# The method of auto-constructing of the person's lifeworld

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# El método de autoconstrucción del mundo de la vida de la persona

## ABSTRACT

Auto-constructing is one of the new person's self-processes, determined by the necessity to use new terminology in the experimental psychology of the postmodern period - the time of practice-oriented results. If self-development is, in our opinion, a term, which characterizes the initiative actions of the person during process of her multi-directional growth, auto-constructing is the term, which describes a more directed self-transformation of the personality in the conditions of a specific social situation.

The leading method of research was modified version of "Self – Interview". The considered variations of the "Self – Interview" method allow to manifest person's activity as self-transformation in the form of "self-development", which is carried out in many ways. One of the ways is auto-constructing of the person's life path towards a specific, self-chosen goal, which is determined by the social situation. Modification of method "Self – Interview", suggested in this research, based on idea of influence of reflexive self-analysis on the goal choice with psychological searching of the possibilities for its achieving. So, this method translates the idea of introception – transforming of external goal which is chosen by experimenter into the internal goal of the person.

KEY WORDS: self-development, auto-constructing, person, method, practical psychology.

## RESUMEN

La autoconstrucción es uno de los procesos propios de la nueva persona, determinado por la necesidad de utilizar una nueva terminología en la psicología experimental del período posmoderno: el momento de los resultados orientados a la práctica. Si el autodesarrollo es, en nuestra opinión, un término que caracteriza las acciones de iniciativa de la persona durante el proceso de su crecimiento multidireccional, la autoconstrucción es el término que describe una autotransformación más dirigida de la personalidad en el condiciones de una situación social específica.

El principal método de investigación fue la versión modificada de "Entrevista personal". Las variaciones consideradas del método de "autoentrevista" permiten manifestar la actividad de la persona como auto-transformación en forma de "autodesarrollo", que se lleva a cabo de muchas maneras. Una de las formas es autoconstruir el camino de la vida de la persona hacia un objetivo específico, elegido por uno mismo, que está determinado por la situación social. Modificación del método "Autoentrevista", sugerido en esta investigación, basado en la idea de la influencia del autoanálisis reflexivo en la elección del objetivo con la búsqueda psicológica de las posibilidades para lograrlo. Por lo tanto, este método traduce la idea de la introcepción: la transformación del objetivo externo que el experimentador elige en el objetivo interno de la persona.

PALABRAS CLAVE: autodesarrollo, autoconstrucción, persona, método, psicología práctica.

**Pavel Nikolaevich Ustin**

Kazan Federal University. Russian Federation

pavust@mail.ru

**Leonid Mikhailovich Popov**

Kazan Federal University. Russian Federation

#### INTRODUCTION

According to the work of social scientists (Baudrillard, 1996; Gergen, 2012; Jameson, 2015; Derrida, 1980; Foucault, 2008 etc.) the modern stage of development of society can be labeled as "era of postmodern". In the system of scientific knowledge postmodernism as a reflection of the "era postmodern" assumes a critical treatment of the categories, concepts and methods which corresponded to the "era of modern".

In the framework of psychological science the serious criticism of the existing theoretical positions (in particular, behaviorism, humanism, cognitivism) was carried out in the framework of social constructionism. Social constructionism is a new direction which reflects the idea of postmodernism in scientific knowledge. According to A.M. Ulanovskiy social constructionism recognizes the primary role of discourse and relations between people in the construction of their world and self (Ulanovsky, 2012). It positions the need to reject the ideas about universal absolute truths, standards of behavior, psychological processes and considers these ideas in relation to the culture and history of specific communities.

Community is one of the key concepts in the framework of social constructionism. This is due to the fact that one of the characteristic features of postmodern society is its fragmentation. The result of such fragmentation is appearing of diverse communities (e.g., gamers, childfree, neo-paganism, etc.). This communities form (construct) their own lifeworlds which undermine the common (universal) system of concepts and symbols.

Thus, the life-world is another key concept of social contructionism. In turn, the proximity of social constructionism with the ideas of phenomenology allows to use phenomenological approaches related to such concept as "lifeworld": the works of the founder of phenomenology E. Husserl (Husserl, 1970) and the works of the founder of phenomenological sociology of A. Schutz (Schutz, 1973). In psychology this is ideas about gestalt psychology in studies of perception and productive thinking (M. Wertheimer, K., Koffka, K. The Dunker), "phenomenological field" (K. Levin) and psychology of emotions (F. E. Vasilyuk, 1984).

A qualitative transition of modern society to a new level opens a scientific problem: the lack of research methods and technologies for experimental studies of psychological and socio-psychological phenomena occurring in modern society. In psychology this problem can be solved through transformation (development) of the arsenal of existing methodological means in the context of qualitative changes that reflect the postmodern society.

This study is one of the variants of the research method transformation to the demands of modern psychology through integration of key positions of the socio - constructionistic trends in categorical and conceptual apparatus of the person-activity approach. It presents a description of method "Self-Interview", which was modified according to modern realities and which is focused on self-knowledge of man's life-world and stimulation of its auto-constructing.

#### METHODS

The experimental base of research was Kazan (Volga region) Federal University in Russia Federation. The participants of research were students and graduate students from various learning profiles (psychology, mathematics, physics, history, jurisprudence, biology and etc.). The number of participants was 120.

Methods of research were: interview, qualitative analysis, introspection, constructing and auto-constructing, theoretical analysis.

The leading method was interview. Specific of interview was determined by its focus on inner psychological processes of participants and included self-describing (introspection), influence of experimenter (constructing) and stimulation of initiative activity of person (auto-constructing).

Qualitative analysis included content analysis and systematization of empirical data during modifying of interview algorithms.

The theoretical analysis included the study and systematization of literature resources about psychological mechanisms and patterns of introspection, self-development and initiative activities of person.

The procedure of creating of method included working out its algorithm, instructions, psychological instruments. The efficiency rating of technology included observations, interviewing, feedback and qualitative analysis.

### RESULTS

The method of "Self- Interview" was based on our desire to provide research participants with method of systemic and structural comprehension of their inner world, which includes the possibility of self-transformation, that is, self-development. The research participants were asked to write an essay about themselves as an alternative form of the exam. It was given a plan of self-cognizing, based on the basic blocks of human psychology: "I am as a person", "My intelligence", "My emotional world", "My will", "My contacts", "My influence". It was also encouraged the selection of difficulties (problems) for each block and searching of the assumed ways of its overcoming. Also criteria for quantitative assessment of works were developed. They included two vectors: the ability to master psychological culture and ability for self-development.

Experimental material which was received over many years of working within the framework of this problem showed that there are three types of "Self- Interview": structured, semi-structured and free (unstructured). From the position of self-development ability semi-structured and free interviews are more interested. They are characterized by initiative desire to go beyond the marked script. And interviews, which were written in semi-structured and free styles, included a variety of social situations with the participation of the author of the work. However, it should be recognized that in most part of the obtained materials was dominated by the external goal (the goal of the experimenter) – interviews were written in structured or semi-structured styles.

The part of interview, connected with the instruction for participants to describe their psychological characteristics that is to show their level of mastering the psychological culture encouraged most part of students to present information about themselves as unique person formally: about their intelligence, emotions, communication and influence. Also the desire to borrow (compile) text from literary sources was noticed. So, this part of text was written not in productive (creative) but in reproductive style.

But, the suggestion of the experimenter to note the difficulties and possible ways of their overcoming in half of the cases found the response from the students and they shared their problems in the hope to obtain from the experimenter an advice or consulting. It can be assumed as primary attempts of initiative (active) behavior, associated with experimenter's work. And only in individual cases some students demonstrated real initiative (active) behavior – they changed suggested interview plan or rejected it and created their own composition variant. Such materials were considered as semi-structured and free interviews. So the behavior of most participants in experimental research can be interpreted through the scheme: "stimulus-response".

Such results generated new task - to implement the basic idea of the W. Stern's concept – the idea of 'introception' - when an external purpose, i.e. the purpose specified from outside, transforms into the internal goal of the person.

This problem was solved by changing of "Self-Interview" instruction through the terms of "Activity theory" (Leontiev, 1977). New instruction was constructed with using such elements as: purpose, actions, ways of their doing and emotional attitude to them ("experience"). Using this type of "Self-Interview" allowed to receive a large number of self-descriptions. In some cases this descriptions included a comprehensive portrait of yourself, your needs, abilities, moral obligations to parents, academic leaders. In other cases this descriptions distinguished by a focus on a specific goal (e.g. "to be a psychologist of top level"). Such cases showed the chain "I – Want – Can" and participant's desire to correlate all components of this chain with the intended purpose.

The practical value of information about inner world of "Self-Interview" respondents was increased during work with graduate students who represented a component of "Want" (motivational component) more directionally. For them it is correlated with the specific purpose - want to write a dissertation. This fact stimulated us to formulate more complete instructions in activity part of "Self-Interview". Activities of respondents should be provided with describing of time and space, connected with time-consuming and limits transitions from stage to stage. It turned out that in some cases, the goal has remained without working out of the space-time parameter, in others it was taken into account. Most part of interviews was described in semi-structured style. In some cases, interviews were written in free style with a description of the biographical data and the obstacles that had to be overcome.

Next step of "Self-Interview" method customizing included integration its general algorithm of self-describing with theoretical provisions of S.L. Rubinstein about the structure of personality in the form of a triad: "I want" – "I can" – "Who I am" (Rubinstein, 2012). S.L. Rubinstein allocated motivation, abilities and personality as central psychological components of human being. Taking into account potential initiative of person and its regulation determinants, we expanded this list of components. So this list also was complemented with person's activities, person's attitude toward these activities and also its volitional and moral components. So the algorithm of introspective self-description has received such form as: "I" – "Want" – "Can" – "Must" (as signs of will and moral duty to someone) – "Act" – "Worry". Thus, such approach included not only full describing of respondent as the person, but also it stimulated identifying his numerous needs, motives, and abilities.

What is about such element as "Must" in algorithm of method, it was introduced for accounting of person's inner obstacles, which could be presented through particle "Not" in the chain: "I"-"Want"-"Can". For example: "I want to, but I can not" or "I do not want to, but I can"." So, element "Must" reflects the willpower of the person in overcoming obstacles during solving problem and person's moral duty in front of someone. It should be noted that in all cases of this variant of method we

couldn't fully transform external goal (from experimenter) to internal (own personal).

At final step of "Self-Interview" method customizing we concreted the content of elements for more effective stimulating of transforming external goal to internal goal (to stimulate the process of independent formulating of goal by a person). Was proposed following variant of algorithm: "Want" – "Can" (according to abilities and qualities of person) – "Must" (as "will" and "moral debt") –"Act" (taking into account the factors of time and space, but also "risks" when person achieves every goal) – "Worry" (attitude toward activities). So we removed element "I" and focused on features and characteristics which are most important in effective goal achieving.

Also new category "risks" was introduced into content of such element as "Act". Under risk we understood sudden obstacles which may prevent the achievement of goals, up to the task's reorientation of the person. This reorientation can happen, for example, in situations of frustration. Thus the final version of the "Self-Interview" reflected concrete motivation and actions of the human being linked to a particular situation in his life and connected with his desires, opportunities and risks. Such approach allowed to use "Self-Interview" as method of individual constructing (auto-constructing) by person his lifeworld. So final variant of method gives to respondent complete algorithm of self-describing, but goal and ways of its achieving person find itself, without help of experimenter.

## DISCUSSION

The subject of the study is the technological embodiment of lifeworld auto-constructing by the person through introspective reflection and subsequent inner intellectual activity.

This research is appropriate to include in the context of modern Russian methodology, where the question about an independent theory of practical psychology is too actual (Zhuravlev, Nestik & Yurevich, 2016). Practical psychology has accumulated in its arsenal a sufficient number of technologies and methods that encourage people to evaluate themselves as individuals with subsequent personal growth. However, there is a gap between theoretical principals about the per-

Pavel Nikolaevich Ustin, Leonid Mikhailovich Popov
: "The method of auto-constructing of the person's lifeworld."

159

son's inner world and psychological practice. Traditionally, theoretical strategy is based on abstract understanding of human being. Practical strategy includes trainings, counseling, games and is built on the eclectic use of various theories in solving personal growth tasks and overcoming conflicts.

The global problem consists in the search for ways to break the gap between the theoretical, logically constructed psychology as a science and psychological practice with its support for an eclectic set of positions from different theories (Ponomarev, 1983).

Obviously, the scientific, the "abstract-analytical psychology" needs to look for ways of it's implementation in practice of modern social life, and practical psychology – points of contact with research psychology to create its own methodology and correct interpretation of empirical results

The methodology (Kornilova & Smirnov, 2006) includes two general parts: the doctrine of original foundations of cognition and the doctrine of the methods and methods of research, which we consider as a practical component of the methodology.

In this work the problem of integration of theory and practice is solved at a particular example – an experimental study shows the possibility of considering the methodological provisions of a number of recognized theories to ensure the effectiveness of the technology of person's lifeworld auto-constructing.

Staying in the position of person–activity approach, we consider it is necessary to state the following:

First – the main task of both scientific and practical psychology is to understand the full breadth and depth of the inner world of man as an initiator of communication, cognition, behavior, contemplation and transformation of the World, which for him acts as a world of Objects (Brushlinsky, 2003).

Second, in interaction of man with himself, when he himself becomes the object in its entirety should be presented the processes, technologies and products of self-cognizing and self-transforming (self-development, self-actualization).

Third, the central moment of the person-activity approach is the question about the driving forces and the process of person's activity in external and internal forms. This issue includes accounting of external and internal determinants, basic psychological elements of activity and associated with it experiences.

The fourth major element of this approach is the initiation of the person in all its acts of interacting with internal and external objects.

Fifth – scientific method of learning is reflection, where the main thrust of the action is self-cognizing, which includes reflecting of the object and its transformation, when the knowledge about the object "completes" and "rebuilds" – namely, it changes and becomes other than it was until the process of reflection (Kornilova & Smirnov 2006).

Implementation of the given positions can be provided by the method, which has capability of holistic (systemic and structural according to B.F. Lomov) comprehending of man's inner world. Also this method must be able to be used in external discovery and multidimensional self-discovery, with subsequent self-transformation, that is, auto-constructing.

Despite the skepticism of many researchers against introspection, with its lack of reliability, we believe that the introspective method has two advantages over test method of data collection: the first - diagnostic introspective self-definition includes a wide range of psychological characteristics; the second – estimation of person's inner world promotes forming of its holistic image, helps in understanding of its own problems and generates a proactive desire for self-transformation (full or partial).

## SUMMARY

In this work the modified method "Self-Interview" is presented. "Self-interview" is the method, which is built on self-analysis of cognitive-psychological culture of person and includes its comprehensive assessment. Activation of person's motivation provided by free

choice, which motivates a person to arbitrary, that is, self-selected behavior.

The essence of the method lies in the fact that people can express their thoughts and views according to algorithm, suggested by experimenter. A practical embodiment of the method encourages the participant as the person of self-description, self-evaluation and self-development beyond the proposed algorithm. As a result – possible description of the path of life with a focus on the most important for the person events, experiences. This method is difficult to analyze, but has considerable potential, because questions can be modified for the tasks of the study.

The final variant of "Self-Interview" directed on auto-constructing of person's lifeworld has such algorithm: "I want" – "I can" (according to abilities and qualities of person) – "I must" (as "will" and "moral debt") –"I act" (taking into account the factors of time and space, but also "risks" when person achieves every goal) – "I worry" (attitude toward activities).

## CONCLUSIONS

The method of auto-constructing of the person's lifeworld is created and tested. It is based on the idea of integration of key positions of the socio - constructionistic trends with conceptual apparatus of the person-activity approach.

Approbation of technology has proved its effectiveness among students and graduate students.

Algorithm of method can be used in psychological consulting, diagnostics and also in educational processes.

This method can be used as a mean of development and auto-constructing of lifeworld of students and graduate students – the representatives of modern society.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Pavel Nikolaevich Ustin, Leonid Mikhailovich Popov
: "The method of auto-constructing of the person's lifeworld."

161