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Relationship of personality with integration and confrontation in internal dialogues

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Interest in confrontational and integrative internal dialogues (IDs) has been growing, as they perform numerous important functions. This study aimed to identify the personality-related determinants of integration and confrontation processes in ID that simulates social relationships. The test group comprised 125 students (62 men). Participants were given a description of a fictional problem facing a young married couple and they were to imagine a dialogue between the characters. Additionally three instruments were administered: the NEO Five Factor Inventory, the Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised Questionnaire and the Integration-Confrontation Questionnaire. Using canonical correlation analysis it was found that intense neuroticism and anxious or avoidant attachments, combined with low openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness, are conducive to confrontational attitude in the author of a dialogue, whereas the opposite combination of personality characteristics is associated with integrative attitudes in both parties to the dialogue.

Key words: Internal/imaginary dialogue, integration and confrontation, simulation of social relationships, personality, attachment styles.

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine that your co-worker, with whom you were to collaborate on some task, failed to complete his or her portion of the task. You expect that both of you will suffer the consequences of this and decide to have a serious talk with this co-worker. When preparing for this important conversation, you rehearse the arguments you intend to use. In these rehearsals you sometimes imagine your interlocutor's responses, which in turn elicit further arguments and responses from you. This rehearsal may be silent or voiced aloud and it is a manifestation of a phenomenon known by many names (see Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015). In this article, it will be referred to as internal dialogue (ID). We assume that a person is engaged in ID when he or she adopts (at least) two different viewpoints by turn, and the utterances (silent or aloud) take the form of responses to one another (Hermans, 2003; Puchalska-Wasył, 2016a).

An ID can be conducted in several ways and perform different functions. If your imagined interlocutor is someone you like or respect you might fashion the dialogue so as to arrive at excuses for your interlocutor's position. You will be open to his or her explanations and sensitive to the possibility that he or she feels remorse. You will probably make an attempt to unite your effort and the interlocutor's to find the best solution to the problem. The function of such an ID will be to strengthen the bond you feel you have with your interlocutor. Additionally, through such an ID you may gain a new perspective on the problem at issue, discover new criteria for (positive) self-evaluation and find motivation for further real world action. But an ID can also be conducted in an adversarial way. In this kind of ID, you are likely to focus only on your own perspective and reject any excuses given by your interlocutor. You will tend to fashion the dialogue so as to arouse a sense of guilt in your interlocutor, so that you end up feeling like a winner in the discussion. This type of ID can help you to

vent anger and prepare for real world conflicts, as in the example of the negligent co-worker and is called a confrontational ID, whereas the first type is called an integrative ID.

Recently, researchers have been particularly interested in integration and confrontation processes in IDs (Borawski, 2011; Nir, 2012; Puchalska-Wasył, 2016a, 2016b). These processes have been interpreted in the literature in two different ways: first, as two extremes on the same continuum by which ID is described (Borawski, 2011; Nir, 2012); and second, as two independent dimensions of ID's description (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016a, 2016b). According to the former approach, in a given ID either integration or confrontation is present, thus, the ID is either integrative or confrontational, respectively. According to the latter approach both integration and confrontation are simultaneously present in all IDs, but to different degrees and hence the ID is described as integrative or confrontational based on the difference in the intensity of the two types of process. If this framework is adopted patterns of integrative and confrontational characteristics can be explored, which would be impossible under the one-dimensional continuum model. Therefore, the two-dimensional model is adopted for this paper.

In the two-dimensional framework integration is defined as the level of basic agreement between the two viewpoints of an ID. It is connected with openness to a partner's perspective, readiness to consider their arguments and willingness to modify one's own viewpoint. The greater a party's propensity to these behaviors, the stronger is his or her integrative attitude. The greater the propensity to integrative attitudes in both parties, the stronger is the general integration process, and consequently, the greater the chance of finding new, creative solutions through cooperation between the two perspectives.

Confrontation reflects the advantage of one party over the other in an ID. The confrontational attitude of a given party in the ID reflects that party's perceived advantage over the opposing party

(evaluating oneself as the winner in the context of a partner's defeat). It is assumed that the greater the differences in the intensity of interlocutors' confrontational attitudes, the more intense their confrontation will be. Confrontation is minimal when both parties to dialogue win and/or lose to a similar extent (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016a, 2016b).

This approach not only distinguishes particular processes in ID and attitudes of dialogue's partners but also proposes a method of measuring them (see Measures) and so it can facilitate research on different patterns of integrative and confrontational characteristics and their determinants. Understanding the personality determinants of integration and confrontation in IDs may help to predict the course and functions of everyday IDs as well as the effects of counselling or psychotherapy based on the client's internal dialogical activity (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004).

There have been several studies of the personality determinants or correlates of ID, but very few have investigated integrative and confrontational characteristics of IDs. For example, ID intensity as measured by Oles's Internal Dialogical Activity Scale (IDAS; Oles & Puchalska-Wasył, 2012) was shown to be moderately correlated with neuroticism and with openness measured by the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R; Costa & McCrae, 1992). In one study, stepwise regression analysis with five personality factors (NEO-PI-R) as independent variables revealed that 28% of variance in IDAS scores was explained by a linear combination of openness and neuroticism. An analogous analysis of 30 personality facets showed that 39% of variance in IDAS scores could be explained by a linear combination of four traits: self-consciousness (neuroticism), aesthetics, feelings (openness), and self-discipline (conscientiousness; negative association) (Puchalska-Wasył, Chmielnicka-Kuter & Oles, 2008). Another study suggests that the way subjects conduct IDs reflects their personality traits. For example, individuals whose dialogues were characterized by cooperation had higher scores for openness and the related facets of aesthetics and actions (NEO-PI-R), than individuals whose dialogues were not. It means that individuals who have cooperative IDs are people who actively seek new experiences as well as harmony and beauty (Costa & McCrae, 1992). These traits were reflected in the conduct of their IDs, since arranging for cooperation within their IDs enabled them to find solutions that were creative and harmoniously combined the needs of both parties (Puchalska-Wasył, 2011).

Researchers have also explored the relationship between ID (IDAS) and attachment style as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised Questionnaire (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller & Brennan, 2000). These studies have shown that IDs are respectively negatively and positively correlated with attachment-related avoidance and attachment-related anxiety (Oles & Puchalska-Wasył, 2012).

Using the Varieties of Inner Speech Questionnaire (VISQ; McCarthy-Jones & Fernyhough, 2011), Alderson-Day, McCarthy-Jones, Bedford *et al.* (2014) showed that two characteristics of inner speech, namely evaluative content and presence of other people (but not dialogicality) were associated with lower self-esteem and more frequent dissociative experiences. They also showed that dissociation mediated the relationship between these specific components of inner speech and auditory hallucination proneness. Another study has shown that there are direct

relationships between some characteristics of inner speech (evaluative and I-positions; VISQ) and ideas of reference, and that these relationships are partially mediated by dissociation (Bellido-Zanin, Perona-Garcelán, Senín-Calderón, López-Jiménez & Rodríguez-Testal, 2017).

Studies have also investigated the relationship between ID functions and personality variables, such as traits (NEO-PI-R), attachments (ECR-R) and empathy (measured by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, IRI; Davis, 1983). They reveal that the greater an individual's neuroticism and tendency to anxious attachment, the less open he or she is and the less willing to adopt an interlocutor's viewpoint spontaneously, the more his or her IDs will tend to serve substitution functions and the less they will tend to serve insight and support functions (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016c). Another study showed that support, bond, insight and self-guiding are all functions fulfilled to a greater degree by integrative dialogues than confrontational ones (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016a).

An experiment was conducted to determine whether psychological distance from the situation enacted in an ID affects the processes of integration and confrontation. Increased distance was shown to reduce the intensity of the confrontation process and increase the number of integrative IDs. No gender differences were found either in the integration or confrontation intensity (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016d).

Finally, one study focused on multivariate relationships between the integrative and confrontational attitudes of the dialogue's author and imagined interlocutor (treated as criteria) and eight personality components (neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, anxious and avoidant attachments and perspective taking – all treated as predictors). Unexpectedly, this analysis did not allow the establishment of personality determinants behind ID's integrative and confrontational characteristics (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016b). This was surprising, not only because previous studies have consistently confirmed a relationship between ID and personality, but also because integrative and confrontational IDs appeared to perform different functions that were connected to personality. This study attempted, therefore, to replicate the results of the earlier study using different materials. In the earlier study participants were asked to conduct an ID about a problematic issue of personal importance with a person who had contributed to the problem. In this study participants were again instructed to conduct an ID reflecting social relations, but this time it was to be based on a fictitious scenario.

The research question for this study was the same as for the earlier study: is there a certain configuration of personality variables that is predictive of a specific pattern of integrative and confrontational characteristics in IDs simulating social relationships? As this was an exploratory study no hypotheses were formulated.

METHOD

Participants

The test group comprised 125 people (62 men) with a mean age of 22.45 years ($SD = 3.04$). The mean age of the female participants was 21.60 years ($SD = 1.48$) and the mean age of the male participants was 23.31 years

($SD = 3.88$). The participants were students of various majors (e.g., law, sociology, psychology, information technology, agriculture, mechatronics) at four Polish universities. All students were eligible to participate; there was no preliminary test of capacity for imagination and information about current psychopathology or use of psychopharmaceuticals or drugs of abuse was not collected.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through departmental announcements giving information about the terms and place of the study. The announcements were repeated until sufficient participants had been recruited.

The participants in several groups were tested in a suitable university room. Before testing commenced they were informed that their data would be anonymous and that the study concerned imagination and its relationship to personality. Research assistants then administered two instruments: the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) and the Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised Questionnaire (ECR-R). Afterwards participants were given a description of a fictional problem facing a young married couple. The description was designed for and used in the other study (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016d; a proximal perspective group). The woman – a wife and a mother – wanted to move from a well-paid, secure job that was inconsistent with her aspirations, to a less certain job that would allow her to fulfill her ambitions. The husband opposed this change as it would threaten the family's financial security. After reading the description participants were given the following instruction: "Imagine a dialogue between the spouses and write it down. Take into account what each of them thinks about the potential change in the wife's job. The dialogue must end with a decision about what to do next." After the dialogue task participants completed the Integration-Confrontation questionnaire (ICON).

Measures

Integration-Confrontation (ICON). This method by Puchalska-Wasył (2016a, 2016b) is a 13-item measure of the integrative and confrontational characteristics of an individual's IDs. ICON is based on the assumption that integration and confrontation are independent dimensions of ID (see Introduction).

ICON consists of eight core items and five supplementary items. All responses are given using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 0 – *not at all* to 6 – *very well*. Responses to the eight core items can be used to calculate the following indices: general integration index (INT), general confrontation index (CONF), index of the author's integrative attitude (INT_aut), index of the author's confrontational attitude (CONF_aut), index of the interlocutor's integrative attitude (INT_int) and index of the interlocutor's confrontational attitude (CONF_int). The supplementary items concern the dialogues author's empathy with the interlocutor's and identification with his/her own role, the author's similarity to the interlocutor as well as the plausibility and wishfulness of the dialogue.

As participants were asked to imagine a dialogue between a fictitious couple, ICON was modified to include the names of the characters from the scenario. Only two of the supplementary items were analyzed, those asking participants to evaluate the empathy they felt towards the husband and wife on the basis of their ID. It was assumed that the character with which a participant felt more empathy would be character with which he or she identified most, and hence that this character's viewpoint would correspond with the participant's own viewpoint and so this was treated as the author's viewpoint. The character with which a participant identified less strongly was treated as the interlocutor.

In two other studies (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016a, 2016b) in which individuals conducted IDs about a matter of personal importance and then completed ICON, the correlation between integration and confrontation indices was non-significant and close to zero ($N = 93$, $r = -0.048$, $p = 0.648$; $N = 119$, $r = -0.024$, $p = 0.798$). Analogous analyses in this study yielded similar results ($N = 125$, $r = -0.118$, $p = 0.189$), supporting the theoretically postulated independence of the integration and confrontation dimensions measured in ICON.

The validity and reliability of ICON were previously confirmed by Puchalska-Wasył (2016a, 2016b). In this study indices of the integrative and confrontational attitudes of the authors and their imagined interlocutors were analyzed. Cronbach's alpha for these indices was as follows: INT_aut = 0.72; INT_int = 0.63; CONF_aut = 0.66; and CONF_int = 0.63. These values are lower than in earlier studies, presumably because the IDs in this study were conducted between two fictitious characters and thus participants were probably less involved in them. However, given that all these indices are based on just two items, these reliability values can be considered acceptable.

Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Questionnaire (ECR-R). This questionnaire by Fraley *et al.* (2000) is based on Bowlby's theory and consist of two subscales. The Attachment-Related Anxiety scale (AX) measures the extent to which people are insecure vs. secure about the availability and responsiveness of romantic partners. The Attachment-Related Avoidance scale (AV) measures the extent to which people are uncomfortable being close to others vs. secure depending on others. Both subscales comprise 18 items to which responses are given using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – *strongly disagree* to 7 – *strongly agree*. In this study Cronbach's alpha was 0.91 for AX and 0.87 for AV.

The NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI). This questionnaire by Costa and McCrae (1992) consists of 60 items to which responses are given using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – *strongly disagree* to 5 – *strongly agree*. It measures the five general factors constituting the Five-Factor Model (neuroticism, N; extroversion, E; openness, O; agreeableness, A; conscientiousness, C). The Polish adaptation of the scale was used, which has adequate validity (Zawadzki, Strelau, Szczepaniak & Śliwińska, 1998). In this study Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the factors were as follows: 0.86 (neuroticism); 0.76 (extroversion); 0.68 (openness); 0.72 (agreeableness); and 0.83 (conscientiousness).

RESULTS

Relationships between participant gender and identification with the imaginary characters were first analyzed using a paired-samples *t*-test. Women identified with the fictitious husband ($M_h = 3.56$, $SD = 2.03$) and wife ($M_w = 3.97$, $SD = 1.88$) to similar degrees ($t(62) = 1.02$, $p = 0.310$, $d = 0.13$), whereas men identified more strongly ($t(61) = 6.77$, $p = 0.001$, $d = 0.86$) with the male character ($M_h = 4.55$, $SD = 1.31$) than with the female character ($M_w = 2.66$, $SD = 1.86$). This difference, however, was not related to the integrative and confrontational characteristics of the imagined spouses in the IDs – there were no differences between men and women in the integrative and confrontational indices characterizing the fictional husband and his wife. Similarly, there were no gender differences in analogous indices describing author's and internal interlocutor's viewpoints (see Table 1).

To answer the research question, a canonical correlation analysis was conducted – a multivariate statistical method that allows simultaneous prediction of multiple dependent variables (criteria) from multiple independent variables (predictors) (Sherry & Henson, 2005). In the study the following criteria were used (ICON): author's integrative attitude (INT_aut), interlocutor's integrative attitude (INT_int), author's confrontational attitude (CONF_aut) and interlocutor's confrontational attitude (CONF_int). The predictors were the NEO-FFI personality components – neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness – and the ECR-R constructs, attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance. The analysis yielded one significant function with canonical correlations of

Table 1. Comparison of integrative and confrontational characteristics between gender groups

Integrative and confrontational characteristics	Groups				Differences			
	Men		Women					
	(N = 62)		(N = 63)		t	df	p	d
	M	SD	M	SD				
INT_husband	5.65	3.42	5.44	3.66	0.317	123	0.752	0.06
INT_wife	5.81	3.93	5.25	3.90	0.789	123	0.432	0.14
CONF_husband	5.18	3.60	4.03	3.46	1.81	123	0.072	0.33
CONF_wife	3.29	2.91	4.03	4.10	-1.17	111.93	0.246	-0.21
INT_aut	4.98	3.53	4.76	3.93	0.332	123	0.740	0.06
INT_int	6.47	3.69	5.94	3.53	0.823	123	0.412	0.15
CONF_aut	5.44	3.52	5.37	3.99	0.105	123	0.917	0.02
CONF_int	3.03	2.81	2.70	3.05	0.637	123	0.526	0.11

Notes: Integrative and confrontational indices range from 0 to 12. INT_husband – husband's integrative attitude; INT_wife – wife's integrative attitude; CONF_husband – husband's confrontational attitude; CONF_wife – wife's confrontational attitude; INT_aut – author's integrative attitude; INT_int – interlocutor's integrative attitude; CONF_aut – author's confrontational attitude; CONF_int – interlocutor's confrontational attitude.

Table 2. Canonical correlation analysis: four canonical functions

Canonical function	Canonical correlation	Canonical R ²	Wilks λ	p
1	0.46	0.21	0.646	0.004
2	0.34	0.12	0.822	0.184
3	0.22	0.05	0.930	0.579
4	0.15	0.02	0.979	0.637

0.46 ($p = 0.004$) and three non-significant functions (see Table 2). The first (significant) function explained 21% of total variance shared between the variable sets. Looking at the coefficients of Function 1 (see Table 3), one can find that the first canonical variable, including the characteristics of personality, is represented mostly by AV (canonical loading = 0.77), O (-0.59), N (0.48), AX (0.38), C (-0.37) and A (-0.36) and explains 22.7% of their shared variance and 3.0% of the variance shared by variables from the "dialogue characteristics set." The second canonical variable, representing the characteristics of dialogue, explains 14.2% of the variance shared by CONF_aut (0.47), INT_int (-0.45), and INT_aut (-0.33) and 4.8% of the variance shared by variables from the "personality set."

The increase in the intensity of Attachment-Related Avoidance (AV), Neuroticism (N) and Attachment-Related Anxiety (AX), and the decrease in the intensity of Openness (O), Conscientiousness (C) and Agreeableness (A), are associated with the increase in the confrontational attitude of the dialogue's author (participant creating the dialogue; CONF_aut) and at the same time with the decrease in the integrative attitudes of both parties to dialogue: the dialogue's author (INT_aut) and their imaginary interlocutor (INT_int). Thus, the higher the intensity of neuroticism and avoidant and anxious attachment styles, and the lower the intensity of openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness, the stronger the tendency of the dialogue's author to make their interlocutor the loser and themselves the winner in the imaginary discussion (author's confrontational attitude) and simultaneously the weaker the tendency to modify both

Table 3. Canonical function 1: anxious-avoidant confrontation

Predictor set:	Loadings	Cross-loadings	Variance in the set variables explained by:	
			Their own canonical variate	The opposite canonical variate
N	0.48	0.22	22.7%	4.8%
E	-0.03	-0.01		
O	-0.59	-0.27		
A	-0.36	-0.17		
C	-0.37	-0.17		
AX	0.38	0.18		
AV	0.77	0.36		
Criterion set:			14.2%	3.0%
INT_aut	-0.33	-0.15		
INT_int	-0.45	-0.21		
CONF_aut	0.47	0.22		
CONF_int	0.20	0.09		

Notes: N – Neuroticism; E – Extroversion; O – Openness; A – Agreeableness; C – Conscientiousness; AX – Attachment-Related Anxiety; AV – Attachment-Related Avoidance; INT_aut – author's integrative attitude; INT_int – interlocutor's integrative attitude; CONF_aut – author's confrontational attitude; CONF_int – interlocutor's confrontational attitude.

viewpoints under their mutual influence (integrative attitudes of both parties). The reverse combination of personality characteristics is associated with more integrative attitudes in both parties and with a lower author's confrontational attitude. In this context, this canonical function can be labeled 'anxious-avoidant confrontation'.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to answer the question: is there a certain configuration of personality variables that is predictive of a specific pattern of integrative and confrontational characteristics in an ID simulating social relationships?

Canonical correlation analysis revealed that a high neuroticism and a high tendency to anxious or avoidant attachments, as well as low openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness, are conducive to conducting IDs in such a way that a dialogue's author strives for victory and wants to make their interlocutor the loser in the discussion. The reverse combination of personality characteristics favors IDs in which each party considers the other's arguments and modifies his or her stance accordingly.

On the one hand, it is surprising that so many personality variables were found to relate to the integrative and confrontational characteristics of IDs, since in the previous study an analogous research question was posed and no such relationships were found (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016b). On the other hand, the results make sense in the context of several other studies. Ome (2013) investigated the relationships between five personality traits and conflict resolution styles such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, acceptance of the situation and threat. Negotiation was understood as the seeking of compromise solutions. Positive relationships were found between negotiation and openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness, whilst negotiation and neuroticism were negatively associated. Ana-Paula, Gonzalo and Dámaso (2012) examined the extent to which the five personality factors influence the following styles of conflict management: integrating, avoiding, compromising, dominating and obliging. They showed that the integrating style was positively related to all personality factors considered, except neuroticism. Another study (Bear & Segel-Karpas, 2015) revealed that anxious attachment style had a deleterious effect on negotiation propensity.

When both parties in an ID have integrative attitudes the dialogue will involve them considering each other's arguments and modifying their stances accordingly. This approach is consistent with the 'negotiation' and 'integrating style of conflict management' constructs used in the above-mentioned studies. Against this background it is understandable that high openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness, and low neuroticism and low tendency to anxious attachment style, are connected with an increase in integrative attitudes in ID.

How can we explain that a dialogue author who is characterized by the reverse pattern of traits, and by a high tendency to anxious or avoidant attachments, adopts a confrontational attitude – that is, creates dialogues in which their character wins an argument with the imagined interlocutor? Enhancing one's own position at the expense of an imagined interlocutor can be viewed as a specific manifestation of aggression. Indeed, many studies have shown that the set of personality characteristics associated with high confrontational attitude are also associated with aggressive behaviors. According to Egan (2009), aggression is positively associated with neuroticism and negatively associated with conscientiousness and agreeableness. Martin, Watson and Wan (2000) showed that aggression, as a behavioral manifestation of anger, was negatively associated with agreeableness, whereas angry affect was most strongly associated with neuroticism. Ode, Robinson and Wilkowski (2008) found that neuroticism and agreeableness interacted to predict anger and aggression in such a way that the association between neuroticism and anger was weaker in the context of high agreeableness. It is also worth noting that in

the previously mentioned study by Ana-Paula *et al.* (2012) agreeableness was negatively related to a dominating style of conflict management that seems to rely on enhancing the position of one person at the expense of another. There are also reports of associations between anxious and avoidant attachment styles and various forms of psychological aggression (McDermott, Cheng, Lopez, McKelvey & Bateman, 2016).

In the light of all these findings one might suppose that a person's social style and approach to IDs would be similar and based on personality traits. But is ID really strongly determined by personality? In seeking to answer this question, we should emphasize two issues. First, the earlier study, which addressed an analogous research question, revealed no relationship between the personality of the author and the integrative and confrontational characteristics of an ID. Second, in this study it was found that personality traits and attachment styles explain only relatively small percentages of variance in the integrative and confrontational characteristics of ID.

Whilst it is possible that the result of one of these two studies is an artifact, it is also possible that the two studies highlight different aspects of the relationship between personality and ID characteristics. The two studies analyzed different types of ID. In the first study, the IDs concerned an important personal problem and the dialogues were between a participant and a person who contributed to a problem personal to that participant. In this study all the participants were asked to base their ID on the same fictitious scenario. The parties to dialogue were fictional characters, so participants were probably less involved in the dialogues than they were in the first study. It seems possible that personal involvement in ID, understood as the author's identification with one of the clashing viewpoints, is a moderator of the relationships between personality and integrative and confrontational characteristics of IDs.

Of course verification of this hypothesis would require further research; however for the moment one can reasonably speculate that when the issue discussed in an ID has less personal relevance for the dialogue's author, the ID will be conducted in a more schematic way, consistent with personality determinants. For example, people high in anxiety may more readily adopt a confrontational approach to IDs, with victory for their favored viewpoint providing satisfaction and serving as a form of emotional catharsis. At the same time, as Puchalska-Wasył (2016b) showed, confrontational ID is often wishful and authors of such dialogues are usually aware that they are unrealistic. If, however, ID is understood as a method of preparing for a real situation of personal importance, then a person may rehearse different scenarios, not just the simplest and most schematic. In crucial moments of their lives people predisposed towards confrontational behavior may seek integrative solutions in their imagination; conversely, a person predisposed to view their interlocutor's arguments favorably may perceive some value in exploring confrontational solutions to disagreements. It is also possible that a person's typical approach to ID can vary with his or her level of identification with the imagined interlocutor's viewpoint. Presumably, greater empathy with an imagined interlocutor is associated with a lower tendency to deprecate the interlocutor's viewpoint in ID, even if the author is the sort of person who typically adopts a confrontational attitude

(i.e., makes him or herself the winner and the ID interlocutor the loser).

The finding that the relationship between personality and the integrative and confrontational characteristics of IDs is relatively weak has positive implications both for people who conduct everyday IDs, but also for counseling or psychotherapy based on a dialogical approach (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004). If, for example, the processes of confrontation and integration in ID were strongly determined by traits of neuroticism and openness, respectively, then a psychotherapeutic effort to integrate clashing viewpoints of a client characterized by high neuroticism and low openness would be useless. This study suggests that people with high neuroticism and tendency to anxious or avoidant attachments, as well as low openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness, are prone to confrontational IDs, whereas people with the reverse personality configuration incline towards integrative IDs. But these relationships are not strong and they are probably more easily detectable when the ID concerns a less important question (and consequently triggers less personal involvement). If, however, the ID deals with an issue of high personal relevance then basic unmodifiable personality traits seem not to constitute a serious obstacle to adopting either integrative or confrontational approaches in ID. All people (sometimes with the help of a psychologist) can engage in both integrative and confrontational IDs and both types of ID may represent prototypes of real world interpersonal encounters. In this context the capacity to be flexible in one's conduct of ID is beneficial, since the nature of the most adaptive approach – integrative, confrontational or a combination of both – varies between situations.

These findings invite further exploration. This is the first study to demonstrate a relationship between personality characteristics and integration and confrontation processes in ID and has some of the typical limitations of exploratory research. It was a cross-sectional study based on a single measure and involved a relatively small sample of Polish university students, so the conclusions cannot be generalized. We analyzed the integrative and confrontational characteristics of IDs based on a single fictional scenario. It might have been more informative to study an additional group with a different fictitious scenario in order to make the results more robust, or a group with an ID based on problematic issue of personal importance in order to replicate previous findings in this area (Puchalska-Wasył, 2016b). The next step in research on this issue should seek to address these shortcomings and use a different sample. Additionally, as suggested above, it would be interesting to investigate personal involvement in ID as a potential moderator of the relationship between ID and personality.

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