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Dialogical Practices as Basis for Self

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of abbreviation in dialogue offers the opportunity to examine basic characteristics of dialogue as such. In this paper, two manifestations of this phenomenon are brought under special consideration: the historically constructed abbreviated dialogues in early life and abbreviation found in adult dialogues. We first examine the constructive role of preverbal dialogical practices in early life, focusing on dialogue as a system of communication that allows for the construction of new patterns of organization in the mother-infant communication system. Abbreviation occurs as a dialogical achievement in which we can identify the emergence of a dialogical self and the seeds of symbolic functioning. A microanalytic examination of abbreviated mother-infant dialogues suggests that the infant is differentiating his/her position in dialogue through the condensation of a relational history. This achievement has the characteristic of carrying both a relational and an individual dimension. The notion of abbreviation as pervasive in dialogical speech is to be found in Yakubinsky's seminal article *On Dialogical Speech* (1923), referring precisely to the kind of condensed relational history of self and other observed in infancy. Yakubinsky explores under what circumstances abbreviation does occur and gives six motives for this reduction. Most importantly, it is that partners' mutual understanding can rely on a well shared "mass of apperception" - dialogues can then proceed almost without language. Hence, basic dialogicity, as we assume axiomatically for human existence and self formation, manifests itself in different, more or less abbreviated dialogical practices. As a conclusion, it is assumed that dialogical self is the one that has an abbreviated relational history. The self is dialogical because it has internalized a selection of historically constructed dialogues that are abbreviated-condensed.

Key words: abbreviation, dialogical self, predicativity, alterity, apperception

The arguments elaborated in this paper conceive dialogue as a relational dynamics that give birth to individuals, subjects or selves. This process-dependent perspective is based on self-others perennial movement that happens in real life contexts. Dialogical practices, thus, are the basis for emergence and development of the

self. We anchor this perspective in the findings of Russian linguistics, psychology and philosophy, mostly referred to through the works of Mikhail Bakhtin (e.g., 1986/1993). Here, Bakhtin's predecessor in a dialogical approach to language, the linguist Lev Yakubinsky will be in the foreground. In his seminal article *On Dialogical Speech*, published in 1923 (see Yakubinsky, 1997), Yakubinsky addresses the dynamics that gives birth to abbreviated dialogues, a notion later taken up and reformulated psychologically by Lev Vygotsky (1934/1987) in his description of the features of inner speech. We elaborate upon the meaning of abbreviations as one dialogical format that characterizes the dynamics of the self, in order to understand the emergence of the self and its functioning in adults. Our aim is to contribute to the comprehension of the Dialogical Self (Hermans, Kempen, & van Loon, 1992; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, 1996, 2001) in which the use of signs and mastery of language are fundamentally embedded in self-others dynamics (Bühler, 1990).

1. ABBREVIATION IN INFANCY

The dialogical format of abbreviation we are concerned with is to be found in early mother- infant exchanges as well as in adult dialogues, hence the question arises concerning the status given here to early dialogical practices. Are they "real" dialogues, "pseudo-dialogues", or "protodialogues"? All these terms are found in the ontogenetic literature, reflecting different views on the performance of caregiver and infant, namely to which extent these performances can claim the right to be dialogues. For instance, "real dialogues" occur when "real responses" are given, that is around the first year of life, as soon as the child is able to utter an identifiable word (Clarke-Stewart, Perlmutter & Friedman, 1988; Newson, 1977, followed by Hermans & Kempen, 1993). What seems to matter here is the capacity of the child to reply verbally, dialogical performance of (at least) two parties is thus narrowed to a linguistic-structural achievement. Maureen Shields (1978), using the more open term "proto-dialogue", addresses the infant's dialogical capacity before his/her being fully verbal. She acknowledges the reciprocity of activities between mother and infant (well-established before the first words appear), i.e. mutual monitoring and responding to each other's behavior. Correspondingly, dialogues are defined not only by the structure but also by the degree to which they show cohesion between remarks. Cohesion is central to Shield's approach, and relates to "the first developmental task for neophyte human communicator [which] is to construct an interpersonal relationship which can gradually accommodate a shared world of persons, things and environment" (1978, p. 315). So, the structural view of dialogical interaction taking into account the sequentiality of partner's behavior – one does this, then the other one does that ("ping-pong") – is replaced by the analysis of what partners do together and what leads to the construction of a common space of knowledge and activity which in turn modifies each partner's possibilities of communication.

Mary Bateson's (1975) approach and her coining of the now widespread term "protoconversation" (e.g., Rochat, Querido & Striano, 1999; Tomaselo, 1999; Trevarthen & Gratier, 2005; Tomasello et al., 2005) can be seen as

a supplement of this line. Bateson speaks of the joint performances of mother and child, "prefiguring" the adult interpersonal exchange called "conversation" and occurring before the third month of life. Worth noting is the fact that the concept of conversation Bateson relies on "focuses primarily on the importance of vocal exchange in affirming and maintaining social contact, rather than on content" (1978, p. 111).[1]Then, protoconversations are seen "equivalent at their level to the conversation of adults", and from that point of view, "we may say that mother and child here have achieved a great part of what we value in conversation" (1978, p.11). Conversation as patterned verbal interaction does matter – not the least because mother's participation is modeled onto it and thus constrains child's part – but what matters more, what defines the exchange as a conversational one, is the establishment of social contact through patterns of mutuality.

These understandings of early mother-infant exchanges as proto-forms of adult ones, point to the notion of dialogue we assume. We take the liberty to go a step further and to call these exchanges "dialogues", for they not only show the structure of turns and takes but first of all because the common performance leads to a mutual, time-bound transformation: both partners and their relationship are transformed in time. It is for this reason that they play a role in the emergence and in the functioning of the self at all. Thus, dialogues have a transformative power and – as a specific structure of verbal communication – are themselves subject to modifications, manifesting the dynamics of partners' communication. Moreover, it is their very characteristic to be modified by partners in time. As partners are dialoguing they transform each other and modify their dialogical patterns, possibly up to a point where these patterns become almost unverbal. This is exactly what Yakubinsky (1997) shows: dialogues are not only a matter of language, but rather a matter of historically built mutual orientation which can lead almost to the disappearance of verbal language itself. Hence, our concept of dialogue focuses on the dynamics of the concrete partners' relationship, and especially its transformative aspect.

We begin with abbreviated dialogues in early mother-infant exchanges, their emergence and history of their construction. Early mother-infant dialogues, since the early beginning of infant's life, can be traced as a temporal construction of three organizational patterns of partners' joint actions in communication process (Lyra, 1999, 2007). The dyad starts with a dynamics of establishing, followed by an extension period of exchanges that gives rise to an abbreviation of dialogues (Lyra & Winegar, 1997). Examining closely these patterns we can observe that establishment occurs throughout successive or concomitant partners' negotiations, in which at least one element that composes dyadic exchanges is constructed as shared understanding. For example, we have the mutual gaze between partners (in face-to-face exchanges) or joint attention given to an object (in mother-object-baby exchanges). Extension is characterized by the dynamics that transforms the previously established mutual understanding to serve as a "background" against which the

[1] See Malinowsky's term of "phatic communion" as a type of communication in which the words are not used primarily to convey meaning but "in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words" (1972, p. 150).

dyad can negotiate partners' new actions and elaborate extended exchanges, such as "figures". Considering the mutual gaze as shared knowledge, the dyad can then exchange smiles, vocalizations, and so forth, in an extended way, for instance in face-to-face exchanges. Another example is a dyad that has previously established joint attention to an object as shared comprehension; it can then negotiate arm and hand movements towards the object, composing extended exchanges of many turn-takings. Finally abbreviation emerges as a new organizational pattern of dyadic negotiation characterized by exchanges of short duration with a typical partner adjustment, which is quickly, easily and smoothly performed in a small number of turn-takings. The elements of dyadic exchanges, extensively negotiated and elaborated during the period of extension, now appear in an abbreviated or condensed fashion. Regarding face-to-face dialogues, the dyad can simply exchange a mutual gaze or mutual gaze together with some previously negotiated and shared actions (smiles, vocalizations, etc). Another example is the swift, easy and smooth adjustment of the shared joint attention given by the dyad to an object, followed by the mother offering the object to the infant and the infant grasping and holding it immediately (Lyra, 1999, 2007, Lyra & Winegar, 1997).

What do these patterns mean for the dialogical self? How do they develop? We conceive of them as relationally constructed patterns resulting from a progressive co-action of mutual transformation and adjustment. Both infant and adult are involved in a particular dynamics, the dialogical dynamics. This dynamics is characterized by the partners' mutually transforming movement, initially – considering partners' actions – their transformation and adjustment in a co-regulated movement (Fogel, 1993) and later on transformation and adjustment as symbolic selves. This movement allows to transform partners' actions in emergent selves progressively including the semiotic-cultural world and transforming in this way the characteristic subject's functioning (Marková, 2003). Thus actions become semiotic actions and ecological selves (Butterworth, 1995) become symbolic ones.

Observing the microgenetic transformation and development of partners' joint actions we can conceive of the development of these patterns as resulting from a self-organizing movement that allows successively for the emergence of new patterns of order emerging from the temporal process of communication. At the level of actions we can apply principles that work in other dimension of reality, namely the physical and biological realities – principles that are based on concepts defined in the context of dynamic systems analysis (Thelen & Smith, 1994; van Geert, 2003). However, at the moment that the process of communication achieves an abbreviate format, we reach a turning point. This movement towards abbreviation exhibits both continuity and discontinuity. Continuity as the dyad uses the same actions already learned during the preceding period of extension, and discontinuity as regards the quality of engagement that the abbreviated dialogues allows for.

Let us examine the temporal construction of the abbreviated dialogues in order to understand the discontinuity feature that encompasses the new quality of this engagement. Departing from a dynamics of establishing, at least one element is mutually constructed by the partners, namely a shared action in order to start a dialogue, as it happens in the beginning of all dialogues. One relational link needs

to be established (Rommetveit, 1990). The dyad extends then the interaction based on the established element. Actions, cadences, rhythms, and the like can be constructed now, composing extended dialogues. Until that moment we can consider these constructions as learning process based on a simple point-by-point contingency. In extension, the dyad has to put necessarily each action in a sequence, almost one-by-one, in order to get the infant's attention, interest and achieve learning. What we observe in the abbreviated dialogues is the capacity of the infant to exhibit a different type of learning process that results in a totality in which the abbreviated format encapsulates the shared history of the dyad (Lyra, 2007). This totality is detached from the exact actions exchanged, abstracted from the immediate and contingent space of actions, thus allowing generalization of a format, the abbreviated format. It means that the shared abbreviated format functions as un umbrella under which the historical constructed relationship between learned specific actions becomes flexible and interchangeable. This is because the process of learning this format allows to encapsulate as a gestalt the possibilities of each action (or group of actions) that comprises each dialogical exchange. Therefore, novelty can be introduced without changing this format; further, the exchanges are flexible, allowing the swift, smooth and adjusted integration of new actions.

What is being constructed by the dyad? More importantly, how is the dyad constructing this communication capacity, these abbreviated dialogues? It is through the temporal development of each dyad that abbreviation emerges. Departing from a basically emotional engagement, typical for primary intersubjectivity (Trevarthen, 1998; Trevarthen & Hubley, 1978), the dyad builds on this type of mutuality to establish the first joint actions, extending them as dialogue, and proceeds to transform this first step into a new organizational pattern of communication–extension. After establishment and extension in which the partners are engaged by the co-ordination of their mutual actions, this dynamics allows for the development of a new pattern of communication that distinguishes the format of exchanges from the actions that actualize these exchanges. These are the abbreviated dialogues; the abbreviated format is maintained while the actions chosen to communicate, the content of each abbreviated event varies according to the particular history of each dyad.[2]

1.1. FROM EXTENSION TO ABBREVIATION

Examples taken from microgenetic analysis of dyadic mother-infant exchanges from weekly videorecords registered from the second to the eighth month of infant's age, will illustrate (a) the transformation from extension to abbreviation; (b) novelty inclusion and maintenance of the abbreviated dialogical form and the reversal of partners' role in the give-and-take mother-infant exchanges (Lyra, 2007).

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[2] This transformation towards abbreviated dialogues has been identified in typical Brazilian and North-American mother-infant dyads (Lyra, 2007, in preparation) and with different paces in mother-infant dyads in which baby is congenitally deaf (Griz, 2004) and has Down syndrome (Melo, 2006).

The following examples from dyad S illustrate the extended movement that happens during the mother-infant exchanges that precedes (example 1) the condensation and contracted movement which characterizes abbreviations (example 2).

Example 1
EXTENSION
Dyad S (baby's age – 19 weeks old)
Duration: 27 seconds
(1) Mother and baby look at an object.
(2) Mother starts to talk while smiling.
(3) Baby keeps looking at the object while moving his arms and legs.
(4) Mother keeps talking and smiling.
(5) Baby keeps looking at the object while moving his arms and legs.
(6) Mother moves the object far from the baby's reach.
(7) Baby moves one of his hands toward the object.
(8) Mother keeps moving the object far from the baby's reach.
(9) Baby looks away.

Example 2
ABBREVIATION
Dyad S (baby's age – 21 weeks old)
Duration: 2 seconds
(1) Mother and baby look at the object.
(2) Mother repeatedly brings the object close to the baby and immediately moves it away from the baby.
(3) Baby takes the object from the mother's hand when the object is in his reach.

The subsequent examples from dyad 2M and J illustrate both (1) novelty introduction and maintenance of the abbreviated dialogical format, and (2) the beginning of a role reversal in a giving-and-taking object's game.
Example 3 from dyad 2M exhibits the prototypical abbreviation used by this dyad.

Example 3 (prototypical abbreviation)
Dyad 2M (baby's age – 29 weeks old)
Duration: 10 seconds
(1) Mother and baby are sitting on a bed.
(2) Mother takes a rattle and tosses it on the bed, out of the baby's reach.
(3) Baby looks at the rattle, moves her body forward, gets on her hands and knees on the bed, crawls toward the object, stretches out her arms, takes the rattle and holds it.

The next example (example 4) shows the mother's new action of grabbing the object from baby's hand, followed by tossing it on the baby's bed and the baby immediately taking one of the objects. The beginning of a reversal suggesting an inversion of roles between the mother and baby in this game is illustrated below.

Example 4 (role reversal and novelty introduction)
Dyad 2M (baby's age – 29 weeks old)
Duration: 4 seconds
(1) Mother takes the rattle from the baby's hand and tosses it on the bed again.
(2) Baby crawls toward the rattle and holds it again.

The same phenomenon of novelty introduction and role reversal seeds can be observed in another dyad, dyad J. The prototypical abbreviation in this dyad is very simple, as illustrated by example 5.

Example 5 (prototypical abbreviation)
Dyad J (baby's age – 23 weeks old)
Duration: 5 seconds
(1) Mother brings an object close to the baby.
(2) Baby reaches for the object with his arms and takes it from his mother's hand.

Against this background of well-established shared dyadic understanding, which is evident in these prototypical abbreviated dialogues, the new actions in this dyad are undeniable and numerous; mother and baby innovate. Almost all the examples that follow (examples 6a to 6f) occurred in a sequence of events of dialogical exchanges in the same record, encompassing a single day. All had a short duration, varying from 7 to 12 seconds. These examples are summarized, highlighting the new actions from both partners.

Examples 6 (novelty introduction and role reversal)
Dyad J (baby's age – 23 weeks old)
Duration: 7 – 12 seconds
Example 6a
The mother responds to the baby by taking an object after the baby has shaken the objects.
Example 6b
The baby, repeating the mother's way of offering, shakes the objects after having taken them.
Example 6c
The baby lets the object drop; the mother takes them and the baby takes the objects from the mother's hand once again.
Example 6d
The baby lets the object drop; the mother looks at the object, makes it produce sound and the baby takes it again.

The flexibility of the dyad to use new actions at the same time that the abbreviated format is maintained in the dialogues is clear. The following examples show the beginning of a reversal give-and-take game, that is, of the inversion of roles between the mother and baby in this game: example 6a shows the mother taking the object after the baby has shaken the objects; example 6b – the baby repeats mother's action of moving the object; and example 6c and 6d – the baby drops the object and the mother takes it, followed by the baby's taking the object again in a swift, smooth and adjusted way. Thus the partners' position in the dialogue becomes differentiated.

1.2. ABBREVIATION: THREE DEVELOPMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Three characteristics of abbreviation in early mother-infant dialogues, exhibiting the constructive role of this developmental step, can be pointed out to: the infant's capacity to abstract a format and to use it in other dialogical events, the seeds of infant self's positioning differentiation and the new quality of the partners' shared engagement that suggests that the dyad has a new functional capacity to dialogue.

The abbreviated format. The emergence of a new pattern of organization of partners' dialogical exchanges, transforming extension into abbreviations, allows for a number of new developmental acquisitions. Abbreviation as a dialogical format is separated and distinguished from the content of each dialogical event, from the actual actions which are exchanged. This allows for facing novelty introduction while still maintaining the dialogue. Thus, we can say that the abbreviated format is abstracted from the actual actions used in each abbreviated dialogue and generalized to other dialogues occurring in dyadic exchanges. In these conditions, we find a high predictability of the format but a freedom and indeterminacy of partners' choice of what specific actions each specific exchange will comprise. The degree of this freedom is constrained by the historical/temporal constructions of dyad.

The role reversal activity. The seeds of partners' positioning differentiation vis-á-vis the other in the dialogue are emerging in the abbreviated dialogues. In the give-and-take exchanges the mother occupy the "offering" position and the baby the "taking" position that starts to be exchangeable in abbreviation; the dyad develops the seeds of partners' role reversal in the give-and-take mother-infant games, as the examples above have shown.

The shared totality. The new developmental pathway that abbreviation exhibits suggests that the dyad unveils a new functional capacity. Abbreviation analyzed from the perspective of the learning process that is now happening shows that the quality of this learning process in abbreviated dialogues is different from the quality we observe during the extension period; if the abbreviated format is distinguished from its content in a communicative message it means that what was learned by the dyad corresponds to the learned product that has a holistic character, the abbreviated format. Thus this format comprises a totality that encapsulates the historically constructed learned actions allowing maintenance of the dialogue and variability of the content (the actions used to actualize this format). Novelty is easier integrated

because the abbreviated format maintains partners' already constructed and known engagement. A slow sequence of novelties introduction, almost one-by-one, in order to get the infant's attention and interest, while maintaining the dialogue and achieving learning is not necessary anymore; a point-by-point contingent learning process moved towards the fast, smooth and flexible introduction of novelty inside the dialogue. To do so the dyad needs a certain degree of abstraction of this format – it should be detached from the exact actions that each abbreviated event comprises and generalized for other dialogical exchanges.

Using these characteristics of the abbreviated dialogues as a premise, we propose that the differentiation of partners' positioning, i.e. the emergent dialogical self, functions in a space that is not the same space in which the extended dialogues had occurred. We have called this new space "virtual space" (Lyra, 2007). Abbreviation characteristically exhibits exchanges of short duration with a typical partner adjustment, which is quickly, easily and smoothly performed in a small number of turn-takings. This ability requires an emerging new space that allows for abstracting the abbreviated format from the actual actions performed and its becoming generalizable for the purposes of other abbreviated dialogues. Due to these new capacities (abstraction and generalization of the abbreviated format), a totality is shared by the dyad that allows for faster and flexible dyadic exchanges, supporting innovation without breaking off the dialogue. On the contrary, the maintained dialogue integrates novelty in an easy, quick and smooth way.

We view abbreviation in early life as a major developmental achievement. Abbreviated dialogues, the phenomenon of abbreviation, are a turning point that exhibits new basic developing capacities. Relying on what we discussed above, abbreviation can be thought of as demonstrating an emergent functional space of signs, a presymbolic transitional space (Lyra, 2007). The abbreviated shared format encapsulates, as a totality, the history of the dyad in which partners' joint actions are condensed and recombined as possibilities of actualization in each abbreviated dialogical event. This history is the history of the constructive power of dialogical dynamics; alterity and "addressivity" are necessary conditions for the transforming and constructive task of joint actions since the early beginning of life.

1.3. IN THE BEGINNING IS THE JOINT ACTION

The phenomenon of abbreviation in early infancy, resulting from the dynamics of the dialogue reveals that self emerges face to face with other selves. Characterized by the insertion in the other's addressed activities (Bakhtin, 1986/1993), joint actions emerge and are organized through a self-organizing process of mutual co-action adjustment that constructs the abbreviated dialogues. Abbreviated dialogues, as a turning point in infant development, exhibit the first seeds of infant's position differentiation and the germ of a presymbolic transitional functional space.

Abbreviated dialogues in infancy, due to the distinction between format and content of partners' exchanges, suggests the emerging distinction between the intention to communicate (contained in the abbreviated format) and the actions used in each abbreviated communicative event. This distinction illustrates the emerging capacity to communicate about something, where this "about" is not

an object, like in the sign-signifier relationship, but a commonly negotiated way of acting/communicating. Thus, the kind of reference which is at stake here is contained in the relation of the shared format and the actualization of this format in which the other's intention encapsulates the objects of communication – both resulting from the shared history of interactive experiences.

Since then, we assume that the mastery of signs requires the other as an engaged partner, as the one to whom the speaker can address his/her expression and appeal. This emotional and other-oriented dimension of sign use prepares future use of symbolic language and is included in language actualization in the communicative process. Thus, we assume the interwovenness of cognitive and emotional dimensions, present in human communication and language processes; and hence the important role of partners' emotional engagement as basis for any conceptual (symbolic) development.[3]

Assuming that the symbolic development is grounded in symptom and sign, we view human being as rooted in alterity – that is why we underscore the importance of the triadic relationship between subject – subject – object (or subject – object – subject in Bühler's model). This, in turn, necessarily includes dialogical engagement based on a historically constructed dialogical "apperceptive mass" (Yakubinskiy, 1997). Dialogue opens up (or closes) the possibilities of communication, basically through our history of experiences constructed in mutual relations. Abbreviation in early infant demonstrates the construction of this dialogical "apperceptive mass" in which format and content of communication are worked and reworked disposing partners to joint actions which play a powerful constructive role.

The role of abbreviated dialogues in adulthood as a genuine language phenomenon is discussed in the next section. Grounded in the dialogical format the concept of abbreviation completes the conception of language with an image that includes the interwovenness of emotional-affective and cognitive dimensions, embedded in the movement between self and others. The early emergence of this phenomenon suggests that reference, the clear distinction signifier-signified (or sign-object) conceived of as the classical indicator of symbolic sign use proper (Hockett, 1960; Sinha 2004, Sinha, 2007), may result from an antecedent process of temporal/historical construction in which the other is apprehended in his/her complexity that includes the temporally/historically created affective-emotional atmospheres. Relying on joint actions, dialogue seems to have the power to engender selves and our symbolic capacity.

2. ABBREVIATION: THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA AND THE HISTORICITY OF A DYAD

Abbreviation as one of three organizational patterns within the mother-infant communication system turned out to be central as regards the creation of a new

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[3] The connection between intellect and affect is already put forth by Vygotsky (1987). Recently Surgan & de Lima (2003) have stressed the importance of the emotional stance in building a cognitive concept.

space, detaching the actors from their here-and-now, and differentiation of infant's position in dialogue. Thus, abbreviation comes to be an important means on the pathway to symbolic functioning as well as to the development of a dialogical self. In what follows, the origin of this core idea of abbreviation is traced back: its history reveals that it is a notion conceived of with regard to specific verbal practices involving a movement between more and less speech. Tracing back the notion will thus allow to observe language usages for which this very movement of more-and-less is typical; it will also enable us to juxtapose of nonverbal and verbal dialogical practices involving abbreviation in order to come to a mutually deepened understanding of both practices. In that, one takes two perspectives corresponding to chronologically different moments within the development of language. One may look then from the pre-symbolic stage with incipient intentionality at the fully developed symbolic usages with developed intentionality and back. The assumption is that these looks may lead one to closer observation of the genetic dynamics of symbolization and dialogical self – dynamics which is comprehended in what has been called with regard to abbreviation the temporality or historicity of a particular dyad.

2.1. ABBREVIATION IN LYRA, VYGOTSKY, AND YAKUBINSKY

Tracing the origin of the core idea of abbreviation as used here and elsewhere (e.g., Lyra, 2007) leads one directly to the work of two Russian scholars: Lev Vygotsky and Lev Yakubinsky, who were born at the turn of the 20th century in Russia and worked in the emergent Soviet Union. The first was a psychologist well known in the world, the second was a linguist almost unknown outside Russia. This is worth mentioning insofar as Mikhail Bakhtin's celebrated theory of dialogue – itself central to Dialogical Self Theory – is greatly influenced by Yakubinsky's conception of dialogue elaborated in his article *On Dialogic Speech* (*O dialogičeskoj reči*, Petrograd, 1923) (Aumüller, 2006).

Linking together Lyra (2007), Vygotsky (1934/1987) and Yakubinsky (1923) is the famous example from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* namely the dialogue between enamored Kitty and Levín. In this dialogue, although using abbreviated words, the interlocutors understand each other because of their "close psychological contact" (Vygotsky 1987, p. 269). Lyra (2007) analyzing this example refers to Vygotsky (1987) who himself relies heavily on Yakubinsky's text (and examples), rendering it almost literally (pp. 266-269). It is quite interesting (and certainly not accidental) that the paradigm of abbreviation is illustrated by a dialogue of two people in love: i.e. being in the closest contact we (in our culture) could imagine, comparable only to the kind of relation maintained by mother and infant. Sharing the Kitty-Levín example, the three authors nevertheless deal with quite different situations and thus apply the notion of abbreviation to various domains of activities, attributing to it quite different functions. These differences should be briefly sketched now in order to make the concept more precise as well as to understand its importance for every domain of communicative activities.

Yakubinsky's *On Dialogic Speech* is an outline of a non-Saussurian approach to the study of language (Eskin, 1997; Friedrich, 2005b) and is devoted to the forms

of language arising from "mutual actions" which can be immediate or mediate, dialogical or monological. The immediate and dialogic form is for Yakubinsky the "universally valid" one. Quoting his teacher, the linguist Shcherba, Yakubinsky underscores this universality: "language reveals its true essence in dialogue" (1997, p. 249), and gives dialogue the status of a paradigm for the understanding of language. Thus, *On Dialogic Speech* is not just a study of a peculiar language activity, it is a study of language as such.

Yakubinsky's interest was to find out what happens to the "language factor" in the different forms, especially in the dialogic immediate one. This approach leads him to observe a movement of retreat and advance of language: on the one hand, a retreat of linguistic means, even to a complete disappearance of words (Jakubinskij, 2004, §24); on the other hand, a growth into linguistic complexity accompanied by linguistic awareness turned to words "purely linguistic relations" (Yakubinsky, 1997, p. 251). The core notion Yakubinsky develops in order to account for this movement is "apperception":

> "Generally, we may or may not understand what is said to us; if we understand, we do so according to the 'turn' of our 'mind', to our mind-set. [...] we can say that our reception and understanding of another's speech [...] are apperceptive – that is, they are determined not only (and frequently not so much) by our actual momentary stimulation by another's speech but also by an entire range of our antecedent internal and external experiences and ultimately by the entire content of our psyche at the moment of listening. These mental contents constitue an individual's 'apperceptive mass', which assimilates any external situation" (Yakubinsky, 1997, p. 251).[4]

Additionally, mutual auditive and visual perception induce certain attitude in both partners from the beginning of a conversation, contributing thus to the "semantization of speech" (Friedrich, 2005b, p. 9); for instance, on the side of the speaker, intonation can decisively modify the meaning of what is said. Conversely, the way the speaker perceives the other's listening determines easiness and quality of his/her speech, the "temperature of the speech" (Jakubinskij, 2004, §20) and eventually what is said as well. Taking the phenomena of apperception and attitude into account, it becomes clear that "language facts" in a narrow sense (e.g., syntax, semantics, phonetics) do not suffice for verbal understanding (nor for verbal production), "[a]ctive stimulation through speech does not alone warrant hearing and understanding" (Yakubinsky, 1997, p. 252). The condition of mutual understanding is related to the apperceptive mass:

> "The more our apperceptive mass resembles our interlocutor's apperceptive mass, the better and the easier we receive and understand his speech, which might be highly elliptical and teeming with allusions. Conversely, the

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[4] Yakubinsky takes the term "apperception" from Wundt's psychology, where it designates conscious awareness of the perceived, its integral nature, and its dependence on previous experience. See the notes to the Russian edition in Vygotsky (1987, p. 383, note 89).

more the interlocutor's apperceptive mass differ, the more difficult mutual understanding becomes." (Yakubinsky, 1997, p. 253).[5]

The case of Kitty and Levín becomes clear now. Being in love, they grasp each other's allusions, are able to maintain relative syntactic simplicity and to spare words - gaze and gestures may suffice. Their apperceptive masses closely resemble highly one another, and their attitude corresponds to this resemblance, deepening it in the actual communication. For in the course of a working dialogic communication, the apperceptive masses of the partners are complemented by momentary apperceptive factors, resulting in a growing facility in the course of communication: "the flow of dialogue is greatly facilitated as mutual apperceptive assimilation grows, and consequently the purely linguistic difficulties of speech progressively decrease" (Yakubinsky, 1997, p. 254).[6]

Attitude and apperception cannot be conceived of without the other of the verbal communication. For it is this other who makes us assume an attitude, with whom we can communicate with more or less difficulty, depending on the extent to which our apperception masses resemble each other. It is this other who lets Yakubinsky say, following Polivanov: "Everything we say needs someone who knows what it is all about", who makes it possible that we talk "in necessary allusions" (Jakubinskij, 2004, p. 416).[7] Even more: just because we cannot in fact say everything we mean, we need this other, who in his understanding goes beyond the "language facts" she/he perceives. That is why Yakubinsky's notion of language is grounded in alterity. Meaning of words and utterances, meaning of verbal symbols is inconceivable outside the other's understanding in regard to which these entities function.[8]

Consequently, the observed movement between more and less language is due to the "true essence" of language, located in the dialogic form. Abbreviations genuinely belong to it, motivated by the auditive and visual perception of the partner, by the fundamental openness and interruptibility of dialogues (Yakubinsky 1997, p. 250), by the apperceptive moment in speech reception, by the correspondence between patterns of everyday life and speech (Jakubinskij 2004, pp. 418-424), and by the automatism of dialogue (Yakubinsky 1997, pp. 254-256). These motives relate to several kinds of abbreviation, which means that for Yakubinsky abbreviation is not limited to a precise linguistic form but rather manifests itself in diverse forms which are, moreover, not motivated by the language system but

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[5] It should be bore in mind that this analysis concerns the general functioning of language. What Yakubinsky demonstrates for dialogic form is in principle valid for other forms, that is the monologic ones, be they spoken or written. Language does not have (as in Saussurian linguistics) a unified form from which various usages are derived (as more or less complete); there is no *langue* (with subsequent *parole*) but functional diversity with several *langues*.

[6] Yakubinsky of course also addresses cases of not understanding and misunderstanding, relying on thesame principle of resemblence-dissemblence of apperceptive masses.

[7] Unfortunately, the abridged translation (Yakubinsky 1997) skips precisely this passage (see p. 253);thus, I refer to the German version. See also Bertau & Friedrich (2005). However, this passage can be found in Vygotsky (1987, p. 269) whose close referring to Yakubinsky's text is striking.

[8] "in regard to which these entities function" and not "are used" which would suppose the existence of verbal symbols which are then put to use.

by the language form chosen by participants themselves – with their complete psycho-corporeal reality. In this, Yakubinsky's understanding of abbreviation is quite different from the one found in linguistic approaches dealing with elliptical phenomena: most approaches start with a language system which is altered in specific, rule-based ways (e.g. McShane, 2005). Because of that, abbreviation is observed by Yakubinsky and not given a specific status with a specific function - observed as belonging genuinely to mutual verbal activity.

It is in describing the linguistic characteristics of inner speech that Vygotsky (1987) refers to Yakubinsky (1923) and also to several of the examples found there. Fragmentation and abbreviation are central features of inner speech, the development from egocentric to inner speech manifests "a form of abbreviation where the predicate and related words are preserved while the subject is omitted" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 267). Thus, "pure and absolute predicativity" is the first feature of inner speech, belonging to its syntactic form. In order to explain how and why predicativity of inner speech develops, Vygotsky considers then situations in external speech where predicativity occurs. It is worth mentioning that the structure of inner speech is explained through an analogy with external speech, and what is more, with dialogic speech. Proceeding in this way, Vygotsky suggests that inner speech – although cognitively oriented – retains a fundamental addressivity.[9] The first cases Vygotsky addresses show that predication arises "where the subject of the expression is present to the interlocutor's thoughts" (1987, p. 268). Vygotsky then continues with the Kitty-Levín example, relating explicitly this example to "the problem of abbreviation in inner speech" and finally referring to Yakubinsky and "the commonality of the interlocutor's apperceptive mass" (1987, p. 269). The same principle holds for inner speech as we always know what our speech is about; we always know our internal situation, the theme of our inner dialogue. "[...] it is particularly easy to understand ourselves through hints and allusions. [...] Inner speech always occurs in a situation comparable to that where the speaker expressed an entire thought [...] through [a] single predicate [...]" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 273).

The second source of the abbreviated character of inner speech is its reduced phonetic aspect, so that in inner speech syntax and phonetics are "maximally simplified and condensed", with the important consequence that "[w]ord meaning advances to the forefront" giving inner speech its unique semantic structure (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 275). All three sources of abbreviation taken together – predicativity of syntax, sound structure and specific semantics – validate Vygotsky's thesis that "inner speech is an entirely unique, independent, and distinctive speech function" and in this completely different from external speech (1987, p. 279).[10] Nevertheless, this speech shows structures that are observable in oral speech and

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[9] Addressivity in inner speech – manifest in dialogic turns – can be traced in thinking-aloud protocols of problem solving adults, see Bertau (1999). Vološinov, another contemporary of Vygotsky, is more explicit on this topic, stating that inner speech has a dialogic structure (1986, p. 38).

[10] Given the fact that psychological tradition tends mostly not to confer an independent status on inner speech, this last statement is important. For a discussion of that topic see Friedrich (2005a) who also sees Vygostky's inner speech as one the functional forms of language according to Yakubinsky: a complete and genuine form of language activity.

that function on the basis of the same principle of "shared apperception" stemming from "mental intimacy" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 273). In inner speech, abbreviation has a cognitive aim, linking an economical shortening of the form aspects (syntax and phonetics) to an intensifying and complexifying of the content aspect (sense over meaning, see Vygotsky, 1987, pp. 275-277). In this way, the sequentially of language is abandoned to a certain degree, allowing for mediation of the dynamic relation between thought and word – the very function of inner speech (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 279). Economic shortening together with intensity of sense holds certainly for oral abbreviation too, but it became much clearer in Vygotsky, possibly because of his cognitive interest in language.

In both Vygotsky and Yakubinsky abbreviation is the result of shared experiences, of repeated interactions, of a constructed communicative history of partners. This is valid also for inner speech where one is one's own partner. There must nevertheless be a history in one's own thinking, and the fact that we unfold our inner dialogues and abandon "absolute predicativity" precisely when we are not sure what we mean, or not sure about the way to understand something, indicates that one's own apperception mass may not resemble itself, so to speak. Dialogic structures emerging in problem situations (Bråten, 1999) can validate this assumption.

Turning now to Lyra's notion of abbreviation as developed above and elsewhere (2007), first it should be underscored that she is concerned with pre-verbal dialogues in mother-infant dyads where the infants are 6 to 29 weeks of age. The dialogues take place with or without the use of objects and are assumed to occur at the level of partner's actions. Underlying this approach is the basic assumption that the infant is born in a "dialogical closure" (assumed with Bråten, 1998), meaning that "the infant is able to establish dialogical exchanges before the establishment of any language or constituted symbolic system" (2007, p. 21). Second, the pattern of abbreviation is conceived of within a microgenetic sequence involving transitions and shifts between all three observed patterns: extension undergoes a process of transformation that becomes increasingly similar to the following pattern of organization, i.e. abbreviation, which is in turn transformed, mainly with regard to the increasing quantity of turn-takings due to the inclusion of novelty that sometimes requires a little more time and turn-takings within the dyadic exchanges (Lyra, 2007, p. 23).

In this perspective, the history of relationship of a particular dyad comes to the foreground. In Vygostky as in Yakubinsky abbreviation may be done on the ground of the conventions belonging to language and may refer thus to something like an over-individual history. As Lyra is dealing with pre-symbolic communication, conventionality related to a symbolic system can't play a role in constructing and using abbreviation; for this very reason it is the particular history of a particular dyad with its specific interactions that becomes important. But again, the Kitty-Levín example chosen by the three authors points out to the fact that it is more the shared experiences and the mental intimacy acquired in the course of a certain length of time (which can be very short) that matters here than a (linguistic) convention at hand. Thus, all three authors regard abbreviation as a psychological phenomenon rooted in social experiences we have with others. These social experiences are shaped

by dialogic exchanges ("mutual behavior", as Yakubinsky puts it) where addressed activities may or may not be realized by means of a symbolic system. Convention then develops out of an actually negotiated way of acting, and what matters is what the partners have internalized from previous communications as well as the kind of "attitude" they have when engaging in a subsequent communication.

2.2. GROWING APPERCEPTION AND INCIPIENT INTENTIONALITY

In Yakubinsky (1997) the case of a working dialogue is linked to the fact that the "apperceptive assimilation grows" leading to a facilitated dialogue, and this can be related to the smoothness in the abbreviation patterns observed by Lyra: the exchanges are smoothly adjusted to each other and this causes a short duration with few turns. The result of abbreviation is a condensed and simplified format. Its density refers to the prior extensively negotiated exchanges and thus engenders something like a similar "apperceptive mass" in both partners. This mass may involve an expectation that the other will take into account my own action ("I expect the other to look at me when I hold object x in my hand within her/his visual field – just as we have done this previously"), an assumption that the other has the same expectation[11], and that, hence, this will produce a sequence of mutual, interdependent actions: a dialogue.

The way of understanding early pre-verbal dialogues can be inferred from this very notion of dialogue, specific to Yakubsinky and also present in Bakhtin: dialogue entails the mutual influence of utterances, their interdependence (Aumüller, 2006). The relationship between utterances is not only an external one (as in question and reply) but also an internal one insofar as the speaker anticipates possible utterances of his/her listener and shapes actual utterances according to this anticipation, as well as in regard to his/her or the other one's previous utterances. This inherent relatedness to a previous and to a subsequent utterance is Yakubinsky's discovery and it is characteristic for his notion of dialogue (Aumüller, 2006, p. 179).[12]

Paraphrasing the feature of interdependence of utterances as "dialogue of the utterances" and thus highlighting the perceivable structural aspect of the exchange, one can assume that dialogues – and expecially early ones – are first of all a certain temporal form, constructed by both partners.[13]Actors are driven by the form's dynamics itself, and not necessarily by the intention to fulfill the form – at least this is not necessary for both partners. Once established by the dyad the form works, holding both actors, leading them through the structure. It is in a second step that intentionality intervenes pushing the acquired form toward new elements. The format of abbreviation does not impute intentionality to the infant, rather, it presents itself as a slide-way into intentionality. Abbreviation produces – because

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[11] This structure refers to Schütz' (1971) idealizations, especially to the idealization of inter-changeable perspectives.

[12] This can be for instance seen in Yakubinsky's consideration of interruptions (1997, p. 250f.).

[13] These forms can in turn make use of previous experiences concerning e.g. rhythms of vocalizations (Trevarthen & Gratier, 2005).

of its very feature which is form – a different quality of action which involves mental states as intentionality.

In sum, abbreviation viewed from an ontogenetic point of view introduces the child into the interdependence of turns within co-actions, corresponding to the learning of dialogical format. As condensed and simplified form, abbreviation is a pathway to symbolization, yet rooted in symptom and signal and bound to the partners and the shared situation. Taken all this together, abbreviation renders possible the development of intentionality and dialogic position: through the distinction between the other's intention to act and his/her actual activity. The supporting basis of this early complex figure of social cognition is common history.

3. CONCLUSION: LESSONS FROM ABBREVIATION

Abbreviated dialogues in early mother-infant dyads and abbreviated dialogues in adulthood (Yakubinsky, 1997, Vygotsky, 1987) suggest that abbreviation can be treated as a paradigm for exploring and understanding the complexity of human phenomena in terms of "self, symbol and subject" (Sinha, 2007).

Basic dialogicality, that we assume axiomatically for human existence, manifests itself in various dialogical practices. One of this practices is abbreviation, a dialogical pattern with a peculiar relation to the development of the dialogical self as well as to the development of the capacity to symbolize. Observation of abbreviations as pervasive phenomena in adult dialogues confirms their central feature: the fact that these specific dialogical formats encapsulate the history of a particular dyad, i.e., the partners' interactive experiences in time. Hence, abbreviations correspond to new pattern of order that emerges in the historical process of communication. This historicity, the time-bound dimension of abbreviations, points to the fact that transformation occured within the dynamics of the concrete partners' relationship, affecting each partner, their relationship to each other and the way they can communicate dialogically. This kind of "affectation" happening in the dialogical engagement is due to the historically and jointly constructed "apperceptive mass", meaning the "entire range of our antecedent internal and external experiences" (Yakubinsky, 1997, p. 251).

The apperceptive mass engernders in particular the experienced positions of self and other in different combinations, including role reversals. The history of mutually constructed experiences supplies the basis on which dialogues function – especially in case of developing self. Dialogues open up or close the possibilities of communication, i.e., the possibilities of taking and experiencing positions, or the possibilities of experiencing the self and other as distinct in the course of a common communicative history. Thus, differences (of positions and stance) are created, distinguishing the partners as well as relating them to each other: this is the work of time, so to speak, laying the foundation for interdependence of mutual actions (turns, utterances).

Hence, emerging from the dynamics of dialogical practices, relational and time-bound joint actions fundamentally require the other to construct different and complementary developmental dimensions. Moreover, this other and these

joint actions express themselves as embedded in a certain context. Involved in the dialogical dynamics, continuity and discontinuity appear while cognition and affect interweave. Thanks to the mass of real-human-context-embedded-events our learning process and space of functioning become more complex and our abstraction-generalization capacity is born. The use of signs and self differentiation (first as positioning differentiation) can be traced back here as emerging capacities. Moreover, all these features of human dialogicality persist through life. Communication as embodied activity evident in abbreviated dialogues in infancy and in adulthood points to a conception of language and symbolization along the lines of Yakubinsky, Bakhtin and Bühler in which form and content, the object of communication and the communicative partners are always backed by our apperceptive mass, historically constructed and dynamically actualized.

The possibilities mentioned above are a matter of degree and quality, answering the basic question: What kind of dialogues are possible within a particular dyad? And including other questions as well: What kind of history is created? Where are abbreviations constructed (in which contexts), and to what extent? The degree and quality of the possibilities to be achieved through dialogues determine the development of the dialogical self, and its specific dialogicality. Thus, the abbreviations jointly constructed and performed with a significant other give way to the particular dialogicality of the self.

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