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THE "CONVERSATION PARTNER" PHENOMENON IN THE DIALOGICAL I-OTHER RELATIONSHIP

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This paper develops a new approach to study one's relationships with others, focusing on the conditions and the effects of the dialogical nature of a person. Theoretical modelling, hermeneutics, qualitative and quantitative methods are applied. A solution for detecting the conditions of self-development and social positioning of a person, which are rooted in dialogical I-Other relationships, is suggested. The originality of the paper is found in describing the relation to the other as the I-Other relationship; in the elaborated model that highlights how different dimensions of I-Other relationships (between I and Other, I-in-Other, Other-in-I, I-in-Myself) leads to truly a dialogical mode of being; in revealing the potentials of the Conversation Partner in dialogical I-Other relationships (subjective interrelations and the significance of Conversation Partners, their activity, the fullness of the reflection of significant Conversation Partners); in the description of different "hypostases" of Conversation Partners (real, ideal, imagined, secret, I as Myself) by means of hermeneutics; in the "My Conversation Partner" method; and in the empirical study of existential and social resources of Conversation Partners. The theoretical background of the study is formed by the works of M. Bakhtin, M. Buber, M. Heidegger, J.-P. Sartre, E. Levinas, and by the works of modern psychologists such as G. M. Kuchinsky, A. V. Rossohin, E. B. Starovoytenko, C. T. Brown, P.W.Keller, H. Hermans, F. Rivetti Barbo. The results show the potentials of social adaptivity, affiliation, dominating, positive solitude, joy of solitude, freedom, self-transcendence, existential fulfilment are associated with the richness of one's Conversation Partners. A real Conversation Partner is associated with a greater affiliation resource, a secret one with a greater solitude resource, an ideal one with a higher potential to constructively dominate the interaction.

Keywords: personality, I-Other relationship, Conversation Partner, dialogue, reflection, dimensions, social resources, existential resources, hermeneutics, model.

JEL Classification: Z.

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Introduction

This article presents a theoretical and empirical study of personality, which follows the 'life relationships' paradigm and emphasizes one's relationship to the Other. The potential of the dialogical forms of this relationship is validated, in particular, its effects on one's social positioning, self-knowledge, and self-development. The study focuses on the following preconditions of dialogical relationship to the Other: the mutual activity of a person and the Other; the representation of this activity in speech; obtaining the quality of significant "Conversation Partners" by the Other; the completeness of the external and internal realization of the relationship; the value orientation of the relationship; the reflexive personal position which shapes this relationship as an "I-Other" relationship. The aim of the study is to examine the "Conversation Partner" in the context of the dialogical I-Other relationship and to disclose how it facilitates one's social effectiveness and existential fulfilment. The theoretical background includes philosophical conceptions of the dialogical relationship [Bakhtin, 1984], [Buber, 2010], [Sartre, 1976], [Lévinas, 2006], and a number of modern psychological approaches [Bratchenko and Leontyev, 2007], [Kopiev, 1999], [Kuchinsky, 1988], [Rossohin, 2010], [Starovoytenko, 2015], [Argyle, 1985], [Brown and Keller, 1972], [Hermans, 2001], [Rivetti Bardo, 1983]. As a result, a new theoretical model of the dialogical "I-Other" relationship was developed. This model emphasizes the capacities of the Other as a Conversation Partner and states that the completeness of the "I-Other" relationship is constituted by the four dimensions: 'between I and Other', 'I-in-Other', 'Other-in-I', and 'I-in-Myself'. The five 'hypostases' of the Conversation Partner were revealed using hermeneutics. Based on this and the theoretical model, a qualitative method "My Conversation Partners" was designed and tested. Empirical data regarding the resources of the Conversation Partner which condition effective social positioning and existential fulfilment were obtained.

A model of the I-Other relationship in the perspective of the acquisition of "Conversation Partners"

The main sources for creating this model were the ideas of dialogical relationships of Bakhtin [1986], Sartre [1976], Lévinas [2006], the conceptions of a personality's vital relationships and the potential of the I in relation to the Other, developed by Starovoytenko [2013b], [2013c], [2015a]. The model represents the structuring of existing and new ideas which reveal the phenomenon of the "Conversation Partner" in one's life. **"Personality"** in the context of the current

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research attributes mainly to the **"I"** who, according to the 'life relationship' paradigm, is actively related to the world, to Others, and to him/herself.

The development of a personality's ability to **enter into a relationship**, **to be in a relationship**, and **to relate** implies its exploratory actions in the world, the activity of its consciousness, the unity and complexity of its **"reflective I"** as the subject of a relationship, the coordination of its psychical and corporeal dimensions, the unity of its psychic and practical functions and their direction towards a significant object. Moreover, it is a personality's avoidance of being consumed by the object or of having power over it, acceptance of the self-sufficiency of the object, responsibility for the state of the object, equilibration of the intentions directed towards the object and oneself, transformation of the object in the dimension of values, putting the object in the subject position, which creates the possibilities for it to influence the external and internal life of the personality.

The subtle psychological architectonics of a relationship are comprised of processes and effects, of motives, feelings, sensations, perceptions, notions, memories, thought, speech, intuition and reflection. These multifunctional constituents, included in practical actions, allow a personality to open both the engaging objectness and the touching subjectness of the one, towards whom the relationship is directed.

The most important object of a relationship is the **Other** as a specific, significant person that holds subjective value for a personality on the scale of its vital presence, the acceptance of its activity, representation within its I, and the reciprocal activity in its life. The Other with his or her body, look, speech, action, and understanding is necessary for the I in terms of experience and awareness of its facticity, dependence and freedom in the context of coexistence. A personality's I is involved in the life of the Other, involves the Other into its own life, appears "in the Other", becomes a part of the "I" of the Other, experiences its activity in itself, "transforms" him or her into oneself, again and again meets the Other as an influencing and assisting reality, reflects, experiences and enhances his or her subjectness at different levels of consciousness and in doing so multiplies its own potential. (Let us not forget that in this game of "mirrors", of mutual reflections, the reflected, according to popular literary plots, may disappear within what is to be reflected or become reflected as an unknown image, or become an unknown reflection of itself.)

The Other gains various forms in the vital connections with the personality and its reflection [Starovoytenko, 2015a]. He or she is a time-space "**object**" for a

personality, a specific fact and situation in the world, a substantial challenge, to which one has to respond, a reality without which they feel a lack of existence.

The Other is not reduced to the role of an object, but represents a "**personal presence**" that awakens in a personality an experience of their own reality, satisfied by the Other addressing it. "The Other is given to me as a concrete evident presence which I can in no way derive from myself" [Sartre, 1976, p.271].

The Other's presence, transmitted to a personality in his or her look, statements, judgement and messages about the personality's internal image in the Other shows the personalities life "beyond" the I-existence. "By the Other's look I effect a concrete proof that there is a **"beyond the world"** [Sartre, 1976, p.270].

The present Other is for a personality a known and at the same time largely unknown "**subject**", which can be the activator, initiator, model, judge and successor of their activity. The Other becomes the co-author of a personality's reflection or life story, and acts also as an active part of one's inner and outer world, where the personality finds him- or herself alive and significant for other people's existence. The Other allows a personality to "be", feel, see, imagine, understand, act, create, to fully open and actualize oneself-in-life, that is, to "fulfil oneself existentially".

Taking a direct part in the cognition, reflection and practice of a personality, the Other demonstrates his or her "**instrumentality**". In other words, the Other shows his or her belonging to the universe of instruments, amplifiers of possibilities, which a personality can master and use in its vital activity, increasing its freedom among many others.

For a personality the Other acts as an addressee and a place for the incarnation of the specific life perspectives of the I. This "global possibility" of the I, connected not only with the presence, but also with the absence of the Other as a possible future. The Other is a "**project**", sketch, a meaning of a personality's I-existence in the coming life.

The Other is the "**creation**" of a personality which embodies the creative potential of its ability to perceive and imagine, cognize and search for meaning, feel and desire, speak and generate text, carry out a multitude of activities. "The Other" can be created by a personality through real transformations of the Other's body and bodily activity, through the experience of internal creation of an "imaginary other", through a mental and image creation of an "ideal other" and through an intuitive and sensory revelation of a "secret other".

The Other is also "**I myself**" which through acts of creation and recreation brings together the "I", given in the Other, the "I", containing in itself a representation of the Other, the "I" that reflects the I-Other connection.

"The Other" for "the I" can be: a specific person (such as a family member, loved one, friend, teacher, authority figure, idol, character from a text, a stranger that affected him or her); a generic image/idea of a significant category of people; a significant community or group of people; a type of a culture that includes important values for this personality; an intuitive idea of a "not I"-in-I, rooted in the unconscious; an extraordinary personality, leading beyond the limits of a usual identity.

The best prospect for the development of the I-Other relationship is a **dialogue** (Bakhtin, Buber, Lévinas*)*, constituted, first, by the active interaction of the I and the Other which shapes the space and time of being "between" them; second, by the mutual representation of the I and the Other in their inner worlds; third, by the reflective giving of each to the other; fourth, by the self-positioning of both participants of the interaction as autonomous and free I-subjects; fifth, by including the I and the Other in a new cycle of interaction based on the knowledge, acceptance, recognition, continuation and complementation of each other. A dialogue has different psychological dimensions, consisting of externally active, emotional, motivational, cognitive and speech co-existence, exchange and the mutual influence of the I and the Other. Each subject of a dialogue gains resources for achieving unity with the Other, for recognising contradictions in the interaction and their constructive resolution. The I in relation to the Other masters dialogical positions, which call on the Other for co-presence, co-knowledge, co-understanding, co-action, conversation and agreement. These "I" positions which determine the subjectivity of the Other have a tendency to spread into the wider world of a personality's connections with other people.

The relationship of the I to the Other that strives for dialogue passes in its formation through 16 logical **stages [**Starovoytenko*,* 2013a]:

1. an impression of a new reality in the I from meeting the Other;
2. the creation of a distance between the I and the Other as "different from me";
3. putting the Other in a position of an "object" for myself and real interaction between the I and the Other;
4. moving the Other to the subjective plane, a transformation of the Other into an internal significance, which is active towards the I;

5. the creation of a complex psychic synthesis, related to the formation of an "internal equivalent" of the Other as a subject;
6. taking real actions towards the Other, which stimulate the "internalization" and the activity of the Other in the I;
7. establishing an internal relationship "I is my significant Other";
8. the correlation of my "internal significance" to the real Other;
9. a search for my active presence in the Other;
10. a mental positioning of the Other in relationship to the I, represented in the Other;
11. an inner acceptance of the Other with my inputs in him or her;
12. care of the I for the development of I, I-in-Other and, Other-in-I;
13. recognizing and attending to the contradictions in the relationship to the Other;
14. a realization of the relationship of the I, which recreated the Other in him- or herself, to the I, reflected and recreated in the Other;
15. the movement of the I beyond the established connection with the Other into the world of the Third (one person or many people), where the Other's existence is unknown to him or her;
16. creating a distance from the Other, expecting a mutual entrance into the next cycle of relationships in a new realm, new situations, with new possibilities.

Once a person completes these stages, the I-Other relationship obtains a **dynamic structure** that includes the elements "between", "I-in-Other", "Other-in-I", "I-in-Myself". All those elements are both relatively interrelated and independent from each other.

These stages of the establishment of a relationship in its realization-non-realization, succession-interruption, harmonious connection-conflicts, resolution of conflicts-failure to resolve conflicts, can characterize a progressive or destructive genesis of the relationship of the I to the Other, its complete or partial development. The I as the subject of the relationship, using the opportunities of all its stages, moves towards its personal **fulfilment** in connection to the Other as a significant part of its vital world.

The dynamics of the relationship with the Other with its specific stages, contradictions and preferred methods of resolution, can become the object of **reflection** that essentially determines the changes of the I within this relationship. The **contradictions** of the relationship accessible for reflection can be "deduced" by a general formula: **"I (Other) ⟷ Other (I)"** [Starovoytenko, 2015a]. For

example, the real I and the Other in the connection "beween" are primordially autonomous and free, which is a basis for the discrepancy between them. / The real I can never fully coincide with the I-in-the Other. / The Other-in-I will never be identical to the real Other. / The Other that reflects the I does not coincide for the I with the real Other. / The Other as real, reflected and reflecting can affect the I by its differences. / The mutually internalized I and the Other could be unrecognized and not accepted by the real I and the Other, involved in a relationship "between". / The I could be dissatisfied by the way the Other is represented in it. / I-in-the Other can become more significant for the I than I-in-itself. / I risks self-identification with the Other-in-I. / The Other can affect the I, trying to change him- or herself as the Other-in-I. / The I and I-in-itself strive to possess the real and reflected Other. / The I tries to enter the escaping existence of the Other beyond the limits of their relationship.

The various ways to **resolve** oppositional moments of the I-Other relationship come to being through experiencing and reflection. These include: establishing the parity of oppositions; finding a new measure of correspondence between the oppositions; finding their mutual complimentation; including the oppositions in a new system of interactions; the denial of one of the oppositions; "holding" the oppositions as equally valuable and unavoidable; and the synthesis of the oppositions in a qualitatively new I-Other relationship. These ways resolve the I contradictions are a sign of its free self-expression towards the Other. It can be spread to other vital relationships of a personality, multiplying their potential for development.

We can distinguish separate "modi" within the reflected I-Other relationship-dialogue [Kuchinsky, 1988], [Rossohin, 2010]. In particular, it is the relationships of I to I-in-Other, I to Other-in-I, I to I (I-in-Other), I to I (Other-in-I), I to I (I-in-Other-in-I). A specific modus can become the target of reflection, for example, **the relationship I to Other-in-I**, and one of the dimensions of its architecture can come to the foreground within this relationship – speech. The Other in a verbal relationship-dialogue acts as a **Conversation partner** of a personality.

The **speech** messages and replies in the dialogue of the I with the Other-Conversation Partner are structured by the "statements" of their authors. Personal authorship of statements acquires a creative nature if the following conditions are fulfilled: the statements take root in the living consciousness of many people; they are addressed to significant others; the author perceives the interaction with the addressee as an "encounter" with a close Other; the author progresses in the

reflection of statements due to the replies of the addressee; the problematization of the addressee by the author's open or hidden questioning. All of this, according to Bakhtin, determines the "dialogical nature of the author's statements" [Bakhtin, 1986] and [Bakhtin, 2000]. A statement is not an individual event; rather it appears in the world of personalities, who speak to each other, in the multi-speech world, in an incessant flow of speech that engulfs an infinite multitude of authors and addressees. A specific I-Other dialogue affirms the mutual identity of partners, their similarity to many other speakers, and also deepens the self-identity of the authors. An author's statement in a dialogue is inseparable from statements of others in its shape and content. It corresponds to the previously said and heard, and orients itself towards what will be said and heard. A statement exists as a complete and whole speech event, because the addressee asks and is him- or herself a question for the author, who gives an answer to the inquiry that arrived. Attractive and inspiring meanings and ways of valuable vital I-relationships, directed towards the Other are realized in a mature statement as a moment of dialogue. "Any statement claims fairness, truth, beauty and veracity […]. And these values of a statement are determined by different forms of relating to the reality, to the other speaking subject" [Bakhtin, 1986, p. 319]. By involving the Other-Conversation Partner in a verbal dialogue based on values, the I awakens and reveals the **subjectivity** of the Other, which could be realized not only in a specific relationship of the I to the Other, but also in a wider social self-determination of the I and his or her social actions, carried out because of the experience of negotiations, discussions, talks, frank conversations, and agreements of the I with the Conversation Partner.

The subjectivity of the Conversation Partner can be revealed in a dialogue if the following **dialogical positions** [Starovoytenko, 2013b] are assumed and reflected by the I:

1. the I addresses the Conversation Partner, participating in an interpersonal interaction;
2. the I speaks of the Conversation Partner as a character of his or her speech;
3. the I speaks in answer to the intellectual, emotional and spiritual strength of the Conversation Partner;
4. the I speaks in the name of the Conversation Partner, identifying with him or her;
5. the I speaks, calling on the Conversation Partner to speak;
6. the I speaks awaiting a specific reaction from the Conversation Partner;

7. the I speaks of him- or herself, addressing the real or "internal" Conversation Partner;
8. the I speaks of him- or herself as "reflected" in the Conversation Partner;
9. the I speaks of the Conversation Partner in the name of the Third (collective I or other Conversation Partners, or oneself as an unconscious "Other");
10. the I speaks addressing the context of the verbal life of the Conversation Partner, and inviting him or her into their verbal life;
11. the I speaks of him- or herself, related to the Conversation Partner or speaking of him or her;
12. the I acts through words to challenge the Conversation Partner to action or deed;
13. the I speaks of his or her changes which resulted from the statements and answers of the Conversation Partner. Thus, I becomes "dialogical Self" [Hermans, 2001].

The **Conversation Partner-Subject** also assumes a dialogical position. He or she motivates the I to the next statement; influences its intention, goal and content; sets the emphases of meaning; provokes the emotional and verbal expression of the I; expects clarity and transparency of the statement from the I; expects mental novelty, expressed by the I; motivates the I to speak about an intention to act; understands, interprets, construes, amplifies the I's statement; values or devalues, accepts or denies, opposes or supports, resists or shares the statement, criticizes or agrees with it; masters the I's statement as a model of future action; answers, inviting the I to joint action; reflects on the effects of mutual statements in their influence on each other. On the intersection of multidimensional dialogical intentions of the I and the Conversation Partner, each achieves an experience of the fullness of their co-existence.

The I-Other relationship in the shape of a verbal dialogue I-Conversation Partner comprises a "unit" of intersubjective interaction, which can lead to the existence and spreading of new ideas, images, activities, ways of communication, and methods of self-knowledge. In other words, this "unit" is responsible for the effective **social positioning** of a person.

The developing life of a personality is constituted by a multitude of relationships with specific significant others, who possess a lot of potential as Conversation Partners with their inherent power of subjectivity. **The Multiplicity of Conversation Partners** is a reality of individual existence that strives to be fulfilled in the connections of a personality with other people, it is the world of his

or her reflection and the realization of the maximum of existential opportunities. The world of a personality's Conversation Partners is "inhabited" by externally perceived people, as well as imagined, thought, desired, created, reflectively constructed, intuitively understood others. We can attribute to the "internal" conversation partners not only the other-than-me, but also I-as-others, for example, I as a Child, I as a Parent, and I as an Adult, as presented by transactional analysis.

In our exploration of the verbal I-Other relationship we concentrated on the distinction and synthesis of the hypostases of Conversation Partners, based on the ideas of Bakhtin, M. Heidegger, Sartre, Buber, O. Mandelstam, and among contemporary writers, V.A. Petrovsky. These hypostases should, in our opinion, indicate a possible completeness of the fulfilment of the relationship of the I to the Other in its external practical, imaginary, ideal, reflective and intimately deep aspects.

Hermeneutics of ¨the Conversation Partners of the I in dialogue¨

Bakhtin: a dialogue is a primary, truly human quality, the essence of an individual's consciousness. To have a dialogue, internal or external, one requires meaningful content, because they are the axis or core of a dialogue. A personality's need to relate, and its striving to acquire a conversation partner are realized in a dialogue rich in content. During communication with a conversation partner, a person is ready for active attention from him or her, for receiving a response, he or she is always expecting something for him- or herself: it could be positive or negative verbal evaluation, agreement or denial, execution or rebellion [Bakhtin, 1986]. A dialogue is necessarily merged with a monologue, which puts into practice one's relationship to oneself, where the speaker is "one's own conversation partner". A monologue and dialogue are united by the relatedness of a personality to the Other. Notably, the I does not address the Other because of the Other's ability to address the I, but the I addresses itself due to the I's skill of addressing the Other, meaning that there is a transition from dialogue to monologue. Monologue is a subtype of dialogue. A dialogue with the Other and with oneself has differences and equivalence, defining the singular features of the Other and the I as the significant conversation partners of a personality.

The essence of dialogues and dialogical consciousness is revealed in its depth in the novels of F. M. Dostoevsky [Bakhtin, 1984]. The consciousness of his

characters is usually divided in two, and represents not one, but two minds, that is to say, it includes the Other in all their separateness and uniqueness. The protagonist of "Notes from the Underground" experiences a conflict between the desire for solitude and for inclusion in society. Entering a circle of other people he becomes directly "infected" by their thoughts about him. Now his consciousness no longer exists on its own, but rushes into a dialogue between the I and himself represented in the Other. The protagonist tries to anticipate what is thought of him, based seemingly on "their" opinions, addressing the Other-in-him. The voices that he hears inside are not passive subjective images of the Other in the personality's consciousness, but representations of real people that are separate, tangible, and possess the ability to be "internal conversation partners". The dialogue is held in the inner world of the personality with a person who is actually absent or imaginary, usually with the voice of this person, who even in this situation is independent from the personality. The dialogue with an imaginary conversation partner and the dialogue with a real one are hard to distinguish, and Dostoevsky is trying to show the contradictions in a particular personality, which unfold in the images of two different people who are in involved in open and hidden conversation and interaction. There are inner and outer dialogues of Raskolnikov with Svidrigailov, and of Ivan Karamazov with the devil and with Smerdyakov. Dostoevsky's characters constantly hold dialogues within themselves with real people, imagining them as if they were standing in front of them. The characters and their conversation partners are connected by a relationship of intersubjectivity at the intersection, in unity and in the contradictions of their minds.

The thoughts of Bakhtin concentrate on **real** and **imaginary** conversation partners, as well as on **the I as one's own** conversation partner.

Heidegger: a person has an existential relationship with the world, which he or she founds for him- or herself. An individual is present in the world not separately from being-in-the-world, as though having "desired" at some point of time to come into relationship with the world, but "coming into a relationship" is possible because his presence already is "being-in-the-world". Due to this quality of already-being-present in the world an individual can meet the Other, being-in-their-world [Heidegger, 1993] and [Heidegger, 2008]. The Other's presence is co-being as a joint existence, and it is essentially necessary for the individual. It can be experienced, when the Other is physically absent or not perceived. Co-being of the individual and the Other is mutual caring, which leads to contact, communication, and dialogue, as opposed to indifference and loneliness as a faulty being among others.

In this co-being an individual can live a genuine or non-genuine existence. To possess genuine existence means to be oneself, to correspond to oneself, "as I am", to connect with oneself, not alienating into the Other. In a non-genuine existence the I exists in an interaction as the Other, "loses its own face" in favour of the Other, becomes impersonal, and entrusts the Other with its being. At the same time, genuineness and non-genuineness are inseparable modi of *Dasein*; overcoming any of them is impossible, even if we speak of dialogue, mutuality and care. Genuineness is awareness and an understanding of one's own being with the freedom of choice between the two modi as possibilities for the I in a dialogue. Non-genuineness appears when the I dissolves in a dialogue, co-being, which represents the abandonment of free choice [Borisov, 1997]. A person in connection to the Other in being always experiences a conflict between being oneself and impersonality. When the Other appears in the field of the I, which is a primary experience of the encounter, it is not a collision with the "alien" but rather with a different dimension of *Dasein*, which takes the shape of a convergence of one's own and other possibilities of being. An encounter, solitude, or the absence of the Other, presents itself as a necessary moment of communication, co-being.

The Other, appearing in the I's being can take upon him- or herself the responsibility for him or her. The I entrusts itself to him or her as to a guide, who passes his or her experience of being. The exchange of possibilities in a dialogue happens on two dimensions: communicative and hermeneutical. A dialogue as an exchange of statements and texts is carried out between the I and the Other who are present at the same time, and it is also included in the context of history, past and future events. The being of I in conversations and talks is raised by the guide to a "historical level", placing it in the global Being-in-the-world.

The theme of "Conversation Partner" is revealed in the teaching of Heidegger as an idea of the "Other", **real** and **ideal**, who directs the I towards itself in a dialogue, towards clarifying its position in existence and towards "fulfilling itself" through the other person.

Sartre: one of the modalities of the vital presence of the Other in relationship to the I is his or her objectness. It is this experience, which is acquired through interaction with the Other, through a subject-object type relationship, which gives a personality a feeling of the external Other. But just the objectness is not enough to state that the Other is real and not imaginary for the I's mind. The unfolding of the life space around the Other is crucial. This way, in the absence of the Other, the space piles up around the I, who is the centre which turns scattered space into a united picture. But when the Other appears in the existential field of

the I, not necessarily directed towards the I, but perceived by the I as the Other, the world begins to structure itself around the "intruder". The appearance of the Other as a concrete and real person means for the I the introduction of an element of decay into their own universe and a shift of this universe to a new centre. Nevertheless, although the space around the I shifts to the Other, he or she remains an object, even if it is a priority for that moment. The Other becomes a subject only when he or she turns their gaze to the I. In this case the I becomes an object and the Other acts as a subject. But to be seen by the Other is an important condition for seeing the Other. The subject cannot see another personality the same way they see the sky or grass, they challenge it to look in response. The I directs its look to the Other, which makes it in turn a subject. When both participants of mutual perception are active, there is a constant exchange of subject-object roles, as the exhilarating mutual subjectivity gains strength. It is more important that the Other's gaze, directed towards the I, turns it from the subject into the object of the world with different space-time characteristics, than the characteristics perceived in the I-for-me. The being of the I for the Other is not a free choice of the I. The Other determines its being as something unknown to the I, not only "structuring" its external space, but also filling it with his or her own meanings and ideas, of which the I does not suspect. [We suppose that their opening "in the Other" and finding him or her "in oneself" means for the I a transformation of the Other's look into "speaking" and "understanding", and the Other him- or herself into a conversation partner – Author.]

The Other is always playing an active part, whether it is he or she "for the I" or I "for him or her"; it is the Other who opens me in my own I. I is the one who plays the part of the subject, and possesses the right to speak to the Other and about the Other and to evaluate the Other-for-me. The I enters into a dialogue with the Other-subject driven the need to protect itself from objectivation by the Other, and by the desire to comprehend his or her secret subjectivity, which acts from the depth or their inner world, addressing him or her in perception and imagination.

In Sartre's conception [Sartre, 1976] the idea of a "Conversation Partner" arises from his thoughts on the Other-subject-object and the I-object-subject in a dialogue, on the unseen being of the Other-in-I, comprehensible through secret address to him or her, and on the need for **the "real"** ("directing his or her look") and **"secret"** Other for the meeting of **"the I with itself"**.

Buber: the I does not exist without the Other, and can say nothing about itself without looking at the Other as a living mirror. The Other in relationship with the I should become especially close, allowing the Other to be addressed as

"Thou". It is this relationship between I and Thou that creates them as participants of a dialogue or conversation partners. Any object in the world can be the "Other", "Thou", or "Conversation Partner" in a relationship with the I, but the true "Thou", addressing the I from a subjective position can only be another person. A person, who is a conversation partner, plays a great role in the I's self-perception, in the way it is represented for itself, in the ability to speak with oneself [Buber, 2010].

The I-Thou relationship is mutual: both participants of the dialogue are equally engaged in it. The relationship of the I with its conversation partner always unfolds in the present and is relatively free from the contexts of time, space and causality. When Thou is directed towards the I, it cannot assume a passive position, it is always interested, touched and engaged by the conversation partner, who is reflected in the I and brings into the I his or her meanings. In the beginning a personality may not hear the "calling" of the conversation partner but suddenly, at some point of time, its ear or imagination detects a sound or voice—signs of a conversation partner calling—a conversation starts, attention and mind are "turned", and a relationship with the Other is there.

Buber sees wide possibilities for a personality to obtain conversation partners in the world. His especially important idea is that of the other person-conversation partner as a "Thou", who allows the transfer of the dialogue onto the **imaginary** plane, where the Other becomes an independent active source able to initiate dialogue.

Mandelstam: a conversation partner that is not close physically can be the only close one, as it is for a poet, who's verse in not directed at anyone in particular, presently close in the physical space. On the contrary, it is addressed to the mental entity that will read it, and it does not matter if it happens soon or in tens or hundreds of years. The reader is the furthest and closest conversation partner who is going to receive the message addressed to no one and at the same time only to him or her. It is the "Providential conversation partner", secret and ideal at the same time, it is the Other-in-Culture, the only one, who will understand the I. The "secret conversation partner" holds in him- or herself a mystery of unexpected turns in the dialogue; it is impossible to predict their questions and prepare answers. In a conversation with a known, physically close partner a person knows in advance, how the other will react to something they say, and cannot experience his or her feelings, because this person imagines them in advance. In a dialogue with a secret, distant partner a desire arises to say something that would have been impossible to say to any Other face to face. The greatest resource lies in this unpredictability, lack of knowledge about the conversation partner. By trying

to interest, surprise or be significant for such a partner, a person gains new knowledge of oneself. It is revealed to him or her, what can be seen in the I only through the perspective of one's distant life in others-in-culture [Mandelstam, 1987].

Mandelstam described a beautiful hypostasis of the Conversation Partner-the Other, that is **secret**, exists in **the imagination**, is **ideal** for an artist, and is possible in the future as **a reality.**

In the current scientific context ideas about the "Conversation Partner" are extended by the concept of the reflected subjectivity by **Petrovsky**, who emphasizes the active presence of the Other in a personality's being, a being of the Other in the I, a continuity of one person in another, and a different being of a personality in a personality [Petrovsky, 2010] and [Petrovsky, 2013]. Developing the idea of the reflexivity of the Other-subject in the I, Petrovsky speaks of the experience and reflection of the Other's presence in a situation significant for the I, his or her ability to act, to introduce his or her meanings, and to create changes in the I. The reflected Other plays an active role in the transformation of the situation experienced by the I, he or she invisibly affects the views, decisions and actions of the I, not leaving the I indifferent, but prompting him or her to reciprocal activity. Reflected subjectivity as a form of unity of the I and the Other has, for the I, a developmental meaning by fulfilling one's own subjective potential.

The Other as a possessor of the quality of reflected subjectivity appears in the life and mind of a personality in several forms. Firstly, as a real Other, who's presence in **the real** experience of a personality influences it in unconscious and reflective ways. Secondly, as **an ideal** Other, as he or she exists in the thought and imagination of the I as an active participant of a personality's inner world. Thirdly, as a converted Other, subjectively merged with the I, who as a result is experiencing a multiplication or reduction of its own possibilities, the Other, who has created conditions for **the I to turn to itself** as essentially renewed.

In the works of Petrovsky the problem of the "Conversation Partner" is revealed in the aspect of **vital transitions** of the Other's influences from the real to the ideal and reflective plane. These transitions can be seen in the evolution of external-verbal, internal-verbal, and auto-verbal I-Other dialogues.

A hermeneutical search for the ideas of the Conversation Partner allowed us to discern its hypostases which exist in the spaces of perception, action, imagination, thought, intuition, desires and feelings. This is the "**real Conversation Partner**" as the Other, who is in a direct, corporeal, factual

interaction/dialogue with the I; the "**imaginary Conversation Partner**" as the Other, who is figuratively represented in the I's world, having or not having a real prototype, and having an internal dialogue with the I; the "**ideal Conversation Partner**" as the Other, created by thought and intuition of the I as the one who possesses for the I, the generic, best and most valuable human qualities, which are addressed in a dialogue; the "**secret Conversation Partner**" as the Other, who represents an intimate significance for the I, whose qualities are largely unknown to the I. These however allow and are favourable for a dialogue with the I and which is impossible in any other communication; the "**I as my own Conversation Partner**" which can exist for oneself as a different I, as an I, incarnated in the Other, or as an Alien other-in-I or a Double, who, according to Likhachev [1984] sometimes holds the I "in a fatal embrace", and "the words of a Double intertwine with the words and thoughts of its victim".

Based on our theoretical modelling and hermeneutical analysis we supposed that processing the I-Other dialogue occurs in dimensions 'between I and Other', 'I-in-Other', 'Other-in-I', and 'I-in-Myself'; the presence of different Conversation Partners and their subjective importance for a person and their interconnections; the activity of Conversation Partners, the totality of the reflective scope of interconnected Conversation Partners; and the openness of a person to their subjective activity form the capacities of Conversation Partners in the "I-Other" relationship. The realization of these capacities impact one's effectiveness in society and existential fulfilment in the world. We conducted an empirical study to test this assumption.

A study of social and existential effects of having Conversation Partners

The empirical study was conducted at the department of personality psychology at the Higher School of Economics.

Methods

According to the theoretical framework, the instruments used for the research were:

1. the author's "My Conversation Partners" method—an interview, developed in a reflective format. The list of questions follows the stages of the "I-Other" relationship [Starovoytenko and Derbeneva, 2015b];

2. the "Differential questionnaire of the experience of loneliness" [Osin and Leontyev, 2013] which includes the "General loneliness" scale, which represents the degree of current feelings of loneliness, a lack of close communication with other people (the sum of Isolation, Self-awareness and Alienation subscales); the "Dependence on communication" scale, which represent intolerance to loneliness and the inability to be alone (the sum of Dysphoria, Dysfunctional loneliness and Need to be with other people subscales); the "Positive loneliness" scale, which measures one's ability to find resources in loneliness, to use it creatively for self-exploration and self-development (the sum of the "Joy of solitude" and the "Solitude resource" subscales) [Osin and Leontyev, 2013];

3. the "Affiliation scale" of Mehrabian with a separate scale of the "Tendency to need people" [Fetiskin, Kozlov and Maynulov, 2002];

4. the diagnostics of socio-psychological adaptation of Rogers and Diamond with separate scales of social adaptivity and conformity (the Dominating and Submissiveness subscales) [Osnitskiy, 2004];

5. Eysenck's Personality Inventory (version A) with a separate scale of extraversion-intraversion [Psychological texts almanac, 1995]; and

6. the "Existence scale" of Längle, which assesses the following indicators: "Self-distancing", "Self-transcendence", "Freedom", "Responsibility", "Authenticity", "Existentiality" [Krivtsova, Laengle and Orgler, 2009].

The "**My Conversation Partners**" method included the following questions:

Do you have *necessary* conversation partners in your life? If so, tell me, who are they and what qualities do they possess? (such partners can be: a real conversation partner, an ideal conversation partner, an imaginary conversation partner, a secret conversation partner, about whom I do not tell anyone, or I myself as my own conversation partner).

Please, evaluate the degree of importance of the conversation partners you have in your life using the following scale:

10-9 points	Very important in my life
8-7 points	Important in my life
6-5 points	Moderately important in my life
4-3 points	Having little importance in my life
2-1 points	Having nearly no or no importance in my life

Type of a conversation partner	Importance in your life
Real conversation partner	
Ideal conversation partner	
Imaginary conversation partner	
Secret conversation partner	
I as my own conversation partner	

Please, select three most significant conversation partners from the list above.

Answer the following questions in relation to each of the three chosen conversation partners. Please, answer the questions as fully as possible.

Who is he or she?

What are his or her qualities?

Is it me or them who usually initiates the conversation? In what circumstances does the conversation usually happen?

What are the most important topics for your conversations?

What do I usually expect from the conversation partner? What does he or she expect from me?

Does the conversation partner always hear and understand me?

Does he or she like me?

What do I usually try to transmit them in my statements?

What can I not say to the conversation partner? And what will he or she never say to me?

What changes in me and what changes in them during our conversations?

Do our conversations affect my decisions and actions?

Participants

The sample consisted of 40 students and graduates of Moscow, Novosibirsk and Kiev Universities (30 women and 10 men) aged 22 to 30 years (average age 26 years).

Procedure

The study proceeded in consecutive application of:

1. the author's method "My Conversation Partners";
2. quantitative methods aimed to test one's solitude/loneliness, affiliation, social adaptation and conformity, extraversion-introversion, existential fulfilment;
3. a qualitative analysis of the interviews;
4. the application of statistical methods of analysis.

The text data of the interviews were interpreted using the directed approach to qualitative content analysis [Hsieh and Shannon, 2005]. The **coding** categories were derived from the theoretical model of dialogic "I-Other" relationship described above. These coding categories do not cover all the possible aspects of the model but highlight the features of "I-Other" relationship most relevant to current study. The following coding categories were applied: subjective significant Conversation Partners (which hypostases of the Conversation Partner are revealed and how many Conversation Partners are chosen and evaluated by the subject); connections between the Conversation Partners, and their activity during the dialogue; the fullness of the reflective description of Conversation Partners (how informatively and precisely they are described), and the person's reflexivity [Puchalska-Wasyl, 2007]. Three experts conducted the coding independently and then came to agreement on categories.

After initial directed coding the data were quantified according to the following rules: subjective significant Conversation Partners were assessed on a scale from 1 to 5 points (1 corresponded to the lowest significant and 5 – to the highest), connections between the Conversation Partners from 0 to 10 points (0 corresponded to the poorest connections and 10 – to the most strong); activity of Conversation Partners from 0 to 2 (the more active was a Conversation Partner, the higher was the mark); fullness of Conversation Partners' description from 1 to 3 (3 marked the maximum fullness); general reflexivity was calculated as the sum of these scores.

The **statistical analysis** of the interconnections between Conversation Partners and the social effectiveness and existential fulfilment of a person was conducted using SPSS 16.0.

Results

The significant correlations between scores derived from interview analysis and the indicators of social positioning and existential fulfilment of a personality based on the other methods are presented below (Table 1):

Tab.1. Correlations between the subjective significance of Conversation Partners, fullness of Conversation Partners' description, connections between the Conversation Partners, and scores on social adaptation, submissiveness-dominating, loneliness-solitude, extraversion, and Existence Scale

	Fullness of Conversation Partners' description	Subjective significance of Real Conversation Partner	Subjective significance of Ideal Conversation Partner	Subjective significance of Imagine Conversation Partner	Subjective significance of Secret Conversation Partner	Subjective significance of I as a Conversation Partner
Subjective significance of Real Conversation Partner	0.32*	1	-0.11	0.14	0.05	0.35*
Subjective significance of Ideal Conversation Partner	0.38*	-0.11	1	-0.02	0.38*	-0.21
Subjective significance of Imagine Conversation Partner	0.67**	0.14	-0.02	1	0.28	0.16
Subjective significance of Secret Conversation Partner	0.65**	0.05	0.38*	0.28	1	-0.11
Subjective significance of I as a Conversation Partner	0.19	0.35*	-0.21	0.16	-0.11	1
Adaptivity	0.52**	0.42**	0.38*	0.16	0.34*	0.03
Dominating	0.42**	0.14	0.42**	0.2	0.26	-0.09
Submissiveness	-0.26	-0.01	-0.19	-0.19	-0.14	-0.13
Affiliation	0.02	0.35*	0.09	-0.29	-0.1	-0.05
Extraversion	0.05	0.34*	0.15	-0.27	-0.09	-0.02
Isolation	-0.26	-0.47**	-0.13	-0.16	0.04	-0.12
Self-awareness	-0.18	-0.23	-0.03	-0.09	0.06	-0.22
Alienation	-0.27	-0.32*	-0.09	-0.12	0.02	-0.11
Dysphoria	0.08	0.14	0.16	-0.12	0.01	-0.12
Dysfunctional loneliness	-0.02	-0.06	0.29	-0.13	-0.01	-0.11
Need to be with other people	0.23	0.3	0.22	-0.07	0.06	-0.08
Joy of solitude	0.06	-0.16	-0.11	0.26	0.15	0.07
Solitude resource	0.20	0.17	-0.17	0.17	0.36*	0.2

General loneliness	-0.28	-0.39*	-0.1	-0.14	0.04	-0.18
Dependence on communication	0.13	0.18	0.26	-0.12	0.03	-0.12
Positive loneliness	0.17	0.05	-0.17	0.23	0.32*	0.17
General Score on Existential Fullfillment	0.33*	0.18	0.22	0.13	0.16	0.01
Self-distancing	0.19	0.14	0.16	0.07	0.09	-0.04
Self-Transcendence	0.35*	0.35*	0.09	0.13	0.12	0.14
Freedom	0.35*	0.03	0.36*	0.14	0.25	-0.11
Responsibility	0.21	0.08	0.2	0.13	0.08	-0.01
Authenticity	0.32*	0.29	0.13	0.11	0.12	0.08
Existentiality	0.3	0.06	0.29	0.14	0.17	-0.06

Note: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

The empirical study of the social and existential resources of a Conversation Partner, which a person develops in the context of dialogical I-Other relationships, allow us to conclude the following.

A modern personality in its internal and external life spaces has a variety of "Conversation Partners" (real, imaginary, ideal, secret, I), using which the personality gains experience of the relationship with Others and oneself.

There are statistically significant positive connections between the fullness of the reflection of significant Conversation Partners by a personality and the subjective significance of the real Conversation Partner, the subjective significance of the ideal Conversation Partner, the subjective significance of the imaginary Conversation Partner, the subjective significance of the secret Conversation Partner, social adaptivity, domination in interaction with others, existential fulfilment, self-transcendence, and desire for freedom.

There are positive connections between the subjective significance of the real Conversation Partner, represented in reflection, and the subjective significance of the I as one's own Conversation Partner, the fullness of the reflection of significant Conversation Partners, social adaptivity, affiliation, extraversion, and self-transcendence, as well as negative connections with the tendency to isolation, alienation, and a general feeling of loneliness.

There are positive connections between the subjective significance of the ideal Conversation Partner and the subjective significance of the secret Conversation Partner, social adaptivity, the fullness of the reflection of significant Conversation Partners, domination in interaction with others, and freedom.

There are positive connections between the subjective significance of the secret Conversation Partner and social adaptivity, the fullness of the reflection of significant Conversation Partners, resourcefulness of solitude, and positive loneliness.

There are no differences between the extraverts and introverts in terms of prevalence of "internal" or "external" Conversation partners.

Discussion

The current study was conducted in a personological manner [Petrovsky and Starovoytenko, 2012], which means there is a correspondence between theoretical models, the hermeneutics of cultural texts and reflexive methods in one study. The empirical data prove theoretical assumptions regarding both the dimensions of "I-Other" relationship ('between I and Other', 'I-in-Other', 'Other-in-I', and 'I-in-Myself') and the hypostases of Conversation Partners.

Positive connections between the subjective significance of the real Conversation Partner and such indicators as social adaptivity, affiliation, extraversion, self-transcendence correspond to former studies [Hermans, 2001], [Kopiev, 1999], [Puchalska-Wasyl, 2016]. Negative connections between the significance of the real Conversation partner and the tendency to isolation, alienation and general feeling of loneliness also are consistent with other conceptions of dialogical relationship [Bakhtin, 1986], [Brown and Keller, 1972], [Puchalska-Wasyl, 2007], [Rossohin, 2010].

The results have also showed specific functions of the ideal Conversation partner and the secret Conversation Partner. According to the data, the high significance of these hypostases of Conversation Partners is associated with higher scores on social adaptivity. Thus, these hypostases are crucial for the social capacity of Conversation Partners.

People with high subjective significance of the ideal Conversation Partner also tend to demonstrate higher scores on domination in interaction with others and freedom, while respondents who value the secret Conversation Partner demonstrate a better capacity to use their solitude productively. Thus, different hypostases of Conversation Partners contain specific resources of the social and existential

development of a person. In particular, the real Conversation Partner has the resource of affiliation, the secret one has the resource of solitude for self-knowledge, and the creative activity of a person.

Conversation Partners have the capacity for social adaptivity, domination, positive solitude, freedom, authenticity and self-transcendence. The social and existential aspects of one's life also include the processes and the effects of dialogues with Conversation Partners represented in reflection.

Exploring the roles of the specific resources of different Conversation Partners for cognitive functioning, professional activity, creativity, and love forms the prospective of current study. Empirical data leads us to further investigation of associations between one's reflexivity, one's ability maintain the dialogical "I-Other" relationship and different forms of social and existential capacities.

Conclusions

A new theoretical model of dialogical "I-Other" relationship was presented and empirically tested. The five hypostases of the Conversation Partner revealed by hermeneutic analysis were used to conduct and interpret interviews with respondents. The study proved the social and existential capacities of Conversation Partners and showed that the influence of different hypostases varies: the real Conversation Partner is associated with a greater resource of affiliation, the secret one with a greater resource of solitude, the ideal one with a greater resource of constructive domination in interaction.

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