

## **AS MANY SELVES AS INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS (OR MAYBE EVEN MORE)**

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**ABSTRACT.** The effects of an "internal audience" (Zajonc, 1960; Baldwin et al., 1990) and "shared reality" (Hardin and Higgins, 1996) seem to indicate a dialogical nature for cognition and modular structure of the mind, which can be fully described by discursive conceptions, including the theory of the Dialogical Self (Hermans, 1999). This article sets out to describe an empirical attempt to verify one of the basic theses of the theory of the Dialogical Self, according to which each I-position, creates its own Me, being the hero of a specific self-narrative. The experiment using a simplified version of the Baldwin and Holmes' (1987) procedure showed that life stories created by different I-positions do indeed differ in a range of content-related and formal characteristics, which is in agreement with the theory of the Dialogical Self. Given the results, one may also evaluate various methods of positioning as experimental procedures that differ in their effectiveness.

The other's presence in my mind: A private audience and a shared reality.

Contrary to what the above title may evoke, this article is not about persecution delusions but rather about the basic question of social psychology. According to the classic definition, social psychology focuses on the effect that real, imagined, or assumed presence of other people may have on the individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviour (Allport, 1968). We are particularly interested in an assumed or imagined presence, which contemporary theories often define as an "internal audience" (see Higgins, 2000). Let us remind ourselves briefly what social psychology has to say in this matter.

Taking other people or groups into account shapes the individual's beliefs and opinions, even if these people or groups are remaining silent or absent at the very moment (Zajonc 1960; Levine and Higgins, 2001). Social psychologists have recently been discussing the phenomenon of "shared reality" (Hardin and Higgins, 1996) in order to describe the social verification of an individual experience, which can be also called agreeing (see Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2004). The non-agreed experience is changeable and undefined. However, when other people hear about it, when it is defined by words and notions, coming from a common system of beliefs, values and meanings, it becomes socially confirmed and legitimised. It is no longer subjectively experienced

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verification as personal experience “only”, but rather as the truth about the world. Social verification turns subjective experience into phenomenological “objective reality” (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Although such a phenomenon has some negative aspects (e.g. social verification also reinforces stereotypes and prejudices), shared reality is beneficial for social interactions: it provides knowledge, values and a set of social identities and thus enables mutual understanding and co-operation (Higgins, 2000). It also plays an important part in the individual’s self-regulation.

Similar threads can be found in contemporary personality psychology. The socially defined Self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus & Nurius, 1986) is not based on the person’s total self-knowledge but rather on the information that is available at a certain moment (Markus & Wurf, 1987). It may be even constructed in a particular social context (McGuire & McGuire, 1988). Relations with significant others constitute a very important context for the Self: the influence of parents, friends and partners on what a person thinks about himself/herself and how he/she behaves seems essential.<sup>1</sup> The real or just imagined “presence” of the others becomes the background for many of the individual’s activities, even for those which have nothing in common with other people. In experiments on the private audience effect Baldwin and partners (Baldwin & Holmes, 1987; Baldwin, Carrell, & Lopez, 1990) show that such subjective relational context changes human behaviour. For example, those students that had previously imagined their friends’ faces liked a story with erotic descriptions more than those who had imagined their older relatives’ faces. Imagined people became some kind of “audience” and influenced any internal evaluation of the story. In the “presence” of the relatives the subjects found less pleasure in such stories than in the “company” of their friends (Baldwin & Holmes, 1987). Baldwin (1997) explains such effects by procedural relational schemas, which constitute the internal representations of the relationship. In this context the Self is made of “if-then” procedures (e.g. “If I get angry he will treat me respectfully”) which are based on internalised experience with the significant others and on different, sometimes even very small, premises included in the present situation (e.g. a familiar smell, a voice).

Studies (Baldwin & Main, 2001; Higgins, 2000) show that private audiences and shared reality have an influence on how the information about oneself and about any other subject is being processed. Is this regularity accidental? We believe that it is not, and that it is worth being studied because it may provide some information about the internal architecture of the mind. On a theoretical level it may be understood as different aspects of the same phenomenon: the modularity of the cognitive system depending on a changeable relational context. When sharing reality the person does not only learn about what the world is like but also about who exists in this world, how they

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<sup>1</sup> Particularly if one adopts the perspective of psychotherapists who have used the notion of “shared reality” for a long time (Winnicott, 1947).

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think, feel and act (Higgins, 2000). The above also applies to the Self – in any shared reality the individual always feels that he/she has a defined identity and perceives the world and others from this perspective. Activation of one element involves activation of other elements because they form a dynamic whole in the mind: knowledge about the world is linked to knowledge about who the individual's own Self is in this world.

William James' thesis (1980), which the title of the present article evokes, contends that a person has as many Selves as important social relations. This may now be modified to say that "a person lives in as many "worlds" as important relations, and in each of them takes a specific identity". However, the notions presented above could be insufficient to describe the Self, which lives in many "worlds". In order to give more details about such modular architecture of the cognitive system let us use theoretical instruments of the discursive and the dialogical approaches, which have gained growing interest among some researchers involved in studying private audiences and shared reality (Baldwin, 1997; Jost & Kruglanski, 2002).

### **Many Voices In One Self And Some Visible Effects**

The dialogical Self is a structure made of many subject positions, which can be compared to Bakhtin's voice, understood as a "speaking personality" (Bakhtin, 1970). Subject positions are considered to result from socialisation: each comes from a particular social context which encompasses interpersonal relations, a social group or an institution and their typical social practices (Wertsch, 1991). In every such kind of interaction the individual plunges into a particular shared reality: he/she perceives the world in a defined manner and takes a social identity, which is offered by the partners in this interaction. The voice, or the subject position, is understood as an active totality of experience that is shaped in a particular social context and represented in a separate representation module. There are many modules in the mind because in the course of socialisation the individual experiences many different social contexts (see Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2004).

Each of these latent representation modules may be activated. Then, the individual is said to be using a particular voice or taking a particular I-position (intentionally or unintentionally). Positions that are activated in a particular moment are similar to some of the protagonists in Dostoyevsky's novels (Hermans, 1999). Each of them tells his/her own story and presents himself/herself and the world from a particular perspective. Subject positions can also refer to each other and the exchange of information about the world and their typical experience leads to the emergence of a complex, dialogically structured Self (Hermans, Kempen, & van Loon, 1992).

As far as we know, basic assumptions about the dialogical Self have not been systematically tested yet. Although there are theoretical arguments and convincing reinterpretations of studies (Hermans, 1999; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; see Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2004) as well as some illustrative case studies (Hermans &

Hermans-Jansen, 2000) showing that adopted notions are useful in describing reality may seem too weak an argument in the case of a new theory. Some representatives of the discursive approach reject neo-positivist methodology. Nevertheless, there are moments in the development of a theory when such methodology seems irreplaceable, particularly when basic assumptions about a new approach are to be tested. Encouraging a dialogue between different theoretical approaches (see Jost & Kruglanski, 2002) becomes an additional reason to test basic assumptions about the dialogical Self experimentally. The present study is understood as a step in this direction.

When planning the experiment we followed Karl Popper's (2002) classic prescription on how to test a theory. Briefly, it consists of three steps:

- imagine that your favourite theory is true;
- describe in details what observable phenomena should occur;
- test it – maybe they will not occur, although they should according to the predictions.

If such an attempt to falsify the model is unsuccessful, Popper allows us to believe in the theory (until new data forces us to change our opinion).

How can this prescription be used for the theory of the dialogical Self? Should this theory be true, the Self may be understood as a multi-voiced structure, composed of many subject positions. Each of them has a specific vision of the Self. In other words, each "speaking personality" has its subject Self and creates a story about itself in which this subject Self is the protagonist. What is the difference between self-narratives made by different Bakhtin's "voices" within the same person? The I-positions are shaped in dialogues with the significant others and therefore each of them corresponds to an important social or interpersonal interaction (e.g. a relationship with the mother, the father, the partner or the friend, etc.). Thus we may expect visible, systematic differences in a person's self-narratives that are constructed in different relational contexts. This is our observable consequence of theoretical statements and its occurrence, or lack of, will provide arguments in favour or against the theory of the dialogical Self, just as Popper recommended.

One way of testing the above consists in inducing subjects to feel as if they were participating in a particular interaction, therefore to take a specific I-position, and then in asking them to create a self-narrative. How can this be done? There are a few possible types of experimental positioning. Firstly, a person can be directly asked to address the self-narrative to a significant other (explicit positioning). Secondly, one may use the private audience effect (Baldwin & Holmes, 1987), i.e. ask subjects to remember a significant other and then, as a separate task, to create a self-narrative. This is implicit positioning – we do not suggest that a person should create his/her self-

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narrative as a participant in a particular interaction. It gives us two other possibilities: the representation of the significant other may be imaginative as in Baldwin and Holmes' original procedure (imaginative positioning) but it may also be a verbal description of this person (verbal positioning). Three kinds of positioning are presented in Figure 1.

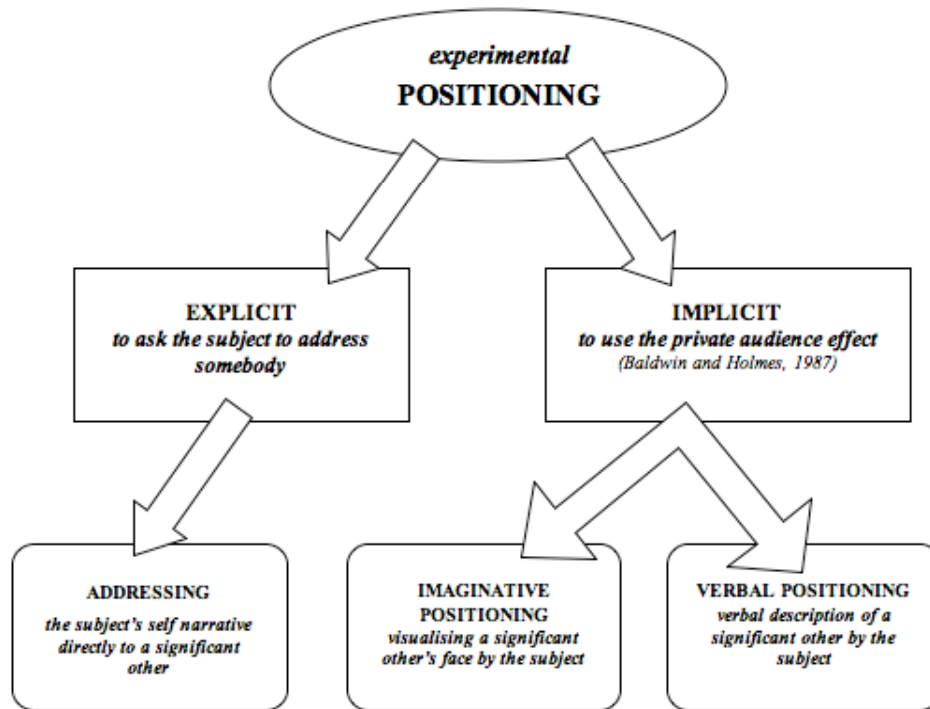


Figure 1. Possible types of experimental positioning

Are any of these possible types of positioning better than the others? We did not know, so we decided to use all of them in order to compare their effects. Thus the aim of the study was to answer two basic questions:

1. the theoretical question: Do self-narratives created by different I-positions differ in their content and form?
2. the methodological question: Do different types of experimental positioning equally lead to assumed results?

### Method

As we mentioned earlier, our study was preliminary and this fact bore consequences for the method and for the analysis of results. We did not know exactly what outcome to expect and therefore we did not form any specific hypothesis. Also, we used a large number of variables in statistical analysis because we did not know which

of them would be meaningful. The final analysis included variables with a rather low value of Cohen's *kappa* coefficient (0.20) and with the level of significance of at least 0.05 because we wanted to see if there would be any dependencies at all, not only the ones with strong methodological grounds. Results of the present study allow the next research to be more precise.

The fact that this study was preliminary brought with it one other consequence in that we obtained a large number of results. For better readability we are presenting only a part of them, however if the reader is interested all results are available on request.

Three hundred students at two Warsaw universities participated in the experiment. The experiment lasted about 20 minutes and was conducted in groups by two female experimenters. The subjects were informed that it was about how people described their lives and that participation was anonymous. After expressing their consent, the subjects received a sheet with the instructions and space for their self-narratives. The sheets with instructions for different experimental groups were mixed and given to the subjects in a random order; so one can say that the selection for the experimental groups was random. However, experimental groups did not have equal proportions of age and sex, so before further analyses a part of results had been randomly rejected. As a result, each group had a similar proportion of women and men (around 3:1) and a similar age mean (between 22 and 25 years). The results of those people who had handed in incomplete sheets were also rejected. The final analysis included self-narratives of 258 people (71 men, 187 women, aged 19-51, the age mean 24).

We used Baldwin and Holmes' (1987) simplified procedure for studying the private audience effect. Each subject had to write a short story which would briefly represent the history of his/her life. Experimental groups differed by the person mentioned in the instruction (mother, father, friend, partner, and teacher) and by what the subjects had to do: to address their story to this person, to imagine his/her face or to describe him/her.

The two-factor experimental design had the form of 3 x 5. Positioning was the first independent variable and it had one of three possible values: addressing, imaginative and verbal positioning. The second independent variable, the I-position, had five values: the Mother's Child, the Father's Child, the Partner, the Pupil and the Friend.

The instruction which was different in each of 15 groups (see Table 1) was used for experimental treatment. The number of subjects in the groups varied between 16 and 20.

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Table 1

*Experimental treatment and instructions used in particular groups.*

INSTRUCTION PART I treatment by the I-position		INSTRUCTION PART II treatment by the type of positioning	
Think about...	addressing	imaginative positioning	verbal positioning
your mother	Invent a short story which would briefly present your life. Write it as if you were addressing it to that person	Imagine his/her face as closely as possible as if this person was near next to you. Take your time to do it... Now invent a short story which would briefly present your life.	Describe him/her below: ..... Now invent a short story which would briefly present your life.
your father			
your partner			
Write his/her name.....			
your friends from your studies Choose one of them. Write the name of that person.....			
your teachers Choose one of them. Write the name of that person.....			

The characteristics of self-narratives referring to formal, content-related and structural aspects were the dependent variables.

The formal (quantitative) analysis defined the total number of words and occurrences of particular speech parts (e.g. nouns, verbs in different forms and tenses, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs), different linguistic structures (e.g. negations, generalisations, addressing the other person), as well as other characteristics specific for written texts (crossing, spelling mistakes). The numbers were referred to the total number of words so each category was presented as a percentage. In total the formal analysis concentrated on 45 working variables.

Two independent trained coders (who did not know the aim of the research or the procedure) conducted the qualitative analysis. Their task was to give a “yes/“no”

answer to such questions as: “does X occur in the story?”, where X meant a particular content-related or structural element. The coders checked whether self-narratives expressed emotions, which emotions in particular (e.g. joy, sadness) and whether these emotions referred to the protagonist of the story. They also defined whether the stories contained certain motives and needs (achievement, affiliation, intimacy, justice, health, etc.). Another group of variables referred to how the narrator had created the protagonist: whether the protagonist was placed among other people (friends, family, with the partner), how his/her activity, achievements and influence on the events were represented (e.g. how he/ she attributed his/her own successes or failures).

Analysis of the narrative structure took into account the order of events on a time axis, the readability of the protagonist’s intentions and the sharpness of narrative structuring. It also evaluated the formal correctness of the stories, whether they were colourful, contained metaphors and non-narrative description etc. The coders also decided whose point of view had been adopted in the story (the protagonist’s or the other people’s) and whether the self-narratives described a subjective or objective world. In total, the qualitative analysis focused on 70 working variables.

The coders’ consistency expressed by Cohen’s *kappa* coefficient varied between –0.05 and 0.81 for different scales. Scales with a lower value than 0.20 were excluded from further analysis. A few simple dichotomy-based scales with different meanings were summed up to give a few additional complex (quantitative) scales. For example the scale “sum of emotions” was created by adding the value of eight scales of eight types of emotions (e.g. joy, sadness, fear). The variance analysis (for the quantitative variables) and the non-parametrical tests (based on the ranks and the chi square statistics for the qualitative variables) were used for the statistical analysis of the results.

## Results<sup>2</sup>

*Answering the theoretical question: Each I-position creates a different story and tells it differently.*

The self-narratives of five I-positions – the Mother’s Child, the Father’s Child, the Partner, the Pupil and the Friend – differed between each other in some formal and content-related characteristics.

Formal differences concerned general verbal productivity ( $F = 4.251$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ): the Mother’s Child was the most “talkative” and differed from the Father’s Child and the Pupil ( $p < 0.01$  for both differences, Tukey’s post hoc tests). However the quiet Pupil did a lot of drawings on the margins of the sheets – just like during the lesson! ( $F = 2.810$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). No specific formal characteristics were observed for the other positions.

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<sup>2</sup> The full list of variables and relevant statistical result can be found in the appendices.



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As for the contents, the I-positions expressed emotions differently. Significant differences concerned some simple scales, such as intensity of expression ( $\chi^2 = 11.31$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ) and verbal definitions of emotions ( $\chi^2 = 11.07$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), as well as the complex index “power of emotional expression” which was based on those simple scales ( $F = 3.82$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). The same pattern of differences between the I-positions appeared for another complex index based on the sum of results of seven separate types of emotions (joy, sadness, anger, etc).

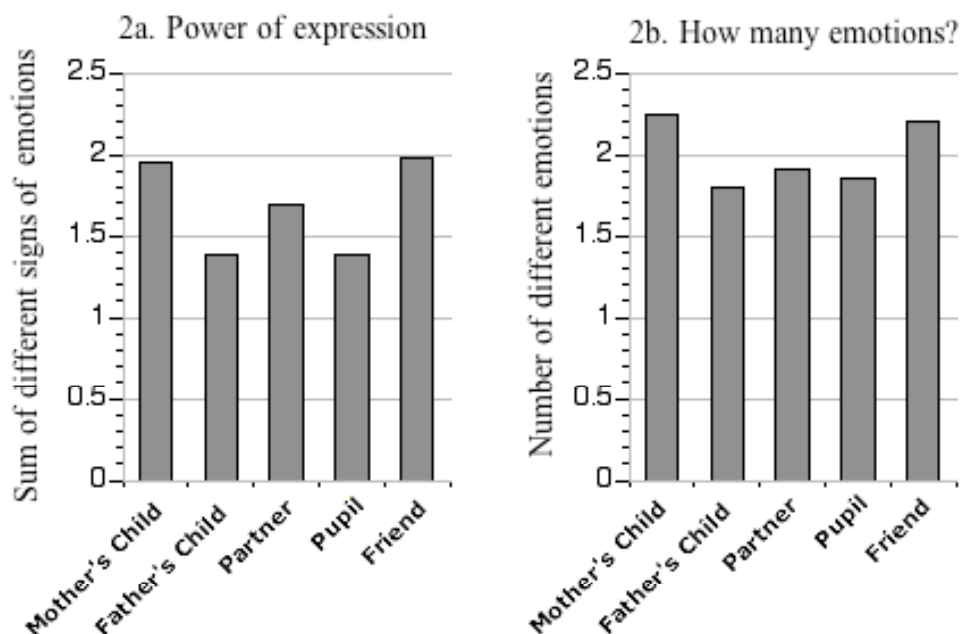


Figure 2. The pattern of differences between the I-positions for two independently constructed indices of emotional expression in the stories.

Figure 2 shows that the Mother's Child and the Friend express emotions the most and the most intensively. The Father's Child and the Pupil are the most emotionally reserved (only extreme differences between the positions are significant in the post hoc tests).

Each I-position also experiences different emotions. For example joy ( $\chi^2 = 17.82$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ) and love ( $\chi^2 = 12.59$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ) were mostly expressed by the Mother's Child and the Partner. Although positive emotions prevailed for all positions, these two expressed them the most intensively. The Father's Child also experienced a lot of negative emotions, particularly reluctance and sadness. He/she also created the most negative endings for he/she stories ( $\chi^2 = 12.78$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ), while the Mother's Child was the most optimistic. Similar tendencies appeared for the general mood of the stories and for the expression of positive evaluations.

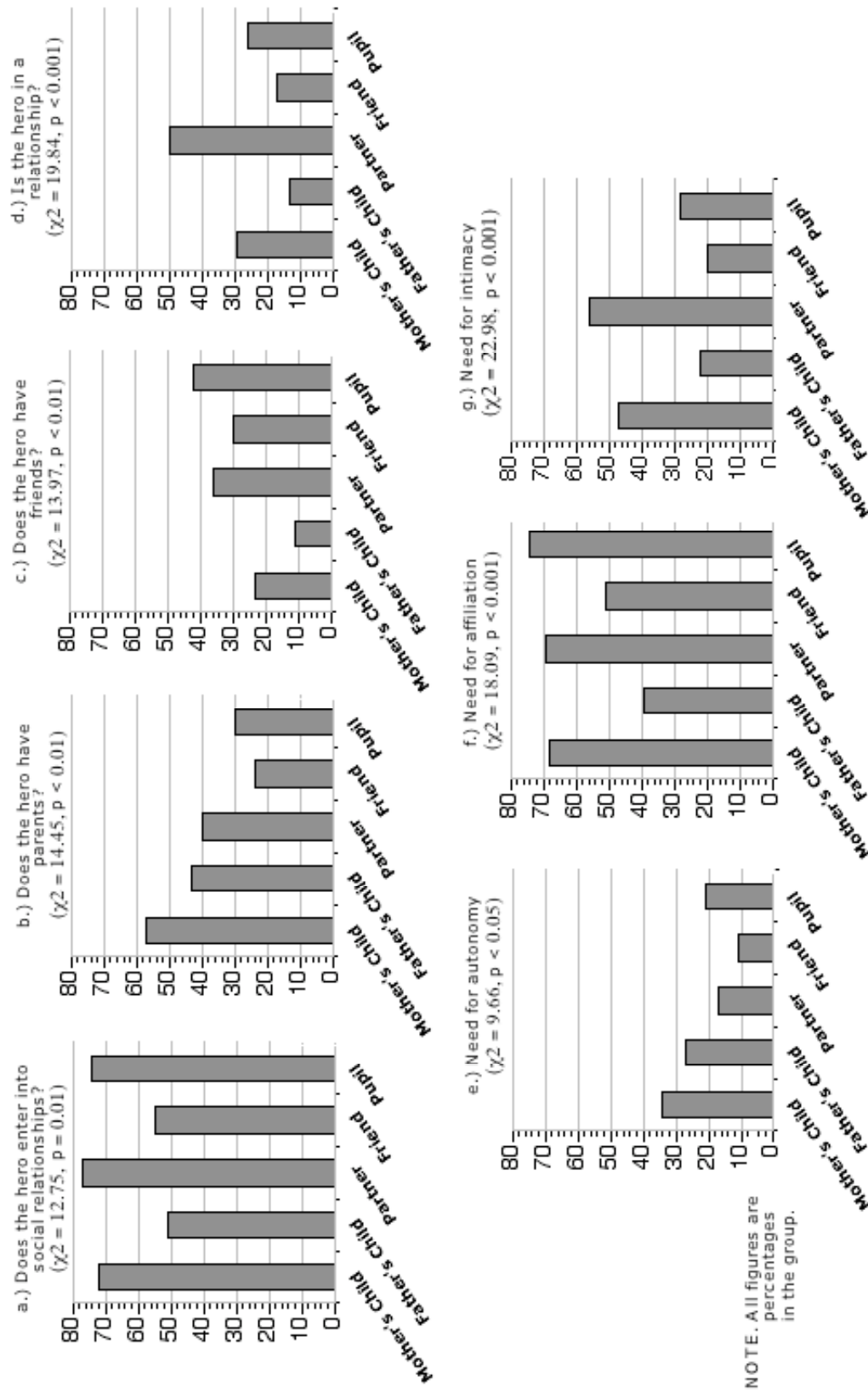


Figure 3. The occurrence of contents referring to social interactions and needs.

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There are also differences between the I-positions when it comes to social relations and needs (see figure.3). General scores for the protagonist having social relations (figure 3a) form the shape of the letter W, which also appeared in the figures presenting emotional expression (figure 2). The Mother's Child, the Partner and the Friend have higher scores than the Father's Child and the Pupil.

However, for each relationship studied separately, the scores form different patterns (figure 3b, c and d). Interestingly, each pattern seems specific for a given relationship and also concerns the type of motivation that can be associated with that relationship (figure. 3e, f and g). Since the indices of relations and needs were constructed independently, the repetition of similar patterns on the scales which are related theoretically proves that the method is reliable.

There was also a difference between the I-positions in whether the protagonist's point of view was taken into account in the stories ( $\chi^2 = 10.55$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Almost all I-positions presented the protagonist's perspective (90% stories or more) with the exception of the Father's Child, who did not take it into account in over one fourth of the stories. The last significant difference between the I-positions is that the Pupil's and the Father's Child's stories were less colourful than those of the three other positions ( $\chi^2 = 11.44$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The Father's Child scored the least again, while the Mother's Child had the highest result among all five I-positions. Also, for many other variables one Child was on one extreme while the other occupied the opposite one, and the other I-positions scored in-between. This pattern recurred in the majority of 115 (formal and content-related) scales. It seems to support the thesis that a person's relations are spread between the relationships with his/her mother and father and that the subjective worlds constructed with these two people become the opposite poles for all other relational realities.

*Answering the methodological question: The type of positioning does matter*

The subjects told the stories of their lives differently in three conditions of the relational context (addressing, imaginative and verbal positioning).

**Addressing** the story directly to a significant other activated an explicitly dialogical type of communication. The significant other was addressed directly the most often (e.g. "you know, mum";  $F = 19.25$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Also, in this group there was the highest score of verbs used in the first and the second person (respectively:  $F = 20.47$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$  and  $F = 6.281$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and of references to the Self (all speech parts in the first person,  $F = 11.82$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The stories also contained the highest number of modal verbs (such as "must", "should";  $F = 3.040$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and of negations ( $F = 3.86$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). However they had the smallest number of verbs in the third person ( $F = 6.281$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), adjectives ( $F = 8.77$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and nouns ( $F = 6.13$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

Therefore it seems that addressing provokes a direct subjective interaction with a significant other and shortens psychological distance. This idea is coherent with the results of qualitative analysis: in almost all stories addressed to a significant other the protagonist and the narrator are the same person ( $\chi^2=34.57$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), and the events are presented from his/her perspective ( $\chi^2=11.565$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). The influence of social conversational and self-presentation rules also emerged: these stories included the most of positive evaluations of the Self in particular ( $\chi^2=7.40$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The protagonist was also responsible for his/her own successes ( $\chi^2=8.42$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and did not depend much on other people ( $\chi^2= 4.07$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Such a socially accepted vision of one's own Self must have been accompanied by self-censorship, as one can judge from the minimal expression of the least socially desired emotions and needs: sadness ( $\chi^2=4.103$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), particularly sadness concerning one's own Self ( $\chi^2=5.13$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = 0,05$ ), reluctance ( $\chi^2=6.27$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ), fear ( $\chi^2=3.65$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ), need for fight ( $\chi^2=6.04$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), need for destruction ( $\chi^2=8.60$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ) and need for pleasure ( $\chi^2=6.94$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ). Addressed self-narratives contained the most guilt ( $\chi^2=4.03$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Perhaps this is the reason why the coders judged these stories as the least colourful ( $\chi^2= 8.40$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and objectively the simplest, which was shown by the variance analysis of complex variable "sum of motives";  $F = 4.291$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ . The narration was the least structured in this group ( $\chi^2=6.73$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), one third of stories even resembled a CV ( $\chi^2 =6.15$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), and the protagonist's intentions were not clear ( $\chi^2 =6.84$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ). Moreover they included the smallest number of metaphors ( $\chi^2 =7.93$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and fairy-tale and fantasy elements ( $\chi^2=20.48$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Imaginative positioning** caused the highest productivity of subjects, i.e. the highest number of words and sentences<sup>3</sup>, but the least of verbs in the first and the second person and the least of direct addressing expressions.

Content-related analysis suggests that imaginative positioning made the stories the most personal. Not only was general emotional expression the highest (the complex variable "sum of emotions") but also these stories contained the highest number of "difficult" emotions and needs, which cannot be expressed overtly if the individual wants to maintain an attractive image of himself/herself: sadness, anger, reluctance, anxiety, need for destruction and for pleasure. In these self-narratives the protagonists are often influenced by other people and owe their successes to external factors, which does not comply with the individualistic ideal of the Self in our cultural circle. Thus, such stories also contained increased need for social acceptance ( $\chi^2=7.61$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ) and for affiliation ( $\chi^2=11.565$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), and that the protagonist also had friends ( $\chi^2=18.39$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

In this group the stories of life most resembled a narrative: the protagonists had clear intentions; the structure of the narration was also clear; the stories rarely

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resembled a CV. These self-narratives were also the most colourful and their contents varied a lot, e.g. the number of different motives and emotions (the complex indices: sum of motives” and “sum of emotions”) was the highest.

In comparison with the previous cases **verbal positioning** made the subjects emotionally reserved. Not only did these narratives contain just small traces of anger, guilt and a need for destruction, but to a small extent the need for affiliation and for social acceptance also emerged. Somewhat strikingly, though these self-narratives are characterised by a generally strong emotional control they also express a need for fight and competition ( $\chi^2=6.04$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and the need for self-fulfilment ( $\chi^2=6.27$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), which was the most powerful. The protagonist has already achieved something ( $\chi^2=4.38$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Interestingly, at the same time he/she is lonely and does not have parents ( $\chi^2=4.32$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), or friends ( $\chi^2=18.39$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

In these self-narratives the narrator is the most reserved towards events. The protagonist’s point of view was rarely taken into account, the narrator also rarely overtly identified himself/herself with the protagonist. However the use of symbolic means compensated for such reserve. The stories contained the highest number of metaphors and fairy-tale and fantasy elements.

The differences between the I-positions were the most visible in the case of imaginative positioning (statistically significant effects appeared for 13 variables) and of addressing (effects appeared for 10 variables). However they were very rare for verbal positioning (significant effects appeared only for four variables). Verbal description of a significant other seems to be the least effective technique of positioning. Perhaps this task encourages the subject to be more reserved towards the described person and thus to go beyond shared relational reality. Thus the subject needs to take the position of the observer, which, of course, counteracts the activation of a given subject position in the dialogical Self.

The answer to the methodological question is the following: addressing and imaginative positioning are effective techniques of experimental activation of specific I-positions. However, generally, verbal positioning does not make the subject adopt a specific subject perspective.

### *Internal structure of “the speaking personality”: Speculating about additional results*

The study showed that the I-positions differed in their self-narratives and that the type of positioning mattered for the clarity of these differences. How can such result be explained? Our experiment does not provide grounds for a final judgement, nevertheless a detailed analysis brought some effects which seem inspiring. We would like to present them briefly.

We believe that three positioning conditions caused differences between the I-positions because the procedures worked as priming for different types of information processing and reached different cognitive resources. When comparing the effects of three types of positioning one cannot but think about psychodynamic theories. Addressing seems to activate the social layers of a personality influenced by the Superego or, in the language of the transactional analysis – it evokes the Parental ego and the Adjusted Child. Imaginative positioning reaches the Id or “wakes” up the Spontaneous Child. Finally, verbal positioning seems to be related to conscious control of the subject, therefore, following the above associations one should compare it to the activation of the Adult ego or the Ego as such. In the language of contemporary social-cognitive theories we might say that probably imaginative positioning on the one hand and verbal positioning and addressing on the other activate implicit and explicit contents respectively. However the contents of addressed stories are shared with a significant other, while verbal positioning makes the contents refer to this person from an independent perspective.

In order to see if this *ad hoc* explanation is worth being further explored we tried to compare it with detailed results of the experiment. If three techniques of positioning activate different types of knowledge – experiential or verbal, shared or non-shared – each of them should reveal a different “face” of the Mother’s Child, the Father’s Child and the other internal positions. The image should be different but specific for a given relationship. In other words, each I-position, which according to Bakhtin is a “speaking personality”, should – as any different personality – have an internal structure, in which a psychoanalyst can recognise the Id, the Ego and the Superego, a transactional analyst will see the state of the Child, the Adult and the Parent and a cognitive psychologist will see experiential and verbal contents, shared or non-shared, with a significant other. This assumption was compared with the data in a similar analysis conducted separately for each I-position. The results are presented in figure 4. It contains all effects which were significant in  $\chi^2$  test on the level  $p = 0.05$  and which were different for at least two groups.

Figure 4 shows that the comparisons seem encouraging. When presented this way, the differences between three “faces” of the I-positions resemble patterns, that are well known from life and psychological practice. These differences appear in the dimensions that often cause difficulties in real relations with significant others. For example, in a direct dialogue the Mother’s Child expresses intense emotions, including guilt and also talks about moral issues. One may assume that a lot of people know such an atmosphere of the “shared-with-the-mother world” (statistical comparisons showed only commonly occurring elements). Such contents as anger, the need for destruction and fight, do not belong to the reality shared with the mother, and the addressing Child holds them back. However they are freely expressed by the “imagining” Mother’s Child who does not feel any guilt (0% of stories in this group contained the expression of this

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	<b>MOTHER'S CHILD</b>	<b>FATHER'S CHILD</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>	<b>PUPIL</b>	<b>FRIEND</b>
<b>ADDRESSING</b>	<p>Strong emotional expression. Guilt concerning the Self. Moral issues</p>	<p>Anger The protagonist has influence on the events. The others do not have influence on the protagonist. Internal attribution of successes The protagonist is lonely. Health question</p>	<p>Positive evaluations concerning the Self. The life story reminds of a CV.</p>	<p>The protagonist does not have influence on the events. The protagonist is lonely (does not have parents, a partner or friends). Lack of narrative structuring. The protagonist's intentions are not clear. The narrative is formally incorrect and little colourful.</p>	<p>The protagonist has influence on the events. Internal attribution of successes. Criticism concerning the Self.</p>
<b>IMAGINATIVE</b>	<p>Strong emotional expression. Anger. Need for fight. Need for destruction. Need for affiliation.</p>	<p>Fear Fear concerning the Self. Guilt Need for fight. The protagonist does not have influence on the events. The others have influence on the protagonist. External attribution of successes. The protagonist has friends.</p>	<p>Strong emotional expression. Unnamed emotions. Positive evaluations Joy concerning the Self. Sadness. Sadness concerning the Self. Reluctance. Guilt and love. Need for intimacy.</p>	<p>The protagonist has influence on the events. The protagonist has parents and friends. The protagonist's intentions are clear. The story is formally correct, colourful and has a narrative structure.</p>	<p>Need for intimacy.</p>
<b>VERBAL</b>	<p>Need for self-fulfilment</p>	<p>The protagonist has influence on the events. The protagonist has achievements. The protagonist has a partner and children.</p>	<p>Need for power Need for fight Need for self-fulfilment Fairy-tale elements</p>	<p>Regret concerning the Self The protagonist does not have influence on the events. The protagonist has a partner. The protagonist's intentions are clear. The story is formally correct, colourful and has a narrative structure.</p>	<p>Sadness concerning the Self. Criticism concerning the Self. Need for affiliation. Need for self-fulfilment. External attribution of successes. The protagonist does not have influence on the events.</p>

Figure 4. The internal structure of the I-positions

emotion) and does not worry about moral issues. They may be so carefree because they simply express their (non-shared) experience and are not aware that the story has something in common with the mother. However the need for self-fulfilment remains outside the reality “shared-with-the-mother”, both the shared “world” and the experiential “underworld”. It is expressed by the “verbalising” Child who adopts an independent perspective and is free of all difficult emotions specific for two other Mothers’ Children.

There is no room to describe different “faces” of each I-position in detail, so we will only underline their most acute characteristics. The Father’s Child differed mostly in self-efficacy. Our results show that the “shared-with-the-father world” is one that is inhabited by independent, effective, a little angry and a little hypochondriacal optimists. The “underworld” contains fear, guilt and a lack of self-efficacy, which have probably been repressed due to a lack of father’s permission. Thus the Father’s Child has only indirect, imaginative access to these contents. It seems that Fathers probably do not notice that their Children have achievements and are growing given that the Father’s Child only talks about these issues from an independent perspective.

In a direct dialogue the Partner praises himself/herself and gives only dry information about his/her life. However, the “underworld” of this relationship is exceptionally vast. Imagining Him or Her causes a lot of powerful emotions, both positive and negative. Love and the need for intimacy give a specific atmosphere, although they cannot be fully expressed in words. On the other hand, the verbalising Partner knows the prose of life in relationship and when thinking about the loved one he/she feels mainly a need for power, fight and self-fulfilment and expresses romantic feelings symbolically with the use of fairy-tale elements in the story.

The Pupil who faces the teacher is above all lonely, helpless, and unable to express himself/herself verbally, but he/she fully compensates for this in his/her imagination. When looking at the situation from some distance the Pupil feels self-pity.

To others the Friend presents himself/herself as an effective optimist with a lot of self-criticism, and all the while hiding the need for intimacy. However from a distant perspective he/she is aware of various emotions and needs when it comes to relations with friends.

How can these results be understood? We believe that they show “internal conflicts” of each I-position. As their meaning is so close to life, it may be encouraging to consider the possible use of such positioning techniques in therapy and psychological diagnosis. However, in order to achieve such a goal the above speculations should be turned into a new hypothesis and should be studied further.



### Conclusions

We did not manage to falsify the theory of the dialogical Self. The experiment proved predictions based on theoretical assumptions: Self-narratives created in different relational contexts differed in a range of formal and content-related characteristics. This indeed should be the case, given the fact that there are many subject positions in one Self. We also answered the methodological question about equality of different techniques of experimental positioning. However, this answer presented a lot of other theoretical questions. Three methods of positioning might have worked as priming for different types of information processing and may have revealed different “levels” of I-positions. The results presented in the final section may be interpreted in accordance with the presumption that the I-position – i.e. Bakhtin’s “speaking personality” – is, like any other personality, a complex structure with its implicit and explicit, verbal and experiential components. This issue requires further study, and it will be a worthwhile enterprise as results concerning the I-positions and their internal differentiation may have an applied value.

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*Appendix A. Qualitative Variables in Final Analysis with I-positions*

Variables	Comparison of I-Positions <sup>a</sup>							
	Kappa	$\chi^2$	p	Percentage of positive answers <sup>b</sup>				
				MC	FC	Prt	Ppl	Frd
1. Do the stories include words and phrases describing emotions and feelings?	.52	11.071	.026*	68	43	48	53	68
2. Can emotions be sensed despite a lack of words or phrases describing emotions and feelings?	.43	8.443	.077	74	57	75	56	74
3. Is the general mood of the story positive?	.45	8.867	.065	51	39	67	44	53
4. Is the end of the story optimistic?	.40	12.778	.012*	72	43	46	66	59
5. Does the story include a great deal of or strong expressions of emotion?	.25	11.312	.023*	55	39	46	29	57
6. Is joy expressed?	.33	17.814	.001**	79	39	60	60	64
7. Does joy concern the protagonist (Self)?	.30	18.063	.001**	77	37	58	64	59
8. Is sadness expressed?	.38	2.523	.640	29	30	26	20	33
9. Does sadness concern the protagonist (Self)?	.37	2.475	.649	26	30	26	20	33
10. Is anger expressed?	.48	1.923	.750	11	17	10	15	9
11. Is disgust expressed?	.43	2.034	.729	19	29	21	27	26
12. Does the disgust concern the protagonist (Self)?	.21	.958	.916	17	25	21	22	23
13. Is fear and anxiety expressed?	.42	3.744	.442	8	14	6	16	11
14. Does the fear & anxiety concern the protagonist (Self)?	.44	3.412	.491	8	12	6	16	11
15. Is love and attachment expressed?	.46	12.585	.013*	43	23	46	20	34
16. Is guilt expressed?	.37	3.144	.534	11	8	4	4	8
17. Does the guilt concern the protagonist (Self)?	.43	5.410	.248	9	8	0	4	8
18. Are criticism and negative opinion expressed?	.51	4.578	.333	46	50	34	35	36
19. Do the criticism and negative opinion concern the protagonist (Self)?	.28	2.504	.644	33	38	23	31	30
20. Is praise and positive opinion expressed?	.48	8.265	.082	79	54	73	64	68
21. Does the praise concern the protagonist (Self)?	.37	3.994	.407	71	52	58	60	60
22. Need for achievement, perfection	.43	5.413	.247	45	42	35	56	51
23. Need for affiliation	.62	18.096	.001**	68	39	69	51	74
24. Need for power and influence on the others	.29	4.019	.403	19	20	11	13	9
25. Need for intimacy and being with the others	.26	22.982	.000**	47	22	56	20	28
26. Need for competition	.40	3.720	.445	13	14	17	9	6
27. Need for aggression and destruction	.48	5.361	.252	11	10	4	2	10
28. Need for entertainment and pleasure	.54	7.478	.113	28	10	28	22	31
29. Need for autonomy, freedom, independence	.43	9.661	.047*	34	27	17	11	21
30. Need for self-growth and self-development	.28	1.684	.794	32	31	38	33	26
31. Need to cope with difficulties	.39	2.296	.681	45	51	38	46	40
32. Need for acceptance and social approval	.25	4.023	.295	23	25	13	16	11

## AS MANY SELVES AS INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

*Appendix A (continued)*

Variables	Comparison of I-Positions <sup>a</sup>							
	Kappa	$\chi^2$	p	Percentage of positive answers <sup>b</sup>				
				MC	FC	Prt	Ppl	Frd
33. Themes of sickness and health	.32	3.347	.502	4	6	4	0	6
34. Themes of justice, guilt, and punishment	.24	0.973	.914	2	4	2	2	4
35. Reasons for the protagonist's successes	.63	0.228	.904					
		internal		44	43	46	44	48
		external		56	57	54	56	52
36. Reasons for the protagonist's failures	.52	1.892	.756					
		internal		47	51	37	51	45
		external		53	49	63	49	55
37. Does the protagonist have influence on events?	.45	4.452	.348	45	31	50	40	38
38. Does the protagonist passively submit to other people's actions?	.24	2.152	.708	38	39	38	33	49
39. Is the protagonist active?	.45	4.008	.287	64	49	56	51	66
40. Does the protagonist have relations with other people?	.71	12.752	.013*	72	51	77	55	74
41. Does the protagonist have a family (parents, a family of origin, etc.)?	.80	14.447	.006**	57	43	40	24	30
42. Is the protagonist in a relationship?	.81	10.827	.001**	29	13	50	17	26
43. Does the protagonist have children (own offspring)?	.59	3.717	.446	17	11	11	6	14
44. Does the protagonist have friends?	.64	13.965	.007**	23	11	36	30	42
45. Has the protagonist accumulated material or nonmaterial possessions?	.44	2.967	.563	32	32	34	45	40
46. Does the protagonist have plans, ambitions, goals?	.56	1.919	.751	47	48	50	44	38
47. Are the protagonist and the narrator identical (the same)?	.71	6.246	.080	85	67	79	69	70
48. Is the story retrospective or look back in time?	.57	1.899	.754	53	61	58	49	57
49. Is there a time axis in the story?	.45	1.765	.779	76	65	71	71	76
50. Is there a structure to the narrative?	.22	6.850	.144	68	55	69	49	66
51. Are the protagonist's intentions clear?	.24	3.000	.558	77	67	81	78	77
52. Does the story describe events from the protagonist's point of view?	.23	10.552	.032*	93	74	90	89	91
53. Is the story describing events from others' points of view?	.36	8.956	.062	15	27	30	12	13
54. Does the story resemble a biography or CV?	.25	2.489	.647	21	16	23	26	15
55. Does the story contain metaphors?	.43	3.566	.468	25	35	38	40	39
56. Does the story contain fairytale elements?	.62	3.541	.472	15	27	29	27	27

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Appendix A (continued)

Variables	Comparison of I-Positions <sup>a</sup>			Percentage of positive answers <sup>b</sup>				
	Kappa	$\chi^2$	p	MC	FC	Prt	Ppl	Frd
57. Is the story colorful, dynamic?	.41	11.442	.022*	66	41	58	44	64
58. Is the story formally and linguistically correct?	.22	6.780	.148	62	61	67	47	70
59. Does the story touch on moral issues, express values or moral judgments?	.39	6.525	.163	25	22	8	22	13
60. Does the story describe a subjective world (of experiences, feelings) or an objective one (of events)?	.31	3.004	.557					
subjective				51	47	42	54	40
objective				49	53	58	46	60

a. All comparisons were calculated with 4 *df*; \*  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

<sup>b</sup> Groupings: MC = Mother's Child; FC = Father's Child; Prt = Partner; Ppl = Pupil; Frd = Friend

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### *Appendix B. Qualitative Variables in Final Analysis with Types of Positioning*

Variables	Comparison of Types of Positioning <sup>a</sup>					
	<i>Kappa</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	Percentage of <sup>b</sup> positive answers		
				Addr.	Imagin.	Verbal
1. Do the stories include words or phrases describing emotions and feelings?	.52	2.736	.255	50	63	56
2. Can emotions be sensed despite a lack of words or phrases describing emotions and feelings?	.43	1.257	.533	64	72	65
3. Is the general mood of the story positive?	.45	1.520	.468	55	46	51
4. Is the end of the story optimistic?	.40	0.155	.925	58	56	58
5. Does the story include a great deal of or strong expression of emotion?	.25	4.736	.094	46	52	36
6. Is joy expressed?	.33	1.862	.394	61	66	56
7. Does the joy concern the protagonist (Self)?	.30	1.457	.483	60	64	55
8. Is sadness expressed?	.38	5.254	.072	20	33	29
9. Does the sadness concern the protagonist (Self)?	.37	5.254	.072	18	33	29
10. Is anger expressed?	.48	7.043	.030	16	17	5
11. Is disgust expressed?	.43	6.272	.043*	17	33	23
12. Does the disgust concern the protagonist (Self)?	.21	4.470	.107	16	29	20
13. Is fear and anxiety expressed?	.42	3.743	.154	6	15	13
14. Does the fear & anxiety concern the protagonist (Self)?	.44	3.185	.203	6	14	13
15. Is love and attachment expressed?	.46	0.438	.803	31	36	33
16. Is guilt expressed?	.37	2.638	.267	10	8	4
17. Does the guilt concern the protagonist (Self)?	.43	4.116	.128	10	6	2
18. Are criticism and negative opinion expressed?	.51	1.190	.551	38	45	37
19. Do the criticism and negative opinion concern the protagonist (Self)?	.28	0.059	.971	31	30	31
20. Is praise and positive opinion expressed?	.48	4.409	.110	76	66	62
21. Does the praise concern the protagonist (Self)?	.37	7.394	.025*	72	53	57
22. Need for achievement, perfection	.43	0.534	.766	44	45	49
23. Need for affiliation	.62	7.614	.022*	56	72	52
24. Need for power and influence on others	.29	0.730	.694	20	15	17
25. Need for intimacy and being with others	.26	3.058	.217	27	40	36
26. Need for competition	.40	6.040	.049	5	14	16
27. Need for aggression and destruction	.48	8.600	.014*	2	14	6
28. Need for entertainment and pleasure	.54	6.944	.031*	17	33	21
29. Need for autonomy, freedom, independency	.43	0.156	.925	21	22	23
30. Need for self-growth and self-development	.28	6.265	.044*	24	30	42
31. Need to cope with difficulties	.39	0.258	.879	42	46	44
32. Need for acceptance and social approval	.25	4.574	.102	17	24	17
33. Themes of health and sickness	.32	0.263	.877	5	3	4
34. Themes of justice, guilt and punishment	.24	1.191	.551	4	3	1
35. Reasons for the protagonist's successes	.63	8.418	.015*			
			Internal	60	42	35
			External	40	58	65
36. Reasons for the protagonist's failures	.52	1.887	.389			
			Internal	54	41	46
			External	46	59	54

## Appendix B (continued)

Variables	Comparison of Types of Positioning <sup>a</sup>					
	Kappa	$\chi^2$	p	Percentage of positive answers <sup>b</sup>		
				Addr.	Imagin.	Verbal
37. Does the protagonist have influence on events?	.45	0.662	.718	43	42	37
38. Does the protagonist passively submit to other people's actions?	.24	3.696	.158	30	47	40
39. Is the protagonist active?	.45	0.448	.779	56	60	56
40. Does the protagonist have relations with other people?	.71	1.921	.383	66	71	61
41. Does the protagonist have a family (parents, a family of origin, etc.)?	.80	4.848	.089	42	44	29
42. Is the protagonist in a relationship?	.81	1.438	.487	22	29	30
43. Does the protagonist have children (own family)?	.59	0.624	.732	11	10	14
44. Does the protagonist have friends?	.64	18.388	.000**	19	46	20
45. Has the protagonist accumulated material or nonmaterial possessions?	.44	4.964	.084	34	31	46
46. Does the protagonist have plans, ambitions, goals?	.56	0.908	.635	42	49	45
47. Are the protagonist and the narrator identical (the same)?	.71	34.566	.000**	93	76	54
48. Is the story retrospective or looking back in time?	.57	5.118	.077	48	51	35
49. Is there a time axis in the story?	.45	2.421	.298	67	77	71
50. Is there a structure to the narrative?	.22	6.727	.035*	51	71	62
51. Are the protagonist's intentions clear?	.24	6.841	.033*	67	83	79
52. Does the story describe events from the protagonist's point of view?	.23	11.565	.003**	96	86	79
53. Does the story describe events from others' points of view?	.36	0.568	.753	21	17	18
54. Does the story resemble a biography or CV?	.25	6.150	.046*	29	14	19
55. Does the story contain metaphors?	.43	7.933	.019*	24	37	44
56. Does the story contain fairytale elements?	.62	20.476	.000**	10	25	40
57. Is the story colorful, dynamic?	.41	8.399	.015*	43	65	56
58. Is the story formally and linguistically correct?	.22	3.418	.181	54	67	63
59. Does the story touch on moral issues, expresses values or moral judgments?	.39	5.275	.260	0	0	1
60. Does the story describe a subjective world (of experiences, feelings) or an objective one (of events)?	.31	1.996	.369			
			Subjective	47	56	57
			Objective	53	44	43

a. All comparisons were calculated with 4 *df*; \*  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

<sup>b</sup> Positionings: Addr. = Addressing; Imagin. = Imaginative; Verbal