

Psychology. Journal of the Higher School of Economics



ПСИХОЛОГИЯ

ЖУРНАЛ ВЫСШЕЙ ШКОЛЫ ЭКОНОМИКИ

В НОМЕРЕ

Исследования когнитивного развития



Психология старости



Творческие способности



Развитие речи у младенцев

Том **14**, №**2**

2017

ISSN 1813-8918 (Print)
ISSN 2541-9226 (Online)

Том 14. № 2
2017

ПСИХОЛОГИЯ

Журнал Высшей школы экономики

ISSN 1813-8918; e-ISSN: 2541-9226

Учредитель

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109316, г. Москва, Волгоградский пр-т, д. 46Б

E-mail: psychology.hse@gmail.com

Сайт: <http://psy-journal.hse.ru/>

Перепечатка материалов только по согласованию с редакцией.

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Vol. 14. No 2
2017

PSYCHOLOGY

Journal of the Higher School of Economics

Publisher

National Research University
Higher School of Economics

ISSN 1813-8918; e-ISSN: 2541-9226

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2017

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RESOURCES OF A “CONVERSATION PARTNER” IN A DIALOGICAL I–OTHER RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract

Authors develop a new approach to the study of one's relationships with others, which focuses on the conditions and the effects of the dialogical nature of a person. Theoretical modeling, hermeneutics, qualitative and quantitative methods have been applied. The solution for identifying prerequisites of self-development and social positioning of a person that are rooted in dialogical I–Other relationships has been suggested. The originality of the paper is associated with describing the relation to the other as a reflexive I–Other relationship; with an elaborated model that highlights the variety of dimensions of I–Other relationships (between I and Other, I-in-Other, Other-in-Me, I-in-Myself) results in a truly dialogical mode of being; with revealing the potentials of a Conversation Partner in dialogical I–Other relationships (subjective interrelations and significance of Conversation Partners, their activity, fullness of the reflection of significant Conversation Partners); with a description of different hypostases of Conversation Partners (Real, Ideal, Secret, I as Myself) by the means of hermeneutics. The method called “My Conversation Partner” should also be mentioned, as well as the empirical study of existential and social resources of Conversation Partners. Theoretical background of the study was formed by the works of M.M. Bakhtin, M. Buber, M. Heidegger, J.-P. Sartre, E. Levinas, as well as by the works of modern psychologists such as G.M. Kuchinsky, A.V. Rossokhin, E.B. Starovoytenko, C.T. Brown & P.W. Keller, Hubert Hermans, F. Rivetti Barbo, etc. Results of the current research have shown that the potential of social adaptivity, affiliation, dominance, positive solitude, joy of solitude, freedom, self-transcendence, existential fulfillment is associated with the richness of one's Conversation Partners.

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

The paper presents a theoretical and empirical study of personality that follows the ‘life relationships’ paradigm and emphasizes one's relationship to the Other. The potential of dialogical forms of this relationship is validated; in particular, its effects on one's social positioning, self-knowledge, and self-development are revealed. The study

focuses on the following preconditions of dialogical relationship to the Other: mutual activity of a person and the Other; the representation of this activity in speech; obtaining the quality of significant “Conversation Partner” by the Other; completeness of external and internal realization of the relationship; value orientation of the relation-

ship; reflexive personal position, which shapes this relationship as "I-Other" relationship. The **purpose** of the study is to examine the "Conversation Partner" in the context of dialogical relationship I-Other and to disclose how it facilitates one's social effectiveness and existential fulfillment. The **theoretical background** includes philosophical conceptions of dialogical relationship (M.M. Bakhtin, M. Buber, J.-P. Sartre, E. Lévinas), as well as a collection of modern psychological approaches (S.L. Bratchenko & D.A. Leontiev, G.M. Kuchinsky, A.V. Rossokhin, E.B. Starovoytenko, C.T. Brown & P.W. Keller, H.J.M. Hermans, F. Rivetti Barbo). The **results** of this research are: an elaborated new theoretical model of the I-Other dialogical relationship that outlines the completeness of its realization in dimensions 'between', 'I-in-Other', 'Other-in-I', and 'I-in-myself'; hermeneutics of the phenomenon of the "Conversation Partner" in scientific and cultural contexts; empirical data about the areas of existence of "Conversation Partners" acquired by the I, and about their existential and social resources.

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 M. Bakhtin, J.-P. Sartre, E. Lévinas (Bakhtin, 1986; Sartre, 1976; Lévinas, 2006) as well as the conceptions of personality's vital relationships and the potential of the I in relation to the Other developed by E. Starovoytenko (Starovoytenko, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2015). The model repre-

sents the author's structuring of the existing and new ideas that reveal the phenomenon of the "Conversation Partner" in one's life. "Personality" in the context of current research attributes mainly to "I" that is actively related to the world, to Others, and to themselves ('life relationships' paradigm).

– Development of a personality's ability to **enter a relationship – be in a relationship – to relate** implies its exploratory actions in the world, the activity of its consciousness, the unity and complexity of the reflective I as a 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 the avoidance by a personality 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 intentions directed towards the object and oneself, transformation of the object in the dimension of values, putting the object in a subject position, which creates possibilities for it to influence external and internal life of the personality.

The subtle psychological architectonics of a relationship are comprised of processes and effects of motives, feelings, sensations, perception, notion, memory, 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 (Starovoytenko, 2015).

– 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, acceptance of its activity, representation within its I, and 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 it into its 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 "hypostases" in the vital connections with the personality and its reflection (Starovoytenko, 2013a, 2013c, 2015).

1. He or she is a time-space "**object**" for a personality, a specific fact and situation in the world, life's substantial challenge, to which one has to respond, a reality without which they feel a lack of existence.

2. 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 personality 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).

3. 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 one life "beyond" the I-existence. "By the Other's look I effect the concrete proof that there is a "**beyond the world**" (Ibid., p. 270)

4. For a personality the present Other is 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 a co-author of a personality's reflection, life story, and acts also as an active part of one's inner and outer world, where the personality finds himself 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 "fulfill oneself existentially".

5. 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.

6. For a personality the Other acts as an addressee and a "place" for the incarnation of 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, meaning of a personality's I-existence in the coming life.

7. The Other is a "**creation**" of a personality that 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 an 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".

8. The Other is also "**I myself**" that through acts of recreation and creation 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 an I can be: a specific close person (a family member, loved one, friend, teacher, authority figure, idol, character from a text, a stranger that affected them etc.); a generic image/idea of a significant category of people; significant community or group of people; a type of a culture that includes important values for this personality; an intuitive idea of an "not I"-in-I, rooted in the unconscious; an extraordinary personality leading beyond the limits of a usual identity etc.

– The best prospect for the development of the I-Other relationship is a **dialogue** (Bakhtin, Buber, Lăvinas), constituted, firstly, by an active interaction of the I and the Other that shapes the space and time of being "between" them; secondly, by mutual representation of the I and the Other in their inner worlds; thirdly, by the reflective givenness of each to the other; fourthly, by the self-positioning of both participants of the interaction

as autonomous and free I-subjects; fifthly, 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 mutual influence of I and the Other. Each subject of a dialogue gains resources for achieving unity with the Other, for recognition of 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 that determine the subjectness 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 the following logical **stages**:

1) An impression in the I from meeting the Other as a new reality.

2) Creation of a distance between myself 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 of the Other to the subjective plane, transformation of the Other into an internal significance, which is active towards the I.

5) Creation of a complex psychic synthesis related to the formation of an "internal equivalent" of the Other as a subject.

6) Making real actions towards the Other, which stimulate the "internal-

ization” and the activity of the Other in the I.

7) Establishing an internal relationship “I – my significant Other”.

8) Correlation of my “internal significance” to the real Other.

9) Search for my active presence in the Other.

10) Mental positioning of the Other in relationship to the I, represented in the Other.

11) 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 I – Other-in-I.

13) Recognizing and attending to the contradictions in the relationship to the Other.

14) Realization of the relationship of the I, which recreated the Other in himself or herself, to the I reflected and recreated in the Other.

15) Moving 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 mutual entrance into the next cycle of relationships in a new realm, new situations, with new possibilities (Starovoytenko, 2015).

Once a person completes these stages, the I–Other relationship obtains **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 establishment of a relationship in its realization – non-realization, succession – interruption, harmonious connection – conflicts, with 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 a subject of the relationship, using the opportunities of all its stages, moves towards its personal **fulfillment** in connection to the Other as a significant part of its vital world.

– The dynamics of the relationship to the Other with its specific stages, contradictions and preferred methods of their 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)**”. For example, the real I and Other in the connection “between” are primordially autonomous and free, which is a basis for a discrepancy between them. / The Real I can never fully coincide with the I-in-the Other. / 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 a real, reflected and reflecting can affect the I by its deferences. / Mutually internalized I and Other could be unrecognized and not accepted by the real I and Other, involved in a relationship “between”. / 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 himself or herself as Other-in-I. / 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 (Starovoytenko, 2015).

The various ways of **resolving** oppositional moments of the I-Other relationship come to being through experiencing and reflection. These include: establishing a parity of oppositions; finding a new measure of correspondence between the oppositions; finding their mutual complimentation; including of the oppositions in a new system of interactions; denial of one of the oppositions; "holding" of the oppositions as equally valuable and unavoidable; synthesis of the oppositions in a qualitatively new I-Other relationship. The variation of ways for resolution of the I contradictions is 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 (Kuchinsky, 1988; Rossokhin, 2010). In particular, it is the relationship of I to I-in-Other, the relationship of I to Other-in-I, the relationship of I to I (I-in-Other), the relationship of I to I (Other-in-I), the relationship of I to I (I-in-Other-in-I) etc. A specific modus can become the target of reflection, for example, **the relationship of 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 answers in the dialogue of *the I with the Other-Conversation Partner* are structured by "statements" of their authors. Personal authorship of statements acquires a bright and creative nature if the following conditions are fulfilled: the statements originate from the living con-

sciousness of many people; they get addressed to significant others; the author perceives the interaction with the addressee as an "encounter" with a close You; the author progresses in the reflection of statements due to the answers of the addressee; problematization of the addressee by author's open or hidden questioning. All of this, according to M. M. Bakhtin, determines the "dialogical nature of statements" of the author (Bakhtin, 1986, 2000). A statement is not an individual event; rather it appears in the global world of personalities that 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 himself 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 **subjectness** 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, 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** are assumed and reflected by the I:

- The I addresses the Conversation Partner participating in an interpersonal interaction;
- The I speaks of the Conversation Partner as a character of his or her speech;
- The I speaks in answer to the intellectual, emotional and spiritual strength of the Conversation Partner;
- The I speaks in the name of the Conversation Partner, identifying with him or her;
- The I speaks calling on the Conversation Partner to speak;
- The I speaks awaiting a specific reaction from the Conversation Partner;
- The I speaks of himself or herself, addressing the real or “internal” Conversation Partner;
- The I speaks of himself or herself as “reflected” in the Conversation Partner;
- 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”);
- The I speaks addressing the context of verbal life of the Conversation

Partner and inviting him or her into their verbal life;

- The I speaks of himself or herself related to the Conversation Partner or speaking of them;

- The I acts through words to challenge the Conversation Partner to action or deed;

- The I speaks of his or her changes that resulted from statements and answers of the Conversation Partner. (Starovoytenko, 2015). Thus, the I becomes a “dialogical Self” (Hermans, 2001).

– The **Conversation Partner – Subject** also assumes dialogical position. He or she motivates the I to the next statement; influences its intention, goal and content; sets the emphasis 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, and amplifies the I’s statement; values highly or devaluates, accepts or denies, opposes or supports, resists the statement or shares it, criticizes or agrees with it; masters the I 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 interactions, which can lead to existence and wide social

spreading of new ideas, images, activities, ways of communication, and methods of self-knowledge. In other terms, 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 high potential as Conversation Partners with their inherent power of subjectness. A **Multiplicity of Conversation Partners** is a reality of individual existence that strives to be fulfilled in connections of a personality with other people, it is the world of his or her reflection and 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 verbal relationship I-Other we concentrated on the distinction and synthesis of the "hypostases" of Conversation Partners, based on the ideas found in the works by M.M. Bakhtin, M. Heidegger, J.-P. Sartre, M. Buber, O. Mandelstam, and among contemporary writers – in the works by V.A. Petrovsky. The revealed "hypostases" should, in our opinion, indicate a possible completeness of the fulfillment 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

M.M. 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 contents, because it is the contents that are the axis or core of a dialogue. A personality's need to relate "to" 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 them, for receiving a response, he or she is always expecting something "for themselves": it can be a 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 a dialogue are united by the relatedness of a personality to the Other. Notably, the I does not address the Other because of its ability to address oneself, but the I addresses itself due to the skill of addressing the Other, meaning that there is a transition from a dialogue to a monologue. A monologue is a subtype of a dialogue. A dialogue with the Other and with oneself has differences and equivalence, defining the singular features of the Other and the I as significant conversation partners of a personality.

The essence of dialogues and dialogical consciousness is revealed in its depth in the novels by 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 on seemingly "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, "imaginary", usually with the voice of this person, who even in this situation is independent from the personality. A dialogue with an imaginary conversation partner and a 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 involved in the open and hidden conversation and interaction. There are inner and outer dialogues of Raskolnikov with Svidrigailov and of Karamazov with the devil, 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 conver-

sation partners are connected by a relationship of intersubjectness on the intersection, in unity and contradictions of their minds.

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

M. Heidegger: a person has an existential relationship to the world, which he or she finds for themselves. An individual is present in the world not separately from the being-in-the-world, as though having "desired" at some point of time to come into relationship with the world. On the contrary, "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, 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 a mutual caring, which leads to contact, communication, dialogue, as opposed to indifference and loneliness as a faultiness of being among others.

In this co-being an individual can live a genuine or non-genuine existence. To possess the genuineness of existence means to be oneself, to correspond to oneself, "as I am", to connect with oneself not alienating into the Other. On the contrary, in a non-genuine existence the I exists in an interaction as the Other "losing its own face" in favor of the Other, it becomes impersonal entrusting 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, 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 abandoning 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 encounter, it is not a collision with the "alien" but rather with a different dimension of Dasein, which takes the shape of convergence of one's own and other possibilities of being. An encounter, as well as solitude, 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 himself or herself the responsibility for them. The I entrusts itself to them as to a guide, who passes his or her experience of being. 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" transpires 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, towards "fulfilling itself" through the other person.

J.-P. 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 that acts in this case as the center, which turns the scattered space into a united picture. But when the Other appears in the existential field of the I, maybe even not directed towards the I, but perceived by a personality 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 to introduce an element of decay into their own universe and a shift of this universe to a new center. 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 exhilarating mutual subjectness gains strength. It is important that the Other's gaze directed towards the I turns it from the subject into the object of the world with space-time characteristics different from the ones 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 them "in oneself" means for the I a transformation of the Other's look into "speaking" and "understood", and the Other himself 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 them"; it is the Other who opens me in my own I. The I is the one playing the part of the subject and possessing the right to speak to the Other and about the Other, to evaluate the Other-for-me. The I enters in a dialogue with the Other-subject driven on the one hand by the need to protect itself from objectivation by the Other, and on the other hand, by the desire to comprehend his or her secret subjectness, which acts from the depth or their inner world addressing him or her in perception and imagination.

In Sartre's conception 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.

M. Buber: the I does not exist without the Other and can say nothing about itself without looking at the Other as a sort of living mirror. The Other in relationship with the I should become especially close allowing it to be addressed as "Thou". It is this relationship between the I and Thou that creates them as participants in a dialogue or as conversation partners. Any object in the world can be the "Other", "Thou", "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, 1995, 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, always touched and engaged by the conversation partner that 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 detect a sound, a voice, signs of a calling conversation partner, and a conversation starts, attention and mind are "turned", a relationship to the Other is there.

M. Buber sees wide possibilities for a personality to obtain conversation

partners in the world. His idea that is especially important is that of the other person-conversation partner as a "Thou" that allows the transfer of the dialogue into the imaginary plane, where the Other becomes an independent active source able to initiate dialogue.

O. Mandelstam: a conversation partner that is not close physically can be the only close one, as it is for a poet whose verse is not directed at anyone in particular presently close in physical space. On the contrary, it is addressed to that mental entity that will read it, and it does not matter if it happens soon or in dozens or hundreds of years. The reader is the furthest and closest conversation partner who is going to receive the message, which is 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 author. "Secret Conversation Partner" holds in himself or herself a mystery of unexpected turns in a 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 would 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, remote partner a desire arises to say something that would have been impossible to say to no Other in a meeting. The greatest resource lies in this unpredictability and 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 themselves. It is revealed to them what can be seen in the I only through the perspective of one's distant life in others-in-culture (Mandelstam, 1987).

In his "On the interlocutor" Mandelstam described a beautiful hypostasis of the Conversation Partner – the Other, that is secret, exists in imagination, is ideal for an artist, and is possible in the future as a reality.

In the current scientific context the ideas about the "Conversation Partner" are extended by the concept of the reflected subjectness by **V.A. Petrovsky**, which 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, a different being of a personality in a personality (Petrovsky, 2010, 2013). Developing the thought about the reflexivity of the Other-subject in the I the author 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, to create changes in the I. The reflected Other plays an active role in the transformation of a situation experienced by the I, he or she invisibly affects views, decisions and actions of the I not leaving the I indifferent, but prompting them to a reciprocal activity. Reflected subjectness as a form of unity of the I and the Other has a developmental meaning for the I in the aspect of the fulfillment of one's own subjective potential.

The Other as a possessor of the quality of reflected subjectness appears in the life and mind of a personality in several forms. Firstly, as a real Other whose 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 that as a result is experiencing a multiplication or reduction of its own possibilities, the Other that has created conditions for the I to turn to itself as essentially renewed.

In the works by Petrovsky the problem of the "Conversation Partner" manifests in the aspect of vital transitions of the Other's influences from a real to an 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 ideas of the Conversation Partner allowed us to discern its "hypostases" that exist in the spaces of perception, action, imagination, thought, intuition, desires and feelings. This is the "**real Conversation Partner**" as the Other that is in a direct, corporeal, factual interaction/dialogue with the I; the "**imaginary Conversation Partner**" as the Other that 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 possessing human qualities that are generic, best and most valuable for the I, addressed in a dialogue; the "**secret Conversation Partner**" as the Other representing an intimate significance for the I whose qualities are largely unknown to the I, but enabling and favorable for a dialogue with the I that is impossible in any other communication; the "**I as my own Conversation**

Partner" that can exist for oneself as a different I, as an I incarnated in the Other, or as an Alien other-in-me or a Double, that, according to D. S. Likhachev, sometimes holds the I "in fatal embrace", and "the words of a Double intertwine with the words and thoughts of its victim" (Likhachev, 1984).

Based on theoretical modeling and hermeneutical analysis (Petrovsky & Starovoytenko, 2012) we assumed that the dialogue I-Other, the totality of the reflective scope of interconnected Conversation Partners, as well as the openness of a personality to their subjective activity can favor his or her realization in the society and experience of their fulfillment in the world, among other people. In other words, these constitute social and existential effects of having Conversation Partners. We conducted an empirical study to test this hypothesis.

A study of social and existential effects of having Conversation Partners

The empirical study has conducted by A.A. Derbeneva at the department of personality psychology in the National Research University "Higher School of Economics".

Methods

According to the theoretical framework, instruments used for the research were: the author's method "My Conversation Partners", an interview developed in a reflective format (Starovoytenko & Derbeneva, 2015); the "Differential Questionnaire of Experience of Loneliness" (E.N. Osin, D.A. Leontiev) that contains a

"General Loneliness" scale representing the degree of current feeling of loneliness, lack of close communication with other people, a "Dependence on Communication" scale representing the intolerance of loneliness, inability to stay alone, a "Positive Loneliness" scale measuring one's ability to find resources in loneliness, to use it creatively for self-exploration and self-development (Osin & Leontiev, 2013); the "Affiliation Scale" of A. Mehrabian with a separate scale of "Tendency to People" (Fetiskin, Kozlov, & Manuilov, 2002); the diagnostics of socio-psychological adaptation of C. Rogers and R. Diamond with separate scales of social adaptivity and conformity (Osnitskiy, 2004); Eysenck's Personality Inventory (version A) with a separate scale of extraversion-intraversion (Psychological texts almanac, 1995); "Existence Scale" of A. Längle, which contains the following indicators: "Self-Distancing" (SD), "Self-Transcendence" (ST), "Freedom" (F) and "Responsibility" (V) (Krivtsova, Längle, & Orgler, 2009).

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

1. Do you have *indispensable* conversation partners in your life? If so, could you tell who they are and what qualities they possess? (Such partners can be a real conversation partner, an ideal conversation partner, an imaginary conversation partner, a secret conversation partner (whose existence I do not share with anyone), or I myself as my own conversation partner).

2. 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	Have little importance in my life
2–1 points	Have nearly no or no importance in my life

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

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

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

- Who is he or she?
- What are his or her qualities?
- Is it me or them who usually initiate the conversation? In what circumstances does it 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 am I unable to 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 people aged 22 to 30 years.

Procedure

The study proceeded in consecutively applied: 1) the author's method "My Conversation Partners" developed on the base of theoretical model of the I-Other relationship and the hermeneutic investigation of Conversation Partners; 2) quantitative methods aimed to test one's solitude/loneliness, affiliation, social adaptation and conformity, extraversion-introversion, existential fulfillment; 3) qualitative analysis of interviews; 4) statistical methods of analysis.

The **parameters** used in the qualitative analysis were derived from the theoretical model of the dialogic I-Other relationship described above. These parameters do not cover all possible aspects of the model but highlight the most relevant to the current study features of the I-Other relationship. The

following parameters were applied: fullness (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; comprehension of reflection of Conversation Partners (how informative and precise their description is), and person's reflexivity.

Coding was made in accordance to the theory of qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Qualitative categories were then quantified using the following rules: hypostases were assessed from 1 to 5 points, connections between the Conversation Partners – 0 to 10 points; activity of Conversation Partners – 0 to 2; comprehension of reflection – 1 to 3; general person's reflexivity was calculated as a sum of all these scores.

Statistical analysis of interconnections between Conversation Partners and social effectiveness and existential fulfillment of a person was conducted using SPSS 16.0.

Results

Significant correlations between scores derived from interview analysis

and indicators of social positioning and existential fulfillment of a personality based on the other methods are presented below (Table 1).

Table 1

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

	Fullness of Conversation Partners' description	1	2	3	4	5
1. Subjective significance of Real Conversation Partner	.32*	1	-.11	.14	.05	.35*
2. Subjective significance of Ideal Conversation Partner	.38*	-.11	1	-.02	.38*	-.21
3. Subjective significance of Imagine Conversation Partner	.67**	.14	-.02	1	.28	.16
4. Subjective significance of Secret Conversation Partner	.65**	.05	.38*	.28	1	-.11
5. Subjective significance of I as a Conversation Partner	.19	.35*	-.21	.16	-.11	1
Adaptability	.52**	.42**	.38*	.16	.34*	.03
Dominance	.42**	.14	.42**	.20	.26	-.09
Submissiveness	-.26	-.01	-.19	-.19	-.14	-.13
Affiliation	.02	.35*	.09	-.29	-.1	-.05
Extraversion	.05	.34*	.15	-.27	-.09	-.02
Isolation	-.26	-.47**	-.13	-.16	.039	-.12
Self-awareness	-.18	-.23	-.03	-.09	.058	-.22
Alienation	-.27	-.32*	-.09	-.12	.017	-.11
Dysphoria	.08	.14	.16	-.12	.011	-.12
Dysfunctional loneliness	.02	-.06	.29	-.13	-.01	-.11
Need to be with other people	.23	.30	.22	-.07	.06	-.08
Joy of solitude	.06	-.16	-.11	.26	.15	.07
Solitude resource	.20	.17	-.17	.17	.36*	.20
General experience of loneliness/solitude	-.28	-.39*	-.10	-.14	.04	-.18

Table 1 (continued)

	Fullness of Conversation Partners' description	1	2	3	4	5
Dependance on communication	.13	.18	.26	-.12	.03	-.12
Positive solitude	.17	.05	-.17	.23	.32*	.17
General Score on Existential Fulfillment	.33*	.18	.22	.13	.16	.01
Self-distance	.19	.14	.16	.07	.09	-.04
Self-transcendancy	.35*	.35*	.09	.13	.12	.14
Freedom	.35*	.03	.36*	.14	.25	-.11
Responsibility	.21	.08	.20	.13	.08	-.01
Authenticity	.32*	.29	.13	.11	.12	.08
Existentiality	.30	.06	.29	.14	.17	-.06

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Discussion

The interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data obtained in our empirical study of social and existential resources of Conversation Partner developed by a person in the context of dialogical I—Other relationships allows the following conclusions.

1. A modern personality in its internal and external life spaces has a variety of "Conversation Partners" through which it gains experience of relationship with Others and oneself.

2. There are statistically significant positive connections between the fullness of 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, dominance in interaction with others, existential fulfillment, self-transcendence and desire for freedom.

3. 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, fullness of reflection of significant Conversation Partners, social adaptivity, affiliation, extraversion, self-transcendence, and also negative connections with the tendency to isolation, alienation and general feeling of loneliness.

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

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

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

7. Different hypostases of Conversation Partners contain specific resources of social and existential development for the personality. In particular, the real Conversation Partner has the resource of affiliation, the secret one – the resource of solitude for self-knowledge and creative activity of a personality.

The results of the theoretical and empirical study allow a general conclusion on the diversity of life spaces, subjectness, interconnections and fullness of reflective representation of Conversation Partners holding a great potential for vital self-development and effective social positioning of a personality. Specifically, it develops one's social adaptivity, dominance in interaction with others, aspiration for freedom and self-transcendence. Among other components, subtle dynamics of social life and the existence of a person include the processes and the effects on one's dialogues with Conversation Partners. Further studies of Conversation Partners may deal with an investigation of their specific influence on cognitive processes, professional activity, loving relationships, and ministering to others.

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