness, agreeableness) refer to generalized, trans-situational qualities. In assessment methods, an individual's personality is represented in terms of average tendencies to exhibit the thoughts, feelings, and actions referenced by each generalized trait construct.

Social-cognitive theorists have objected to this equation of "personality" with the "generalized average." The most forceful objections have been those of Mischel (1968, 2004), who explains another key indicator of personality structure is *variability* in personal functioning. Patterns of variation in behavior, from one context to another, are signatures of an individual's personality (Mischel & Shoda, 1995). To support this argument, Mischel and colleagues have marshaled much empirical evidence showing that different people who are the same "on average" (and thus would be equated in trait

theory) can differ considerably in their patterns of variability around the average (Mischel & Shoda, 1998). Disregarding these distinctive patterns of action would be a blunder, Mischel explains, since it would overlook valuable information about the distinctive personal qualities of the individual. The body of theory and empirical evidence amassed by Mischel and colleagues is meant to reorient the field; they wish to convince students of personality to move beyond conceptions in which “personality” is equated with “context-free average-level tendencies.”

Dialogical theorists would require little convincing. We suspect that there is not a single reader of this journal who would subscribe to the view that, to learn about a person, one should statistically average together the different voices in an individual’s multivoiced dialogue, in order to represent the person’s singular “average voice.” That would be senseless – as senseless as trying to understand a novel by determining the average psychological attributes of its multiple characters and disregarding the varied ways in which they interact. Work on the dialogical self renders nearly absurd the notion that an individual’s personality is best understood by computing the person’s average tendencies in thought and action. One must study the way “the *I* fluctuates among different and even opposed positions” (Hermans, 1996, p. 33), rather than averaging together the fluctuations in order to study the *I*’s “average position.”

The empirical and theoretical base of dialogical self theory, then, undermines the presumption that “personality = average tendencies” in much the same manner as does the work of Mischel and colleagues. In retrospect, scientific debate on the sufficiency of context-free trait variables as foundations for personality theory (e.g., Pervin, 1994) would have been more illuminating and convincing if it had benefited from the arguments of dialogical self theory, which complement those of the social-cognitive theorist.

In the remainder of this paper, we move from those broad points about potential integration to more specific issues of theory and empirical research. We outline one social-cognitive perspective on personality functioning and present novel data illustrating how it might foster research on social-cognitive structures and dialogical processes.

### **KAPA Model of Personality Architecture**

The Knowledge-and-Appraisal Personality Architecture (KAPA; Cervone 2004) model is an effort to characterize social-cognitive structures and processes that contribute to personality functioning. Rather than describing all of the features of this theoretical model here, we will highlight the particular aspect of the KAPA model that underlies the present empirical investigation (for a full treatment, see Cervone, 2004, 2008).

## MODELS OF PERSONALITY

As noted by Lazarus and colleagues (1991; Smith & Lazarus, 1990) in their study of cognition and emotion, the cognitions that contribute to personal function are of two types. Some are aspects of *knowledge*, a term that refers to “our understanding of the way things are and work.” (Lazarus, 1991, p. 144). Elements of knowledge are enduring mental representations of the attributes of entities (including oneself). Appraisals, in contrast, are dynamic evaluations of the meaning of encounters for oneself. In a continuously ongoing manner, people appraise the personal significance of their current circumstances, judging, for example, whether events are potentially harmful or beneficial, and whether they can cope with challenges that may arise.

In the KAPA model, elements of knowledge are enduring cognitive structures of personality. People possess beliefs about themselves, others, and the social world that endure over time, and thus are construed as cognitive “structures.” Enduring cognitive structures thus contribute to consistencies in the way an individual interprets and experiences the world.

Appraisals are dynamically shifting personality processes. People’s appraisals change rapidly from one moment to the next, as they encounter potentially rapidly-changing environments or contemplate upcoming challenges that vary from one another.

Basic principles from the field of social cognition (Higgins, 1996) explain how knowledge and appraisals are related. When appraising the environment to determine its personal significance, people draw on their enduring beliefs. Since people hold a large number of beliefs about themselves and the social world, only a very small subset of these beliefs is likely to come to mind in any given situation (Markus & Wurf, 1987). The particular subset of beliefs that springs to mind may determine the meaning people assign to a given encounter. For example, imagine a somewhat shy individual who is extended an invitation to a party. If the person thinks about her tendency to be shy, she may appraise the situation as threatening and turn down the invitation. If, however, something reminds her of her intelligence and wit rather than her shyness, she may appraise the situation as a valued opportunity and accept it.

An implication of this line of thinking is that elements of knowledge that are highly mentally accessible – that come to mind readily, in many life circumstances – are the ones most likely to foster consistent patterns of appraisal. The KAPA model (Cervone, 2004) anticipates that a given element of knowledge may come to mind, and foster consistent appraisals, across seemingly diverse circumstances. In our example, the woman’s thoughts of her shyness might come to mind in multiple circumstances – a party invitation, a job interview, a holiday gather with family – and cause her to appraise the diverse circumstances in a similar manner.

In empirical research, we have tested this hypothesis by conducting research in which both knowledge structures and contextualized appraisal processes are assessed. To assess enduring elements of self-knowledge about the self, or self-schemas (Markus,

1977), we ask participants to write narratives in which they describe positive and negative personal attributes of theirs. To determine how individuals subjectively relate their personal attributes to everyday social situations, we ask participants to complete a categorization task in which they indicate the degree to which each of their personal attributes is relevant to each of a wide variety of everyday social contexts (for details on the assessment method, see Cervone Shadel, & Jencius, 2001). When these assessments of self-schemas and situational beliefs are combined, the result is analogous to the contextual position matrix of dialogical self theory (Hermans, 2001); ours is a matrix whose rows and columns are personal attributes (phrased, by participants, in their own terms; cf. Hermans, 1988) and everyday social contexts.

Finally, in a later experimental session, we target one aspect of appraisal: appraisals of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), that is, people's appraisals of their capabilities to execute specific actions in designed contexts. The contexts we employ when assessing self-efficacy appraisals are highly related to those used in the earlier assessment of situational beliefs; this enables us to identify subsets of situations within which the individual is predicted to display consistently high or low appraisals of self-efficacy. A critical aspect of these predictions is that they are made idiographically; since different people have different beliefs about themselves and social situations, we predict self-efficacy appraisals on an idiographic, case-by-case basis.

Findings robustly confirm our theoretical predictions. People's appraisals of self-efficacy are consistently high (low) across situations that they subjectively link to positive (negative) schemas about the self (Cervone, 1997, 2004; Cervone, Orom, Artistic, Shadel, & Kassel, 2007). Similar results are not obtained if one assesses generic personality attributes, rather than the distinctive attributes identified in our idiographic methods. We find also that experimentally priming different aspects of self-knowledge alters self-appraisals. Subtle priming procedures raise the accessibility of one versus another aspect of self-knowledge, and thereby influence the self-efficacy appraisals people subsequently form (Cervone, Caldwell, & Fiori, 2006; Shadel & Cervone, 2006).

### **Self-Appraisals in Multiple Contexts as Dialogue?**

A question that arises in the context of a Special Issue of this journal is the degree to which our empirical methods involve dialogue. The research procedures we have just described clearly are less dialogical than, for example, asking participants to engage in an imagined dialogue with a figure depicted in a painting (see Hermans, 1996) or to chat with an anonymous interlocutor (Stemplewska-Żakowicz, Walecka, Gabińska, Zalewski, & Suszek, 2005). When participants in our research report on their self-efficacy beliefs in different contexts, the contexts arise in an order determined by the experimenters, who present a series of structured questionnaire items; the participants' reports, then, do not have the flow of a narrative.

Yet our methods do contain a dialogue, albeit of a highly structured, technical sort. As Harré has explained, when a “participant is answering questions posed by an experimenter,” the “joint activity is a kind of formal conversation” (2002, p. 172). To the extent that the participants’ conversation with the experimenter on the topic of personal attributes, social contexts, and self-efficacy for coping with everyday challenges resembles his or her private, internal dialogue on these matters, our methods could be seen to tap aspects of the participants’ inner voicing in multiple life contexts.

### *KAPA-Based Methods and Dialogue*

An investigation of dialogical aspects of the self, then, can be undertaken using existing methods derived from the KAPA model (Cervone, 2004). The idiographic, bottom-up methods outlined in the KAPA model include an unstructured assessment of self-knowledge. In this assessment process, participants can express their subjective view of their own most important personal attributes, be they traits, skills, personal goals, or even personal life stories that are revealing of the self; the content and form expression are chosen by the participant. The researcher uses this information about the individual’s knowledge structures to predict coherent patterns of appraisals-in-context.

In the present paper, we report novel analyses of an existing dataset; we reanalyzed previous work from a dialogical perspective suggested by the work of Hermans. We recognize that an ideal investigation to bridge the gap between the KAPA model and Hermans’ model of dialogical self would employ assessment methods that are less structured than the ones we are to present here; ideally, participants would have more flexibility to voice multiple aspects of self in a format, and of a length, of their own choosing. Nonetheless, the present methods show how the researcher can begin making the move from studying the static cognitive structures traditionally targeted by research in social cognition to the dynamic dialogical processes that occur when a person contemplates multiple attributes of self and the multiple situations in which these attributes bear upon social behavior.

### **Overview of Empirical Methods**

As noted above, Cervone and colleagues’ (Cervone 2004; Cervone, Caldwell, Fiori, et al., 2008; Orom & Cervone, 2009) experimental methods allow participants to write unstructured essays about themselves, and thus provide idiographic data, rather than the nomothetically-structured data seen commonly in personality research. This is in keeping with Hermans’ repeated call (e.g. Hermans, 1996, 2004) for a paradigm shift in psychological research away from an exclusive reliance on nomothetic measurement. Such a shift should allow complex, temporally and spatially nuanced selves to speak for themselves rather than describing themselves merely in terms dictated by the researcher (cf. Kelly, 1955).

In the present study, we attempt to advance such methods through novel analyses of open-ended essays previously described by Cervone (2004). Participants were asked to write about personal strengths and weaknesses. In the original research (Cervone, 2004), analyses focused merely on two of the attributes mentioned in these essays: the positive and negative attribute that participants judged to be most self-defining. The original analyses, then, did not investigate overall narrative qualities of the essays in a holistic manner. In the present report, we reanalyze the data with a coding system that captures the overall complexity of each individual's self-knowledge.

When researchers conduct empirical studies of self-knowledge structures, they face a number of methodological requirements. One, of course, is that the method they choose is psychometrically reliable. A second concerns efficiency; if they are investigating a sample of research participants rather than one person in great depth, researchers need a way of coding participants' statements that is efficient, in order to complete research in a timely manner. Finally, the research cannot sacrifice the sensitivity of his or her measures. They must be sensitive, in particular, to idiosyncrasy in personal beliefs. One wants to capture people's beliefs in their own terms, without forcing participants' belief systems into the researcher's favored terminology. In the present study, we used a coding system that is derived from an information-processing perspective, yet that allows for an examination of a holistic self-concept: an index of integrative complexity (Schroeder, Driver, & Streufert, 1967; Suedfeld & Rank, 1976; Tetlock, 1984).

### Integrative Complexity

As previously stated, social-cognitive theories of mind portray the enduring knowledge structures from which recurring patterns of appraisals stem. By identifying multiple aspects of knowledge, and the social contexts in which this knowledge shapes appraisals, the KAPA model yields a complex portrait of a whole person, as opposed to merely a few numerical estimates of a person's average standing on cross-situational traits. Yet even the KAPA model may fail to capture aspects of selfhood that are revealed by dialogical theory and its associated methods (e.g., Lyddon, Yowell, & Hermans, 2006), which are particularly able to provide a holistic portrait of the individual's intrapsychic experience. As such, incorporating a method that allows for both the concept of enduring knowledge and dialogical complexity would allow a researcher to examine both enduring knowledge and internal dialogue. Integrative complexity, a synergistic coding method wrought from an information-processing framework (Driver & Streufert, 1969), seems to allow for such an analysis.

Integrative complexity is defined as the amount of nuanced cognitive understanding a person expresses (Driver & Streufert, 1969; Schroeder, Driver, & Streufert, 1967; Suedfeld, Tetlock, & Streufert, 1992). This understanding can be in

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relation to either situational determinants of action or personality attributes and the ways in which one differs from other persons.

Integrative complexity develops as a two-stage process, consisting of an initial differentiation of concepts and then a subsequent integration of knowledge (Driver & Streufert, 1969; Shroeder, Driver, & Streufert, 1967; Suedfeld, Tetlock, & Streufert, 1992, Tetlock, 1984). In the differentiating stage, a person recognizes at least two conflicting concepts with regard to an issue. The integration of these concepts, which necessarily follows the initial differentiation, ranges from (1) low to (2) moderate to (3) high, depending on whether a statement reflects (1) little understanding of the possible integration of two or more differentiated concepts, (2) an uncomplicated understanding of the concepts' basic interaction, or (3) a more complex understanding of the connection between the concepts, which intuitively seemed disparate (Driver & Streufert, 1969; Shroeder, Driver, & Streufert, 1967; Suedfeld, Tetlock, & Streufert, 1992, Tetlock, 1984).

Within the context of two open-ended essays regarding personal strengths and weaknesses, then, integrative complexity seems a particularly apt construct for indexing individual differences in people's narratives about their personal characteristics. It represents a temporal progression and communication (if not total integration) of spatially disparate voices, and thus captures aspects of self that have been explored dialogically (e.g., Hermans, 1996). Integrative complexity is an individual-differences variable that reflects the transitioning of multiple internal narratives: the interplay of multiple self-narratives is implied in the emerging complexity of self-representation. That is, it is an individual differences variable that *allows* for possible positions, as opposed to standing in contrast to such a concept (see Hermans, Kempen, & van Loon, 1992).

### Dialogical Complexity

With rare exception (e.g., Pratt, Pancer, Hunsberger, & Manchester's (1990) use of integrative complexity in relation to Gilligan's moral orientations model), integrative complexity has not been used to study the self. Perhaps one of the reasons that researchers have rarely attempted to code for integrative complexity in relation to the self is the inherent difficulty faced when attempting to parse integrative complexity and narrative complexity. Integrative complexity is conceptually independent of the ability to summon narrative complexity (i.e., writing style), but it is difficult to devise a paradigm to keep these variables from becoming conflated. Some studies examining integrative complexity have found an association with verbal fluency (Shroeder, Driver, & Streufert, 1967; Suedfeld, Tetlock, & Streufert, 1992), whereas others have found little association (Coren & Suedfeld, 1990; Suedfeld, Tetlock, & Streufert, 1992). We believe that when examining self-complexity, in contrast to other individual differences or determinants of action, it is vital to parse verbal fluency from self-concept. Persons

may have complexly investigated the nuances of their internal self-dialogues, but this may not be information that is readily expressed due to restrictions in writing ability. As well, a narrative that is crafted too precisely may represent a motivated attempt to present oneself as a function of the format in which it is presented (see White, 1987).

In an attempt to address these issues, we adjust traditional integrative complexity methods to allow for narrative and integrative complexity to be separated. As described further below, we include a second coding scheme to assess writing style. By including a second coding scheme that assesses writing style, and coding self-schematic open-ended essays, we establish a technique that allows the researcher to delineate internal, integrative complexity from external writing style. Thus, with the researcher is able to assess *dialogical complexity*: integrative complexity – writing style = *dialogical complexity*.

In summary, idiographic assessment allows for participants to provide unrestricted data regarding their own self-knowledge, while a coding system based on integrative complexity, with the removal of participants' writing skill, allows for an assessment of their (general) dialogical complexity. The dialogical researcher hence is provided with the tools to empirically analyze questions about internal communication without the need to attempt to find a direct, explicit measurement of an otherwise internal dialogue.

### Predicting Dialogical Complexity

Now imbued with the ability to assess for dialogical complexity, the task turns to understanding what cross-situational measure might predict it. This task is of primary importance to dialogical studies, in that it will establish a measure that can serve as a proxy for dialogical complexity. Here we examine a multidomain self-efficacy scale (Cervone, 2004). This measure assesses participants' confidence in their behavioral success across a wide array of specific situations.

Rather than exploring participants' mean score on this scale, we examined the *variance* in their responses. We hypothesized that there would be a systematic association between this variance and dialogical complexity. Specifically, we predicted that the complexity of the dialogues created by participants when they were asked to write narratives describing their personal qualities would be positively associated with amount of variance seen in their responses to the self-efficacy measure.

This hypothesis was based on the following reasoning. On the narrative task, some individuals will display relatively low levels of integration of self-knowledge. We anticipated that, when contemplating multiple situations during the multi-domain assessment of self-efficacy, such persons would be relatively unable to access or constitute multiple aspects of self. They would tend, then, to consider situations from only one perspective; phrased differently, they would tend to consider only "one side" of

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a problem, rather than considering a problem from multiple perspectives that addressed multiple contingencies. As a result, some circumstances presented on the self-efficacy scale would seem completely unmanageable to them, others would seem easily manageable, and their scores on the scale would vary widely.

Conversely, a person who has an established, readily-accessible, integrated dialogical self should tend to consider multiple perspectives when contemplating situations. The complex, multi-voiced dialogue about the self should reduce the situation-to-situation variability in self-efficacy appraisals, because the individual would tend, in any given situation, to envision *both* personal strengths, that might enhance performance, and personal weaknesses, that might impair it. Therefore, we hypothesized that variance in self-efficacy ratings and dialogical complexity would be statistically related, such that those lower in dialogical complexity would be higher in variability on the self-efficacy questionnaire.

The current empirical analysis extends the concept of integrative complexity to include dialogical complexity, by (1) coding essays in which research participants had been asked to describe their personal attributes, while (2) removing a possible confound of writing style. Our goal was to assess whether dialogical complexity was systematically related to situation-to-situation variability in people's expressions of their beliefs in their personal efficacy for performance.

### Method

As part of course requirements, 122 undergraduates participated in three assessment sessions over a 1-month period (see Cervone, 2004). Data from the first and third assessments were analyzed, with data from session one coded for dialogical complexity using a modified integrative complexity coding scheme, and a writing style coding scheme.

#### *Narrative Essays: Personal Strengths and Weaknesses*

In the first session, participants wrote two open-ended essays describing their personal strengths and personal weaknesses. Instructions encouraged writing whatever information came to mind first. A sheet of paper with 20 blank lines was provided for each essay. Participants could write for up to 5 minutes per narrative.

This information was subsequently coded for integrative complexity using a modified, streamlined integrative complexity coding scheme, and also coded for writing style. Writing style was coded on a 7-point scale, ranging from *low narrative complexity* (1) to *high narrative complexity* (7), by examining each essay for grammar errors, and for general narrative complexity. Integrative complexity was coded by comparing the strengths and weaknesses essays to one another, in order to ascertain the amount of contingencies used by the participant in relating each essay back to the other.

Situational differences and complex personal attributes were also assessed, along with any demonstration of an integration of various self-motifs.

Participants' essays already differentiated responses into strengths and weaknesses, based on the instructions of the experiment. Therefore, only integration scores were coded. Thus, the coding scheme used a 7-point scale, ranging from *low integration* (1) to *high integration* (7).

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An example of a 7-point Integrative Complexity score (Writing Complexity = 3):

Subject 127

Strengths: "Analytical, thought-proking (sic), have answer for a lot of things, think a lot, laughter-oriented..."

Weaknesses: "All the same on previous page. There are times when these things are good and some when there (sic) bad. The situation matters. That's not a cop out. I'm not being lazy. There are times I'd rather be dumb instead of smart. There times (sic) to be realistic and dream, too."

An example of a 1-point Integrative Complexity score (Writing Complexity = 3):

Subject 123

Strengths: "If I start something, I like to finish it. If someone tells me I incapable (sic) of doing something, I try to prove them wrong. I am a patient person, understanding, forgiving, and loving."

*Fig. 1.* Two case examples of participants' responses to strength and weaknesses open-ended questions; the first participant has a 7-point integrative complexity score, whereas the second participant has a 1-point integrative complexity score.

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### *Self-Efficacy Appraisals in Context*

In a subsequent experimental session, participants completed an 81-item multidomain self-efficacy scale (Cervone, 2004). Items featured concrete, self-referent sentences that described specific behaviors in specific encounters. Participants indicated, on 10-point scales ranging from *certain I could not do it* (1) to *certain I could do it* (10), their sense of personal efficacy in being able to perform the indicated behaviors in the designated contexts. Test items varied across a range of contexts and challenges; for example, some were interpersonal (e.g., "If you and your boyfriend have had an argument, [how confident are you that you could] figure out a way to 'patch

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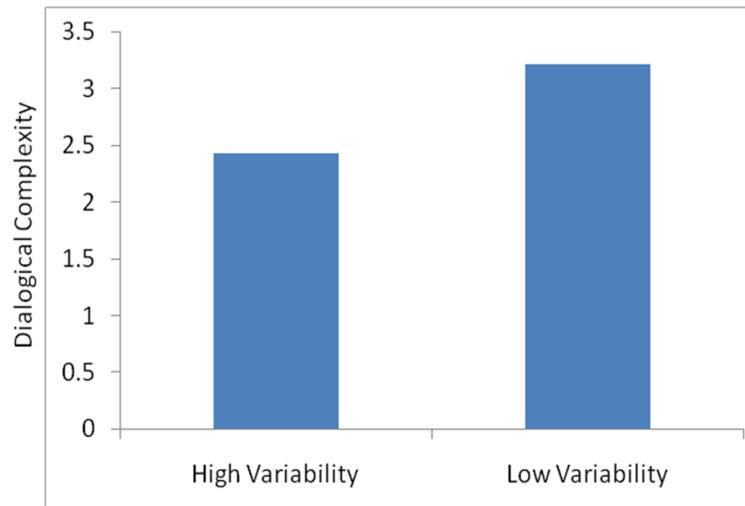


Fig. 2. Mean Dialogical Complexity score for people with either high or low variability responses to an objective measure of self-efficacy

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things up' while still maintaining your pride”) and others intellectual (“If a friend starts an argument with you, [how confident are you that you could] win the argument by discussing the issue from a number of different points of view and then drawing a convincing conclusion”).

Participants who had the narrowest ( $n = 22$ ) and widest ( $n = 20$ ) range of scores on the multidomain self-efficacy scale were selected for this analysis, leaving a final  $N = 42$ .

### Results

Before conducting the main analysis, self-efficacy mean distributions were examined for extreme scores. Three scores exceeded the distribution by at least .63 on a 10-point scale, and were placed in the group predicted to have low dialogical complexity scores ( $8.48 <$  placed in alternate group;  $7.86 =$  highest mean within distribution), as indicated earlier. For ease of interpretation, actual, not estimated means are reported.

In order to assess whether variability on a nomothetic self-efficacy measure negatively predicted dialogical complexity, a 2-way (self-efficacy variability) ANCOVA was conducted with integrative complexity as the dependent measure, and writing style as a covariate. As predicted, there was a main effect of self-efficacy variability,  $F(1, 41) = 3.11$ ,  $p < .05$  (one-tailed),  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ ; in other words, participants who differed in

situation-to-situation variability on the self-efficacy measure also differed in dialogical complexity.

An examination of the sample means revealed the direction of this difference was as predicted. Participants with lower variability on the self-esteem measure had higher dialogical complexity ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 2.016$ ) than those with higher variability on the self-esteem measure ( $M = 2.43$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ). Higher levels of dialogical complexity, then, predicted lesser situation-to-situation variance in self-appraisal (see Figure 2).

### Discussion

The results demonstrate a relationship between statistical variance on a self-report of personal efficacy for performance, and dialogical complexity on an open-ended narrative task. Participants who displayed high levels of variability on the restricted measure also showed relatively low levels of dialogical complexity on the open-ended measure.

We interpret these results in the context of the KAPA model of personality architecture, which posits that enduring elements of knowledge underlie consistency and variability in self-efficacy appraisals (Cervone, 2004). People vary in the complexity of their self-knowledge and, we suggest, this complexity is evident in our coding of the personal narratives our participants wrote. Our findings suggest that people with a more nuanced cognitive understanding of themselves will be less prone to large variations in self-efficacy appraisal as they consider multiple contexts. The cognitively complex person will, therefore, display less cross-situational variance.

Our method of coding for dialogical complexity should be understood as one technique for quantifying individual differences in the complexity of people's personal knowledge systems. A key methodological procedure is that we statistically controlled for any theoretically unrelated ability participants might have had to craft a narrative (White, 1987). We also examined people's responses on an objective measure of self-efficacy for variability in response style, i.e., how much each individual response people made differed from their average response collapsed across all questions. We then looked to see if people's different levels of variability on the objective self-efficacy measure predicted people's strength of dialogical complexity. We predicted that the more variable people's responses were on the objective measure, the less dialogical complexity they would show on an open-response question about themselves. As predicted, we found this relationship.

Although our methods identified a link between dialogical complexity and statistical variability on our self-efficacy measure, and in this sense were successful, in future research investigators should consider additional methodological tools that might constitute more powerful methods of linking the knowledge structures studied in social-

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cognitive theory to the discursive processes studied by narrative and dialogical theorists. In particular, a great strength of experimental cognitive and social-cognitive psychology is that it furnishes research methods for studying self-knowledge that are not based on explicit self-report. For example, reaction time and thought-listing tasks have long been used to measure the degree to which elements of knowledge are highly accessible for the individual (Higgins, 1996). One direction for future research is to determine whether these laboratory-based measures of cognitive accessibility might predict the complexity of multi-voiced dialogues produced by an individual. If so, the knowledge structures could be understood as conceptual “tools” with which an individual constructs a dialogical understanding of himself or herself; the person who has a greater repertoire of stored knowledge may build more complex dialogical constructions.

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**TEMPORAL DIALOGUES AND THEIR INFLUENCE  
ON AFFECTIVE STATES AND THE MEANING OF LIFE**

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**ABSTRACT:** The study contributes to the understanding of temporal dialogical activity of the self. The four separate studies conducted on student samples were focused on the immediate and direct influence of the confrontation of time-related I-positions (voices) on affective states and the meaning of life. The affective states and the meaning of life as a state were measured twice just before and after the temporal dialogues between past or/and future and the present I-positions. The State Personality Inventory (SPI, by Spielberger & Reheiser), and the scales measuring the meaning of life (by Oleś) were used. In general, the temporal dialogues tended to increase the meaning of life as a state, and the extent of the influence was affected by an ability to integrate the voices (points of view) representing different temporal positions of the self. Moreover, temporal dialogues tended to increase curiosity and reduce negative affects like depression or anxiety (except the cases in which an initial level of the meaning of life was lowered). The confrontation of inner voices representing future and present I-positions had positive influence on well-being and the meaning of life as a state, while an analogous phenomenon concerning the confrontation of past and present I-positions was not so salient. In the fifth study we checked distant effect of a whole life story construction in adolescents. The meaning of life as a trait (scale by Oleś) and identity dimensions (Ego Identity Process Questionnaire – EIPQ - by Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger) were measured just before and one week after life story construction. According to the results, constructing a prospective life story by adolescents enhanced their meaning of life, and constructing an imagined retrospective life story from the perspective *I as an old person*, stimulated exploration of one's own identity. The results are discussed with reference to the theory of the dialogical self, psychology of time and life-span developmental perspective.

Dialogicality, understood as the inner activity of a person, is one of the most general human features (Oleś, 2009), which originates from: (1) social interactions influencing and stimulating human development and functioning, (2) the use of symbols and the ability to apply meaning, and (3) the ability to represent the external world with all its complexity in one's own mind (see: Asmolov & Asmolov, 2009; Hermans, 1996; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Cooper, 2003; Markova, 2003). As Ivana Markova (2003) argues:

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Why do we think and speak in antinomies? Because, I hypothesize, thinking and speaking in antinomies is an expression of dialogicality of the human mind. Dialogicality is the capacity of the Ego to conceive and comprehend the world in terms of the Alter, and to create social realities in terms of the Alter (p. 203).

Confronting different and often contradictory points of view, the person uses different I-positions created around specific life experiences, e.g. child, mother, successful, abused, and so on. Each I-position represents a specific evaluative perspective and is able to create a story about this, and even other domains of personal experiences. In addition, each I-position has a capacity to exchange ideas with the other positions, to agree and disagree, or to negotiate common meanings. These numerous and different I-positions or internal voices, when put together, form the dialogical or multivoiced self. “The dialogical self can be described in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of voiced positions in the landscape of the mind, intertwined as this mind is with the minds of other people” (Hermans, 2003, p. 90).

A structured unit of internal activity is called an internal dialogue, that is a dialogical relationship between two I-positions. This original notion developed by Hubert Hermans (Hermans, 1996, 2002; Hermans, Kempen, & Van Loon, 1992), refers to Michail Bakhtin’s idea of a polyphonic novel. Sokolova and Burlakova (2009) define inner dialogue in the following way: “We define inner dialogue as inner communication between Self and Other, often internalized and objectified in verbal, formally monologic utterances.” (2009, p. 414). However, inner dialogue is not limited to simulations of a social interaction. There are at least three basic forms of internal dialogical activity: (1) a changing of point of view that is, e.g. creating and confronting visions of a possible world, and ‘playing on meanings’, (2) imagined dialogues between parts of the self – identity dialogues (e.g. ‘good self’ vs. ‘bad self’), (3) internal monologues to, and internal dialogues with imagined figures, (4) simulation of social relationships (Puchalska-Wasyl, Chmielnicka-Kuter, & Oleś, 2008).

Considering the notion of an intentional arc by Merleau-Ponty (see Hermans, 1976; 1996), the person is not only able to take at least two different I-positions rooted in the present, but he or she is also able to take at least two different temporal I-positions, e.g. from the past and/or future (e.g. I as a young person and I as an old person). Such temporal voices may extend a personal valuation perspective introducing new points of view, which are not engaged in the present.

“For example, I can imaginatively move to a future point in time and then speak to myself about the sense of what I am doing now in my present situation. This position, at some point in the future, may be very helpful to evaluate my present activities from a long-term perspective. The result may be

that I disagree with my present self as blinding itself from more essential things” (Hermans, 1996, p. 33).

Taking a starting point in the assumption about personal ability to establish imagined inner dialogues between temporal I-positions, we focus our considerations on the psychological functions of such inner dialogues (Oleś & Sobol-Kwapinska, in print). In this article, we show few possibilities of exploration of internal dialogues when considering the psychological effects of activating temporal I-positions (past, present, and future) and temporal dialogues. Preliminary data suggests an increase in the meaning of life, following a temporal dialogue (Oleś, 2005).

### **Study 1. Temporal Dialogues: Past versus Present**

The goal of this study was to check the possible influence of a temporal dialogue between past and present I-positions on affective state and the meaning of life as a state of the persons under investigation. The participants were asked to choose an important moment in their past (e.g. connected with identity formation), to try to go back to it and to recall it with all necessary details (e.g. emotional climate, socio-psychological context), and to formulate from this past I-position a message or expression of something important addressed to their present self. They then tried to answer for this voice from the past using their usual present I-position. The participants were asked to make at least one round (expression and answer), but they were free to make two or three such rounds if they liked (Krason, 2007).

Before and after such a dialog, they answered on two scales: a 30-item scale measuring the meaning of life, by Oleś, and the State Personality Inventory (SPI), by Spielberger and Reheiser (2003, 2009).

The scale measuring the meaning of life was prepared on the basis of the content of the Purpose in Life Test by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1981). The items are sentences, and a subject assesses the level of assertion using a 5-point scale (from 1 - I definitely do not agree, to 5 – I definitely agree). The total result is a sum of raw scores from the items, so it ranges from 30 to 150. Internal consistency of the Cronbach  $\alpha$  scale is 0.95.

The SPI is 40-item inventory measuring four emotional states: anxiety, anger, depression and curiosity (10 items per each). The answers are registered on a four-points scale pertaining to the intensity of currently experienced affect. The Polish version of the method was prepared by K. Wrześniewski and P. Oleś. Internal consistency of the scales, Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  are respectively: 0.75, 0.68, 0.85, 0.75.

The participants were students ( $N = 30$ ; 22F, 8M), mean age,  $M = 22.7$ ;  $SD = 1.42$ .

The results show only one significant difference that is an increase in a state of curiosity, which could mean short time of interest in such exploration of the personal past (see Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of the Level of Meaning of Life and Affective States before and after Inner Temporal Dialogue: Past vs. Present

Variable	Before		After		Differences	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (29)	<i>p</i> <
Meaning of life	101.8	10.6	104.5	11.7	-1.93	.07
Anxiety	16.9	6.0	16.4	6.4	0.54	-
Curiosity	31.9	4.0	33.3	3.4	-2.25	.05
Anger	12.0	4.9	11.5	3.7	0.79	-
Depression	16.1	4.7	15.1	5.1	1.54	-

The conclusion is that confrontation of the past and present points of view has unspecific influence on the affective state of a person. Note that the participants were asked to choose past I-positions and they were free to formulate any message from the past (including ‘keep smiling’, or ‘life is beautiful’). They were not disposed to confront any personal problem or to look for a piece of wisdom hidden in their past experience.

### **Study 2. Temporal Dialogues: Future versus Present**

This second study is quite parallel to the first one. The difference concerns the activation of a future (instead of past) temporal I-position. Thus the goal of this study was to check the possible influence of a temporal dialogue between future and present I-positions on the affective state and the meaning of life as a state of the participants.

The procedure was very similar; however, using imagination rather than memory was important. In this second study, the participants were asked to choose a particularly important moment in their imagined or expected future (e.g. the beginning of their first job, marriage, being in midlife), to try to imagine possible life circumstances carefully, with all necessary details (e.g. emotional climate, socio-psychological context), and to formulate from this future I-position a message or expression of something important addressed to their present self. Then they just had to

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try to answer to this voice from the future. The participants were asked to make at least one round (expression and answer), but they were free to make two or three such rounds if they liked (Ryczan, 2007). Also, before and after such a dialog, they answered to the same two scales as in the previous study: a 30-item scale measuring the meaning of life as a state and the State Personality Inventory (SPI), by Spielberger and Reheiser (2003, 2009).

The participants were students ( $N = 30$ ; 21F, 9M), mean age  $M = 22.6$ ;  $SD = 2.09$ .

As the results shown in Table 2 indicate, in this study one can find significant changes in all assessed states, both affective and of the meaning of life. Thus there is a significant increase in the meaning of life and curiosity as states, and a decrease in anxiety, depression and anger.

Table 2. Comparison of the Level of Meaning of Life and Affective States before and after Inner Temporal Dialogue: Future vs. Present

Variable	Before		After		Differences	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (29)	<i>p</i> <
Meaning of life	93.4	8.56	103.0	13.3	-19.8	.001
Anxiety	19.8	5.8	17.0	5.1	10.4	.005
Curiosity	29.7	5.9	32.4	5.4	-18.7	.001
Anger	14.1	4.8	13.2	3.4	15.5	.001
Depression	19.5	6.3	16.7	5.4	14.1	.001

Confrontation with the future self opens or extends temporal perspectives, influencing affective states towards more positive affects. At the same time, it reduces the possible impact of present life events, problems and concerns on the affective state. However, a change in the meaning of life suggests reflection on life and probably taking new points of reference in assessing current life issues. Why does future vs. present temporal dialogue have an effect on the affective states and the meaning of life as a state, while the past vs. present temporal dialogue does not have a similar impact? Two reasons are probably responsible for these contrasting results. On the one hand, turning to the past can recall positive as well as negative experiences; on the other hand, people's attitudes towards the future are optimistic, so dialogical confrontation with

future I-positions may refer to a possible self which is most often desired, rather than undesired (Markus & Nurius, 1986). However, this explanation does not especially refer to temporal dialogue. Also, future I-positions can, of course, warn or reprimand the present self. Yet, as we expect, most often (excluding depressive cases), it shows possibilities, hopes and a successful ending. This is the main reason for the observed and very salient change.

### **Study 3. Temporal Dialogues: Past versus Present - Research with Changing Positions**

In this study, we checked more complex temporal dialogical relationships, activating in one study all three time-related I-positions and using spatial relationships aiming at reinforcement of changing time-related positions of the self. This third study was conducted by M. Sibinska, who used three chairs symbolizing the past, present and future. In this way, she tried to intensify the experience of (spatial and temporal) movement towards the past or future.

The procedure was very similar, with one small but significant difference: the participant had to sit in a chair, which meant the past, and to choose an important moment in their past (e.g. connected with identity formation), to try to go back to it and remember it with all necessary details (e.g. emotional climate, socio-psychological context), and to formulate from this past I-position a message or expression of something important addressed to their present self. Then they repeated the procedure, changing a chair and formulating an important message from the future. At the end of the first round, they had to sit in the middle chair, which signified the present, and tried to answer for these voices from the past and future. The participants were allowed to make more than one round if they liked (expressions and answer), but not more than three rounds (sitting in the appropriate chair when changing the temporal I-position). Before and after such a dialog, they answered the same two scales: a 30-item scale measuring the meaning of life as a state, and the State Personality Inventory (SPI) by Spielberger and Reheiser (2003).

The participants were students  $N = 30$  (22F, 8 M), aged 19-26 years, mean age  $M = 22.13$ ,  $SD = 1.98$ .

The results of a chair version of the experiment are shown in Table 3. Three significant differences reveal an increase in the meaning of life and anger, and a decrease in anxiety.

There is an influence of past vs. present temporal dialogue – using chairs for reinforcement of temporal I-positions – on the meaning of life (increase) as in the first study, and on anxiety (decrease), and this result is different from the first study. An unexpected increase of anger is difficult to explain. It could mean a kind of frustration

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Table 3. Comparison of the Level of Meaning of Life and Affective States before and after Inner Temporal Dialogue

Variable	Before		After		Differences	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (29)	<i>p</i> <
Meaning of life	93.4	8.56	103.0	7.79	-8.02	.001
Anxiety	16.0	2.6	14.1	2.3	4.28	.001
Curiosity	32.1	4.6	31.6	4.9	1.00	-
Anger	14.0	2.7	15.4	2.9	-2.82	.01
Depression	13.9	2.4	13.4	2.8	1.08	-

when the participants were asked to fill in the questionnaires (the second time they were the same) after a very exciting exercise as they estimated the ‘chair position’ experiment. The reduction of anxiety, which was not very high at the beginning, may indicate that the exchange of ideas between the past and present self, with a clear change of positions quiets or tones down the anxiety present in everyday life.

### **Study 4. Temporal Dialogues between the Past, Present and Future - Research with Changing Positions**

The fourth study was conducted in the same way as the previous one. The replication aimed at closer exploration of conditions implying affective change and change in the meaning of life. There were two research questions:

(1) Does confrontation of the past, future and actual I-positions relate to affective states and/or the meaning of life?

(2) And if so, under what conditions do temporal dialogues influence affective traits and/or the meaning of life in one way or another?

The hypothesis related to the first question was: (H1) Temporal dialogues between past, present and future self cause an increase in curiosity and the meaning of life as states, and a decrease of anxiety, depression and anger as affective states. The rationale under it is that confrontation of different time perspectives helps to objectify criteria of life, it concerns evaluation and this can reveal more positive affective states, as well as an assessment of life as more meaningful. Regardless of this main line of arguing, in the previous studies we discovered that temporal dialogues in most young people produce an increase in the meaning of life, however in the minority of

participants – a decrease in the meaning of life (Oleś, 2005). The question is, why? Thus, referring to this problem and the second question, we postulate the second hypothesis (H2): Temporal dialogues tend to increase positive affective states and/or the meaning of life when the person is able to integrate two or more voices (points of view) introduced by different temporal positions of the self. Also, temporal dialogues tend to increase negative affective states and/or decrease the meaning of life when the person is not able to integrate two or more voices (points of view) introduced by different temporal positions of the self.

As in the previous study, we used the ‘chair instruction for a temporal dialogue’, which is a method of activating the temporal voices. The method can be briefly described as an attempt to: imagine oneself in a specific time in the past and/or future, and to formulate a message-speech: (1) *I in the past* – “What would my ‘I’ from the past say to me?” (2) *I in the future* – “What would my ‘I’ from the future say about my present life?”, and (3) *Actual I* – “What is my answer to those voices?” The instruction for temporal voice activation was such: “There are three chairs in front of you. Each of them represents a certain moment in your life. The chair in the middle represents your current self or life situation, which we will call *the actual I*; the chair on your left represents any chosen, distant moment in your past and it will be called *I in the past*, and the chair on your right represents any chosen moment in your distant future which we will call *I in the future*. Please take a seat representing the past...” (and next as in the previous studies).

One element was added at the end of an investigation. The participants answered a question on the level concerning meta-reflection on the effects of what they have done just before: What is the result of confronting those voices? Can they be somehow combined into one consistent message or one sentence? In this way we checked if the participants were able to integrate the voices emerging from different temporal I-positions.

The participants were students,  $N = 100$  (60 women and 40 men), mean age  $M = 22.96$ ,  $SD = 2.38$ . The results do not replicate previous results very well (see table 4).

The first hypothesis is partly verified. Temporal dialogues between past, present and future self caused, on the one hand, an increase in the meaning of life and curiosity and a decrease in anger, and on the other hand – quite unexpectedly – an increase in anxiety as a state. An increase in the meaning of life is clear, this result suggests ones more high potential influence of temporal dialogue for the meaning of life. An increase in curiosity as an affective state is also replicated from the first and second study, but not from the third, which – interestingly enough – was done according to exactly the same procedure. A decrease in anger is also understandable, taking into account the

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Table 4. Comparison of the Level of Meaning of Life and Affective States before and after Inner Temporal Dialogue

Variable	Before		After		Differences	
	M	SD	M	SD	t(99)	p <
Meaning of life	78.01	11.6	101.36	12.9	-17.95	.001
Anxiety	15.33	4.42	16.36	4.49	-2.88	.005
Curiosity	28.63	6.53	29.73	6.15	-2.84	.005
Anger	16.00	3.97	14.64	3.81	4.51	.001
Depression	14.73	4.01	14.45	3.93	0.83	n.s.

positive effect of temporal dialogue on affective state. However, in this light, increase in anxiety is intriguing. This result seems specific to the group. The participants originated from different social environments than in the previous study. And a specific result in this group is a relatively low initial mean score of the meaning of life (more than one standard deviation lower than in the first, second and third study). It suggests some level of existential frustration, and in such a case, temporal dialogue can result in a higher, not lower level of anxiety, because it regards difficult personal, unresolved problems.

Referring to the second hypothesis, a qualitative analysis of the dialogue effects was conducted. The question under consideration was whether a person was able to integrate the voices representing different temporal perspectives or not. The indicator for temporal voice integration was a formulation of a message from the present position, expressing a combination of the voices or showing a new quality derived from confrontation of the past, present and future self. The qualitative evaluation with the judges' method was used for that aim. According to consistent assessment of five independent judges, more than two-thirds of the participants were able to integrate the voices, and only less than one third of the participants did not reach such integration. Thus, we compared two distinguished groups, one called "Integration Group" and the second "No Integration Group" (see Table 5).

In both groups, we found a significant increase in the meaning of life, which does not mean that the results in these groups are similar. First, and most importantly: the comparison of the extent of change in the meaning of life ('after' result – 'before' result) reveals a great difference between the groups. Increase is much higher in the

Table 5. Comparison of the Level of Meaning of Life before and after Inner Temporal Dialogue

Variable	Before		After		Differences	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (99)	<i>p</i> <
Integration Group, <i>N</i> =70	75.66	10.64	105.49	11.17	-27.84	0.001
No Integration Group, <i>N</i> =30	84.17	11.84	90.53	12.10	-7.48	0.001

group called ‘integration’ – the participants who were able to integrate the voices articulated from different temporal perspectives ( $F(1.98) = 187.9, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.66$ ). This, in turn, supports the second hypothesis. Increase in the meaning of life in the ‘No integration group’ – the participants who were not able to integrate the voices articulated from different temporal perspectives – is also significant, contrary to our reasoning. Moreover, the comparison of the changes in affective states like anxiety, depression, anger, and curiosity, does not reveal any significant change (respectively:  $F(1.98) = 2.59, n.s.$ ;  $F(1.98) = 1.11, n.s.$ ;  $F(1.98) = 1.31, n.s.$ ;  $F(1.98) = 2.18, n.s.$ ), also contrary to the hypothesis. The ability to integrate different temporal voices causes greater increase in the meaning of life, and does not influence affective states. A rare phenomenon of the decrease in the meaning of life after temporal dialogue needs another explanation. At the moment, one can postulate a serious personal problem, like a deep sense of lack of fulfillment, activated by a temporal dialogue; the problem implies negative influence on the meaning of life.

The second difference between the two groups concerns not the extent of change, but an initial and final level of the meaning of life. An initial level of the meaning of life was almost one standard deviation lower in the ‘integration group’, and the final level was over one standard deviation higher than in the opposite group. Students who need an internal integration possible via internal dialogue, and who are able to connect and unite different temporal voices, probably find such a dialogue as an occasion to answer important existential dilemmas. They take clear profits, clearly benefiting from temporal internal dialogue. Students who are not able to unite inner voices, or who do not have a serious need to do so, have not specially lowered their initial meaning of life, and do not benefit significantly from temporal dialogue.

Interpreting this result from the dialogical perspective, one can indicate a lack of or limited flexibility, as a potential reason of both inability to integrate inner voices, and lowered readiness for change in the meaning of life. Considering the result from another

perspective: a tendency to influence of a temporal dialogue on the meaning of life originates from existential frustration.

### **Study 5. Self-Narratives and the Meaning of Life and Identity Dimensions**

According to McAdams (1996), making self-narratives is crucial for creating personal identity. The emphasis on organization of life experiences in time and the generating of narrative structure which integrates the personal past, present, and future, is the essence of this approach. Therefore, story-telling about the self expresses narrative identity. Assuming that the self is dialogical or polyphonic, and providing that there are many different I-positions, we can assume that each I-position is able to tell their own story. The same concerns temporal I-positions.

This project is focused on the potential influence of creating a life history from two different temporal perspectives, namely, the present – prospective life story, and the future – imagined retrospective life story, on identity dimensions and the meaning of life. Knowing the integrative power of self-narratives (McAdams, 1993; Ramírez-Esparza & Pennebaker, 2006), we expected significant changes in identity dimensions and the meaning of life, following the creation of life history. In particular, the construction of a possible history of life from an imagined perspective, *I as an old person*, will promote exploration of one's own identity and/or commitment to chosen goals and tasks. Also, exploration of future possibilities has to do is connected with choice of life goals which are on line with personal needs and aspirations, so it should influence exploration as an identity dimension. We also expected influence on the meaning of life for the broadening of temporal perspective, which allows one to find basic values and other anchors for a personal meaning of life. The exploration of the imagined past has more to do with life review and is based on the realization of choices and values – *what has been important in the past?* Therefore, it should enhance the commitment dimension of identity, as well as the meaning of life.

The procedure was as follows. The participants, adolescents aged from 15 to 19 years ( $M = 16.57$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ), were randomly divided into three groups. Some of them, 'old persons', were asked: "Please try to imagine that you are old, at the end of your life, you have lived for many years and you have had many experiences. When you are ready, please write down a comprehensive story of your life. You have about a quarter hour to do this." Another group, 'young persons', were asked: "You are young and you have a lifetime before you; however, you can imagine your future. Please try to do that and write down a comprehensive story of your whole life. You have about a quarter hour to do this." Also, a control group, 'Mars travelers', were asked: "Please try to imagine that you have traveled to Mars. It has taken a few years, and you have experienced many events. Please try to write down a comprehensive story of your travels. You have about a quarter hour to do this." Directly prior to story construction and a week after it, the participants were asked to fill in two measures: the Ego Identity

Process Questionnaire (EIPQ) by Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, and Geisinger (1995), and a short, 10-item scale for assessing the meaning of life as a trait.

The EIPQ is a psychological tool for measuring two dimensions of identity: Exploration and Commitment. The scale for assessment of the meaning of life is a shortened version of a parallel for an aforementioned 30-item scale measuring the meaning of life as a state, prepared by Oleś.

The results are shown in Table 6. There are only two significant differences; however, note that the second investigation was conducted one week after constructing the story. The first difference concerns an increase in the exploration of identity in the group of participants who formulated a life story from an imagined future perspective (*I as an old person*). Another significant result is an increase in the meaning of life of the group of participants who formulated a whole life story from their own perspective (*I as a young person*). No significant differences were observed in any control group.

Table 6. Identity Dimensions and Meaning of Life in Three Groups Before and After Construction of Life Story

Variable	Group Investigation	“Old person” ( <i>N</i> = 82)		“Young person” ( <i>N</i> = 55)		Controls: “Mars” ( <i>N</i> = 51)	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Exploration	1	56.66	7.58	55.60	7.54	54.84	6.98
	2	57.99	7.37	55.29	7.42	54.78	7.71
	<i>t</i>	-2.15*		0.34		0.08	
Commitment	1	62.13	9.01	63.73	7.40	63.71	7.09
	2	62.13	9.42	63.47	7.41	62.92	7.49
	<i>t</i>	0.00		0.31		1.05	
Meaning of life	1	27.01	4.17	25.47	3.68	25.08	3.15
	2	27.15	4.39	26.35	3.36	25.14	3.04
	<i>t</i>	-0.49		-2.13*		-0.19	

Note: \* -  $p < 0.05$

The research shows that some changes can be initiated by narrative thinking activation, and that these changes depend on the temporal perspective. It was revealed that retelling a life story from the imagined position *I as an old person* intensifies identity exploration, whereas constructing one’s life story from the current position *I as a young person* reinforces the meaning of life (as a trait).

Therefore, the results suggest higher exploration inspired by the creation of a life story from an imagined future perspective. Why does an imagined retrospective perspective activate exploration of possible identity? One possible answer is that the creation or activation of a very special temporal I-position, namely, *I as an old person – at the end of my life* – confronts a participant with ultimate life values and an imagined life review, and reveals a kind of pressure to evaluate personal concerns, gains and losses from the point of view of their impact on one's total assessment of life. The challenge to prepare a life history from the distant future can inspire young people to focus on searching for important life values, and to confront two different I-positions: one created during an experiment, that is the future self, and the actual self. The same things may have different meaning from each of them. What seems valuable or nice from the actual I-position can be estimated as meaningless from the future I-position. What seems valuable from the future can be boring, too difficult, or quite uninteresting from the actual I-position. So we postulate that activation of this particular future I-position – *I as an old person* – causes some confusion which results in more or less intensive searching for universal meanings – which has value for the present and for the future. This is not the case in the situation where a person projects his or her life from a normal I-position ('Young person group'). In creating a prospective story, they were closer to planning their life than to assessing it as if they were at the end of their days. The second assessment of identity dimensions and the meaning of life was conducted a week after the formulation of a life story – enough time to reflect upon important life issues, provided that the person was ready to do so.

In the 'young person' group, which formulated a prospective life story, the significant effect concerns the meaning of life, not exploration or commitment as we expected. Creation of a prospective story does not touch upon identity but it influences the meaning of life. Most young people (except for a few cases) formulated stories about their happiness, successful fulfillment of personal goals, and joyful relationships. In a great majority of cases, they expressed an optimistic attitude towards the future, which could strengthen their actual meaning of life. Life, as an open and hopeful possibility, helps to cope with current concerns and treat them as limited to the present time, place and situation.

Retelling one's own history enables the person to distance themselves from the present, and take on new interpretations of certain life events. It is particularly noticeable when the individual creates a life story from a distant moment in the future. From the dialogical point of view, we can say that when people activate an I-position which forces them to see their whole life and possibly review it, then they can challenge the current lifestyle and outlook on the world. At the same time, the exploration processes are intensified and can provide for identity changes.

The aforementioned result is equally interesting. The meaning of life seems to involve identity. McAdams defines identity as "an internalized narrative integration of

past, present, and anticipated future which provides lives with a sense of unity and purpose” (1989, p. 161). It is clear that the sense of unity and purpose are closely connected with the meaning of life. Therefore, if narrative identity provides the person with a sense of unity and purpose, we can understand why among participants who constructed a life story, the meaning of life increased. However, it is worth noting that the relation between constructing a self-narrative and an increase in the meaning of life is observed only in the case when a life story was retold from the position *I as a young person*. Perhaps the explanation for this result should be found in the form of an activated temporal I-position, and in the manner of thinking accompanied by the taken perspective. If the life story is constructed from a current point of view, it is based chiefly on what had already happened in life. In such case, thinking is more realistic and does not allow for much imagination. The meaning of life may increase, because the individual makes a reflection about the present and the past that leads to the present life situation. It is possible to make sense out of some actual experiences, because they have truly gone through.

### **General Discussion**

Generally speaking, our research was focused on the potential power of self-narrative and dialogical activity. Creation or (re)construction of one’s own story implies processes of applying meaning, selection and evaluation of life events and personal experiences, and the integration of disperse plots into one coherent and narratively structured whole (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; McAdams, 1993). Usual self-narrative activity aims at (re)construction of the past, explanation and justification of the present, with some references towards the future. According to our results (study 5), taking a broad temporal perspective and constructing a prospective life story, on a stage when people usually plan their lives (Heckhausen, 1999; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995; Nurmi, 2004), gives an important impulse to enhance the meaning of life. Moreover, the challenge to construct an imagined life story from the retrospective perspective *I as an old person*, implying a change of time perspective, stimulates exploration of one’s own identity in young people. Both results indicate that self-narratives, in life story construction, have personal development promotion power, and it can be used in counseling and/or psychotherapy for young people who exhibit difficulties in defining their meaning of life and identity. We will return to this topic further on.

Both results also suggest the meaningful influence of future time perspective activation on the present condition of the person. The future allows for relieving oneself from limitations of the past and pressures of the present, and to project one’s own trajectory of life into the imagined and challenging future (Lens, 2006; Zaleski, Cycon, & Kurc, 2001). Similarly, as with goals (Bandura, 2006), a future life story opens the person up to possibilities and chances. It challenges intentionality and confronts the person with a broad horizon of personal choices perceived as free, or at least partly free.

Therefore, taking a future I-position stimulates the person in changing their point of view and in considering life issues in a broader and developmental perspective.

This well-being promoting aspect of the future was shown in studies 1 – 4, which were focused on the immediate and direct influence of changing temporal perspectives, and the confrontation of time-related I-positions (voices) on affective states and the meaning of life, also as a state. In all these studies, we checked the potential influence of temporal dialogue on affective states and the meaning of life. A general conclusion is as follows. The temporal dialogues tend to increase the meaning of life as a state, and the extent of the influence is affected by personal ability to integrate the voices (points of view), representing different temporal positions of the self. Moreover, temporal dialogues tend to influence affective states, that is, they tend to increase curiosity and reduce negative affects like depression or anxiety (besides the cases when the initial level of the meaning of life is lowered). However, personal ability to integrate different temporal voices does not have an influence on affective states. In general, we found that the confrontation of inner voices representing the future and present has positive influence on well-being and the meaning of life (with a few exceptions). Confrontation of inner voices representing the past and present does not have such a salient effect, but tends to the same direction.

In summary, we basically confronted different I-positions situated in three time dimensions: future, past and present. The present self is often under pressure of immediate needs, everyday concerns, and urgent tasks, the future self is closer to possible self, according to Markus and Nurius (1986), so it is more flexible, more colored by hopes or fears, and more prone to creative power of imagination, while the past self implies memory of important life events and reevaluation of their influence on the present and future. Confronting the past or future causes the present to be viewed from a broader perspective (e.g., teenage values or the sum of life events). Thus present actions, which seem important and urgent (e.g. completing studies, academic-related tasks at the expense of one's social life), when perceived from a broader temporal perspective, may not only lose its importance, but also gain an entirely different value (e.g., it may seem undesirable, as opposed to urgent and important).

As a life story organizes one's tasks and desires, or determines personal goals and defines associated affects, it evokes and influences motivational processes, while the temporal dialogues, initiated among time-related positions, have probably even greater influence on the functioning of the self. The narratives people create reveal their motives and goals, show their hopes and fears, help understand the undertaking of activities, as well as withdrawal from them (Bruner, 1990). By activating the past, future and present self, people clarify goals, values and desires, and in this way influence their meaning of life. Confrontation of the present situation from distant temporal points of view may initiate processes of change (Hermans, 1996). Moreover, such temporal confrontation can stimulate identity formation processes.

The dialogical abilities and functions of the self are used in dialogical therapy. The aim of dialogical therapy is twofold. On the one hand, it aims at expression of diverse internal voices (that is, I-positions), which do not know about or ignore each other; on the other hand, at the promotion of mutual exchange and communication between different parts. As a result, the voices representing different I-positions can communicate and cooperate, seeking agreement on common meanings (Hermans, 2004; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995).

Psychotherapeutic functions of internal dialogues have been emphasized by researchers taking different perspectives and assumptions (e.g. Dimaggio & Lysaker, in print; Hermans, 2004; Pollard, 2008; Sokolova & Burlakova, 2009; Whelton & Greenberg, 2004). Internal dialogues are used as a usual therapeutic technique in gestalt as well as cognitive therapy (Alford & Beck, 1997). They are also considered important in the existential approach. One of the personal attitudes towards terminal disease is described by an internal dialogue.

An individual who is afflicted with a disease is faced with the task of finding a way to live with it. (...) Disease is a *phenomenon*; the individual has to enter into a dialogue with it. Dialogue entails listening. In this context, dialogue is understood as *internal dialogue*; that is, a conversation the individual is having with themselves. One part of the individual speaks to another part, while the other part does listening; like when you take a stroll in the woods and talk to yourself about how life is going these days (Jacobsen, 2007, pp. 31-32).

Arguing that temporal dialogues have a therapeutic and wisdom-promoting function, we would like to refer to the study by Staudinger and Baltes (1996). In the research on wisdom-related performance, they used an experiment involving inner dialogue as one of the experimental conditions. A difficult life problem was introduced to the participants, and before they responded, they had an opportunity to discuss it with a person in the laboratory, or with a person they usually discuss difficult life problems, or to conduct an inner dialogue about the problem with someone of their choice; or to think about the problem without interaction with any other person. The results showed a significantly higher level of performance (about one standard deviation) in the participants who had the opportunity to discuss the problem with another person, both in real social interaction, as well as in inner dialogue. The authors concluded that adults have a latent potential to use or develop their wisdom. However, from the point of view of the dialogical self, this result proves the power of inner dialogue and shows that inspirations given by this form of dialogicality are similar to dialogue in real social interactions. If a person is able to increase his or her wisdom while conducting inner dialogue with another person, is it the same when he or she establishes inner dialogical exchange between inner self in the future and the actual self? Does it work in a similar way as inner dialogical interaction with another person? According to the theory, temporal dialogues give the opportunity to extend a personal meaning system, and to

explore a zone of nearest development (Oleś & Sobol-Kwapinska, in print). Further studies should also penetrate how dialogicality underlies not only life story and identity construction, but also specific ways of managing life challenges and tasks, coping with stress, or contacting other people.

The studies, as described in this article, introduce a picture of the self as a space of dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions, also temporal, where each of them can be a center of self-narrative (Hermans, 2004; Pollard, 2008). The issue of polyphonic and dialogical self, and the issue of temporality seem to complement each other and show holistic human functioning. The conception of dialogical self reveals a vertical complexity of person, whereas temporality depicts a horizontal one. Particular I-positions can move within the self-system, depending on changes in situation and time. Each of the I-positions has their own story to tell, creating in this way a narrative self, or – as McAdams (1993) proposes – narrative identity. When many I-positions exchange views on the self and the world around, we can tell not only about narrative, but, what more, the dialogical self (Hermans, 2001, 2003).

As far as the problem of self-narrative is connected with narrative identity, it is worth referring to the dialogical account of identity. Mick Cooper (1999), talking about the subjective relation between the individual's unique I-positions, emphasizes that interaction between these I-positions may be associated with identity dialogue. It happens when internal voices express significant I-positions, and in this way the negotiation of identity occurs. In this respect, Hermans' theory of the self is coincident with the quoted view, because it allows for non-continuity, changeability, and reevaluation within the self, involving internal negotiations. This account stands in some contradiction to McAdams' theory of narrative identity, where continuity is one of the basic features of identity as such, and evolutionary changes of points of view are restricted by the scope of self-narrative. However, if we assume that different I-positions, though each of them tells their own life story, the inner voices may enter integration, then retaining of self-continuity is not only possible but even placed on the higher level. Probably the meta-I-position plays a crucial role in these processes.

Anthony Giddens (1991), claims that identity is not a gift that we are given, but something that we incessantly construct by self-reflection. Seeing identity in such light, it seems that the idea of creating identity is common to a narrative and dialogical approach, although the manner of identity-creating appears different. According to Hermans (1996, 2002), identity is negotiated in inner dialogue between I-positions, whereas in McAdams' (1993) view, identity is created by the accumulation of experiences integrated into a coherent self-narrative. Perhaps application of dialogical techniques in the process of generating a coherent and rich identity will turn out to be a bridge between these two notions of personal identity.

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## **DIALOGICALITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY**

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**ABSTRACT.** Inspired by social-cognitive and dialogical theory of identity the research was focused on identity dynamics. It was assumed that there are two basic factors which influence identity organization: first, basic motives underlying identity formations which are: self-esteem, efficacy, continuity, distinctiveness, belonging and meaning (Vignoles et al, 2006); second, dialogical activity as an intrinsic property of the self (Hermans, 2003). The study explored the relation between identity structure and basic motives satisfaction as well as internal dialogical activity. It was hypothesized that the more identity element satisfies the motives and the higher its dialogical potential, the more it is privileged in the identity structure. Participants were 23 females and 19 males, aged 19-28. The research was conducted in the longitudinal design (2 stages in the space of two months). "Identity Ratings" questionnaire by Vignoles and collaborators (2006) was used to measure identity structure and motives satisfaction, and Questionnaire of Internal Dialogues Frequency by Puchalska-Wasyl (2006) as a measure of dialogicality. Because of the nested data structure (identity elements clustered within participants), multilevel regression was computed. The results confirmed that all abovementioned motives have to a certain extent important impact on identity (re)organization. Dialogicality proved to be good predictor of identity structure in its cognitive and behavioral dimension, that is perceived centrality of identity elements and their enactment. Identity structure is shaped by motivational influences as well as internal dialogical activity.

One intriguing self quality is the commonly experienced sense of unity despite heterogeneity - even ambiguity - of self-knowledge. Consciously we experience stability as well as changeability of the self and identity.

It is commonly agreed that identity is heterogenic and flexible, but there are many views of its complexity and dynamics. According to Markus & Wurf (1987) self-concept is simultaneously characterized by stability and changeability. According to the cognitive-experiential self-theory by Epstein, two modes of information processing, rational and experiential, explain this dual nature of identity (Epstein, 1994; Pacini, Epstein, 1999). The social-cognitive approach explains cross-situational coherence of behavior despite heterogenic social and self-knowledge (Cervone, 1996). Narrative psychology recognizes the ongoing life-story as an integrative process of constructing one's identity from the diversity of life experience (McAdams, 2001).

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Unity-multiplicity paradoxes become clearer, especially when we acknowledge dialogical nature of self-construction (Hermans, 2003). In this paper I present dialogical and social-cognitive interpretations of identity dynamics, supported by research on how these two approaches may complement each other in the analysis of identity construction.

### **Heterogenic Identity From Dialogical And Socio-Cognitive Point Of View**

Identity is conceptualized as a multidimensional entity, consisting of multiple components, called I-positions (Hermans, Kempen, and van Loon, 1992) or identity elements (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, Scabini, 2006; Vignoles, Manzi, Regalia, Jemmolo, Scabini, 2008). It has a dialogical nature and is constantly reorganized, because of its internal dynamics and context-dependency (Markus, Wurf, 1987; Andersen, Chen, 2002; Hermans, 2003; Kashima et al., 2004; van Halen, Janssen, 2004; Oleś, 2008a).

According to dialogical self theory (DS theory) the self is defined as a dynamic multiplicity of relatively independent I-positions, representing an extensive range of various perspectives (Hermans, 1996, 2001a, 2002, 2003). Depending on the changes in time and space the self fluctuates among a variety of positions, endowing each one with a voice. The dialogical self is inhabited by individual and collective voices (representing social groups, communal worldviews and other shared perspectives), which can be related to the individual and social identity. Internal dialogue is a phenomenon of mutual interchange between I-positions. Dialogical relations are established, because positions turn to each other exchanging their peculiar points of view. As a result of such an exchange the self system may change. There are several possibilities of such a modification: a new position may emerge, coalition between positions may be established, some may become salient, whereas others may become quiet and remain on the side-lines. Then, it is hard to establish any firm distinctions and lines of demarcation, because its internal structure and borders are flexible. The concept of dialogical self joins both unity and multiplicity, continuity and discontinuity of experience (Hermans, 2003). Each I-position is a possible center of narration (McAdams, 2001), therefore it is also a potential source of dialogue. Dialogical activity of certain I-position is at least partly accessible to conscious experience and may be assessed by self-report methods.

The terms “self” and “identity” are used interchangeably in the DS literature, not as a result of the lack of theoretical accuracy, but rather as a result of a peculiar conceptualization. The notion of dialogical self relates to James’s classical distinction between the I and the Me, in other words between “I as a subject” and “I as an object”. It joins these two aspects of the self. The sense of personal identity stems from the activity of I-as-a-subject, which integrates the variety of experience represented in the multiplicity of empirical elements (I-as-an-object). The term “I-position” expresses the

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I-Me relationship: the self shifts from one spatial position to another, depending on the changes in situation and time. As far as the self is decentralized and there is no core, also the identity is not ascribed to particular I-position, but emerges from the interaction among numerous self components. The interplay between the I and the Me is a basis of identity construction.

Identity is heterogenic and context dependent (Talamo, Ligorio, 2000; Hermans, 2004; van Halen, Janssen, 2004; Hermans, Dimaggio, 2007). It is influenced by certain pressures, which results in its internal re-organization. Context dependency relates to identity's sensitivity to external influences, as well as to the changes of power and dominance among I-positions/identity elements (Hermans, 2001a). The question may be posed about reasons of this everlasting changeability. Even in the absence of evident external pressures identity architecture fluctuates. The key to identity dynamics is hidden in the motivational basis of identity creation.

It has been argued recently that identity construction is governed by particular motivational principles, called identity motives. Research has proved that these are: 1. self-esteem, 2. efficacy, 3. continuity, 4. distinctiveness, 5. belonging, and 6. meaning (Vignoles et al., 2006, 2008; Vignoles, Chrysochoou, Breakwell, 2002; Breakwell, 1986). Identity motives are defined as “pressures toward certain identity states and away from others, which guide the processes of identity construction” (Vignoles et al., 2006, p. 309). Identity elements occupy certain positions in the three dimensions of identity structure: 1. cognitive - *perceived centrality* of a certain element within identity, 2. affective – *positive affect* connected with it; and 3. behavioral – which refers to what Reicher (in: Vignoles et al., 2006) called *identity enactment*, defined as “the extent to which individuals strive to communicate each of their identity elements to others in everyday life” (p. 320). In other words it is a behavior harmonious with the self-knowledge. The elements that best satisfy the 6 motives are privileged in the identity structure. The more particular aspect of identity is a source of self-esteem, efficacy, continuity etc., the more it is perceived as central within identity (cognitive domain), the more happy one is with it (affective domain) and the more it is demonstrated in everyday life (behavioral domain). In other words, the extent to which a particular element satisfies the motives determines its position in the identity structure. The level of motives satisfaction is not stable, therefore identity structure changes. Three dimensions of identity structure express three essential manifestations of the “selfhood”: “thoughts, feelings and behaviors that arise from the awareness of self as an object and agent” (Hoyle et al. in: Mishel, Shoda, Smith, 2004, p. 430).

In this project, the following conceptualizations of the abovementioned motives were assumed (by Vignoles et al., 2006). Self-esteem is conceived as a motivation to preserve and strengthen a positive perception of one's self. Efficacy refers to the searching for feelings of competence and control. Continuity relates to the need to preserve subjective sense of continuity across time and situation (however this

continuity does not exclude change). Distinctiveness refers to searching for a sense of differentiation from others, on the individual and social level. Belonging concerns the motivation to maintain and enhance feelings of closeness or acceptance by other people. Meaning is responsible for striving for the purpose in one's life. The basis of identity is not located in a homogenous structure, but is based on multiple heterogenic components (identity elements/I-positions) that satisfy the motives to certain extent. In terms of DS theory, the sense of identity is derived from the heterogenic system of various voices of the self, which cooperate, compete, contrast or complement each other. The voices come from I-positions, which are activated in certain contexts, in accordance with changes in time and space (e.g. during Christmas I may have temporarily activated my I-as-family-member, and derive pleasure and sense of identity from interaction with my family).

The sense of identity doesn't come from a single "Me", but is embedded in a complex set of elements, and emerges from multiple experience. From the perspective of self-complexity theories, apart from a "global" we have a "partial" sense of self-esteem, efficacy etc., which can be distinguished theoretically and grasped empirically (Swann, Chang-Schneider, McClarty, 2007). Hence, following socio-cognitive research we should take into account specific self-views, not global.

As argued above, identity motives constantly stimulate identity creation. Along with dialogical properties of the self they guide identity dynamics. The ongoing process of identity construction may be interpreted as continuous striving for such an organization of contents which best satisfies the motives. Furthermore, we may assume that optimal organization of identity elements can be established in dialogue. Dialogical activity re-organizes the system so that certain I-positions became dominant (Hermans, 2001a). Linking these two approaches, we may predict that the primacy of identity elements in the system is determined by two factors. Firstly, it is motives satisfaction that provides dominance in the identity structure (in its three dimensions). Secondly, dialogical activity of elements should promote their privileged location in the system.

### **Dialogue As A Source Of Identity Dynamics**

Dialogue is an essential property of the self, which plays an important role in identity construction (Hermans, 1996, 2001a, 2003; van Halen, Janssen, 2004). It helps to describe and explain the ongoing process of identity formation, contents heterogeneity, structural complexity and continuous malleability. Dialoguing as an intrinsic feature of the self is not restricted to internal mental activity, however this paper presents the project focused on its internal manifestation.

Cognitive psychology extensively elaborates on dynamic aspects of the self system; however it does not indicate a particular mechanism of interchange between its subsystems. This mechanism may be a dialogue. The phenomenon of internal (imaginative) dialoguing is called *internal dialogical activity* and it is defined as mental

engagement into the dialogues with imagined figures, simulation of social verbal relationships, changing points of view and mutual confrontation of different I-positions relevant for personal or social identity” (Oleś, 2006). Following this conceptualization dialogicality is treated as a trait and measured by Internal Dialogical Activity Scale (IDAS by Oleś). However for the purpose of a study of identity complexity, we should rather use a method that estimates the dialogical potential of each particular identity aspect. For this purpose we may use the Questionnaire of Internal Dialogues Frequency worked out by Puchalska-Wasył (2006). It is a modified version of Personal Position Repertoire (PPR) by Hermans (2001b), which was elaborated as a method for the study of (re)organization of the individual’s repertoire of I-positions. The version allows one to indicate the extent to which certain aspects of identity are engaged in dialogues with each other. The method is presented below.

Dialogue (internal or external) is a highly innovative activity, and as such may facilitate identity creation. It is an open process, which may be highly important for self-regulation (Ferryhough, 1996). The idea that dialogue is highly relevant for identity construction becomes clear especially when the sense of identity breaks up. Lysaker & Lysaker (2002) are convincing in maintaining that the disturbances in the sense of unity and internal consistency observed in schizophrenia may be caused by the collapse of internal dialogues. Indirectly, this observation supports the DS theory, suggesting that dialogue integrates a variety of experience and turns fragmentation into constructive heterogeneity (Hermans, 2001a).

Identity changeability should not necessarily be considered as constructing identity *ad hoc*, what would postmodern perspectives would imply. The contents may stay the same, while the structure of identity alters. The authority in dialogical space is shared by many positions. Those which gain dominance become salient. According to DS theory it is dialogue that is the source of that dominance. The identity elements currently activated in dialogue have potentially greater impact on self-regulation (Hermans, 1996).

When analyzing dynamic identity we should take into account dialogical functions of the self. Dialogical activity can be a mechanism of change, as well as the process leading to integration, which preserves existing structure (Hermans, 2001a; see also: Oleś, Brygola, & Sibińska, this issue). Does internal dialogical activity consolidate identity structure or does it rather stimulate its changes? The experimental study presented below aims to answer this question.

The implicit basis of this research rejects the idea of unrestricted changeability of identity. Its flexibility refers basically to the structural malleability rather than its contents. It is assumed that identity is dynamic, but not necessarily fluid, amorphous and relatively unlimited in its changeability (as many contemporary sociological

theories suggest, see Giddens, 1991). We can define its structure, contents, and specify the motives which guide its construction.

### **Study**

#### Goal of the research

The project was based on the cognitive and dialogical self theories. The social-cognitive point of view was enriched by the concept of dialogue. Both approaches emphasize constructivist and dynamic nature of identity creation. Motivational basis underlying identity formation may contribute to the understanding of dialogical self. The aim of the research was to capture identity dynamics. That is, its structural changes in the three dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioral. In this study, it was assumed that there are two basic variables responsible for its changeability. The first of these, which regulates identity re-construction, is identity motives influence (6-motive model by Vignoles et al., 2006, 2008). Second, it is the internal dialogical activity as an essential property of the self (DS theory by Hermans, 2003).

The following question was posed: What is the relationship between identity structure and: a) basic motives satisfaction; as well as b) internal dialogical activity? It was hypothesized that: privileged location of identity elements in the structure is predicted by: a) identity motives satisfaction, and b) dialogical activity. That is, the more the identity element satisfies the motives and has high dialogical potential, the more it becomes dominant in the identity structure (in its three dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioral).

The results will let us describe the conditions of the structural changes of identity, in reference to the six motives guiding identity construction and internal dialogical activity, and will reveal the motives which clearly stimulate identity construction. Moreover, theoretically the justified role of dialogicality in identity creation will be verified.

#### Method

The longitudinal study was conducted to observe structural changes of identity. In accord with Vignoles et al. (2006) it was assumed that longitudinal design would bring us closer to identity processes in action. The procedure consisted of two stages conducted in the space of two months. The research was presented as a study of identity. Questionnaires were distributed mainly among students. Participants responded to the questionnaires, working individually or in small groups (up to 6 people), in the presence of the researcher. Participants were contacted after two months and invited to the second stage of the research. The final sample consisted of 42 individuals (23 F and 19 M), aged 19-28.

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*Time 1 questionnaire:* Participants first were instructed to generate freely a list of 12 identity elements. The instruction was constructed on the basis of the study by McQuillen, Licht & Licht (2001) and Vignoles et al. (2006) (Appendix A). Participants used the “Identity Ratings” questionnaire by Vignoles et al. (2006) to rate each identity element for perceived centrality, positive affect, identity enactment (2 items each; average was treated as a final score), and for its association with feelings of self-esteem, efficacy, continuity, distinctiveness, belonging and meaning of life (1 item each). Thus the questionnaire included 9 parts, related to the 3 dimensions of identity structure and to the 6 motives (Appendix B). The questions were followed by 7-point response scales. The “Identity Ratings” questionnaire was followed by the Questionnaire of Internal Dialogues Frequency by Puchalska-Wasyl (2006). This modified version of the Personal Position Repertoire by Hermans (2001a) measured dialogical activity of each identity element. In this adaptation participants had to estimate the frequency of internal dialogues between identity elements (I-positions) instead of the power of relationship between them. Secondly, whereas, in standard PPR, the participant juxtaposes two sets of positions, external (rows) and internal (columns), here comparisons are within the same set of positions or elements. The rows and columns contain the same list; each element is listed twice (once in the row, once in the column). Participants juxtaposed in the matrix each element with all other elements from the list and estimated the extent to which these two communicate in internal dialogue. The following 6-point response scale was used: 0 – not at all, 1 – very seldom, 2 – seldom, 3 – sometimes, 4 – often, 5 – very often. So as not to confuse the participants, half of matrix was crossed out (like in the multiplication table), in order not to juxtapose twice the same pair of positions. Adding the numbers in each column we obtained the score indicating the engagement of certain identity element in the dialogues. The score reached by a particular element was treated as its “dialogical potential”, the tendency to run internal dialogues.

*Time 2 questionnaire:* After a 2 months break (8-9 weeks), identity element lists were photocopied and presented to the participants. They were asked to reformulate those elements that needed revision. As a result, 18 (3.57%) out of 504 identity elements were revised. All revised responses were included in the analyses. Participants completed “Identity Ratings” tasks as they did initially (time 1). The same questions were used to estimate perceived centrality, positive affect, identity enactment as well as 6 identity motives.

### Results and Discussion

According to Vignoles et al. (2006) multilevel regression was computed, using the R Program. Time 2 measures of perceived centrality, positive affect and identity enactment were treated as dependent variables. In the final model its value at time 1 was controlled, so as to estimate autoregressive effects. Time 1 measures of identity motives satisfaction and dialogical activity were introduced as predictors (independent variables). In the multilevel regression model, identity elements were primary units of

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analysis, rather than individual participants. This approach was determined by nested data structure: identity elements (level 1) were clustered within participants (level 2). The variance within participants was computed. Previously, the predictors (6 motives and dialogical activity) were centered around participant means (following Vignoles et al., 2002a, 2006). Table 1 (Appendix C) shows zero-order correlations between dependent and independent variables, for raw and participant-mean centered ratings.

Three separate regressions were computed for the three dependent variables: time 2 perceived centrality, positive affect and identity enactment. As a baseline for comparisons, in the first step null models were computed to predict centrality, affect and enactment by using a random intercept only. Next, six motive model was computed, adding fixed parameters for self-esteem, efficacy, continuity, distinctiveness, belonging and meaning. Estimates of fixed parameters from the null model and the 6-motive model, predicting time 2 outcome ratings of cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of identity as a function of time 1 ratings of motive satisfaction are shown in Table 2 (Appendix C).

Next, the third model was computed, which included 6-motives and dialogical activity (Table 3 in the Appendix C). The 6-motive model was enhanced by adding dialogical variable, however some motives lost their significance (compare Tables 2 and 3).

The extended model (Table 3) was characterized by a significant reduction in deviance compared with the null model, and compared with the 6-motive model. For perceived centrality it was  $\chi^2(7) = 163.593, p < .000$  compared with the null model and  $\chi^2(1) = 21.060, p < .000$  compared with the 6-motive model. For positive affect it showed  $\chi^2(7) = 332.815, p < .000$  compared with the null model, however there was no reduction in deviance compared with the 6-motive model  $\chi^2(1) = -7.848, p = 1.000$ . Then, for identity enactment it was a significant reduction in deviance compared with the null model:  $\chi^2(7) = 103.775, p < .000$ , as well as compared with 6-motive model:  $\chi^2(1) = 8.910, p = .003$ . The extended model (which comprised 6 motives and dialogicality) showed significant connection to the identity structure, however the relationships differed among the tree domains. The results were as follows. Perceived centrality at time 2 was predicted uniquely by time 1 ratings of continuity ( $\beta = .3, p < .000$ ) and dialogicality ( $\beta = .22, p < .000$ ). This result for cognitive level shows that identity definition process is guided basically by the continuity motive, which is acknowledged as the most fundamental feature of properly functioning identity (Maslow, 1970; Goldstein, 1990; Dunkel, 2005). Next, the positive affect at time 2 was predicted by time 1 ratings of self-esteem ( $\beta = .38, p < .000$ ) and efficacy ( $\beta = .14, p = .021$ ), which is in line with the identity process theory by Breakwell (1986), as well as by meaning ( $B = .186, p < .000$ ) which is widely acknowledged as fundamental human need (Frankl, 1984; Baumeister, 1991). And finally, identity enactment at time 2 was predicted uniquely by time 1 ratings of efficacy ( $\beta = .19, p = .008$ ), continuity ( $\beta = 0.15,$

$p = .023$ ), distinctiveness ( $\beta = .18, p = .001$ ) and dialogicality ( $\beta = .18, p = .003$ ); while belonging was approaching significance ( $p = .081$ ). The results for identity enactment partially relate to the self-determination theory (Ryan, Deci, 2000, 2008), which indicates that people tend towards satisfaction the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness in their actions.

The findings for the extended model (Table 3) indicated that dialogicality was a significant predictor of perceived centrality and identity enactment. However there was no connection with positive affect, which may be explained by its emotionally diversified nature. Dialogicality assumes different types, emotionally positive and negative. Internal dialogical activity correlates with neuroticism; some of the dialogues take the form of rumination, e.g. persistent rethinking one's misfortunes (see Oleś, 2008b; Puchalska-Wasył, Chmielnicka-Kuter, & Oleś, 2008).

The results confirmed the influence of dialogicality on identity construction. The more dialogical a certain identity element, the more central it becomes in one's perception and the more it is manifested in behavior. In time, people give privileged location to those identity aspects which are active in their internal dialogues. To understand this we should focus on the nature of dialogicality and its role in personality. Internal dialogues serve a number of distinctive functions. Seven meta-functions of internal dialogues were discovered in empirical research by Puchalska-Wasył (2007): 1. support, 2. substitution, 3. exploration, 4. bond, 5. self-improvement; 6. insight; 7. self-guidance. The extent to which a particular dialogue may fulfill these functions depends on the type of dialogue. The abovementioned functions show that dialogues may play an important role in self-regulation and potentially improve subjective well-being. It may explain why dialogical aspects of identity are privileged in the system. Another interpretation is that internal dialogues draw attention to certain aspects of identity. Certain aspects become more cognitively accessible as a consequence of dialogue [analogous to the *working self-concept* by Markus & Kunda (1986) and Markus & Wurf (1987)].

In conclusion, the final model was computed. It included six motives and dialogical activity, but additionally dependent variables at time 1 were controlled so as to estimate autoregressive effects (Table 4 in the Appendix C).

This ultimate model was characterized by a significant reduction in deviance compared with the null model, 6-motive model, as well as with the extended model (6-motives *plus* dialogical activity) but without autoregressive impact. For perceived centrality it was  $\chi^2(10) = 217.776, p < .000$  compared with the null model;  $\chi^2(4) = 75.245, p < .000$  compared with the 6-motive model, and  $\chi^2(3) = 54.184, p < .000$  compared with the extended model without autoregressive effects included. For positive affect it was  $\chi^2(10) = 419.270, p < 0.000$  compared with the null model,  $\chi^2(4) = 78.608, p < .000$  compared with 6-motive model, and  $\chi^2(3) = 86.456, p < .000$

compared with the extended model. For identity enactment it was a significant reduction in deviance compared with the null model:  $\chi^2(10) = 254.480, p < .000$ , as well as compared with 6-motive model:  $\chi^2(4) = 159.616, p < .000$  and extended model  $\chi^2(3) = 150.706, p < .000$ .

Controlling for autoregressive effects it turned out that just a few predictors appeared significant. Perceived centrality at time 2 was predicted uniquely by time 1 ratings of continuity ( $\beta = .21, p < .000$ ) and dialogical activity ( $\beta = .14, p = .049$ ). Positive affect was predicted uniquely only by time 1 ratings of self-esteem ( $\beta = .18, p = .014$ ). Whereas, for identity enactment we found no significant predictors, when controlling for centrality, affect and enactment at time 2. Enactment showed the strongest autoregressive effect of time 1 measure on time 2 measure. Additionally, identity enactment at time 1 appeared to be a predictor of perceived centrality at time 2 ( $\beta = .13, p = .039$ ). This result was obtained also in the study by Vignoles et al (2006) and interpreted as a proof of the interplay between action and cognition in identity processes. However, unlike that research, in our study there was no reciprocal relationship (time 1 centrality didn't contribute to predictions of time 2 enactment).

This final, statistically restrictive design, showed that dialogicality predicts only perceived centrality of identity elements (Table 4). This outcome confirms Vignoles's predictions, that predicted that dialogicality might be a type of centrality "indicator" (2009, private conversation). Furthermore, zero-order correlations (Table 1) provide some more insight into the peculiarity of dialogicality. Internal dialogical activity of identity elements correlates with all the three dimensions of identity structure ( $r = 0.32, p < .001$  with centrality and enactment; and  $r = .22, p < .001$  with positive affect; scores based on participant-mean centered ratings). From among identity motives, the strongest correlation appears between dialogicality and meaning ( $r = .33, p < .001$  for participant-centered scores). This result may indicate a "meaning making" role of dialogical activity. Probably dialogical as well as narrative identity construction (McAdams, 2001; Oleś, 2008a) are two modes of thinking beneficial for the meaningful sense of identity.

### Conclusions

The 6-motive model extended by dialogicality delivered multidimensional description of identity dynamics. The motives accompanied by dialogical activity turned out to be important predictors of identity structure shape. Finally, only self-esteem and continuity appeared significant in the prediction of identity structure change. In time, participants rated as significant more central in their self-definition those identity elements which they earlier associated with a greater level of continuity and dialogicality. Furthermore, elements connected with greater self-esteem, were in time associated with a higher positive affect. The longitudinal character of the research led to conclusions about the impact of dialogical activity on the structural changes of identity.

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However, more precise investigation is needed to sketch a causative model. Moreover, the analyses were done on a very small sample, further study is required. Despite the limits of this study, it seems to validate the view that dialogical activity indeed does play an important role in identity construction.

The results concerning internal dialogical activity may have practical consequence in counseling, where the aim is to stimulate identity change in a preferred direction (called “identity interventions” after Schwartz, 2001). Increasing the importance of some aspects in self-definition (perceived centrality) may be influenced by activating them in the internal dialogues. However, how long this increase of cognitive accessibility will last remains to be determined.

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### Appendix A

Instruction used for eliciting identity elements.

Think for a moment about the answer to the question *Who am I?*

In everyday life people present various “faces”, which mirror who they are. Think about your relationships (eg. I as a daughter, I as a friend of Magda); your main activities or interests/hobbies (eg. I as a member of a sport team, card player, traveler, jazz fan, rally organizer); the roles which you fulfill (I as a choir member, student, employee) and other characteristics, abilities, preferences and goals, which are important to you (eg. I - religious, I as a winner of a prize in a recitation contest, I - chronically sick, I as a future mother, I as a lawyer in 20 years, loser, person seeking for a risk, art lover).

Thinking about different aspects of your identity, don't limit yourself only to those which you consider as appropriate, nice and desired. If there are any which describe you well, but are less appropriate or even unwanted, also put them on a list with your answers.

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Appendix B

Questions from the Identity Ratings task were taken from the study by Vignoles et al. (2006, p. 333) and translated to Polish

CONSTRUCT	QUESTION
Perceived centrality (2 questions)	How much do you see each of the answers you have written as central or marginal to your identity? <sup>a</sup>
	How important is each of your answers in defining who you are?
Positive affect (2 questions)	How happy or unhappy do you feel about being each of these things? <sup>b</sup>
	How fulfilled do you feel by being each of these things? <sup>c</sup>
Identity Enactment (2 questions)	To what extent do you feel that being each of these things influences your actions toward other people in everyday life? <sup>d</sup>
	To what extent do you try to show people that you are each of these things in your everyday life? <sup>e</sup>
Self-esteem	How much does each of your answers give you a sense of self-esteem?
Efficacy	How much does each of your answers make you feel effective in doing the things you do?
Continuity	How much does each of your answers give you a sense of continuity in your life?
Distinctiveness	How much do you feel that each of your answers distinguishes you from other people?
Belonging	How much does each of your answers make you feel close to other people?
Meaning	How much do you feel that each of your answers gives a “meaning” to your life?

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Each question was followed by a table with all identity elements.

The answers were given on a 7-point scales.

In most questions, scale anchors were as follows: 1 – not at all; 7 – extremely; however there were some exceptions, indicated below.

<sup>a</sup> scale anchors were: 1 – very much marginal; 7 – very much central.

<sup>b</sup> scale anchors were: 1 – very unhappy; 7 – very happy.

<sup>c</sup> scale anchors were: 1 – not at all fulfilled; 7 – extremely fulfilled.

<sup>d</sup> scale anchors were: 1 - no influence at all; 7 - extremely strong influence.

<sup>e</sup> scale anchors were: 1 - don't try to show it at all; 7 – very definitely try to show it.

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Appendix C

Table 1. Zero-order correlations between all ratings of independent variables at time 1 and dependent variables at time 2, for identity elements (n = 504). Values below diagonal use raw ratings, above use participant-mean centered ratings.

Variable	Time 1										Time 2		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Time 1													
1. Centrality	-	.47	.46	.45	.36	.42	.12	.27	.41	.32	.5	.36	.31
2. Affect	.48	-	.45	.78	.63	.44	.17	.48	.73	.22	.34	.71	.26
3. Enactment	.43	.43	-	.5	.47	.4	.27	.37	.43	.32	.41	.34	.58
4. Self-esteem	.46	.78	.49	-	.65	.46	.22	.48	.77	.25	.4	.65	.31
5. Efficacy	.39	.62	.46	.65	-	.37	.17	.35	.57	.27	.34	.52	.32
6. Continuity	.47	.42	.38	.46	.38	-	.12	.4	.47	.16	.42	.35	.28
7. Distinctiveness	.2	.17	.25	.22	.18	.17	-	-.15	.12	.06	.12	.13	.19
8. Belonging	.31	.47	.38	.46	.34	.36	-.14	-	.52	.22	.27	.42	.24
9. Meaning	.5	.72	.45	.77	.55	.47	.13	.53	-	.33	.41	.61	.28
10. Dialogicality	.32	.26	.33	.31	.29	.2	.08	.24	.39	-	.32	.23	.25
Time 2													
11. Centrality	.57	.38	.43	.44	.38	.48	.22	.27	.46	.3	-	.52	.44
12. Affect	.39	.76	.35	.69	.56	.36	.18	.44	.64	.28	.39	-	.4
13. Enactment	0.3	.29	.64	.34	.35	.25	.18	.32	.34	.34	.3	.29	-



Table 3. Estimates of fixed parameters from full models predicting time 2 outcome ratings of centrality, affect and enactment as a function of time 1 ratings of motive satisfaction and dialogical activity; identity elements (level 1, n=504), nested within participants (level 2, n=42).

Predictors (time 1)	Outcome rating (time 2)																		
	Centrality						Affect						Enactment						
	B	SE	$\beta$	$\Delta\chi^2$	p	$\Delta R^2$ (%)	B	SE	$\beta$	$\Delta\chi^2$	p	$\Delta R^2$ (%)	B	SE	$\beta$	$\Delta\chi^2$	p	$\Delta R^2$ (%)	
Intercept	5.06	.10				4.90	.10				4.24	.13							
<b>Self-esteem</b>	.08	.05	.12	-1.33	1.000	.3	.31	.38	<b>39.62</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>4.5</b>	.05	-3.52	1.000	-0.1	.05			
<b>Efficacy</b>	.04	.04	.06	-3.45	1.000	.0	.11	.14	<b>5.35</b>	<b>.021</b>	<b>.9</b>	.04	<b>6.99</b>	<b>.008</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>.04</b>			
<b>Continuity</b>	.27	.04	.30	<b>38.09</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>6.3</b>	.00	.00	-4.73	1.000	-1	.04	<b>5.21</b>	<b>.023</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>.04</b>			
<b>Distinctiveness</b>	.03	.03	.04	-4.01	1.000	.0	.02	.03	-4.61	1.000	.0	.04	<b>11.19</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>.04</b>			
<b>Belonging</b>	.01	.04	.01	-4.86	1.000	-1	.09	.11	2.02	.155	.6	.04	3.04	0.081	1.1	.04			
<b>Meaning</b>	.08	.05	.12	-.88	1.000	.4	.19	.23	<b>14.35</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>1.8</b>	.05	-3.93	1.000	-1	.05			
<b>Dialogical Activity</b>	.04	.01	.22	<b>21.06</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>4.2</b>	.00	.01	-7.85	1.000	-1	.01	<b>8.91</b>	<b>0.003</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>.01</b>			
Residual variance																			
Level 2 ( $\tau^2$ )	.318					.297						.560							
Level 1 ( $\sigma^2$ )	1.150					1.008						1.305							
Deviance						1593.911			1530.573			1671.226							
Model comparison																			
			vs null model	<b>163.59</b>	<b>(df=7)</b>	<b>.000</b>			vs null model	<b>332.815</b>	<b>(df=7)</b>	<b>.000</b>			vs null model	<b>103.775</b>	<b>(df=7)</b>	<b>.000</b>	
			vs 6-motive model	<b>21.06</b>	<b>(df=1)</b>	<b>.000</b>			vs 6-motive model	-7.848	<b>(df=1)</b>	1.000			vs 6-motive model	<b>8.910</b>	<b>(df=1)</b>	<b>.003</b>	

*Note:* Deviance was calculated as  $-2 \times \log \text{likelihood}$ . Values of  $\beta$  were derived from B weights by using within-participant standard deviations. Values of  $\Delta\chi^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  for each parameter were derived from comparisons with alternative model without that parameter.

Table 4. Estimates of fixed parameters from full models predicting time 2 outcome ratings of centrality, affect and enactment as a function of time 1 ratings of motive satisfaction and dialogical activity; identity elements (level 1, n=504), nested within participants (level 2, n=42). Centrality, affect and enactment at time 1 were controlled; autoregressive effects are italicized.

Predictors (time 1)	Outcome ratings (time 2)											
	Centrality				Affect				Enactment			
	B	SE	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	B	SE	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	B	SE	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
Intercept	5.0	.10			4.89	.10			4.2	.13		
	6			7				4				
<b>Outcome ratings</b>												
Centrality	.32	.04	.32	<b>45.13</b>	-.03	.04	-.03	4.11	1.000	.04	.04	3.56
Affect	-.09	.05	-.11	-.91	<b>.47</b>	<b>.05</b>	<b>.52</b>	<b>93.30</b>	<b>.000</b>	-.05	-.10	-1.73
Enactment	.13	.05	.13	<b>4.26</b>	-.06	.04	-.05	-2.36	1.000	<b>.59</b>	<b>.05</b>	<b>148.9</b>
												<b>5</b>
												<b>21.1</b>
<b>Motive Ratings</b>												
Self-esteem	.08	.05	.19	-1.19	.14	.04	.18	<b>5.95</b>	<b>.014</b>	.00	.05	-4.30
Efficacy	.03	.04	.05	-3.94	.05	.03	.06	-3.00	1.000	.06	.04	-1.70
Continuity	.19	.04	.21	<b>19.41</b>	.00	.04	.00	-4.88	1.000	.04	.04	-3.36
Distinctiveness	-.01	.03	-.02	-4.91	.02	.03	.02	-4.84	1.000	.04	.03	-3.07
Belonging	-.03	.03	-.04	-4.30	.06	.03	.07	-1.49	1.000	.03	.03	-3.999
Meaning	.06	.04	.09	-2.51	.08	.04	.10	-.88	1.000	.01	.04	-4.48
<b>Dialogical Activity</b>	.03	.01	.14	<b>3.89</b>	.01	.01	.05	-5.7	1.000	.01	.01	-4.52
												.3

Table 4 cont'd

Residual variance									
Level 2 ( $\tau^2$ )	.330			.313			.539		
Level 1 ( $\sigma^2$ )	.998			.814			.916		
Deviance		1539.728			1444.117			1520.520	
Model comparison			$\Delta\chi^2$	$p$		$\Delta\chi^2$	$p$		$\Delta\chi^2$
	vs null model	<b>217.776</b> (df=10)		<b>.00</b>	vs null model	<b>419.270</b> (df=10)	<b>.00</b>	vs null model	<b>254.480</b> (df=10)
				<b>0</b>			<b>0</b>	vs 6-motive model	<b>159.616</b> (df=4)
	vs 6-motive model	<b>75.245</b> (df=4)		<b>.000</b>	vs 6-motive model	<b>78.608</b> (df=4)	<b>.000</b>	vs 6-motive model	<b>159.616</b> (df=4)
	vs 6-m & dialogicality	<b>54.184</b> (df=3)		<b>.000</b>	vs 6-m & dialogicality	<b>86.456</b> (df=3)	<b>.000</b>	vs 6-m & dialogicality	<b>150.706</b> (df=3)

*Note:* Deviance was calculated as  $-2 \times \log \text{likelihood}$ . Values of  $\beta$  were derived from  $B$  weights by using within-participant standard deviations. Values of  $\Delta\chi^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  for each parameter were derived from comparisons with alternative model without that parameter.

## **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

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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-Wasył.* 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-Wasył.* 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

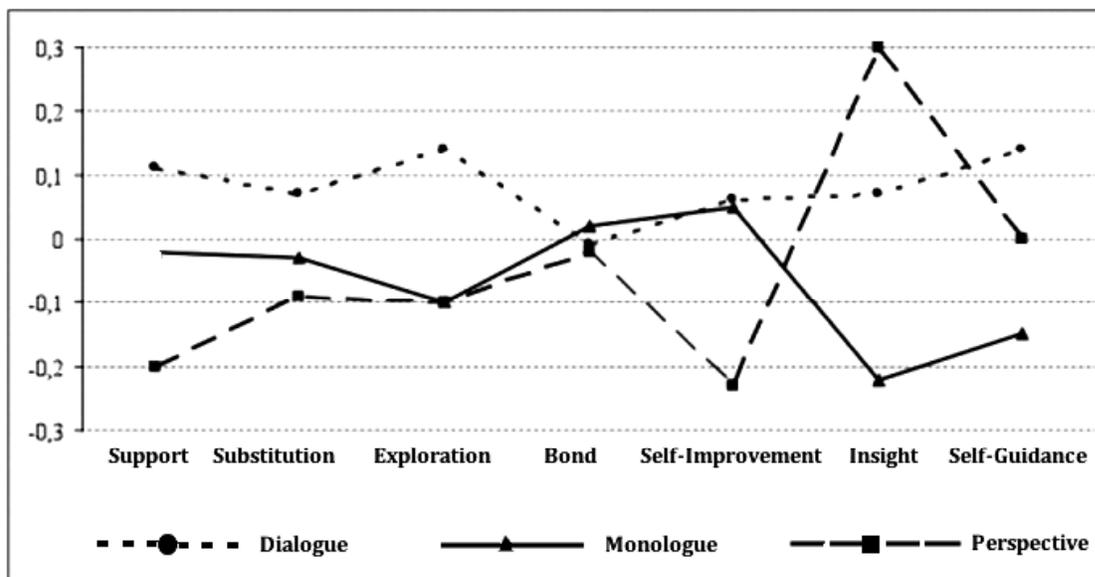
Table 1  
Comparison of the Meta-functions in the Three Forms of Internal Dialogical Activity

Meta-Function	Forms of Internal Dialogical Activity			ANOVA			H Kruskal-Wallis $H_{(2,1503)}$	Differences between forms	T3 Dunnett
	Dialogue (N = 618)	Monologue (N = 589)	Perspective (N = 296)	$F_{(2,1500)}$	$p <$	$\eta^2$			
Support	M	-0.02	-0.20	9.55	0.001	18.57	17.92	b	0.001
	SD	1.04	1.00	0.87				c	0.05
Substitution	M	-0.03	-0.09	3.20	0.05	11.96	6.09	b	0.05
	SD	1.03	1.01	0.92					
Exploration	M	-0.10	-0.10	10.33	0.001	53.94	18.8	a	0.001
	SD	1.09	0.90	0.96				b	0.01
Bond	M	-0.01	-0.02	0.22	n.s.	1.12	0.43	-	n.s.
	SD	0.99	1.01	0.99					
Self-Improvement <sup>1)</sup>	M	0.06	-0.23	4.30	0.05	4.94	11.37	b	0.05
	SD	1.00	1.01	0.95				c	0.05
Insight	M	-0.22	0.30	31.19	0.001	4.64	67.78	b	0.01
	SD	1.00	0.95	1.00				a, c	0.001
Self-Guidance	M	-0.15	0.00	12.88	0.001	4.83	24.85	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-Wasył, 2005, 2006; Puchalska-Wasył, 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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## **EXPLORATIONS IN THE DISCURSIVE MIND: THEORETICAL MODEL**

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**ABSTRACT.** In the article we describe the model of discursive architecture of mind, which expresses the ideas of DST in more cognitive terms and adapts it to experimental research. We show how is this model connected to many contemporary approaches to human mind and/or personality and explain why we think the model is unique and needed. The model is based on 3 assumptions. They refer to: 1) the modular character of the cognitive system; 2) the social origin of one's knowledge structures; 3) the specificity of the knowledge structures for the social context from which they stem. For the presented discursive model of the mind the question of subject of knowledge is essential and can be justly posed referring to every piece of knowledge stored in every particular person's mind.

**Keywords:** discursive mind, dialogical self, positioning, I-position, shared knowledge, cognitive representation, cognitive-affective resources, discursive resources

Discursive concepts have been so far rarely the subjects of a systematic empirical verification. They are mostly supported by case studies and other qualitative studies as well as by re-interpretations of previously conducted research. In this article we will present research which is one of the first attempts of an experimental verification of these conceptions' assumptions.

In this article we introduce the model of the discursive mind, propounded by the authors of this article, which combines DST and other discursive conception's elements

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with the social-cognitive approach. In the next article in this volume, we describe several experiments which were aimed at verifying the model's validity.

### **The Discursive Mind Model's Assumptions**

On the foundation of the model lays a thesis of the cognitive system's discursive organization, inspired by the classical works of Vygotsky (1982) and Bakhtin (1984), as well as by social constructionism concepts (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) and some ideas from discursive psychology. This thesis states, that a number of relatively autonomic, holistic modules of representation exist in our mind, of which every one is linked to a specific social context, which is present in one's socialization history. Different modules contain specific cognitive-affective resources, shaped by different ways of giving meaning to personal experience. These patterns of naming and weighting experience are developed within relationships with significant others, important groups or influential social backgrounds.

The theoretical view of the cognitive system, based on the described thesis (Hermans, 1999, Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2002, 2004, Wertsch, 1991, see also van Dijk, 2008), is called by us the discursive mind model. Three assumptions are fundamental for this model:

1. the modular character of the cognitive system;
2. the social origin of one's knowledge structures;
3. the specificity of the knowledge structures for the social context from which they stem

The first two assumptions can be found in many contemporary psychological theories, especially from the social-cognitive approach (Cervone and Pervin, 2008).

The first assumption – about the modular character of the cognitive system – refers to widely accepted nowadays schematic organization of cognitive structures. The assumption can be found rooted in a variety of approaches (Gazzaniga and LeDoux, 1978; Greenwald, 1982, Markus, 1977, Epstein, 1991, Nowak, Vallacher, Tesser and Borkowski, 2000). The key approaches here are: the concept of self-schemas offered by Markus (1977), the concept of relational schemas by Baldwin (1992), the *Cognitive-Affective Processing System* model (CAPS) put forward by Mischel and Schoda (2008) and the *Knowledge-and-Appraisal Personality Architecture* model (KAPA) proposed by Cervone (2004).

The assumption concerning the social origin of one's knowledge is one of the cornerstones of the social-cognitive approach to personality (Bandura, 1999, Cervone and Pervin, 2008) and the social cognition approach (Forgas, 1981, Forgas and Williams, 2002). As may be reckoned, the contemporary trends tend to consider the impact of the phenomena and processes, that are intersubjective in their nature,

increasingly more. These phenomena include culture, subjective patterns of self-constructing (*selfways*, Markus, Mullally and Kitayama, 1997); relational self (Andersen and Chen, 2002), private audience (Baldwin and Holmes, 1987), or shared reality (Hardin and Higgins, 1996). They all draw a coherent vision of a human as someone (see Higgins, 2000) who is shaped by relationships with others and is being consistently engaged in the social process of meaning creating.

The third assumption mentioned above does not play a key role in mainstream theories; however it is present in the concepts of social constructivism and discursive psychology. Rom Harré's theory of positioning is the most important of these concepts (Harré and Gillett, 1994, Harré and van Langenhove, 1999) as well as the influential ideas of Kenneth Gergen's (1991, 2009), Derek Edwards and Jonathan Potter (1992) and Michael Billig (1996). The specific structural basis of these theories can be dwelt upon. Because they reject experimental methodology and traditional psychological notions such as cognitive representation, there is also nothing strange in the fact that these theories do not offer any precise models of the architecture of the mind, directly from which some specific, testable hypothesis could be drawn. The contrast between these theories and the group of personality and self theories mentioned before can be seen as an exemplification of the general interaction-cognition gap in social sciences recognized by Teun van Dijk (2007, see also Jost and Kruglanski, 2002).

The theory of context proposed by van Dijk (1989, 2008, 2009) is an interesting attempt to fill this gap. He described two types of mental models needed to explain text processing: the text model and the context model. The former is a representation of the data being currently processed whereas the latter is an overriding script-like structure, which represents the social situation (the subjective meaning of it) in which a particular act of information processing takes place. Context models continuously shape and control the text models' activity; therefore the developing discourse maintains its suitability over changing conditions.

The sociocultural approach proposed by James Wertsch (1991) can be considered another interesting attempt of filling the interaction-cognition gap. His "tool-kit" metaphor views the mind as a collection of discursively constructed instruments for understanding reality and acting on it. The dialogical self theory put forward by Hubert Hermans (1996, 1999, Hermans and Kempen, 1993) shares the main assumptions of the Wertsch's conception; however it goes further in describing the internal activity of a discursively structured mind. The bachtinian notions such as dialogicality and multivoicedness gain their full psychological meaning on the basis of Hermans' theory. Following these ideas, Stemplewska-Żakowicz (2002, 2004, see also Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2000) described the discursive mind model, which was the starting point of the concept described here. The aim of why it was created and described was to combine the valuable elements of all already described groups of theories and to give them an empirically testable shape.

### **The Properties of the Discursive Mind Model**

The way in which Forgas (1981) defines social cognition is twofold. It can either mean knowledge about the social world or/and knowledge which is socially constructed and shared. In the first case, the social character applies to the **object of the knowledge**, while in the second case, what is social is the **subject of the knowledge**. It seems that the majority of research and conceptions focuses on the former aspect of the social cognition, while the latter one remains relatively less examined. However there are significant trends (Hardin and Higgins, 1996, Higgins, 2000) leading to taking a wider account of the intersubjective nature of cognition.

For the hereby presented discursive model of the mind the question of subject is essential and can be justly posed referring to every piece of knowledge stored in every particular person's mind. In other words - every piece of knowledge „belongs to someone“, even if it does not seem so obvious introspectively. We assume that there cannot be any knowledge without the subject just as there is no novel or handbook without its author. Furthermore, the psychosocial characteristics of the subject affect the form and the content of the knowledge shared by it, as it was argued by the discourse analysts (van Dijk, 1997). We can, for example, be quite sure to understand the identification of the statement's author depending on whether he or she uses the term “terrorists” or “fighters” when referring to the September 11 attackers.

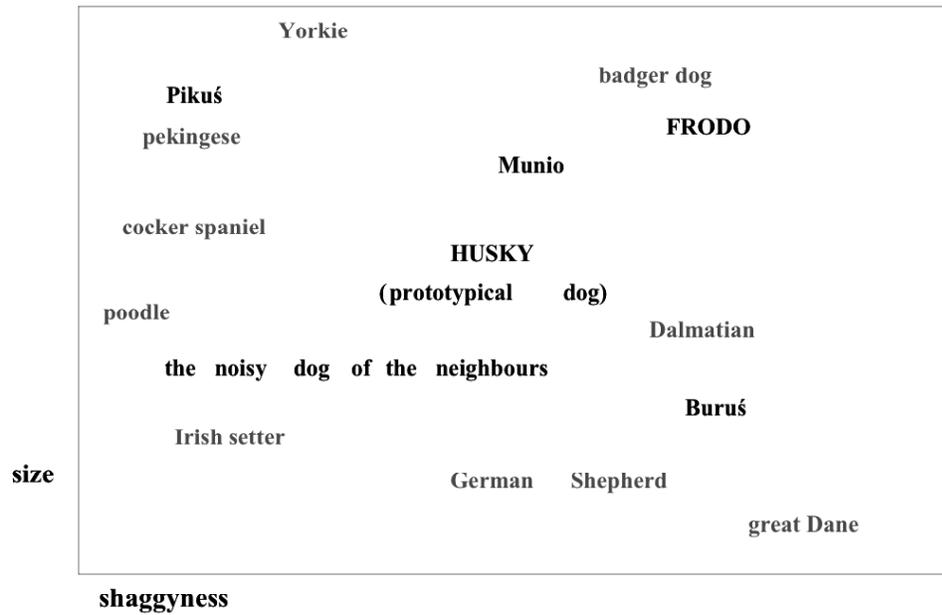
We assume that every piece of knowledge represented in one's mind is in a similar way marked by its author's perspective. However stating that the subject of this piece of knowledge is just the very same person is too much of a simplification. The assumption about the social origin of knowledge forces one to recognize that knowledge stored in human mind is shared with others - significant social groups, organizations of which one is an active member, and last but not least with important people with whom he or she has close relationships. Each of these contexts can form certain shared reality, which is a source of knowledge represented in one's mind. Thus, this knowledge is socially constructed and its subject is not a given person in general, but this person in her or his social identity, emerging from being part of a certain group or a relationship.

In today's complex world, a person is usually involved in many relationships and can be a member of many groups. The thesis of the presented model states that the architecture of the cognitive system reflects this variety. A given person's knowledge stems from many sources and can be diverse. In the cognitive system, knowledge which stems from different social contexts is recorded and stored in different modules of representation – even if it concerns the same object. For it is the subject of knowledge which is a more important (though likely implicit) criterion of knowledge aggregation than its object, just as the author of a book is a more significant attribute than its title.

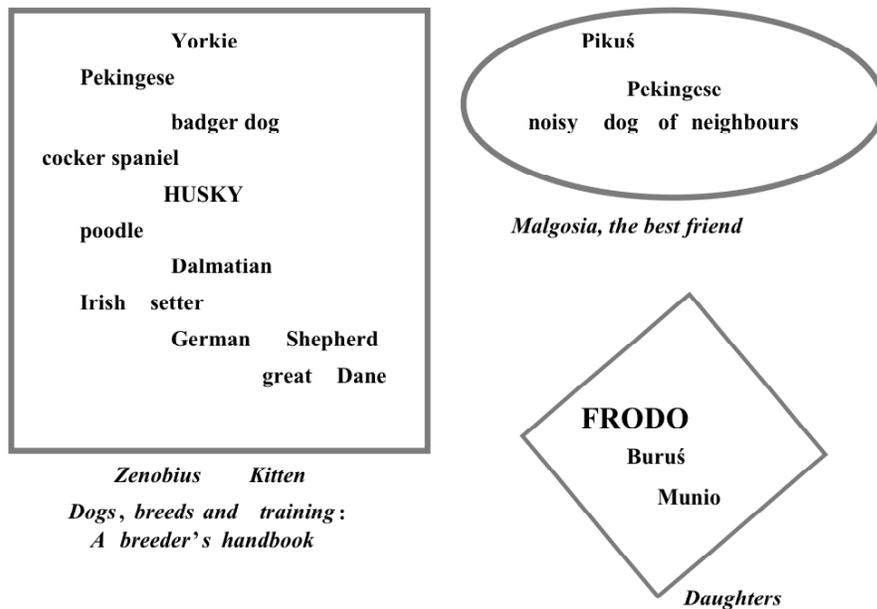
Figure 1

*The structure of “a dog” concept*

*A. According to Rosch’s conception (1978)*



*B. According to the discursive mind model*



What are the consequences of this statement for the cognitive architecture of the mind? Let us consider an example shown in Figure 1, which derives from an introspection of one of the authors of this article. It shows the subjective meaning of a concept of “a dog”, which, from the discursive mind concept perspective, turns out to have a slightly different structure than it would have according to the contemporarily acknowledged theory of natural concepts (Rosch, 1978).

Natural concepts consist of a prototype and a number of examples of a greater or smaller resemblance to the prototype. The resemblance can be interpreted as a distance and on the basis of it we can predict how fast the concept of “a dog” is activated when we are exposed to different examples of dogs’ images as more or less prototypical examples of this concept. For example, Figure 1A implies that the time of recognizing a given object as a dog should be shorter when a Dalmatian image is presented and longer for an image of a budger dog or a Pekingese. According to this approach it is irrelevant from which social context the knowledge of different examples of a dog comes – it is universal and organizes all information on dogs which a given person stores. This is very different in the discursive mind model, in which – as shown in Figure 1B – the examples of “a dog” concept are organized in three different circles. Each circle contains representations of different dogs, which are constructed in certain social contexts. In this introspective example, the “owner” of knowledge about dogs discovered that there are at least 3 different contexts that play a major role: a dog breeder’s handbook neatly studied when she was young (the author and title in Figure 1 are fictional), a childhood experience of being bitten by a particular dog called Pikuś, and a current experience with her dogs, which the author breeds and cares for with her daughters.

If our cognitive representation is organized as described in the discursive mind model, the social context would definitely be important for the data processing speed, which should be reflected by classical indicators as reaction times or error rates. In the example from Figure 1B, the Pekingese should be recognized as a dog quicker when the memories of a relationship with a friend (Pikuś was a Pekingese!) was activated than in a condition in which the knowledge from the Kitten’s dog handbook was active (a Pekingese is not a very representative example of this concept). The data showing the role of context was collected during studies on the example based approach (Rosch, 1978), however in the discursive model of mind, there is more to be said.

The object of knowledge constructed in each of these three social contexts is seemingly the same – a dog. However despite the same verbal etiquette, the subjective meaning of this concept varies as well as the detailed attributes of knowledge (see Table 1).

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Table 1. Detailed attributes of knowledge about “a dog” constructed in three social contexts (example)

<b>Contexts</b> <b>Attributes</b>	Context 1	Context 2	Context 3
	A dog breeder’s handbook	A relation with a childhood friend	Family, friends
An object of knowledge (what does “a dog” mean?)	A biological species, can be divided into breeds, with characteristic dimensions, colours, traits. A domestic animal, bred by human and trained (go to nurturing, training and feeding)	Pikuś - a mean and aggressive Pekingese, a dog of Malgosia’s neighbours	Munio, Buruś, Frodo – a friend, a member of family, played a role in major life events, a subject of many stories, one of a kind
Discourse - particular verbal means along with the attitudes and social practices behind these verbal means	Objectified, rational, verbal, public, context-less, based on special kennel jargon (“seek dead”, “guarding dog”)	Private, intimate, inter-subjective, highly contextualised, includes non-verbal content and meanings, specific for a relation with a friend	Family discourse-private, intimate, highly contextualized, includes non-verbal content and meanings
Partner of dialogue (with whom the knowledge is shared, who understands the same way, with whom can I talk about it?)	An anonymous group of kennels, readers of the Kitten’s handbook	Malgosia- good old friend	Members of family, especially daughters
Identity of subject (who knows it?)	A young dog enthusiast seeking for rational information on dogs	Malgosia’s friend	A Family - We (“this is our dog”)
Subjective experience	Reading book at parents’ home: yellow linen on the cover of a book, black-and-white images	Friends’ chat, a special ambience of Malgosia’s home, attempts not to meet Pikuś	A community of duties (feeding, walking), a collective admiring the dog, a disregard for its bad habits, tales of his adventures

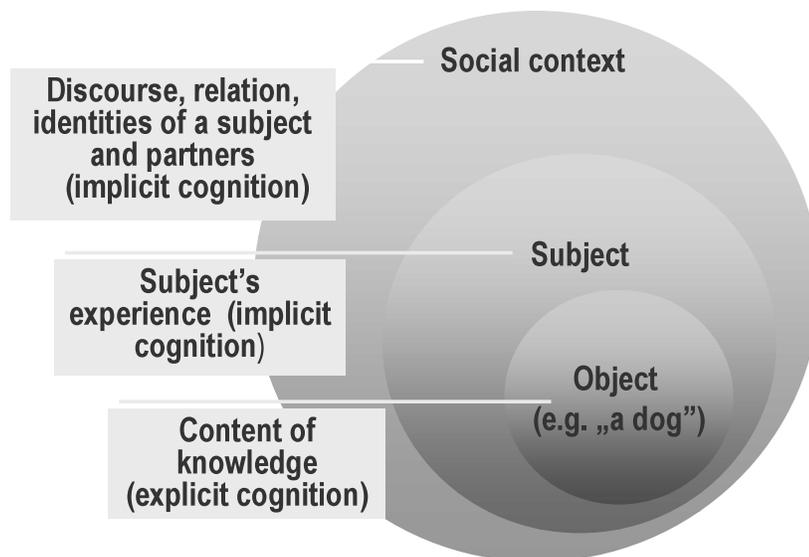
The example from Figure 1 and Table 1 is apparently an easy one. However, it does well illustrate the essence of the specificity of knowledge for a social context, which – according to the discursive mind model – applies to the whole cognitive system of a person. The basis for the organization of cognitive structures is the aggregation of experience and knowledge in relatively independent modules; any of them being able to contain concepts and all other forms of cognitive representation – schemas, scripts, narrations or procedures. Each module carries cognitive-affective resources, which were raised and developed in a certain social context – within relationships with parents, peers, children, bosses or colleagues. The number and characteristics of these modules are the inter-individual variable, depending on the course of primary and secondary socialization processes in the case of a particular person.

Explicit knowledge, of which one is aware, is then nothing more than a tip of the iceberg. Every piece of such knowledge is wrapped with the representation of personal experience stemming from the social context, in which it was acquired – interpersonal relationships, participation in a group, being a member of a certain community. The record of experience forms the personal implicit knowledge – theoretically, it can be accessible to the subject's awareness. However, more often it remains below the threshold of his or her conscious awareness – engaged in processing information about an object of knowledge, of which one is aware. There also is a supra-individual, shared, inter-subjective, implicit knowledge stored in this unit of representation. It is the knowledge concerning social context. It contains, among others, the characteristics of interpersonal relationships in a given social circle as well as a representation of the identity of the subject and its partners (“who is who” in a certain relationship). It also contains sets of beliefs and truths shared by members of this social circle. Figure 2 depicts these ideas.

These modules can be thought of as being similar to subsystems, the existence of which was postulated by Greenwald (1982) as part of the “personalism” conception of inner multiplicity. This conception depicts the mind as an informational system consisting of many relatively independent subsystems. This independence arises from the code (or discourse – in discursive mind) differences and limits in access, which hinder the flow of information. Each subsystem carries an expanded knowledge volume and can influence the behavior of a person in its own domain. Greenwald does not determine which specific subsystems can be distinguished (however, he comes up with a certain proposal), so it is not conflicting with his concept to assume that these subsystems can be the I-positions or voices, understood as in the above-mentioned Hermans', Wertsch's and Harré's theories. Following this path, as we understand the I-positions as subsystems of the mind, we may describe them using other useful notions developed in the social-cognitive approach and used in the concepts of Markus, Andersen, Mischel and Shoda or Cervone. These notions are accessibility, priming, or limitation of resources. This provides us with a basis for a model of a cognitive

Figure 2.

*Representation of explicit and implicit knowledge in a discursive mind*



architecture of the mind, in which we can explain the intriguing phenomena both of an inter-subjective and intra-subjective nature, which are described in discursive concepts. However, so far, the phenomena have been perceived as too subtle or too blurred to be considered by the rigorous models of mainstream psychology.

This is the aim of elaborating the discursive mind model. According to this model, I-positions are relatively autonomic modules of cognitive system which consist of script-like structures combining personal knowledge and socially shared knowledge, as depicted on the diagram in Figure 1. These structures are activated in certain conditions (automatically or intentionally) and henceforth – up till when the next I-position is activated – determine the range of processable information and the specific rules of this processing.

The process of taking up a certain I-position is called positioning (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999, Hermans, 1996, 2001) and it is essential in the discursive mind model, because it is crucial for the whole chain of events which happen afterwards. Each of the modules has specific rules of discursive structuring and is linked to specific cognitive contents. Different I-positions can even “remember” the same things differently, because they are independent in their ontogenetic development, each developing in its own social context and at its own pace. At a given time in life, different I-positions of the same person can be at different stages of their development

and their specific knowledge can be represented on different levels of the cognitive system and expressed in different codes. According to theories of general cognitive development (Karmiloff-Smith, 1992, Mandler, 2004) and narrative development (Salvatore, Dimaggio and Semerari, 2004), the levels of cognitive representation vary in their way of data encoding. The general trend of developmental change in the form of representation leads from sensual-temporal procedural code on lower levels, through mid-stage levels, where different meta-procedural coordinates enable the storing of data encrypted in more abstract and more complex codes, into respectively imaginative and verbal (fully declarative) codes on the two top steps of the representation ladder (compare to Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2004).

All the differences described above result in the fact that the activation of different I-positions within the same person can cause significant intra-individual variations in this person's functioning. Metaphorically, it may happen that one of the I-positions of a given person is more neurotic or intelligent than another one. It can be that only one of many I-positions within a given person shares stereotypes concerning a certain social group or is prejudiced others are not. This internal diversity and its complex, dynamic organization are well portrayed by the "self as a society of mind" metaphor (Hermans, 2002).

The discursive mind model also offers a new approach to the classical problem of stability vs. lability of personality. Like many social-cognitive concepts, this model associates stability to a latently existing repertoire of knowledge structures, while lability is explained by the fact that only some particular modules of that knowledge are activated at a given moment. What is specific for the discursive mind model – as well as for the dialogical Self theory (Hermans, 1996), by which it was inspired – is the emphasis on the subject of knowledge. In this concept, the activation of a specific module of knowledge (an I-position) is much more than just an activation of a certain content of a self-image – in the same act, a specific tool of information processing is launched. Here we have to deal with the well-known distinction of the Jamesian I and Me or "self-as-an-object" and "self-as-a-subject", which was given a new social-cognitive meaning by Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984).

In the discursive mind, the entire knowledge that a person possesses is always "someone's" knowledge, constructed and used by a specific person of a specific identity. For each portion of knowledge, a question of "who owns" this knowledge may be asked. For example, a subject of school knowledge is surely "a pupil" as one of the I-positions within a discursive mind. This knowledge was acquired in the context of a relationship with a teacher and school friends, where situations, such as being tested or preparing for an exam, were natural and obvious. After many years, when a grownup is in an entirely different social context and intentionally recalls information acquired in school, his or her discursive mind automatically activates also his/her identity as a pupil, and with that – all sorts of expectations which are natural in the school context

and are not a subject of reflection. Currently, these formerly natural situations – for example, being assessed or waiting for a school bell to ring – are no longer adequate, but can still be activated implicitly while recalling portions of explicit knowledge and may involuntarily influence the way one experiences current situations or currently behaves, even if it is far away from the original context. It is hard to deny that this example is probable (a similar description can be found in Wertsch, 1991). The discursive mind model can provide explanations of these kinds of effects, because it understands relations between cognitive-affective units differently as compared to classic models. The network of mutual activation is based on the sharing of relational context and the identity of the subject, not on explicit knowledge contents' resemblance.

Some of these assumptions were put in the form of an empirical hypothesis and were a subject of empirical verification. The described model, like DST, with which it corresponds, is characterized by a great complexity. Such a complexity makes an unequivocal verification harder to conduct. In an attempt to solve this problem, we used rigorous methodology and performed a series of different experiments. These empirical studies were aimed at checking the effects of activation of different I-positions on cognitive processes and behaviour. The results support the thesis that I-positions have their own specific cognitive-affective resources and that the main constructs of the DST - such as an I-position and positioning – are empirically real and can produce effects that are observable by means of empirical and experimental investigation. These research are described in details in the next article in this volume

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## **EXPLORATIONS IN THE DISCURSIVE MIND: RESEARCH**

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**ABSTRACT.** A growing body of research investigates various aspects of the dialogical self theory and the concept of positioning. However, the majority of these studies are qualitative in nature and the empirical verification of fundamental assumptions which form the basis of the dialogical self theory is largely lacking. We review a series of newly conducted experiments which provide preliminary evidence for the hypothesis that the mind is dialogically structured and that each I-position is represented in a separate representation module, shaped in a particular social context. By experimentally activating different I-positions it is possible to demonstrate their effects on various cognitive processes and behaviour.

**Keywords:** discursive mind, dialogical self, positioning, I-position, shared knowledge, cognitive representation, cognitive-affective resources, discursive resources

In the article we describe several experiments which were aimed at verifying the discursive architecture of mind model's validity (for the detailed description of the model see the preceding article in this volume).

In some earlier research, initial confirmation of the empirical existence of the positioning phenomenon was obtained. It also was demonstrated that interactive positioning can be thought of in terms of social influence (Stemplewska-Żakowicz, Zalewski & Suszek, 2005). Other research (Stemplewska-Żakowicz, Walecka & Gabińska, 2006) provided initial empirical support for the thesis that knowledge structures are specific for social context. This research also gave an opportunity to test different methods of experimental positioning (Stemplewska-Żakowicz, Walecka, Gabińska, Zalewski & Suszek, 2005).

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Based on the results of this research, procedures of the further research (described below) were planned. The main aim was to verify the relevance of the discursive mind model. Two essential assumptions of this model – about the modularity of cognitive system and about the social origin of an individual’s knowledge – play a key role in other theories described before. However the third assumption – about the specificity of a person’s knowledge structures for a social context – is unique for the discursive model and differentiates the model from other contemporary concepts. The efforts in verification of the model’s relevance focus on this third assumption.

The main idea behind all the experiments is common – it is expected that experimentally manipulating one of the representation module’s (the I-position’s) characteristics will result in corresponding changes of all other properties. This effect is expected to appear for structural, functional and content properties of different modules. It is the strongest version of the thesis about the specificity of the knowledge structures for a social context. The general research idea is to put a variety of efforts to disprove this thesis. If these attempts fail to disprove the tested thesis, according to Popper’s (2002) guidelines, it may be considered as being relevant.

Nearly all experiments had repeated measurements. The tentatively called ABBA scheme was applied in all the experiments. It is a single factor experimental plan with repeated measurements. Activated I-position is the experimental factor. It may have two values, in this example they can be called position A and position B. The experimental manipulation is to activate respectively two different positions within the same participant (in the experimental group) or the same positions twice (in the control group). The order in which the positions are activated is rotated. One ABBA experiment requires about 40 participants, 20 for each experimental and control group and 10 for each rotation variation (see Figure 1).

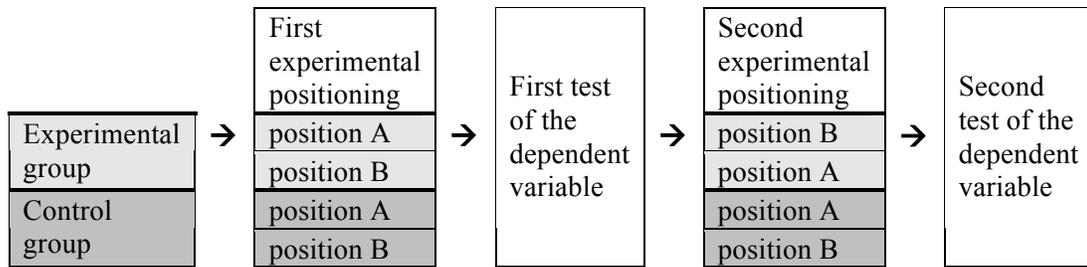
The ABBA scheme enables the verification of the thesis about the specificity of the knowledge structures for the I-positions. This thesis can be considered verified if the mean difference between the first and the second measurement is significantly higher in the experimental group (two different I-positions) than in the control group (the same I-position twice). The differences are stated in their absolute value, regardless of whether the value of a particular difference is positive or negative as it may vary between participants and the direction is not important in this hypothesis.

### **Stereotypes**

One of the possible applications of the discursive mind model is the field of stereotypes and prejudices. Despite the fact that this field has an abundance of relevant theoretical concepts and a great deal of empirical data, the discursive mind model can

Figure 1

*The ABBA scheme applied in the described experiments*



offer new insights. If we assume that each of the I positions within a person has its own cognitive-affective resources, it may happen that one of the positions is biased towards a certain group and perceives it in a stereotypical way, whilst the other I-position of the same person is free of such prejudice. This hypothesis is tempting, but is it right? Two experiments were conducted to find the answer to this question.

The experiment of Antoni Syrek-Dąbrowski (2007) investigated whether the intensity in dehumanisation as an element of racism (see Goff, Eberhardt, Williams and Jackson, 2008) depends on the activated I-position. 44 members of the All-Polish Youth organisation (Młodzież Wszechpolska) famous for its extreme nationalistic and fascistic politics, took part in the experiment. The participants were randomly assigned to two groups in which two different I-positions were activated: “Me as a member of All-Polish Youth” (APY) or “Me in relation with John Paul II” (JP2). Special surveys were used in the experimental manipulation, in which the participants were asked to answer 3 questions freely (some parts of the questions were asked in both groups and are marked in bold):

- **What do you feel when you think about** John Paul II / All-Polish Youth?
- **Recall one of your personal memories from** John Paul II pilgrimages to Poland / All-Polish Youth manifestations.
- **What does** the person of John Paul II/to be a true APY member **mean to you personally?**

Then participants from both groups were asked to complete an identical task on a computer (programmed by the author using the FLX Lab software), which was to organize pictures displayed on the screen into three categories: a man, an animal or an object. 45 different pictures were randomly displayed including 15 pictures of human faces (5 Caucasian, 5 Afro-American and 5 Asian) and 15 of each: animals and objects. This task was aimed at measuring the level of dehumanisation (dependent variable), which was indicated by the reaction times when the pictures of different colour faces where shown. The operational hypothesis was that the time needed to categorize the

pictures with Asian and Afro-American faces is longer in the MW group as compared to the JP2 group.

The two-factor multivariate analysis of variation was used for the analysis in the 2 (I position: APY vs. JP2) x 3 (skin colour: white, yellow, black) experimental plan. All multidimensional effects were significant, however what is directly important for the hypothesis is the interaction effect of the activated position and the skin colour of the faces in the pictures ( $F(10,33)=4.27$ ;  $p<0.001$ ;  $\eta^2=0.56$ ), which indicates that the time needed to assign a picture of a human face in different colours to the “human” category was shorter or longer depending on the I-position currently activated.

Further analysis revealed that the participants with the I-position “Me in relation with John Paul II” tended to dehumanize yellow coloured people less than the participants from the APY group ( $t(35,15)=1.96$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). For the pictures of black colour faces no predicted differences were found. Thus, these results provide partial support for the hypothesis.

Critically reviewing the effect which was found, it cannot be denied that it may have happened that other, simpler than discursive mechanisms worked in this experiment. The reason of a lesser dehumanisation of Asians after recalling the person of John Paul II may be found in the political correctness effect – the Pope might have reminded participants of socially endorsed values and attitudes, of which the All-Polish Youth members are aware and which do not have to be assigned to the specific I-positions. Another explanation refers to the experimental manipulation, which can be also understood as activating the social identity (All-Polish) or the individual identity (personal relation with the Pope). This first type of identity, as shown in classic research, is more responsible for the discrimination of others.

The next experiment offers more solutions to these problems, as the influence of the above mentioned factors was controlled better. The experiment conducted by Katarzyna Nowak (2008) involved the Polish stereotypes towards the minority Romani people. Here, the repeated measurement plan was applied to make sure that the predicted effects were really intra individual differences. Another difference from the Syrek-Dąbrowski (2007) experiment was the method of experimental positioning (activating I-positions). Two short descriptions of a certain person’s behaviour were shown to the participants, one of which was an example of tolerant and one of intolerant behaviour (however the word “tolerant” or any similar word was not used in this experiment). Then the participants were asked to recall a close person who could behave similarly to the described person, and then to spend some time imagining talking with this person. The aim of this manipulation was to activate two different I-positions: a tolerant person position and the intolerant person position. The experimental plan was based on the ABBA scheme.

The dependent variable was the level of negative stereotyping towards the Romani, measured with two indicators: the evaluation of adjectives' relevance in the description of the Romani people and the reaction times for these adjectives. The same indicators in reference to non-stereotypical and neutral adjectives were also measured for more control. The whole experiment was conducted on a computer and was programmed using Inquisit software. The measurement of the dependent variable was in the form of a series of questions "How well does the term X describe a Romani person" and the answers were given on a 6 point scale. These terms were 36 adjectives chosen earlier in the pilot experiment – 12 adjectives in three categories: characteristic for the Romani negative stereotype (stereotypical), contrary to this stereotype (not stereotypical) and non referring to the stereotype (neutral). The software measured both: the relevance evaluations and the reaction times of the participants. The experiment was in a two-factor 2 (tolerant vs. intolerant I-position) x 3 (stereotypical, not stereotypical and neutral adjectives) plan with repeated measurements of the first factor.

As it had been predicted, the results showed that the activated I position influenced the level of the negative stereotypes towards the Romani people. The variation analysis with repeated measurements revealed a significant interaction effect of the currently active I-position and the adjective category. This effect was discovered for both indicators – the relevance assessment ( $F(2,88)=6.84$ ;  $p<0.01$ ;  $\eta^2=0.13$ ), and the reaction times ( $F(2,43)=4.68$ ;  $p<0.05$ ;  $\eta^2=0.18$ ). Details are shown in the Figure 2.

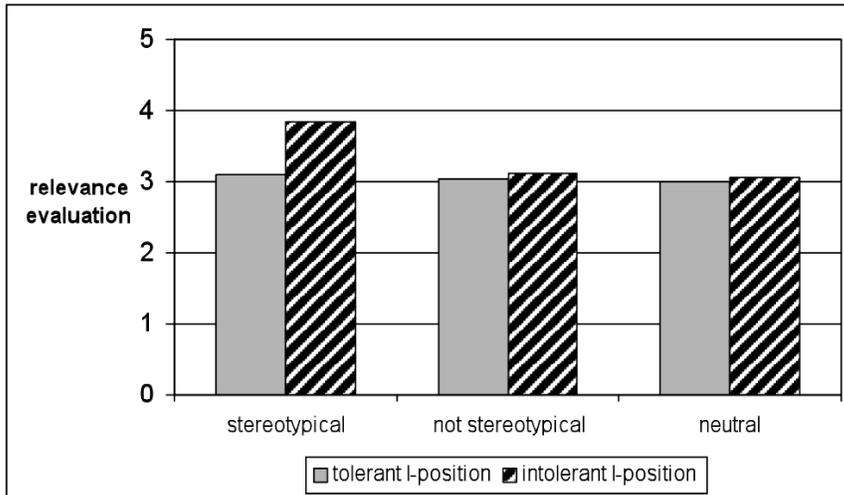
In both cases the differences between the tolerant and intolerant positions were significant only for the stereotypical adjectives. It was discovered by means of a series of Student's t-tests for dependent probes. When the tolerant position was activated, the participants remembered significantly more positive words than negative or neutral. The activation of the intolerant position implied exactly the opposite effect. This was shown in a control measurement which was analysed with similar statistical methods. This additional effect makes us more confident that the experimental manipulation was effective and the differences in the level of negative stereotype which resulted can be interpreted as being caused by activating two different I-positions.

In this case it is hard to contest research for non-equivalence of the positions as far as we are concerned with the likelihood of increasing the need of social approval or activating the social or individual identity. Yet another question can be posed: can the differences shown in this experiment be explained by a simple manipulation of positive or negative affect, which was aroused by recalling a good or bad relationship? The results of both of the described experiments need further elaboration. However it can be agreed, that the thesis about the specificity of the knowledge structures for the social context was not found false. A successful replication would bring new light to the nature of stereotypes and reinforce the point of view according to which they are a

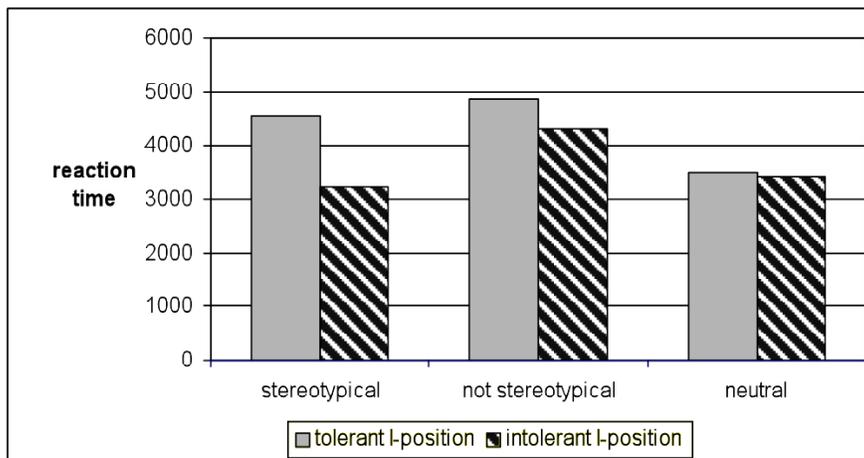
Figure 2

*Mean evaluation of the adjectives' relevance in the description of the Romani people (from Nowak, 2008)*

*(A) mean reaction times for these adjectives*



*(B) in three adjectives' categories and two I-positions activated*



result of the social negotiation process of giving names and a part of a shared reality (see Higgins, 2000) This would mean that a given stereotype is stored in the mind only in a certain module of representation, which contains content developed in a specific social context.

### Personality

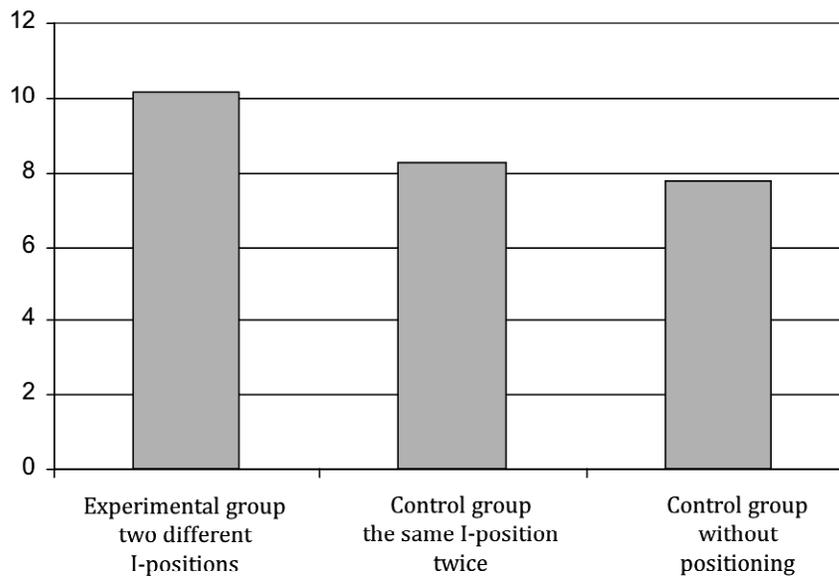
The notion of I-positions comes from a notion of the voice proposed by Bakhtin (1984) who is commonly referred to in the discursive and dialogical approach. The voice was understood by Bakhtin as a “talking personality”. Bartosz Szymczyk (2010) decided to empirically verify if we may assume that different I positions within the same person can have different personalities. For this aim he used the Big Five Model and the NEO-FFI questionnaire (Costa and McCrae, 1985) based on this model of personality. This research is widely presented in a separate article in this volume. Szymczyk’s experiment’s results incline to reconsider the problem of stability vs. variability which is essential for the whole personality psychology. Referring to personality, the model of relational mind assumes that the personal dispositions of a person are variable not only between different situations, but mostly between social contexts. Two experiments were conducted to verify this assumption.

Taking Baumeister’s (2002) theory of ego depletion and ego power as a starting point, Monika Turowska (2008) was trying to find an answer to the question of whether the I-positions have separate sources of energy. In the research with 143 students from two Warsaw colleges, participants were induced to use the energetic resources of two different I-positions to find out if it makes the total resources attainable for the ego, as understood in Baumeister’s works (2002), larger. Two experimenters manipulated their behaviour one after another in order to activate two different I-positions among the participants: “I as a competent person” vs. “I as an incompetent person”. The before described ABBA scheme was used in the experiment as well as the methods of ego depletion and the depletion measurement already tested by Baumeister (2002). An additional control group was also planned in which Baumeister’s procedure was used without the experimental positioning. The experiment started with positioning the participants in a certain I-position, after which they were asked to complete the first task aimed at causing a cognitive dissonance and by this means to deplete the ego resources. The task was to think of and write down as many arguments for introducing fees for studies as the participants could find, which was obviously contrary to their own interests as students of public universities (in Poland public schools are free). While the first experimenter was collecting the papers with the arguments, the second one appeared to substitute him and activated the same or different I-position depending on the experimental condition. Then, he asked the participants to solve anagrams. The number of correct solutions was the indicator of the dependent variable – the volume of resources attainable for the ego. It was expected, that activating a different I-position after the first task (experimental groups) would result in the restoration of the general ego resources, because the second I-position’s resources became available, as they had not been depleted during the first task. In the control groups, this effect should not occur because the second task was completed in the same I-position as the first one. The

regular ego depletion effect known from Baumeister's experiments was expected in these groups. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

*Mean number of correct anagrams in the experimental group and control groups*



One-way ANOVA showed a significant main effect of the positioning variable ( $F(2, 140)=5.230; p<0.01$ ). Additional analysis implied that in the experimental group, in which two different I-positions were activated, more correct anagrams were found than in the control group, in which the same position was activated twice. There were no differences between the experimental group and the neutral group and neither between the control group and the neutral one.

This result is broadly in line with expectations. However, before drawing the conclusion that the hypothesis was confirmed, further statistical analysis had been conducted which revealed that only the result from one of the experimental half-groups (distinguished on the basis of the order of position activation) is responsible for the observed differences ( $F(4,138)=8.491; p<0.001$ ). Most solutions were found by people in whom the “I as an incompetent person” position was activated prior to the “competent person” position. In the second group, in which these positions were activated in a reversed sequence, the number of solutions matched the level of the control group. Hence, not only activating two different positions was found to be important, but the sequence of it.

It seems possible that the participants from the first group found more solutions to the anagrams because they were using ego resources from another position and not

because the second position is associated with a positive affect. This is supported by the fact that there were no differences between the two control groups. In one of them the participants were positioned as “I as a competent person” both times and this position can be associated with high self esteem and positive emotions. In the other group the position “I as an incompetent person” was induced twice (associated with low self esteem and negative emotions). If these characteristics of emotions had had influence, it would have been demonstrated in the differences between these two groups and no such differences were found.

Another explanation which cannot be excluded here is the mechanism of emotional see-saw, in which negative emotions are induced and quickly suppressed (Nawrat and Doliński, 2007). The influence of this mechanism on submissiveness has already been reported and in this experiment the participants were submissive to the will of the experimenter when creating solutions in the task. Hence, the results of the experiment neither allow to conclude with confidence that the I-positions have their own power resources, nor has the hypothesis about the autonomy of I-positions been disproved.

Another experiment based on the assumption of the autonomy of the I positions' resources is the one conducted by Bartosz Zalewski (2008), which examined the social influence of the particular effect of the “foot-in-the-door”. In this effect the likelihood of complying with a request is higher for a person who has already complied with a similar but smaller request of another person. This effect should be stronger if the “recipient” of the first and the second request is the same I-position. In contrast, when both requests are addressed to different I-positions, the “foot-in-the-door” effect should not take place or be weak, because the processes responsible for this effect occurred within the first position, while the second position faces the second request without this priming (it is the first request for this position). The experiment aimed at verifying this hypothesis and is described in this volume in a separate article (Zalewski, 2010).

### **Intelligence and School Achievement**

In the field of intelligence and social context the most interesting I-positions are the ones developed during positive and negative interactions with tutors. These can be generally described as the positions of Good Student and Bad Student. Despite individual differences, which certainly refer to a specific content, effect and many other aspects of these positions, probably both of them exist in every pupil. This is because both objectively better and worse students tend to have successes and failures of their own kind from time to time. Both are sometimes unappreciated or over-appreciated by their teachers, thus all students are sometimes perceived as Good or Bad Students, which helps develop these positions in their minds.

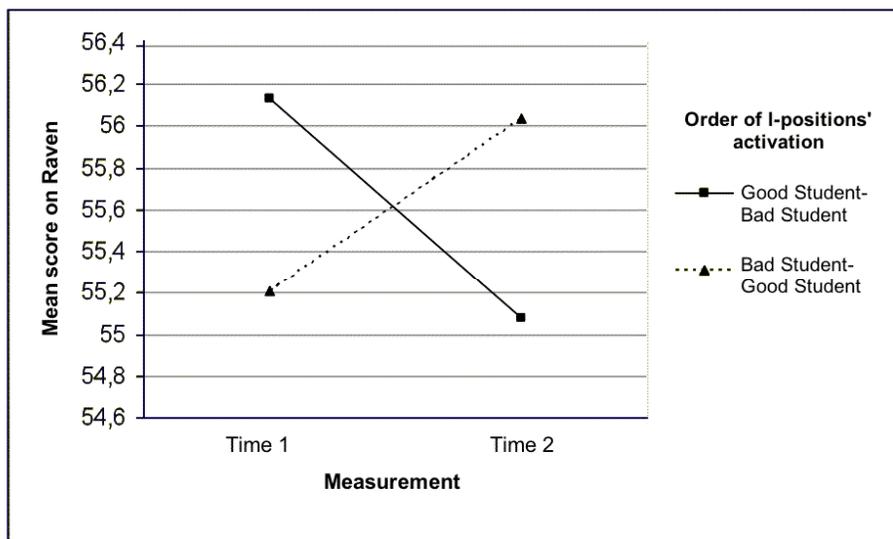
The discursive model assumes that once the position of a Good Student is activated in a given person, he or she can use the cognitive-affective resources of this

position in his or her current behaviour. It results in an increase in performance in different school competency tests, because it is in the Good Student position's resources where the majority of knowledge and skills taught in school is stored. The resources of the Bad Student are much poorer and so is the performance in tests and exams, when the position is activated. This assumption was a subject of empirical verification in two experiments on intelligence and three on school knowledge.

Agnieszka Zakrzewska (2009) conducted a one factor experiment with repeated measurements, in which 48 adult high school students were subjects of repeated (after one month) positioning in the Good Student and Bad Student positions. The sequence of activating these two positions was rotated in both classes which took part in the research. The experimental manipulation was performed with the help of tutors who gave instructions to the procedure in two different ways: emphasizing their opinion on the high (Good Students) or low (Bad Students) abilities of a given class and predicting the performance in the test tasks accordingly (after the research a profound debriefing was given to the students with the information about the aim of the experiment). After activating the positions by these means, the Standard version of Raven's Progressive Matrices was handed to the participants (in the repeated measurement a version of the test was used)

Figure 4

Activated I-position and intelligence test performance level



The results of the experiment were the subject of a two-factor analysis of variance with repeated measurements, which showed the significant effect of interaction between the measurement and the sequence of activating the I-positions ( $F(1,46)=7.40$ ;

$p < 0.01$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.14$ ), as illustrated in Figure 4. This result means that regardless of whether the Good Student position was activated as first or second, it always caused an increase in the Raven's test results by 1 point on average. The scale of the effect is unimpressive; however it occurred on a regular basis. No difference was found between first and second measurements, which confirms the equality of the versions of Raven's tests used in the experiment. Furthermore, no difference was found between half-groups, in which a reversed sequence of activating the I-positions was used, which proves the equality between groups in terms of intelligence.

These results are in line with what was predicted. Of course the question of whether the results can be explained by simply reinforcing the pupils with supportive and encouraging feedback from the teacher, remains unanswered. However, still the hypothesis about the influence of the activated I-position on intelligence (here the non verbal) is supported.

Verbal intelligence was examined by Mariusz Solpa (2008), who used the Linguistic Test *Leksykon* (Jurkowski, 1997). In a one-factor experiment (without repeated measurement), 40 secondary school pupils were assigned to the experimental or control group. In the experimental group the Good Student position was activated by presenting the experimenter's opinion on the high abilities and good performance of the pupils, which was strengthened by non-verbal signals. In the control group, the experimenter acted in a formal and demeaning way, however – considering the age of the participants – did not address negative opinion on their competences or performance.

The results revealed differences between the two groups, which were as expected. The details are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Mean general results and the results on two subscales – passive and active dictionary – of the LEKSYKON test in two groups.*

Variables	Means in groups		t	p<
	Good Student (experimental group)	Bad Student (control group)		
Subscale: passive dictionary	19,13	17,16	-1,57	n.s.
Subscale: active dictionary	14,59	10,33	-2,48	0,05
Overall result	33,72	27,50	-2,31	0,05

Note: *All t-tests had 38 df.*

As illustrated in Table 1, when the “Good Student” position was activated, a young man performed generally better in the test of intellectual abilities than when the “Bad Student” position was activated. This particularly refers to the function of active verbal activities, which require a creative application of the resources owned. The passive functions in contrast are probably more automatic and therefore less vulnerable to the limitations of cognitive resources and emotional discomfort, which probably followed the activation of the “Bad Student” position.

Similar results were shown in three research studies based on the same experimental schemas and sharing a similar procedure, in which, instead of psychological tests of intellectual abilities, the school tests of knowledge in mathematics (Sokołowska, 2008), nature (Kiszczuk, 2008) and English (Więckowska, 2008) were used. In this research the results significance was on the level of statistical tendency ( $p < 0.10$ ), however we mention them because the results followed the same pattern repeatedly. In the experimental tasks the Good Students performed better on average than the Bad Students, however there were no differences in the routine school tests which were conducted before by the teachers during lessons. These results were as expected.

The effects shown in the described experiments can seem similar to the Pygmalion effect. From the rich empirical data on this effect (see Rosenthal, 2002), a conclusion can be drawn that the expectations of the teachers can influence the intelligence and performance of the students at school like in a self fulfilling prophecy. At first this research was received enthusiastically, because it seemed that thanks to them the development of the students could be stimulated and the possibilities of children at school could be made more equal – simply by changing the attitude of the teachers from negative to positive. However critical opinions were presented on the methodology (Snow, 1995; Spitz, 1999), and later on it was shown that the influence of positive expectations on pupils’ performance is quite limited by the real abilities of children (Jussim and Eccles, 1992). We neither offer to go back to the former conceptualisations of the Pygmalion effect, nor put forward a new theory on it. There is one important theoretical difference between the phenomena described in the discursive mind model and the Pygmalion effect. The latter is – theoretically – based on a real, persistent and independent of context an increase or decrease in the observed competency of a student due to specific treatment by a positively or negatively biased teacher. In the discursive mind model, the increase in competence is temporary, limited to a particular relational context. An increase applies to the accessibility of the particular cognitive-affective resources, which refer to a latent I-position. This is no more the Pygmalion effect but the positioning phenomenon.

### Accessibility of Semantic Categories

Because the results of the described research seemed encouraging, a further series of experiments was planned to examine the influence of positioning on the more basic phenomena of accessibility of the representations of semantic categories, in more detail and more systematically. The here-described research was a number of pilot experiments, the main aim of which was to check the efficiency of different positioning techniques, however a side effect could also be the verification of the fundamental hypothesis of the discursive mind model. This hypothesis proposes that the I-positions hold their own cognitive-affective resources – for some positions some content is more accessible than for others, which can be observed as a difference in reaction times to different words.

From a longer series of experiments, nine have been conducted so far, the results of which were combined and analysed together for the purpose of this article. The participants were 377 students of Warsaw colleges. The details of distribution in groups are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Number of participants in each research condition*

		POSITIONING			Overall
		imaginative	Verbal	interactive	
POSITIONS	Mo/Fa	28	39	0	67
	Mo/Fr	49	38	0	87
	Fa/Pa	35	33	0	68
	Ac/J	0	0	35	35
	Hd/Hr	0	0	40	40
	Au/Co	0	0	40	40
Overall		112	110	115	337

All experiments were programmed in E-prime software. In each particular experiment the participant took two identical series of lexical decision task (described below). The reaction times were measured (RT). The experimental plan was based on the ABBA scheme. According to the hypothesis, it was expected that when the same position is activated twice, the difference in reaction times between the first and the

second series of the task would be smaller than when two different I-positions are activated.

By putting nine experiments into one analysis we received a three-factor experimental plan. The first independent variable was a pair of positions that had these values:

- Mo/Fa (I in relation with my mother / I in relation with my father)
- Mo/Fr (I in relation with my mother, I in relation with my girl friend),
- Fa/Pa (I in relation with my father, I in relation with my partner)
- Hd/Hr (I as someone who needs help, I as someone who helps)
- Ac/J (I as someone accepted, I as someone judged),
- Au/Co (I in relation with an authority, I among friends)

The experiments for the three last pairs of positions were the basis of the master's theses of Iwona Daszczuk (2008), Katarzyna Lech (2009), and Joanna Raczyńska (2009) respectively.

The next two independent variables were the method of positioning (imaginative vs. verbal vs. interactive) and the manipulation (experimental group: two different positions vs. control group: the same position twice).

The imaginative positioning was the modified Baldwin and Holmes (1997) procedure. It is a procedure in which a participant is presented an instruction in which he or she is asked to recall a significant other person (depending on the activated position) as if he/she was with him/her at the moment. On the consecutive tables some questions which help to recall the picture of the person are shown (*“Imagine your Mother as if she was standing in front of you. Spend a while imagining her... Recall her face in your mind. Give it some time..., Try to recall the colour of her eyes and her hair. Spend some time on it...”* etc. all together 10 questions).

The verbal positioning was obtained by means of a word which the participant uses to recall the significant person (mother, father, friend or partner). This word was displayed in the top left hand corner during the lexical decision task. Earlier, before starting the experimental procedure, the participants were asked to enter one or two such words (depending on the experimental condition and the I-positions activated) into the software's dialog box.

The interactive positioning was based on manipulating the experimenters' behaviour in order to activate a particular I-position. Each participant had contact with two experimenters respectively, who changed in the middle of the experiment. In case of activating the “I as needing help” position and the “I as helping” one, before each series of lexical decision task the experimenter had a 15-minute interview with the

participant. The interview differed depending on the position. When activating the “Help needing” position the experimenter asked about trouble in learning, expressed sympathy and gave advice on where to seek help. When the “I as a helper” position was activated, the interview referred to the participant’s interests and next, he or she was asked to help in a research project, because they were told that people with similar interests are needed for this research.

In the conditions where the I-positions “I as an accepted person” and “I as a judged person”, the participant was interviewed on the many ways of spending free time. The “I as a accepted person” was treated with understanding, actively listened to and was not interrupted by the personal opinions of the interviewer. The “I as a judged person” participant was interviewed in a way in which the experimenter spontaneously expressed his own opinion and preference – both positively and negatively (i.e.: *I also adore cinema, This really was a great movie, I would never go to see it, You really liked this dumb picture?*).

When the “I in relation to an authority” position was activated, the experimenter was formally dressed (a suit, a white shirt), had a briefcase and gave instructions using formal language (*This is a scientific experiment aimed at verifying the hypothesis about the specificity of representation structures for the social context. All questions will be answered after the experiment, because, being aware of the purpose of the experiment could have a direct impact on the mental processes which are to be examined*). When the participant was completing the lexical decision task, the experimenter was working on papers from a briefcase. In the “I among friends” group, the experimenter was wearing jeans and a sweater, he had his backpack hung on a chair and he was using everyday language with elements of humour to give information on the experiment (*Here we have limited research, which aim is pretty much unclear to everyone. It is hardly possible to explain it, but if you want, I will try to do that afterwards. If I tell you now, the whole experiment would have pretty much no sense*).

The dependent variable was the ABBA effect, that is, the absolute value in reaction times to the same stimuli in both series of the lexical decision task. Both general mean values for all word categories used in the research and particular mean values for each of the categories were a subject of analysis. The words were put in 30 categories (see Table 4), taken from the LIWC software designed for text analysis (Pennebaker, Francis, & Booth, 2001). Each series consisted of 270 trials, each containing 180 words (6 from each category) and 90 non-words: senseless strings of signs created by mixing the letters of three words from each category. Each stimulus was exposed for 100 milliseconds in the centre of the screen. The participants were asked to decide whether the displayed string of letters was a word or not and confirm it by pressing one of the two keys indicated on the keyboard. The next string of letters was presented instantly after pressing one of the keys. The sequence of display was randomly assigned to each person and identical in both series.

Table 3. *Word categories used in the lexical decision task (Taken from LIWC software, Pennebaker, Francis, Booth, 2001)*

1. me	11. seeing	21. music
2. you	12. hearing	22. money
3. we	13. feeling	23. religion
4. positive emotions	14. movement	24. death
5. negative emotions	15. family	25. body
6. positive assessment	16. friends	26. sexuality
7. negative assessment	17. work	27. eating
8. causality	18. science	28. sleeping
9. possibility	19. home	29. hygiene
10. sureness	20. sport	30. swearing

The data were analysed using a three-factor analysis of variance in a plan of 6 (pair of the I-POSITIONS: Mo/Fa, Mo/Fr, Fa/Pa, Hd/Hr, Ac/J, Au/Co) x 2 (MANIPULATION: experimental group with 2 different positions vs. control group with the same position twice) x 3 (POSITIONING method: verbal vs. imaginative vs. interactive). This plan was not complete, some of the values of certain variables were not tested, for example the positions Hd/Hr, Ac/J, and Au/Co were activated only by using interactive positioning, which was on the other hand not used in the case of other positions.

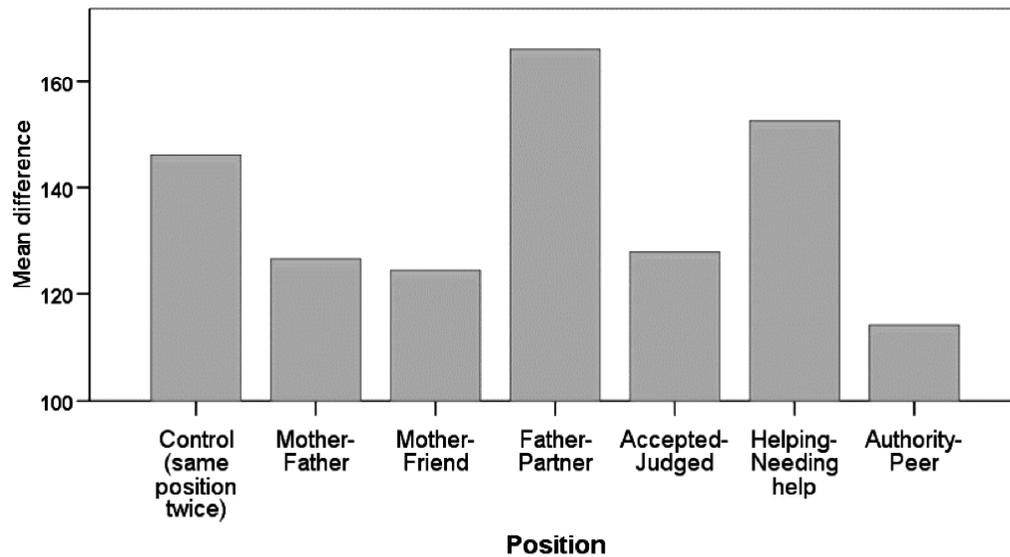
The analysis revealed:

- no main effect for the MANIPULATION variable
- Main effect of the POSITION variable  $F(120,1172)=1.25$ ;  $p<0.05$ ;  $\eta^2=0.11$
- main effect of the POSITIONING variable ( $F(30,290) =1.63$ ;  $p<0.05$ ,  $\eta^2=0.14$ )
- interaction effect of the POSITIONING and POSITION variables ( $F(60,582)=1.35$ ;  $p<0.05$ ;  $\eta^2=0.12$ )
- interaction effect of the POSITIONING, POSITION and MANIPULATION variables ( $F(60,582)=1.41$ ;  $p<0.05$ ;  $\eta^2=0.13$ ).

Figure 5 shows the mean differences in RT between two series of the lexical decision task for the control group (control conditions in which the same I-position was activated twice all together) and for different pairs of the I-positions.

Figure 5

*Mean differences between reaction times for words in two series of the lexical decision task preceded by positioning*



As shown in Figure 5, only for the pairs of Fa/Pa and Hr/Hd positions, the difference in RT between the two series of the lexical decision task was bigger than in the control group.

The analysis of variance tested each pair of positions individually but no significant multidimensional effects were found. In tests of one variable for all position pairs several differences between the experimental group and control group were found for certain categories of words.

To illustrate it, we show the results of two-factor analysis of variance in a 2 (POSITIONING: verbal vs. imaginative) x 2 (MANIPULATION: two different position vs. the same position twice) plan for the Fa/Pa pair of positions. It was discovered that the interaction of POSITIONING and MANIPULATION is significant only for these categories of words:

- learning ( $F(35,1)=7.68$ ;  $p<0.01$ ;  $\eta^2=0.11$ )
- work ( $F(35,1)=7.78$ ;  $p<0.01$ ;  $\eta^2=0.11$ )
- sport ( $F(35,1)=4.33$ ;  $p<0.05$ ;  $\eta^2=0.06$ )
- religion ( $F(35,1)=4.68$ ;  $p<0.05$ ;  $\eta^2=0.07$ )

- you ( $F(35,1)=7.18$ ;  $p<0.01$ ;  $\eta^2=0.1$ )
- positive assessment ( $F(35,1)=4.67$ ;  $p<0.05$ ;  $\eta^2=0.07$ )

Also a trend for the “swearing” category was found ( $F(35,1)=3.20$ ;  $p=0.08$ ;  $\eta^2=0.05$ )

For each of these categories the direction of differences was the same. For the imaginative positioning condition the expected ABBA effect occurred (the differences in RT between measurements were higher when a person was positioned twice in the same position, than when a person was positioned twice using the same method). In contrast, for the verbal positioning condition, an effect contrary to the ABBA was observed – the difference between two measurements was higher when the same I-position was activated, than when two different I-positions were evoked). This means that the accessibility of certain word categories was differentiated due to imaginative positioning (categories were differently accessible to the “I in relation with my father” position than for the “I in relation with my partner” one). However the verbal positioning caused an unexpected contradictory effect, suggesting that even with the same positioning method used, the availability of categories can fluctuate.

To conclude, the results of this series of experiments do not confirm a strong version of the hypothesis, that is the expectation of the ABBA effect to occur for all 30 categories and all pairs of positions and positioning methods. The multidimensional ABBA effect did not occur in any of the 9 experiments individually, nor if analyzed all together. Multivariate effects showed up only as interactions, implying different levels of the expected effect in particular pairs of positions and positioning methods. Yet, several (from several to over a dozen in each of the 9 experiments) univariate effects were observed in the form of the expected ABBA effect and a contradictory unexpected one as well, referring to some of the word categories. The most evident univariate ABBA effects occurred for the Fa/Pa pair of positions, but only in the condition of imaginative positioning. As expected, the availability of the categories: work, sport, learning, religion, you, positive assessment and swearing were different when the position “I in relation to my father” was activated, than it was when we evoked the “I in relation with my partner” position. This effect however was not observed for verbal positioning. Thus, it may be speculated that the verbal positioning procedure was not effective, or it induces different results than the imaginative positioning.

It would be hard to agree that the selective univariate effect does support the hypothesis, however the fact that they were observed makes it even harder to reject it completely. It may be stated that while rejecting the strong version of the hypothesis, which as we all agree is what shall be done, it would be right to offer a weaker version of it, which would take into account the differentiation which is caused by the use of a certain pair of positions and a particular method of positioning. The meaning of the reversed ABBA effect which occurred for many word categories is also worth a theoretical consideration.

How then should we interpret the lack of confirmation of the strong version of the hypothesis? The first possible interpretation suggests the misapprehension of the theoretical assumptions: maybe the I-positions do not exist at all and the model of discursive structure of the mind is misjudged. However previous research, both described in this article and previously conducted by our research team (Stemplewska-Żakowicz, Zalewski & Suszek, 2005; Stemplewska-Żakowicz, Walecka & Gabińska, 2006; Stemplewska-Żakowicz, Walecka, Gabińska, Zalewski & Suszek, 2005) and other researchers (Oleś, 2005, see also the review in Hermans and Dimaggio, 2007), allows one to presume that the I-positions exist empirically.

Thus, the second interpretation agrees that the I-positions exist, however the differences between them are subtle and not always possible to observe in experimental procedures. It may be argued that in this case of experiments, the idiographic approach would better be applied, modelled on the Daniel Cervone's research (Shadel, Cervone, Niaura, & Abrams, 2004). This would imply examining the reaction times to the words only from these categories which were tested to be important to the participant and personally associated with a certain I-position. In this research the focus was rather on finding differences between arbitrary selected categories, and it was assumed that the differences in the higher or lower accessibility of certain categories will be equal for many people (although it was predicted that the direction of the differences may vary, it was still expected that they will occur systematically among different people for the same categories). To check whether this assumption was a mistake in the procedure and ought to be corrected in the next experiments, a re-analysis of data was performed.

In the idiographic procedure proposed by Cervone and his co-workers (Cervone, Caldwell, Fiori, Orom, Shadel et al, 2008; Shadel, Cervone, Niaura, & Abrams, 2004) the material used in an experiment, for example for priming, is prepared individually, which enables observing effects which could not be observed otherwise. To check whether the expected effect can be observed for semantic categories which truly are connected with certain individual positions (this link being a highly individual difference), we decided to investigate whether the ABBA effect can be observed for categories of words of which we know that their accessibility is different for a given position within a particular person.

For the re-analysis sake, the dependent variables were constructed again. The indicator of accessibility of a certain word was the reaction time of a particular person for this word when a particular position was evoked. On the basis of the empirical distribution of reaction times for a particular person, 3 different word categories were created (dependent variables): easily accessible (1/3 words with the shortest reaction times for a particular person), hard to access (1/3 longest RTs) and moderately accessible (1/3 words with moderate RTs). The differences in the structure of data analysed in standard and idiographic analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Differences between standard and idiographic analysis.*

CATEGORIES	ANALYSIS	IDIOGRAPHIC RE-ANALYSIS
Number of categories	30	3
Items in categories	6 words	60 words
Creating criteria	Semantic	RT in the first lexical decision task
Example	We, science, positive assessment	Short RT, Long RT, Moderate RT
Content	Planned before the experiment	Post-experimental analysis
Basis for categories	Theoretical	Empirical
Material structure	The same for every participant	Individually chosen for every participant

The reorganized data were the subject of the same statistical analysis as the originally organized data. The results showed similar but not identical main and interaction effects. They are presented in detail in Table 5.

These results indicate that some effects refer to words easily accessible in a given position (short RTs), and other – to those hard to access (long RTs). What does it mean? Given that the easily accessible words in a certain position are the ones which are specific for this position and strongly connected to it, we can conclude that there are separate patterns of relatedness for the words specific and unspecific for the given I-position. Further conclusions can be drawn when repeating the analysis for the control groups and the experimental groups separately. This analysis is shown in Table 6.

In control groups, where the same position was activated twice, statistically significant effects refer to the words, to which the participant reacted slowly, because these words do not belong to the activated I-position. On the other hand, in the experimental groups, where two different positions were activated in each measurement (and the word accessibility was determined by the reaction times in the first measurement), significant effects refer to the words to which the reaction was faster, due to the fact that these words belonged to the active positions' resources. This reinforces the model's relevance, because a change in the semantic categories' accessibility occurred due to a shift between active positions between repeated measurements. The categories specific for a certain position are easily accessible, but when the position is changed, they are not easily accessible any more and they are substituted by the easily accessible categories of a different I-position, which is now

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Table 5. Results for the three-factor MANOVA on the data reorganized in the idiographic scheme

Idiographic scheme	Multivariate effects				Univariate effects						
	Effect	F	df	p <	h <sup>2</sup>	RT	df	F	p <	h <sup>2</sup>	
positions						Short			n.s.		
				n.s.		Moderate			n.s.		
						Long	5	3,12	0,02	,04	
positioning	2,65	3; 321	0,05	0,02		Short	1	4,91	0,03	,015	
						Moderate			n.s.		
						Long			n.s.		
manipulation x positioning	2,64	3; 321	0,05	0,02		Short			n.s.		
						Moderate			n.s.		
						Long	1	5,56	0,02	,02	
positions x positioning	2,13	6; 644	0,05	0,02				n.i.			
manipulation x positions x positioning						Short	2	2,54	0,08	,02	
			n.s.			Moderate	2	2,79	0,06	,02	
						Long			n.s.		

active. Yet, if we activate the same position twice, the resources specific for this position do not change, thus the categories accessibility remains indifferent.

The idiographic analysis was repeated for all 12 experiments, investigating the ABBA or reversed ABBA effect (which either is in line or contrary to the general hypothesis). The conclusions from these ideographical analyses are that the method did not influence the overall results much – still the hypothesis was confirmed in just a few of the experiments (namely 2 out of 12). However, after the ideographical analysis the pattern of the dependencies seems clearer, and some regularities appear:

The dependencies in line with the hypothesis about the specificity of the knowledge structures for the social context (ABBA effect) apply to short RTs and imaginative positioning

Long RTs and verbal positioning imply the dependencies contrary to the hypothesis (reversed ABBA effect)

As the effects in line with the hypothesis appeared for words which are specific for a certain position, it can be agreed that the model relevantly describes the real dependencies, however they are blurred by the non-specific words for a certain position

Table 6. *Idiographic analysis for the control groups and experimental groups separately (dependent variable – the absolute value of difference in RTs between two repeated measurements).*

Effect	THE SAME POSITION TWICE					TWO DIFFERENT POSITIONS				
	RT	df	F	p <	<i>h</i> <sup>2</sup>	RT	df	F	p <	<i>h</i> <sup>2</sup>
Positions	short			n.s.		<b>short</b>	2	5,37	0,01	,06
	moderate			n.s.		<b>moderate</b>	2	4,20	0,05	,05
	<b>long</b>	2	3,41	0,05	,04	long			n.s.	
Positioning	short			n.s.		<b>short</b>	2	3,49	0,05	,04
	moderate			n.s.		moderate			n.s.	
	long			n.s.		long			n.s.	
Positions x Positioning	short			n.s.		<b>short</b>	4	2,62	0,05	,06
	moderate			n.s.		<b>moderate</b>	4	2,80	0,05	,07
	<b>long</b>	4	2,12	0,05	,07	long			n.s.	

within a particular person. Thus, the verification of the model requires more precise research methods, in which only the content individually selected for every particular participant will be used. Further application of the Cervone idiographic method seems to be worth the effort and the results described above can be used for fine-tuning the procedure.

As we know that the idiographic analysis results also do not confirm the strong version of the hypothesis, we may investigate other interpretations. One of them is that the techniques of positioning which were used, are not efficient enough to make the activation of a given position last throughout the whole lexical decision task. This interpretation is agreeable, if we refer it to the theories associated with the working self concept (Markus & Kunda, 1986). If we follow them to agree that the working self consists of sets of chronically available central selves (main I-positions) relatively insensitive to the changing situation, which are placed in the context of more variable peripheral selves (position, which we manipulated in our experiments), then we realize how much variation can be explained by those central positions and how weak and latent the efforts in manipulating the peripheral positions might be. Likely, a solution to this problem would be even more personalized idiographic extraction and further manipulation with the central I-positions characteristic for a given person. The manipulation with I-positions may also seem difficult, because the positions have a partly common content range - their resources overlap, because the associations between I-positions are unique for each person (Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987; Rosenberg,

1997). The manipulation with just one element of a “tangled web” of the mind leads to uncontrollable reactions in its different weaves. It is thus possible, that during the lexical decision task not only have we failed to hold the evoked I positions, but also the task itself activated several other different I-positions within individual participants.

Another interpretation refers to the theoretical model itself. The I-positions are dynamic constructs; the content which they store can change constantly, also as a result of every single activation of a given position. Thus, maybe it is not possible to activate the same position twice, just as “you can't step twice into the same river”. The surprising reversed ABBA effect, which occurred in some of the conditions in the semantic categories' accessibility research, could also be explained using this pattern. Following this interpretation, it has to be pointed out that the control conditions in the ABBA procedure are not appropriate. What had been expected was that when we evoked the same position, the effects should be identical. This expectation can be wrong from the theoretical point of view. This can be supported by the results of at least two from the before-described research, which show that the I-position are not unchanging mechanisms, which can be easily turned on and off, and each time resulting in the same effect. The research of Turowska and Zalewski has shown that dynamic processes inside particular positions are influenced by current experience. These processes can lead to certain changes, for example ego resources depletion or social influence vulnerability increase. Undoubtedly this is an interesting problem, worth theoretical elaborating and systematic research.

Considering all possible explanations, it seems necessary to put further efforts in research examining the influence of the positioning on semantic categories' accessibility. At this stage, the procedure is still too far from perfect to draw final conclusions. The further and more precise implementation of the ideographical approach to choosing categories is in line with the theoretical model and can bring new results showing the efficiency of positioning and its effects on the cognitive accessibility of the word categories. However re-structuring the data collected in previous experiment is not enough and it is suggested to conduct further experiments with the fully idiographic procedure.

### **Conclusion**

Probably the biggest objection against the ideas of the discursive approach can be that the majority of the phenomena described by them can be just as well explained referring to classic theories and mechanisms, known and empirically verified in mainstream psychology. In this sense, the approach is in danger of the elevationism error (contrary to reductionism), in which simple phenomena are explained with far too complex and complicated processes. Two alternative ways of thinking, represented partly by mainstream psychology, are the ideas that the I-positions do not need to exist at all, or that the I-positions exist, however their regulative role in human functioning is

much smaller than we assumed – there are many more mechanisms involved. Both phenomenologically perceived changes in experience and changes in the observed behaviour are not proof of the existence of the separate I-positions. Even if we agree that the positions exist, we have to admit, that behind the variations of behaviour and experiencing we may find different (sometimes contradictory) needs, motives, feelings, beliefs, and values of the same Self, the same I-position. From this perspective on the results of our research, a question may be asked whether the positioning really took place here - and if yes, then was it really responsible for the results which were observed. Maybe other factors played more important roles, such as: evoking social attitudes, personal vs. social identity, affect, emotional see-saw, providing reinforcement, etc.

Conducting further experimental research on the discursive model seems indispensable. Showing evident empirical results, this research can help clarify the existing doubts, which might then contribute to developing new, promising theoretical approaches. Furthermore such experimentally verified ideas of the discursive approach may broaden mainstream approaches, which is encouraged by some representatives of the latter (see also Jost & Kruglanski, 2002). Especially some of these ideas seem to be worth theoretical and empirical elaboration, because they can also have practical implementations.

One of them was regularly observed in several of the described experiments, and can be summed up as follows: people who position others in a positive way, experience the world as better. Such teachers “have” better, more intelligent students, bosses – more effective employees, and more tolerant people meet others who are more open-minded and less negatively biased towards differences. There is more than one single truth about these people and in a different relational context all of them – pupils, employees, partners of relationships – can show their less positive face. However, the effects of the positive positioning are definitely not a misjudgement or an artefact. Positive positioning does not – metaphorically saying – turn ugly into beautiful, but allows the beauty which these people carry inside to be manifested, something that would remain hidden in worse circumstances. Frequent positive positioning of a given person could likely cause that the competent, intelligent or tolerant I-position became permanently accessible. Thanks to this, the increased abilities of this person could become his or her permanent dispositions. The probable practical application of this phenomenon seems promising and makes the effort of further detailed research even more worthy.

From the methodological perspective, tailoring the content used in the experiment for every participating person seems to be in line with the subjective approach characteristic for this model. The moderate version of the hypothesis about the specificity of knowledge structures for the social context was confirmed mostly in these experiments where the direction of the hypothesis was assumed, as in the “Good/Bad

Students' experiment on intelligence and school abilities. Thus, maybe more precise predictions can help understand the positioning process better in future experiments.

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