

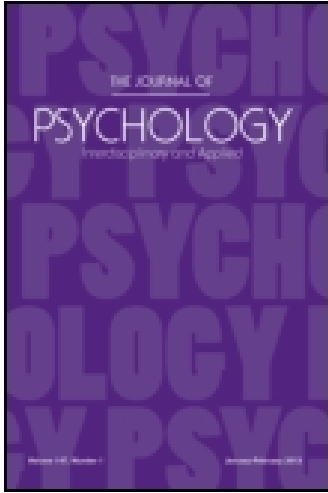
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Self-Talk: Conversation With Oneself? On the Types of Internal Interlocutors

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ABSTRACT. The two studies presented in the article aimed to empirically verify the tentative typology of internal interlocutors in self-talk proposed in a previous research project. The typology comprised four emotional types: Faithful Friend, Ambivalent Parent, Proud Rival, and Helpless Child. Study 1 involved 98 participants (49 women) and Study 2 involved 114 (55 women), mostly students. In both studies, the names of internal interlocutors were generated by participants as qualitative data, quantified by reference to the standard set of affect terms, and, as affective patterns, subjected to clustering. Study 2 fully confirmed the recent results, whereas Study 1 revealed a new interlocutor type instead of Helpless Child – Calm Optimist. The conducted studies confirm the existence of four main types of inner interlocutors and provide a reason to verify the existence of Calm Optimist.

Keywords: imaginary dialog, imaginary interlocutor, internal dialog, internal interlocutor, self-talk

MACHIAVELLI IS REPORTED TO HAVE HAD IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS with historical figures at dinner (Watkins, 2000) and Jung (1963) wrote about inspiring internal discussions with Philemon. In such situations we usually say that people talk to themselves. In the literature, this phenomenon is named by numerous terms, such as inner speech (MacKay, 1992), private speech (Winsler, Fernyhough, & Montero, 2009), auditory imagery (Reisberg, 1992), interior monolog (Hogenraad & Oriane, 1983), self-statements (Kamann & Wong, 1993), or self-talk (Brinthaupt & Dove, 2012). Particularly the last two, like the colloquial expression “to talk to oneself,” suggest full identity of the speaker with the recipient of the utterance, both being the same self. At the same time, the widespread stance in psychology is that the self is not monolithic. In the cognitive approach, the idea of self-multiplicity inspires the differentiation between actual self, ideal self, ought self (Higgins, 1987, 1997), undesired self (Ogilvie, 1987), possible self (Markus & Nurius, 1986), working self (Markus & Wurf,

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1987), among others. The dialogical approach refers to various I-positions (Hermans, 1996; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, Rijks, & Kempen, 1993), and polypsychism speaks of numerous subpersonalities (Assagioli, 2000; Rowan, 1990; Rowan & Cooper, 1999). In this context, “talking to oneself” does not exclude distinguishing between the speaker and the recipient. For example, when a person says to themselves “You cannot give up now!” this may be interpreted as one part of their self (e.g., ought self) addressing another part (e.g., actual self). Similarly, Machiavelli’s “talking to himself” at dinner may be understood as one of his I-positions (e.g., I as a statesman) addressing another I-position, representing an honorable guest’s (e.g., Cesare Borgia’s) standpoint.

As the aforementioned examples show, the addressee of such internal utterances can be not only a part of the self in the strict sense (a personal viewpoint) but also an imaginary other (someone else’s perspective). In the mid-1980s, Caughey (1984) claimed that the social world of an average contemporary American comprised about 200–300 people (family, friends, and acquaintances) and that an individual’s imaginary world was inhabited by a similar number of figures. Conceivably, in the age of digital social networking those numbers have been multiplied (Alperstein, 2003). Caughey divides imaginary figures into three groups: (1) people from the media, (2) purely imaginary characters conjured up in dreams or fantasies, and (3) imaginary replicas of people personally known: parents, friends, loved ones, and so forth. He believes that a person can not only address but also talk with a figure of each type as if they were really present.

The phenomenon of addressing someone objectively-absent (an imaginary other) and imagining them reply is sometimes included in analyses of self-talk. For example, discussing the basic functions of this activity, Brinthaup and Dove (2012) speak of self-talk that reflects a person’s social interactions and consist in “replaying something said to another person or imagining how other people responded to things one said” (p. 326; see also Brinthaup, Hein, & Kramer, 2009).

It follows that sometimes, in reaction to an utterance, the internal addressee can “voice their stance.” This may concern both imaginary others (e.g., my parent, my future child) and parts of the self (e.g., I as pessimist, I as optimist, I as a mother). They then cease to be mere recipients of internal utterances and, by taking up verbal interaction, become internal interlocutors. Consequently, internal dialog occurs, which means that a person alternately adopts two different viewpoints and that utterances formulated from these perspectives refer to one another.

The mutual reference of utterances formulated from different perspectives is one of the main differences between a healthy person’s internal dialog and the pathology of hearing voices in mental illness. For instance, according to Lysaker and Lysaker (2002), in schizophrenia, instead of voices interacting dialogically, either an internal cacophony of voices occurs or the self is dominated by rigid nonevolving monologues of one voice. Moreover, in healthy internal dialog a

person may intentionally give voice to or quieten down a given viewpoint, thus exercising control over it, which is lacking in illness.

According to Mead (1934), the ability to adopt different perspectives alternately, juxtapose them and make them interact is typically human. In the course of phylogenesis, it enabled the emergence of meanings, language as a set of symbols, and the human mind. Cooley (1902) suggested that the self comes into being by adopting someone else's viewpoint. He saw the "reflected self" or "looking-glass self" as comprising three elements: "the imagination of our appearance to the other person, the imagination of his judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification" (Cooley, p. 184). More recent social-cognitive theories also emphasize that a person carries internalized others inside, which considerably influences thinking and activity (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Baldwin, 1992; Baldwin, Carrell, & Lopez, 1990; Ogilvie & Ashmore, 1991).

Caughey's (1984) aforementioned division of imaginary figures, as well as various perspectives on differentiation within the self (Assagioli, 2000; Hermans, 1996; Higgins, 1987, 1997; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Ogilvie, 1987; Rowan, 1990), suggest that internal interlocutors are a heterogeneous group. This is because they reflect the diversity of an individual's internal and external world. Still, it is worth asking whether indeed a person enters into dialog with any part of the self potentially available to them or any figure they can imagine or does a person choose some of those only? If the latter is the case, what figures are usually chosen? Is there anything they have in common? What criterion could their typology be based upon? All these issues come down to one question: What (if any) are the basic types of internal interlocutors? Identifying these types was—besides determining their functions—the main aim of my previous study on imaginary interlocutors, published elsewhere (Puchalska-Wasył, Chmielnicka-Kuter, & Oles, 2008). That study was the first one of this kind and was treated as a pilot study. Because of its exploratory character, no hypotheses were advanced concerning the number of types of internal interlocutors or their characteristics. Since a review of case studies reporting internal interlocutors (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995) revealed that the correspondence of internal interlocutors' names does not necessarily indicate their deeper affinity, it was decided that in the pilot study the criterion for distinguishing possible types of internal interlocutors would be the interlocutor's emotional attitude towards the person creating them. Consequently, emotional types of internal interlocutors were sought.

In my aforementioned study (named "the pilot study" further throughout the manuscript) (Puchalska-Wasył et al., 2008), two measures were used: the *Dialogical Activity Form* (DAF) and *Figure's Emotional Climate Inventory* (FECI). Each person was to take into account all his/her inner interlocutors. As a result, participants described a total of 649 internal figures using 24 affect terms (e.g., love, care, pride, anger, etc.). The emotional profiles of interlocutors were subjected to k-means clustering. Analyses allowed identification of four clusters, corresponding

to four main emotional types of internal interlocutors, which were named: Faithful Friend, Ambivalent Parent, Proud Rival, and Helpless Child.

The main weakness of the pilot study was the fact that its procedure did not specify the number of internal interlocutors that a person was to describe. This freedom resulted in different numbers of figures representing each participant in cluster analysis. Moreover, a given respondent could be represented by a large number of interlocutors of one type, because at this stage it was impossible to control which type a figure belonged to. Thus, there was a risk that the types of internal interlocutors identified in this study did not fully reflect the reality.

In this context, replication of the pilot study results was necessary. Study 1, presented in this article, was aimed at verifying the existence of the four types of internal interlocutors using a procedure meant to minimize the risk that large groups of figures of one type, reported by individual participants, would distort the picture of basic types. Therefore, each participant was asked to name one internal interlocutor. The fact that only three types from the pilot study were confirmed in Study 1 argued for conducting Study 2, with the same aim as Study 1 but a different data collection method to eliminate the limitations of the procedures used in the pilot study and Study 1. In that sense the aim of the two studies presented in this article was to replicate the results of the pilot study while minimizing its methodological shortcomings. Refining the procedure for identifying the types of internal interlocutors was the other, additional aim. Its realization will enable further research on different populations so as to check to what extent the results obtained so far can be generalized. The two studies presented here were deliberately carried out on similar samples, because if different types of internal interlocutors had been distinguished in two studies that differed in both procedure and sample it would have been impossible to say what caused the divergent results.

Methodologically, both studies presented in this article combine qualitative and quantitative approaches in psychology. Each study—like the pilot study—started from collecting qualitative data, reflecting the great diversity of internal interlocutors reported by participants. Next, the data were quantified and subjected to standard statistical analyses.

General Method

Overview

Both studies were conducted in Poland. They were meant to verify the existence of four emotional types of interlocutors appearing in internal dialogs. In each study, the figures for analysis were selected differently. In Study 1, each participant named only one internal interlocutor—the one they had internal dialogs with most often—and characterized them in emotional terms using *Figure's Emotional Climate Inventory* (FECI). In Study 2, respondents could first reflect on all their internal interlocutors thanks to the *Dialogical Activity Form* (DAF). Then, each participant chose four and described them in emotional terms (using FECI). Two

of those were the interlocutors who most often appeared in internal dialogs and the remaining two were supposed to differ from them in the emotions they typically showed toward the participant.

Procedure

In both studies convenience sampling was used. Participants learned about the research project from announcements or friends. Paper-and-pencil versions of all the measures were used. In Study 2, where more information was collected than in Study 1, participants filled in questionnaires at home; this allowed to avoid time pressure and, in the case of DAF, to stimulate reflection on internal dialogical activity.

Measures

Two measures were used: *Dialogical Activity Form* (DAF) and *Figure's Emotional Climate Inventory* (FECI).

Dialogical Activity Form (Puchalska-Wasył, 2006), previously also called Initial Questionnaire (e.g., Puchalska-Wasył, 2011; Puchalska-Wasył et al., 2008), allows to establish what figures or parts of the self become interlocutors in a participant's internal dialogs. Internal dialog is defined as a situation in which a person alternately adopts two or more different viewpoints and from these perspectives formulates utterances relating to one another. Inspired by Hermans' (2001) *Personal Position Repertoire*, DAF also contains a list of example figures and parts of the self (e.g., my beloved, my imaginary companion, I as good, I as bad). Participants are requested to mark those that they recognize as their internal interlocutors and add others to the list. The interlocutor names reported by respondents in DAF are then entered into FECI.

Figure's Emotional Climate Inventory (Puchalska-Wasył, 2006) may be treated as a modification of Hermans' *Self-Confrontation Method* (SCM) (1987, 2001; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995). FECI is based on the following SCM elements: a list of 24 affect terms, the affective pattern index, and experience categorization criteria. It also shares Hermans' assumption that various types of experience result from different degrees of gratification/frustration of two affectively manifested basic motives, common to all people: desire for self-enhancement (S) and desire for contact and union with others (O). Gratification of these motives is accompanied by positive feelings (P) and frustration—by negative ones (N). The major difference between FECI and SCM is that FECI is used for investigating internal interlocutors whereas SCM allows to investigate and reconstruct the client's personal system of meanings, which makes it useful, for example, in therapeutic work.

FECI has the form of a table whose rows are labeled with the names of internal interlocutors reported by a given respondent in DAF and whose columns correspond to the following 24 affective states:

Joy (P)	Shame (N)	Guilt (N)	Safety (P)
Powerlessness (N)	Enjoyment (P)	Self-Confidence (S)	Anger (N)
Self-Esteem (S)	Care (O)	Loneliness (N)	Pride (S)
Anxiety (N)	Love (O)	Trust (P)	Energy (P)
Satisfaction (P)	Self-Alienation (N)	Inferiority (N)	Inner Calm (P)
Strength (S)	Tenderness (O)	Intimacy (O)	Freedom (P)

Using a scale from 0 (not at all) to 5 (very much), participants indicate the extent to which each of the 24 affects describes the typical emotional attitude of their imaginary interlocutor towards them. It then becomes possible to compute a number of indices for each interlocutor, including (Hermans, 2001; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995, 2001; Hermans & Kempen, 1993):

- S = the sum score of four affect terms expressing self-enhancement;
- O = the sum score of four affect terms expressing contact and union with others;
- P = the sum score of eight general positive affects;
- N = the sum score of eight general negative affects.

The scores range from 0 to 20 for S and O indices and from 0 to 40 for P and N. All four, computed for a particular interlocutor, make up his/her affective pattern (S, O, P, N). Based on that pattern, the most characteristic type of experience can be determined for a given internal interlocutor. The classification criteria of the six basic types of experience proposed by Hermans (1987; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995) are the following:

- +S = "autonomy and success"; when $S-O \geq 6$ and $P-N \geq 10$;
- S = "aggression and anger"; when $S-O \geq 6$ and $N-P \geq 10$;
- +O = "unity and love"; when $O-S \geq 6$ and $P-N \geq 10$;
- O = "unfulfilled longing"; when $O-S \geq 6$ and $N-P \geq 10$;
- LL = "powerlessness and isolation"; when S and $O \leq 7$, and $N-P \geq 10$;
- +HH = "strength and unity"; when S and $O \geq 12$ and $P-N \geq 10$.

If there is no clear difference between the levels of P and N, we speak of ambivalent experience (+/-) irrespective of S and O indices.

Hermans and Hermans-Jansen (1995) determined the reliability of S, O, P, and N indices by examining two groups: 43 students (including 20 men) and 40 clients (including 20 men). For students, the reliabilities (Cronbach's α) of S, O, P, and N were .83, .86, .85, and .88, respectively. The correlation between S and O was .27, and the correlation between P and N was -.79. For clients, the reliabilities of S, O, P and N were .83, .89, .93, and .91, respectively. The correlation between S and O was .64, and the correlation between P and N was -.70. Clients showed lower S scores ($p < .001$), lower O scores ($p < .05$), lower P scores ($p < .001$),

and higher N scores ($p < .001$) than students. No differences were found between men and women.

The reliability of FECEI was tested on a group of 31 students, who assessed one figure of their choice. The reliabilities (Cronbach's α) of S, O, P, and N were .74, .93, .88, and .89, respectively (Puchalska-Wasył, 2006).

Study 1

Pilot study procedure (Puchalska-Wasył et al., 2008) allowed a situation of respondents being represented in analyses by different numbers of internal interlocutors. Moreover, a respondent could be represented by a large number of interlocutors of one type (uncontrolled variable). There was, therefore, a risk that the types of internal interlocutors identified in the pilot study did not fully reflect the reality. For this reason, Study 1 was aimed at verifying their previously proposed tentative typology; in this study, each participant was to be represented by only one interlocutor. It was hypothesized that four types of internal interlocutors exist, distinguished by emotional climate: Faithful Friend, Ambivalent Parent, Proud Rival, and Helpless Child.

Participants

The participants were 98 people with a mean age of 23.48 ($SD = 2.41$; range 19–31): 49 women and 49 men. There were 78 students of various majors (e.g., management, sociology, geography, history, economics, law, administration, education studies, or medicine): 42 undergraduate and 36 graduate students; 14 participants were university graduates; and 6 had secondary education. One person was excluded from analyses for formal reasons (missing data).

Procedure

At the beginning of Study 1 it was briefly explained to participants what internal dialog was; next, they were asked if they were able to identify one internal interlocutor: the one they most frequently had internal dialogs with. Participants who answered positively were asked to describe that figure in emotional terms, using the standard FECEI list of 24 affects.

Results and Discussion

To determine the possible types of internal interlocutors, their affective patterns ($N = 97$) were subjected to k-means clustering. As in the pilot study, analyses with various numbers of clusters (from two to six) were performed. Averaged affective patterns of clusters were related to the experience categorization criteria proposed by Hermans (1987, 2001; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995) and presented when describing FECEI. If any cluster obtained for k-means had an ambivalent pattern, clustering was conducted again for $k + 1$ means. It was possible to stop repeating this procedure when adding an additional cluster yielded redundant

types. With the number of clusters exceeding four, at least two averaged affective patterns could be classified as representing the same experience type. Analysis of the affective patterns of the four groups distinguished (see Table 1) revealed that three patterns corresponded to the emotional types of internal interlocutors identified in the pilot study, namely to Faithful Friend, Ambivalent Parent, and Proud Rival.

Type +HH ($N = 30$) was described in the pilot study as Faithful Friend. Such figures are best characterized by the experience of “strength and unity” (high S, high O, high P, low N), which often appears in the context of friendship, enabling self-reinforcement thanks to a deep relationship (cf. Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995).

Type +/- with strong S and O motives ($N = 22$) was previously called Ambivalent Parent. It represents a strong (high S) and loving (high O) interlocutor, who often experiences ambivalent feelings (high P, high N) toward the person he/she enters into dialog with. He/she therefore resembles a parent, who experiences various negative emotions in reaction to the child’s irresponsible ideas but never stops loving the child.

Type +S ($N = 32$) was earlier called Proud Rival. “Autonomy and success” (high S, low O, high P, low N) is this figure’s basic experience during imaginary dialog. This kind of interlocutor does not give his/her creator a sense of closeness and bond (low O) but strengthens himself/herself instead through interactions with them, experiencing pride and self-confidence (high S).

In Study 1, Helpless Child (-LL) did not occur; however, a new type of interlocutor emerged. They both have a low level of the two basic motives (S and $O \leq 7$) but differ in the proportion of positive (P) to negative affect (N). In Helpless Child, negative affect predominates over positive affect, the reverse being the case in the new type (although positive affect is not particularly intense there).

The kind of experience that most accurately corresponds to the new type is termed “passive enjoyment” or “empty satisfaction” and assigned the +LL symbol (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995, p. 93). It concerns cases when a lack of self-enhancement (S) and contact with others (O) is experienced as positive. Being relatively rare, it is not listed by Hermans (1987, 2001; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995) among basic types of experience. Analysis of the content of +LL experiences indicates that they represent attempts to escape from the tensions and motivational pressures that originate inside or outside the person. In this light, the figure type revealed in Study 1 can be called Calm Optimist. This is a relaxed interlocutor, whose attitude suggests distance towards everything that seems to urge people or put pressure on them. It is uncertain, though, whether Calm Optimist’s attitude should be interpreted as encouragement—grounded in existential reflection—to enjoy every moment of life consciously or merely as putting aside, defensively, the current matters that one is unable to cope with.

TABLE 1. Comparison of Affective Indices for the Four Types of Internal Interlocutors Identified in Study 1

Affective Pattern	Type of Internal Interlocutor				ANOVA		Post Hoc Tests – Significant Differences
	1. Faithful Friend (N = 30)	2. Ambivalent Parent (N = 22)	3. Proud Rival (N = 32)	4. Calm Optimist (N = 13)	$F_{(3,93)}$	$p <$	
S							
<i>M</i>	13.50	10.82	11.88	6.46	13.73	.001	.31
<i>SD</i>	2.81	3.83	3.54	3.20			
O							
<i>M</i>	16.30	12.27	6.84	7.23	38.02	.001	.55
<i>SD</i>	2.26	3.01	4.39	5.64			
P							
<i>M</i>	31.70	21.45	21.00	11.54	68.00	.001	.69
<i>SD</i>	3.87	5.57	4.02	5.08			
N							
<i>M</i>	4.00	15.95	5.09	3.69	43.64	.001	.29
<i>SD</i>	3.77	4.87	3.87	4.59			

Note. S = the self-enhancement motive; O = the motive of contact with others; P = positive affect; N = negative affect. Bonferroni test was applied in post hoc analyses—except for the O index, where *T*3 Dunnett's test was used due to violations of the homogeneity of variance assumption. The numbered subgroups differ significantly at the level of at least $p < .05$.

In Study 1, post hoc analyses (see Table 1) compared the four types of internal interlocutors in terms of each element of the affective pattern. The same analyses were also performed using data from the pilot study (Puchalska-Wasył, 2012). In Study 1 the self-enhancement motive (S) was the weakest in Calm Optimist, which is consistent with the definition of +LL experience and should be no surprise. Faithful Friend, as in previous analyses, had a significantly higher level of this motive than Ambivalent Parent but did not differ in this respect from Proud Rival. The results obtained for the contact motive (O) also corresponded to the pilot study. It turned out that tenderness or care describe Faithful Friend to a significantly greater degree than they describe other types. Ambivalent Parent comes second, experiencing these feelings more strongly than Proud Rival and more intensely than Calm Optimist, whose basic motives are assumed to be reduced. As regards positive affect (P), it was found to accompany Faithful Friend to the greatest extent and Calm Optimist to the smallest, both figures differing significantly from the remaining three types in this respect. Analysis of negative emotions (N) showed that significantly more negative affect was attributed to Ambivalent Parent than to other types of interlocutors. In the pilot study, this concerned Helpless Child, not analyzed in this case, to an even greater degree.

Summing up, the results of Study 1 largely correspond with those of the pilot study. The existence of three types of internal interlocutors was verified positively: Faithful Friend, Ambivalent Parent, and Proud Rival. However, no confirmation was found for that part of the hypothesis which predicted the existence of the interlocutor referred to as Helpless Child.

Study 2

The fact that Study 1 confirmed only three out of four hypothesized types of internal interlocutors not necessarily meant that Helpless Child, identified in the pilot study, was an artifact. The result may have been due to the way of collecting data. In Study 1, participants named only one internal interlocutor, the one they most frequently had internal dialogs with. Thus, it is possible that Helpless Child, which indeed often occurred in internal dialogs, was not identified as a basic type only because in the analyzed sample it was rarely reported as the most frequent interlocutor. Therefore, in Study 2, the same hypothesis as in Study 1 was advanced, but the way of collecting data was modified. On the one hand, respondents were asked about the interlocutors that most frequently appeared in their internal dialogs (as in Study 1); on the other, the procedure was meant to guarantee that interlocutors with high emotional diversity were selected for analyses (as in the pilot study).

Participants

The participants were 114 people with a mean age of 22.45 ($SD = 2.26$; range 19–30), 55 women and 59 men; there were 90 students of different majors (e.g.,

history, law, education studies, information technology, medicine, architecture, construction, or philology), including 63 undergraduate and 27 graduate students, as well as 12 university graduates, 9 participants with secondary education, and 3 whose education level was unknown.

Procedure

In Study 2, unlike in Study 1, DAF was used so as to give participants a chance to reflect on all their internal interlocutors. Next, they were asked to select and, using FECI, characterize four of them with reference to 24 affect terms. Two of the interlocutors described were those appearing most often in internal dialogs and the remaining two were supposed to differ from them in the emotions they typically showed toward the participant.

Results and Discussion

Each participant was asked to characterize four internal interlocutors in emotional terms. Out of 114 participants, 108 did so, 5 people described three interlocutors, and 1 person described only two. In total, affective patterns of 449 internal interlocutors were subjected to k-means clustering. In the same manner as in the previous studies, analyses with different numbers of clusters (from two to six) were performed. With four clusters, such averaged affective patterns were obtained that, when related to Hermans' criteria of experience categorization, they yielded non-redundant emotional types. As shown in Table 2, they fairly well reflect the four emotional types of imaginary interlocutors identified in the pilot study (Puchalska-Wasył et al., 2008). The following types were distinguished:

- Faithful Friend ($N = 206$) – high S, O, P, and low N;
- Ambivalent Parent ($N = 89$) – high S, O, P, and N;
- Proud Rival ($N = 99$) – high S, low O, high P, and low N;
- Helpless Child ($N = 55$) – low S, O, P, and high N.

As in the case of previous studies, post hoc analyses were performed for each element of the affective pattern, comparing the four types of internal interlocutors (see Table 2). They yielded results almost identical to those of analyses conducted on pilot study data (Puchalska-Wasył, 2012). Of the 22 differences revealed in the study previously published, only one was not confirmed in Study 2: Faithful Friend and Ambivalent Parent did not differ significantly in the intensity of the contact motive (O). Such high correspondence of differences between the analyzed groups additionally argues that the types of interlocutors obtained in Study 2 can be regarded as confirmation of those identified in the pilot study.

TABLE 2. Comparison of Affective Indices for the Four Types of Internal Interlocutors Identified in Study 2

Affective Pattern	Type of Internal Interlocutor				ANOVA		Post Hoc Test - Significant Differences
	1. Faithful Friend (N = 206)	2. Ambivalent Parent (N = 89)	3. Proud Rival (N = 99)	4. Helpless Child (N = 55)	$F_{(3,445)}$	$p <$	
S							
<i>M</i>	15.43	11.57	12.22	6.75	72.62	.001	.33
<i>SD</i>	3.30	3.74	5.40	4.37			1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-4, 3-4
O							
<i>M</i>	14.77	14.26	3.66	3.89	231.89	.001	.61
<i>SD</i>	4.50	3.19	4.01	4.39			1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4
P							
<i>M</i>	33.58	25.34	14.59	8.58	482.60	.001	.76
<i>SD</i>	4.32	5.47	6.64	5.66			1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
N							
<i>M</i>	4.02	17.84	9.44	25.78	393.95	.001	.73
<i>SD</i>	3.77	5.10	5.16	6.29			1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4

Note. S = the self-enhancement motive; O = the motive of contact with others; P = positive affect; N = negative affect. In post hoc analyses for S, O, P, and N indices, 73 Dunnett's test was used due to violations of the homogeneity of variance assumption. The numbered subgroups differ significantly at the level of $p < .001$.

General Discussion

The main aim of the research presented was to verify empirically the tentative categorization of emotional types of internal interlocutors proposed in the previously published pilot study (Puchalska-Wasył et al., 2008). Just like in that one, four types were distinguished in the two studies presented here. Attempts to distinguish a greater or smaller number of types yielded redundant ones. Total correspondence of results was obtained between the pilot study and Study 2, which revealed the existence of Faithful Friend, Ambivalent Parent, Proud Rival, and Helpless Child. What points to the identity of these types in both studies is not only the analysis of their affective patterns in the light of Hermans' criteria (analysis of relations within each pattern) but also the results of comparisons between interlocutor types in terms of each element of the pattern (analysis of relations between patterns). In Study 1, the first three of the above types were revealed, whereas Helpless Child was "replaced" by Calm Optimist.

The occurrence of Faithful Friend, Ambivalent Parent, and Proud Rival in all the three studies carried out so far seems to confirm not only the existence but also the significance of these types. It can also be said with a fair degree of certainty that the Helpless Child type exists too, having been identified in the pilot study and Study 2, which differed in the way of collecting data and were conducted on different samples. Should, then, the identification of Calm Optimist in Study 1 be regarded as an artifact? This is conceivable, but other possible causes of such a result should also be considered. The specificity of the sample examined does not seem to be one of them, given that all three samples were composed mostly of students and had similar demographical profiles. A more convincing explanation is connected with distinct ways in which the three studies directed the respondents' attention towards their internal interlocutors. In Study 1, the intention was to minimize the risk that large groups of figures representing one type, created by individual respondents, would distort the picture of basic internal interlocutor types. Participants were therefore asked to indicate only one figure: the most frequent one in their internal dialogs. By contrast, in the pilot study and Study 2 participants were asked, respectively, about all internal interlocutors or about the two that most frequently appeared in dialogs and the two that differed from those in terms of emotional climate. The fact that Helpless Child was not found in Study 1 may mean that in the sample analyzed, this figure was rarely declared as the most frequent interlocutor (which does not exclude that it may have appeared in internal dialogs very frequently). Regarding the Calm Optimist, the figure can be one that occurs particularly often but only in a certain group of people, probably relatively small (13.4% of participants in Study 1). Therefore, even if this type was present in the pilot study and Study 2, it may have been obscured among more strongly represented types. The "replacement" of Helpless Child by Calm Optimist points to the basic limitations of the procedure applied in Study 1. A frequent interlocutor systematically not mentioned as the most frequent one may

not be identified at all among the main types of interlocutors. And conversely, a figure indicated by a narrow subgroup as the most frequent interlocutor may be listed among the types considered basic for the entire population. In the procedure of Study 2 these shortcomings were minimized, which was an additional aim of the research.

Summing up, the research conducted so far confirms the existence of four main types of internal interlocutors and provides a reason to verify the existence of Calm Optimist. It is conceivable, however, that even these five types do not constitute an exhaustive typology.

The reasoning that leads to the above conclusion starts with the observation that the first types of imaginary figures in children (Harter & Chao, 1992) reflect the duality of human motives, which was underscored not only by Hermans (2001; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995) but also by theorists such as Adler (1964), Angyal (1965), Bakan (1966), Binswanger (1963), and McAdams (1989, 1996). It turns out that in preschool girls the imaginary companion is a helpless and dependent figure, while preschool boys imagine theirs as strong and brave: as their superior in nearly every respect. Unlike boys, who stop at describing the traits of their imaginary comrade, girls usually stress the actions they perform for their imaginary companion (Harter & Chao). In the light of the duality of human motivation, girls' caring behavior towards helpless friends seems to be an expression of the contact with others motive (O), and boys' identification with the embodiment of strength seems to gratify the self-enhancement motive (S). This interpretation is consistent with data showing that adult men build their identity through personal achievement and autonomy expansion (Erikson, 1993), whereas women tend to locate theirs in contacts with other people (Gilligan, 1993; Horner, 1972). Development differentiates and integrates basic motives, which manifests itself in the creation of a differentiated and flexible system of personal meanings. This means that, when describing important aspects of their life, people take all basic types of experience into account and are able to move from one to another with relative ease (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995; see also Jung, 1968: Jungian unification of opposites as a criterion of psychological health). Assuming that a child's imaginary companion is a form of gratification of basic motives and that there is a link between creating imaginary figures in childhood and engaging in internal dialogs in adulthood (Goffman, 1981; Myers, 1979; Taylor, Hodges, & Kohányi, 2002; Taylor & Manning, 2006; Watkins, 2000), we may hypothesize that internal interlocutors are a way of making up for the experience missing from one's system of personal meanings. This hypothesis requires empirical verification, but if it turned out to be true, then it would be possible to identify internal interlocutors with significantly different emotional characteristics in different people. In this context, it cannot be excluded that, apart from the four types of internal interlocutors confirmed and the one type suggested so far, there are others, generally represented by fewer figures and—as opposed to Calm Optimist—not found among the types most often appearing in dialogs.

It is also probable that some types are “invisible” in the typology emerging from statistical analyses because participants are unwilling to reveal them (e.g., as highly personal).

Thus, in the light of the pilot study and the two studies presented here, it cannot be said with confidence how many types of internal interlocutors actually exist, but it can be said that those identified in at least two of these three studies, Faithful Friend, Ambivalent Parent, Proud Rival, and Helpless Child, deserve to be called basic types. It should be emphasized, however, that without further research in different age groups and cultures those types can be considered as basic ones only for young Polish adults.

Apart from conducting studies on different samples, which would allow to extend the generalizability of results, it should also be checked how often interlocutors representing each type occur in various kinds of internal dialogs. For instance, with regard to their mode and outcome, we can distinguish integrative and confrontational dialogs. The former aim to take all viewpoints into consideration and integrate them to arrive at creative solutions. The latter emphasize differences between viewpoints and enhance one of them while ignoring or deprecating the others. Given the specificity of these two types of dialogs and the emotional profiles of the distinguished types of internal interlocutors, it is highly probable that integrative dialog will more often feature Faithful Friend and Ambivalent Parent figures, whereas confrontational dialog will tend to involve Proud Rival and Helpless Child. It would also be worthwhile to define the functions of each type of imaginary interlocutor more precisely. In the pilot study (Puchalska-Wasył et al., 2008) it was tentatively established that there are seven major functions internal interlocutors perform: Support, Substitution, Exploration, Bond, Self-improvement, Insight, and Self-guiding. It was also established that interlocutors perform them with different degrees of intensity. Further research should be undertaken to replicate the seven major functions and to specify the functions characteristic for each interlocutor type. It would be advisable, too, to check whether the functions of a given type of figure are relatively permanent or dependent on the context, for example, dialog type. Another issue for further exploration is the relations between interlocutor types and the personality profiles of their creators (e.g., their traits, attachment styles, coping styles, self-esteem, and system of personal meanings). We still do not know, for example, if there exists a phenomenon of interlocutor type preference and, if so, how it manifests itself. The proposed research will not only allow additional determination of internal interlocutors and development of their universal typology but also facilitate identification of the types dealt with in specific cases.

However, is it indeed worth searching for a universal typology of internal interlocutors, defining their functions and typical contexts? Given that internal dialogs are a useful instrument in psychotherapy (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004; Pollard, 2008), a universal typology of internal interlocutors and the knowledge of functions fulfilled by these universal types in different contexts can be of

practical significance: it could contribute to more effective use of those dialogs in psychological practice.

AUTHOR NOTE

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