The impact of psychological distance on integrative internal dialogs

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*N*egotiators more distanced from the negotiated goal more often exhibit integrative behavior, which maximizes both their individual and joint outcomes. Based on the assumption of an analogy between interpersonal negotiations and internal dialogs simulating social relationships, an experiment was carried out. It aimed to verify if psychological distance (proximal vs. distant perspective on the situation enacted in an internal dialog) affects the processes of integration and confrontation and, consequently, increases the frequency of integrative dialogs. Data from 115 participants (56 women) were analyzed. An increase in psychological distance was found to reduce the intensity of the confrontation process and to cause an increase in the number of integrative internal dialogs.

Keywords: Distance; Integration and confrontation; Mental simulation; Internal/imaginary dialog; Construal level theory.

Having to interrupt an interesting discussion with a mentor or an emotional conversation with a friend who has disappointed us, we often continue it by mentally uttering what we had no time or courage to voice and we imagine the interlocutor's responses. This phenomenon is colloquially called "talking to oneself." In the literature, it is known by many different names: imagined interactions, self-talk, private speech, inner speech, covert speech, silent speech, internal monolog, internal dialog and so on (cf. Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015; Brinthaupt & Dove, 2012; Hermans, 2003; Honeycutt, 2003). It is the last of these that will be used in the present article, because other terms—particularly "self-talk" and the colloquial expression "talking to oneself"—suggest full identity of the speaker with the addressee, both being the same self, whereas "internal dialog" implies that there are (at least) two distinct communicating parties within one self. This is consistent with the idea that the self is not monolithic, broadly accepted not only in polypsychism (Assagioli, 2000) and the dialogical approach (Hermans, 2003; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995) but also in the cognitive approach (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

The concept of internal dialog is closely related to the dialogical self theory (DST; Hermans, 2003; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995), rooted in the phenomenological approach. Referring to the world, to others and to themselves, a person may adopt many different perspectives. Hermans calls them I-positions. He conceptualizes the dialogical self as a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions. Each I-position, shaped in a particular social context, is endowed with a voice (the voice of a culture, a community, a significant other, or a personal voice) and intertwined with other I-positions resembling people in social relationships (Hermans, 2003). Consequently, not only external (interpersonal) but also internal (intrapersonal) dialogs are possible. An internal dialog means that a person alternately adopts (at least) two different perspectives and that utterances formulated from these viewpoints refer to one another (Puchalska-Wasyl, 2015). A personal viewpoint may (but does not have to) be a party to an internal dialog: I can imagine my conversation with a friend, but also one between a pair of my quarreling friends whom I would like to help.

Internal dialogs can be divided according to different criteria (Oleś et al., 2010; Puchalska-Wasyl, 2006), but researchers are particularly interested in the distinction (with regard to mode and outcome) between integrative (integrating) and confrontational (contrasting/confronting/coercive) dialogs (negotiations). In general terms, integrative internal dialogs aim to take

into account and integrate all the viewpoints involved; consequently, they can result in creative solutions. Confrontational inner dialogs, by contrast, emphasize differences between standpoints and aim to enhance one of them and ignore or deprecate the others (Borawski, 2011; Młynarczyk, 2011; Nir, 2012). At the specific level, researchers differ in their understanding of integration and confrontation. In an attempt to reconcile and elaborate their approaches, I assumed and empirically confirmed (Puchalska-Wasyl, 2016; see further: *Integration–Confrontation* [ICON] measure) that integration and confrontation are independent dimensions in describing internal dialog. Integration concerns the level of agreement between the standpoints clashing in dialog, while confrontation involves the assessment of victory and defeat in each party to dialog, reflecting the advantage of one of them. Integration comprises two processes: the extension and alignment of perspectives/viewpoints, whereas confrontation encompasses their valorization and devalorization. Each of these four processes potentially occurs in both dialoguing parties. Perspective *extension* consists in a given perspective undergoing modification under the influence of new contents heard in a dialog to take into account the arguments of the other party. *Alignment* consists in adjusting a given standpoint to the partner's perspective in order to maintain a relationship with him/her. The higher the intensity of these two processes in both parties, the more the solution reached takes into account both viewpoints, and the stronger is the integration. Integration thus involves openness to the partner's perspective and willingness to consider his/her arguments and/or needs, manifested in modifying the adopted stance. The stronger the integration, the greater the chance of new creative solutions appearing through the cooperation of two extended perspectives.

Confrontation in an internal dialog involves valorization and devalorization processes. *Valorization* consists in treating a given viewpoint as the winner in a dialog: the victory is attributed exclusively to the strength of argumentation following from that viewpoint. *Devalorization*, by contrast, consists in perceiving a given standpoint as defeated in a dialog. Confrontation consists in maximizing the valorization and minimizing the devalorization of one party while minimizing the valorization and maximizing the devalorization of the other. The higher the disproportion in perceiving the dialoguing parties, the stronger the confrontation. If both parties win or/and lose to a similar degree, confrontation is weak.

This approach (and the method presented further) allows to analyze particular processes in internal dialog and at the same time—following Borawski (2011), Młynarczyk (2011) and Nir (2012)—to distinguish between integrative and confrontational dialogs. According to this proposal, integrative dialog has a higher intensity of integration than confrontation, whereas confrontational dialog has the reverse pattern.

Few studies have been conducted so far on integrative and confrontational internal dialogs. As has been shown, compared with confrontational dialogs, integrative dialogs enhance situational self-esteem and positive emotions (Borawski, 2011). Additionally, integrative dialogs conducted by a person who prefers dialogical thinking can diminish discrepancies between his/her ideal and ought selves (Młynarczyk, 2011). Hermans's studies reveal that voicing different viewpoints on a problem and attempting to consider their arguments (typical of integrative dialog) is conducive to well-being and more adaptive psychological functioning (Hermans, 2003; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995). Internal dialogs, which often simulate social dialogs, also fulfil cognitive, motivating and modeling functions (Puchalska-Wasyl, 2006). As integrative internal dialogs enable taking someone else's perspective into consideration, they can model positive social relationships, motivate to bring this model into effect, and support its implementation. Presumably, the ability to integrate internal perspectives in a dialog simulating social interactions also translates into greater ease in generating various solutions to difficult situations (Staudinger & Baltes, 1996). Therefore, integrative internal dialogs perform a number of positive functions. Studies to date, however, fail to pinpoint the factors conditioning these dialogs. Apart from theoretical significance, the knowledge of such conditioning factors could also have practical significance, as it would make it possible to induce integrative dialogs (instead of confrontational ones) and, indirectly, to influence the effects of internal dialogs conducted by people. The present study aims to check if psychological distance is one of the factors conditioning integrative dialogs. Why psychological distance?

Observations of negotiations in the social world suggest that if negotiators concede on secondary issues in exchange for getting what they want on high-priority issues (a process called logrolling), their behavior is more integrative and maximizes both individual and joint outcomes. A study of live negotiation (Henderson, Trope, & Carnevale, 2006) conducted in line with the construal level theory of psychological distance (CLT; Bar-Anan, Liberman, & Trope, 2006; Trope & Liberman, 2010) shows that 91% of dyads reached a fully logrolling agreement when interlocutors adopted a perspective temporally distant from the realization of the negotiated settlement (the negotiated event was to take place five months later). Of dyads with a temporally near perspective (with the negotiated event on the following day), only 50% reached a fully logrolling agreement. It was concluded that a temporally distant perspective promotes integrative behavior during the negotiation and, consequently, produces greater joint outcomes.

According to CLT, temporal perspective is one of the psychological distance dimensions, aside from spatial and social ones and hypotheticality (Bar-Anan et al., 2006; Trope & Liberman, 2010). Psychological distance is a

subjective experience that something is close or far away from "the self, here, and now." When I adopt the viewpoint of the other (e.g., partner or stranger), I move on the social dimension, and the further from the self the other is, the larger the distance. The further that which I think about is from "now" (future or past) or from "here" (a distant place), the larger the temporal or spatial distance, respectively. "Real" and "unlikely to occur" constitute the extremes of the hypotheticality dimension. Those four distance dimensions are mentally associated, which means the experience of distance on one dimension automatically affects the perceived distance on other dimensions. Additionally, those distance dimensions influence and are influenced by the level of mental construal. The more distant an object/action/event is from "the self, here, and now," the higher (more abstract) its level of construal, and vice versa. Lower-level construals are concrete and contextualized representations that include subordinate and incidental features of situation (e.g., lecturing on personality psychology at university A in country B). Higher-level construals are abstract, schematic and decontextualized representations, emphasizing superordinate, core features of events and omitting incidental features (e.g., developing as a psychologist).

According to CLT, the negotiators examined by Henderson et al. (2006) who adopted a (temporally) distant perspective construed negotiation goals on a more abstract level. Their behavior was more integrative because they could ignore the incidental features of their goal and pursue its essence. In the context of this conclusion and the fact that internal dialogs simulating social relations involve movement on the four dimensions of distance by adopting the other's perspective, traversing temporal and spatial distance, and analyzing situations that vary in probability, the main question of the present study was posed: Does the way of conducting internal dialog simulating social relationships depend on the psychological distance (proximal vs. distant perspective on the situation enacted in a dialog) a person adopts when conducting that dialog?

Based on the assumption that there is an analogy between social negotiations and the clashing of perspectives in internal dialogs, the main hypothesis was formulated:

H1. An increase in psychological distance (adopting a distant perspective) causes the increase in the number of integrative internal dialogs simulating social relationships.

Given that two independent processes—integration and confrontation—take place in internal dialogs, two specific hypotheses were formulated:

H1a. An increase in psychological distance intensifies the integration process in internal dialogs simulating social relationships.

H1b. An increase in psychological distance weakens the confrontation process in internal dialogs simulating social relationships.

The integration process appears to be linked with a higher level of mental construal, and thus with greater distance, since creative agreement on goals represented by two viewpoints requires concentrating on their central features while giving up peripheral ones. A lower level of mental construal, connected with small distance, makes omitting peripheral features impossible. The impossibility of agreement between viewpoints may foster their polarization and intensify confrontation. If a young psychologist looking for a job thinks of professional development, they may creatively negotiate various proposals with the potential employer (both in internal dialog and in reality). If, however, he or she insists on becoming a personality psychology lecturer at university A in country B, there is no chance of reaching agreement through dialog. Only success or failure is possible.

Testing the above hypotheses appears worthwhile. If it turned out that distance is indeed a factor conditioning the intensity of integration and confrontation processes in internal dialogs, the knowledge of this relationship, expanded through further research, could enable us to influence the types (integrative vs. confrontational) and, indirectly, the effects of dialogs conducted by people. Studying this relationship appears even more important if we assume that internal dialogs can model behaviors in interpersonal relations (cf. Honeycutt, 2003; Puchalska-Wasyl, 2006). In this situation, the above effects of dialogs could have not only individual but also social significance.

An experiment was designed to address these problems. The manipulation concerned psychological distance, whereas the dependent variables were the indices of integration and confrontation in the dialogs conducted and, in consequence, the number of integrative dialogs.

PRESENT STUDY

Measure

Dependent variables were measured using the ICON method, designed by Puchalska-Wasyl (2016) and available upon request. It is a 13-item measure of the intensity of integrative and confrontational characteristics of internal dialog, completed with a specific imaginary dialog in mind. ICON is based on the author's understanding of integration and confrontation as independent dimensions of internal dialog (see Introduction). Integration refers to the degree of agreement achieved between clashing standpoints, while confrontation—connected with the intensity of victory and defeat perceived in each party—reflects the advantage of one of them.

Integration encompasses the processes of extension and alignment of the standpoints involved in a dialog, whereas confrontation is constituted by the processes of their valorization and devalorization. Each process potentially occurs in each party to dialog. Thus, the first eight ICON items, rated on a 0–6 scale, concern the following, respectively:

1. first perspective extension (EXT1)
2. second perspective extension (EXT2)
3. first perspective alignment (ALI1)
4. second perspective alignment (ALI2)
5. first perspective valorization (V1)
6. second perspective valorization (V2)
7. first perspective devalorization (DV1)
8. second perspective devalorization (DV2)

The remaining, supplementary items (0–6 scale) concern, e.g., the participant's identification with the first and the second perspective.

The higher the intensity of extension and alignment processes in each party, the stronger is the integration. Its intensity, from 0 to 24, is computed as follows:

$$INT = EXT1 + EXT2 + ALI1 + ALI2$$

Confrontation consists in the polarization of partners—maximizing the valorization and minimizing the devalorization of one party while minimizing the valorization and maximizing the devalorization of the other. It increases with the growth of disproportion in perceiving the discussing parties. Confrontation intensity, from 0 to 12, is computed as follows:

$$CONF = |(V1 + DV2) - (V2 + DV1)|$$

In order to determine whether a dialog is more integrative or more confrontational, its percentage indices of integration ($INT_{(\%)}$) and confrontation ($CONF_{(\%)}$) are compared.

In the basic version of ICON, the first perspective corresponds to the viewpoint of the dialog's author (research participant); the second perspective corresponds to his/her imaginary interlocutor's standpoint. Because in the experiment presented further the participants were to imagine a dialog between the spouses from the situation previously described to them, ICON was modified for each item to include the respective names of the characters from the description. Thus, in the above formulae "1" referred to the husband and "2" to the wife.

In two other studies, where individuals conducted dialogs about a matter of personal importance and then completed ICON, the correlation between integration and confrontation indices was non-significant and close to zero ($N = 93$, $r = -.048$, $p = .648$; $N = 119$, $r = -.024$, $p = .798$). This supports the theoretically postulated independence of the integration and confrontation dimensions.

The reliability of the basic version of ICON was established on a sample of 99 people (50 women; $M_{age} = 22.58$; $SD = 1.39$). Cronbach's α was .75 for INT and .78 for CONF; items V2 and DV1 were reverse-scored.

There are no other methods measuring integration and confrontation, which makes the validation of ICON difficult. However, it is also a form of validation of a given method to confirm theory-based hypotheses using that method (Zawadzki, 2006). Based on DST and DST-inspired research on the types of internal interlocutors (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995; Puchalska-Wasyl, 2006, 2015), I hypothesized that two types of interlocutors were characteristic for integrative dialogs, while two other types were characteristic for confrontational dialogs. The participants were 99 student (50 women; $M_{age} = 22.58$, $SD = 1.39$) of various majors at 16 Polish universities. They conducted dialogs about a matter of personal importance and then completed ICON. By means of ICON, all the dialogs were divided into integrative ($n = 45$) and confrontational ($n = 54$). The hypothesis concerning integrative and confrontational interlocutors was positively verified (Puchalska-Wasyl, 2016). This means dialogs have been correctly divided and indirectly proves the validity of ICON.

Participants

Participation was proposed to 178 people: 53 people (35 women) refused. Additionally, eight contributions were rejected on formal grounds (unfinished, incorrectly completed, etc.) and two were excluded based on competent judges' evaluation of dialogs (see Results). Ultimately, analysis was performed on results from 115 people (56 women; $M_{age} = 22.26$, $SD = 1.87$, range 19–27). The group with greater distance (distant perspective group) consisted of 59 people (28 women). The group with smaller distance (proximal perspective group) consisted of 56 people (28 women). The participants were randomly assigned to groups and examined individually or in pairs. They were 63 undergraduate and 52 graduate students of various majors (e.g., law, information technology, administration, economics, mathematics) at four universities.

Procedure

The study was conducted in Poland. It took 20–30 minutes. Participants were informed that the study was anonymous and voluntary and that it concerned the ability to adopt various people's viewpoints and to empathize with their emotions. The procedure was based on mental simulation of an interpersonal situation, different versions of which are used in various research areas (e.g., Slotter et al., 2012). The participants received a description of a fictional problem situation faced by a young married couple. The woman—a wife and a mother—wanted

to change her job from well-paid but inconsistent with her aspirations to uncertain but ambition-fulfilling. The husband opposed this change as threatening the family's financial situation. After reading the description, participants were to write down an imaginary dialog between that couple. The dialog was to end in a decision about what to do next. The instruction was identical in both experimental groups, but the situation description was slightly different. In the proximal perspective group, the fictitious spouses lived at the same time in the same town in which the research took place; they were roughly the same age as the participants (soon after graduation) and had fairly popular Polish names. The situation was described as real. In the distant perspective group, several changes were introduced to increase distance on each dimension: the participants were told that the story was made up (hypotheticality), that the situation happened in a country other than Poland (spatial distance) and in the past (temporal distance) and that the characters were not immediately but about 10 years after graduation; they also had foreign names (social distance). After the dialog, participants from both groups completed ICON, which measured integration and confrontation intensity in the dialogs conducted and allowed to determine the number of integrative dialogs. Two supplementary items concerning the participant's identification with characters served as a form of manipulation check. It was assumed that greater distance would increase the objectivization of the problem, promoting impartial perception and similar identification with the two parties to dialog, whereas small distance—intuitively associated with lower objectivity—should promote stronger identification with one (favored) party.

Results

The manipulation can be considered effective because in the distant perspective group there were no differences in the degree of identification with the husband and the wife ($M_h = 3.24$, $SD = 1.86$ and $M_w = 3.36$, $SD = 1.79$; $t(58) = -0.3$, $p = .765$, $d = 0.04$), whereas in the proximal perspective group the participants identified more strongly with the husband than with the wife ($M_h = 3.63$, $SD = 1.98$ and $M_w = 2.59$, $SD = 1.94$; $t(55) = 2.83$,

$p = .007$, $d = 0.38$). Additionally, identification with each spouse was tested within the male and female groups. In women, there were no differences ($M_h = 3.20$, $SD = 2.05$ and $M_w = 3.55$, $SD = 1.90$; $t(55) = -0.84$, $p = .407$, $d = 0.11$), whereas men identified more strongly with the husband than with the wife ($M_h = 3.64$, $SD = 1.78$ and $M_w = 2.44$, $SD = 1.75$; $t(58) = 3.73$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.49$). Because of the small size of the subgroups, analyses with a simultaneous division into genders and experimental conditions were not conducted.

In accordance with the main hypothesis, an increase in psychological distance causes an increase in the number of integrative internal dialogs. It was assumed that integrative dialogs had a higher percentage index of integration than confrontation ($INT_{(\%)} > CONF_{(\%)}$) and that confrontational dialogs had the reverse pattern ($CONF_{(\%)} > INT_{(\%)}$). Of the 117 dialogs initially collected, four had balanced integration and confrontation indices, but only in two cases did the content appear to confirm such balance. Two competent judges, completing ICON for each of these four dialogs, unanimously decided that one of them was integrative and the other one confrontational. Thus, eventually, 48 integrative and 67 confrontational dialogs were analyzed (24 and 32 from women, respectively). Two dialogs were rejected.

The distribution of the number of integrative and confrontational dialogs in both experimental groups was determined and analyses were performed using chi-squared test. Generally, a significant relationship was found between psychological distance and internal dialog type ($\chi^2 = 5.82$, $df = 1$, $p = .016$).

Additionally, it was found that in the proximal perspective group there were significantly more confrontational dialogs than integrative ones. However, the difference disappeared in the distant perspective group (Table 1 and Figure 1), which was caused by a significant increase in the number of integrative dialogs in this condition ($\chi^2 = 4.08$, $df = 1$, $p = .043$). At the same time, the decrease in the number of confrontational dialogs was non-significant ($\chi^2 = 1.81$, $df = 1$, $p = .179$). There were no gender differences in the distribution of either integrative ($\chi^2 = 0.09$, $df = 1$, $p = .763$) or confrontational dialogs ($\chi^2 = 0.03$, $df = 1$, $p = .853$) between the proximal

TABLE 1
The number of integrative and confrontational dialogs—comparison within proximal and distant perspective groups

Group		Dialog		Differences		
		Integrative	Confrontational	χ^2	df	p
Proximal perspective	Females	9	19	3.57	1	<.059
	Males	8	20	5.14	1	<.023
	Total	17	39	8.64	1	<.003
Distant perspective	Females	15	13	0.14	1	<.705
	Males	16	15	0.03	1	<.857
	Total	31	28	0.15	1	<.696

TABLE 2
Integration and confrontation indices—comparison between proximal and distant perspective groups

| | Group | | | | Differences | | | |
| | Proximal perspective (n = 56) | | Distant perspective (n = 59) | | | | | |
Indices	M	SD	M	SD	t	df	p	d
Integration	10.07	4.28	10.07	3.67	0.005	113	<.996	0.00
Confrontation	6.70	3.62	4.71	3.20	3.12	113	<.002	0.59

Note: Maximum integration index is 24; maximum confrontation index is 12.
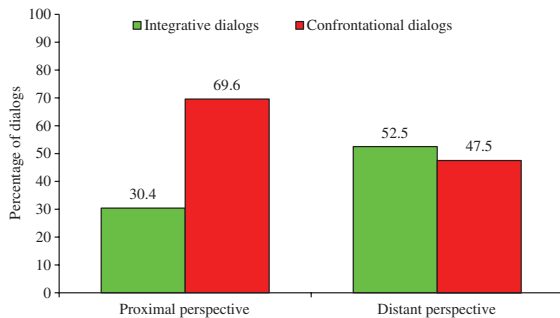

Figure 1. The percentage of integrative and confrontational dialogs in proximal and distant perspective groups. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com].

and distant perspective groups. Thus, the main hypothesis (H1) was confirmed.

It was also hypothesized that internal dialogs in the distant perspective group would have higher integration indices (H1a) and lower confrontation indices (H1b) than dialogs in the proximal perspective group. In order to verify these hypotheses, the above-mentioned indices were compared between the experimental groups using Student's t-test (Table 2). No differences were found in the integration index but there was a significant difference in the confrontation index. The increase in psychological distance caused a fairly strong effect ($d = 0.59$) of decrease in the intensity of the confrontation process in internal dialogs. The observed power of the test was 0.584. The specific hypothesis H1b was thus confirmed, and H1a was not.

Because of the small size of the subgroups, these relationships were not tested with a simultaneous distinction between genders and experimental conditions. However, there were no gender differences either in integration ($M_W = 10.36$, $SD = 4.30$ and $M_M = 9.80$, $SD = 3.63$; $t(113) = 0.76$, $p = .451$, $d = 0.14$) or in confrontation ($M_W = 5.96$, $SD = 3.18$ and $M_M = 5.41$, $SD = 3.85$; $t(113) = 0.84$, $p = .400$, $d = 0.16$).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The presented study showed that an increase in psychological distance lowers the intensity of the confrontation process in internal dialogs. Although the intensity of the integration process does not change when

distance grows, an increase in the number of integrative dialogs is observed because dialog type is determined based on the differential index (difference in the intensity of integration and confrontation processes).

The fact that an increase in distance weakened confrontation but did not strengthen integration appears to confirm that the two processes defined here are not extremes of the same continuum and should be considered separately.

It is, therefore worth considering—going beyond the general terms of mental construal—why there were significantly more confrontational dialogs than integrative ones in the proximal perspective group and why did the confrontation process grow weaker with the increase in distance. The participants were to conduct an imaginary dialog between spouses. In the situation description they read that, in the husband's opinion, the change of job may shake the financial situation of the family. As research shows, adopting a proximal perspective involves a focus on pragmatic concerns rather than on idealistic values (Kivetz & Tyler, 2007) and noticing cons more readily than pros (Eyal, Liberman, Trope, & Walther, 2004). Focus on the drawbacks of the change may have induced the participants to oppose the change and, consequently, prevent them from identifying with the person proposing the change (the wife). Additional analyses of ICON items, concerning identification with the characters of the dialog, actually showed that, in the proximal perspective group, the participants identified significantly less strongly with the wife than with the husband. Probably, the different level of identification with the dialog's characters resulted in the characters being liked to different degrees by the participants. Research shows that the more other people resemble us, the more we like them (Sprecher, 2014). It is also known that the success of a person we like gives us joy and his/her defeat causes sorrow (Pietraszkiewicz & Wojciszke, 2014). This may have led to the viewpoint of a liked character being easily strengthened in a dialog and, consequently, to the polarization of the interlocutors, manifesting itself in a high confrontation index. Adopting a distant perspective results in a weaker focus on cons and pragmatic concerns (Eyal et al., 2004; Kivetz & Tyler, 2007). The fact that the importance of the drawbacks of the discussed change diminished may have resulted in similar levels of the participant's identification with both characters. As previously, analyses of additional ICON

items showed that in the distant perspective group there were no differences in the degree of identification with the wife and the husband. In such a situation, polarization is undesirable, since the defeat of any of the parties to dialog causes sorrow (Pietraszkiewicz & Wojciszke, 2014). This could explain the decrease in the intensity of the confrontation process in the group with increased distance. However, the confirmation of these interpretative hypotheses requires further research, including replications of the described identification patterns in analyses taking distance and gender into account simultaneously.

Can the decrease in confrontation in the distant perspective group be explained by the participants' assumption that if the situation was about spouses and a problem they had in the past, then their marriage must have survived the trial thanks to a creative (integrating) resolution of the problem? Such an explanation would be possible if the participants had not been informed that the situation was invented. Because they knew the description was fictional, what may have actually influenced them appears to be psychological distance, resulting from the unreality (hypotheticality) of the situation.

Why was the increase in distance not accompanied by an increase in the intensity of the integration process, which was assumed in the light of CLT as a result of the higher level of mental construal? This might be an effect of the difficulty of the task the participants were given. The pivotal problem of the dialog was complex, and it probably required a high level of abstraction (and considerable cognitive effort) to generate an innovative solution satisfactory for both parties. Given the moderate integration index in both experimental groups, it can be supposed that the participants in both conditions usually tried to "half-solve" the problem: only one party to dialog modified his/her stance under the influence of the other party's arguments (extension) and/or in order to maintain a good relationship with him/her (alignment). High integration indices, by contrast, are possible when the processes of extension and alignment are bilateral—particularly when the solution generated is new and takes into account the goals of both partners. Further studies are therefore necessary, using other tasks, so as to conclusively resolve whether or not the integration process in internal dialog can intensify with the increase of psychological distance.

To what extent are the presented results consistent with Henderson et al.'s (2006) conclusions from research on negotiators, which inspired the present study? Above all, it must be stressed that the present study was not designed as a replication of the above-mentioned research. Although a certain analogy is observed between internal dialogs and social negotiations, these phenomena are distinct. In live negotiation there are (at least) two people, each representing his/her own viewpoint. In an experimentally conducted internal dialog, a person alternately adopted two strangers' perspectives. Taking into account the dissimilarity of the studied phenomena, the

presented results should be regarded as largely consistent with the findings of Henderson et al.—an increase in distance increases the frequency of integrative dialogs as well as integrative behavior in negotiations. The similarity of results at the general level is therefore clear. At the specific level, the results are more difficult to compare. Henderson et al. measured integrative behavior using numerous indices (e.g., the proportion of multi-issue offers, individual and joint outcomes) that were developed in research on (live) negotiation and would be difficult to apply to internal dialog. The two indices I used measure integration and confrontation taking into account the specificity of internal dialogs, but they have a more general character. The fact established in the present study that the integration process did not intensify with the increase in distance remains inconsistent with the findings of Henderson et al., but—as emphasized above—this result requires verification. As regards other specific indices, one may wonder whether it is not the case that the indices of individual and joint outcomes used by the American researchers can more easily be translated into the confrontation index than into the integration index applied in my study. This is because the measure of confrontation is based on direct assessment of the victory and defeat of each party (individual outcomes). At the same time, confrontation is at the minimum level for example when both partners have achieved victory to a similarly high degree and suffered defeat to a similarly small degree (high joint outcomes—logrolling). In this perspective, the results of present study are largely consistent with those obtained by Henderson et al.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that this is the first study on the potential relationship between integrative internal dialogs and the distance towards the situation enacted in them. Its findings should be treated as inviting further exploration. The present study involved manipulating the four dimensions of distance that, according to CLT, are mentally associated. Still, in further research each dimension should also be manipulated separately to check whether indeed each has identical influence on the integrative and confrontational characteristics of internal dialogs. Moreover, the procedure presented here came down to the participants imagining how two strangers would talk to each other. The next study should be planned to follow the self/not-self × proximal/distant perspective design. CLT assumes that imagining oneself in dialog will reduce distance towards the situation enacted (on the social dimension). In the light of the results presented here, what should be expected in that condition compared with the not-self condition (i.e., adopting another person's viewpoint) is a higher intensity of confrontation in the proximal perspective group and, consequently, a lower number of integrative dialogs in the distant perspective group. The next important step will be to test the above-mentioned relationships in internal dialogs concerning a problematic issue of

personal importance to participants. Such internal dialogs can become "prototypes" of interpersonal relations (cf. Honeycutt, 2003; Puchalska-Wasyl, 2006). If it was found that a real conversation concerning a difficult matter (e.g., a serious conflict) becomes significantly less confrontational after it has been imagined in different space and time, these results could have enormous practical significance. Internal dialog, which is now a useful tool in psychotherapy (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004), could not only strengthen its position in psychological practice but also become a simple and inexpensive instrument for shaping more positive social behaviors in everyday life.

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