

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

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We have a great pleasure to introduce to 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 of the Theory” (Volume 4, Issue 1 of IJDS, 2010, previously published) and “Empirical Approach to the Dialogical Self: Applications” (Volume 4, Issue 2 of IJDS, 2010, the current publication). 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 embody 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.

The issue “Empirical Approach to the Dialogical Self: Applications” is focused on various applications of the DST. Given that internal organization of the self mirrors culture variability and existence of different points of view engaged in social discourse, one can argue that internal dialogicality provides necessary conditions for adaptation. It is especially important and fruitful when the person challenges a new socio-cultural environment after immigration or quite new life situation caused for example by unemployment or any other a great change, loss or danger. The question of adaptation concerns not only creation of quite new I-positions but – even more important - integration of new and existing voices of the self and establishing dialogical relationships among them. Dialogical organization of the self seems to be a necessary condition of flexible and adaptive functioning of the person, who is able to understand internal and external world and to define various relationships with others. At the same time internal dialogues belongs to a broad scope of psychic phenomena called self-reflection ability, playing a crucial role in personality development and maturation. Moreover, variety of I-positions and their numerous relationships are responsible for internal dynamics of the self, which is sometimes limited or needs correction in frames of counselling or psychotherapy. The processes typical for psychotherapy - regardless of a particular school or approach - from the dialogical perspective tend to enrich a set

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of actual and possible I-positions and to restore or initiate mutual exchange among them. There are of course much more possible applications of DST in psychotherapy, including for example dialogical therapy *per se*.

Very inspiring research trend emerges from positioning as phenomenon which can be interpreted in terms of different I-position activation. The question is, if activation of a particular I-position may influence interpersonal relationships, social attitudes and/or personality assessment. If so, many phenomena described in social psychology may gain a new dialogical interpretation, as well as reliable assessment of personality traits implies exploration of a given I-position activated for answering a questionnaire. All these examples illustrate a great potential of DST.

The content of this special issue is constituted by six articles; the authors originated from six different countries and three continents contribute in it. Mariel Sanchez-Rockliffe and James Symons compare personal meanings constructed by the I-positions connected to a new Australian identity and previous national identity. Using Self-Confrontation Method they prove that different I-positions in immigrants may evoke valuations having different affective meanings. Bartosz Szymczyk explores possible influence of positioning on assessment of personality, posing a question; to what extent activation of different I-positions influences the personality traits; and the results show such an influence. Implications of this study emphasize importance of positioning in social relationships and personality assessment. Bartosz Zalewski introduces empirical evidence that effectiveness of a popular technique of social influence, namely 'Foot-In-The-Door' is caused by positioning phenomena and a double activation of the same position results in a high efficiency of the technique. Lisa Whittaker describes identities of a group of young Scottish unemployed people in terms of internal dialogues as well as relationships with the others, what gives a clear example of DST application to the understanding of individual and social phenomena. Dmitry Leontiev and Anastasia Salikhova focus on self-reflection phenomenon, they propose two dimensional model composed from focus on oneself and focus on external situation. As they postulate and reveal on empirical data, true inner dialogue emerges when self-detachment is combined with self-involvement. In the last article Maickel Andrade Dos Santos, Gustavo Gauer, and William B. Gomes propose an innovative measure of the self dynamics – Dialogical Valence – containing relationships between I-positions and their number, and they intend to prove its usefulness in psychotherapy. Low level of dialogical dynamics predisposes the person to psychotherapy and is – as the authors argue - a regular state at the beginning of psychotherapeutic process.

The aforementioned articles reveal some areas of empirical investigations based on DST and suggest only a few from possible array of applications. However they prove that the theory meets some important criteria as for example heuristic value, empirical verification and applications.

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