

Vladyslava Kulish

Sumy State University
email: v.kulish@gf.sumdu.edu.ua
ORCID: 0000-0002-8283-7431

NARRATIVE ORGANIZATION AND DIALOGIZATION OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH PSYCHOLOGICAL NARRATIVES

ABSTRACT

The article examines the structural and communicative organization of contemporary English psychological narratives. Psychological narratives are viewed as cognitive-discursive constructs integrating experiential, emotional, and interpretative dimensions through narrative and dialogic mechanisms. The study is based on a qualitative corpus of contemporary psychological texts written by prominent media narrators and psychologists. It combines discourse analysis, cognitive narratology, pragmatic analysis, and qualitative textual interpretation. The findings demonstrate that psychological narratives are organized through interconnected functional components, including introductions, narrative-interpretative blocks, practice-oriented sections, and concluding parts. The study shows that psychological narratives function as communicative practices supporting cognitive reinterpretation, emotional engagement, and behavioral change.

Keywords: psychological narrative, dialogization, discourse analysis, cognitive-linguistic construct

ABSTRAKT

ORGANIZACJA NARRACYJNA I DIALOGIZACJA WSPÓŁCZESNYCH ANGLOJĘZYCZNYCH NARRACJI PSYCHOLOGICZNYCH

Artykuł analizuje strukturę narracyjną i organizację komunikacyjną współczesnych anglojęzycznych narracji psychologicznych. Narracje psychologiczne są ujmowane jako konstrukty kognitywno-dyskursywne integrujące doświadczeniowy, emocjonalny i interpretacyjny wymiar za pomocą mechanizmów narracyjnych i dialogowych. Badanie

opiera się na jakościowym korpusie współczesnych tekstów psychologicznych autorstwa znanych narratorów medialnych i psychologów. W pracy zastosowano analizę dyskursu, narratologię kognitywną, analizę pragmatyczną oraz jakościową analizę tekstu. Wyniki wskazują, że narracje psychologiczne są organizowane poprzez wzajemnie powiązane komponenty funkcjonalne obejmujące wprowadzenia, bloki narracyjno-interpretacyjne, części praktyczne oraz zakończenia. Badanie pokazuje, że narracje psychologiczne pełnią funkcję praktyk komunikacyjnych wspierających reinterpretację poznawczą, zaangażowanie emocjonalne oraz zmianę zachowań.

Słowa kluczowe: narracja psychologiczna, dialogizacja, analiza dyskursu, konstrukt kognitywno-językowy

1. Introduction

Psychological narrative is viewed as a cognitive-linguistic construct that dynamically unfolds the subject's experiences, events, and inner states over time. Its structure is described on two levels: formal (the sequence of the narrative) and content-related (situational model, motives, the 'self' image). Psychological stories are often multidimensional, with nine key dimensions such as genre, emotional tone, developmental trajectory, and metaphor use, which emphasize their diversity and rejection of linear coherence¹.

Narratives are formed through the individual's dialogical positioning within a social context, where memory and experience are organized into meaningful structures that take into account temporal sequence and social representations². Dialogue in narratives is essential because it helps construct the interaction between the narrator and the reader.

2. Materials and Methods

The research is based on a qualitative corpus comprising approximately 2,700 pages, selected from books by prominent contemporary psychologists and media

¹ V. Biradar, *Psychological Complexity and Narrative Form in Peter Shaffer's Equus: A Close Comparative Study through the Lens of Modern Narrative Theory*, "International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research" 2025.

² D. Tóth, *The narrative organization of social representations in life stories*, "Belvedere Meridionale" 2024.

narrators, including Anna Mathur³, Becky Kennedy⁴, Terry Real⁵, Vex King⁶, Natthan Joice⁷, and Nedra Glover Tawwab⁸. The corpus includes texts related to psychological discourse, parenting narratives, self-development, interpersonal relationships, and emotional well-being.

The research combines elements of discourse analysis, cognitive narratology, pragmatic analysis, and qualitative textual interpretation. Discourse analysis is employed to examine communicative strategies, dialogization, and reader-oriented interaction within psychological narratives. Cognitive-narrative analysis is used to investigate experiential framing, narrative organization, and the representation of personal and quasi-personal experience. Pragmatic analysis focuses on speech acts, communicative intentions, and interactional mechanisms, while qualitative textual analysis enables the interpretation of lexical, syntactic, compositional, and narrative features functioning within contemporary English psychological discourse.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Psychological Narratives and Dialogization

Narratives are viewed as symbolic representations of cohesive and coherently organized events characterized by an identifiable structure⁹. They are bounded within specific spatial and temporal dimensions and contain implicit or explicit messages about the issues they represent¹⁰. Individual experience is transmitted through the act of narration, which integrates separate life events into a meaningful and coherent structure. Narrative functions both as an internal dialogue of

³ A. Mathur, *The Uncomfortable Truth: Change Your Life by Taming 10 of Your Mind's Greatest Fears*, London 2024.

⁴ B. Kennedy, *Good Inside: A Practical Guide to Becoming the Parent You Want to Be*, London 2022.

⁵ T. Real, *Us: Getting Past You and Me to Build a More Loving Relationship*, New York 2022.

⁶ V. King, *Good Vibes, Good Life*, London 2018.

⁷ N. Joyce (comp.), *Lockdown Parenting Fails (Because It's Not All F**king Rainbows)*, London 2020.

⁸ N.G. Tawwab, *Set Boundaries, Find Peace*, London 2021.

⁹ H. Bilandzic, R. Busselle, *Narrative persuasion*, [in:] *The Sage Handbook of Persuasion: Developments in Theory and Practice*, J.P. Dillard, L. Shen (eds.), Los Angeles 2013.

¹⁰ M.W. Kreuter, M.C. Green, J.N. Cappella et al., *Narrative communication in cancer prevention and control: A framework to guide research and application*, "Annals of Behavioral Medicine" 2007, vol. 33.

the self and as a communicative interaction between the individual and others, serving as a process of meaning-making within a social context¹¹. In this regard, contemporary narrative and discourse studies demonstrate a growing interest in the micro-analysis of everyday speech aimed at identifying subtle mechanisms of meaning construction and the dynamic interpretation of human experience¹². Dialogized psychological narratives are constructed through the interaction of multiple voices, including internalized subject positions, the perspectives of others, culturally conditioned discourses, and therapeutic forms of narration. Within narrative discourse, dialogization functions as a communicative and interpretative mechanism through which identity, agency, and personal experience are linguistically represented, negotiated, and reinterpreted.

3.2. Structural Organization of Psychological Narratives

The psychological narrative is based on a system of specific textual markers, including lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and compositional devices, as well as narrative roles. The interaction of these elements ensures the simultaneous representation of both the event structure and the subject's internal psychological states, including emotions, attitudes, and cognitive orientations. The compositional organization of psychological narratives is grounded in the principle of linear hierarchical development, which allows complex psychological concepts and scientific interpretations to be integrated into a form accessible to a broad audience. Structurally, psychological narratives are typically realized through several interconnected functional blocks, including the introduction, the main body, and the final section, each performing distinct communicative, narrative, and pragmatic functions.

3.2.1. Introduction as the Presentation of the Problem in Psychological Narrative

Introduction brings the topic to life by appealing to the reader's life experience, posing a problem question, or describing a typical situation that evokes an emotional response. This section is most often represented by elements such as preface, introduction, welcome, and foreword. In terms of the structure, introductions do not, as a rule, begin with generalized conceptual propositions, but with the

¹¹ H. Nomura, *Reorganization of life-history promoted by self-narratives and memory recall: Deductive and inductive analysis of inquiry into the middle-aged and the elderly*, "Journal of Japanese Clinical Psychology" 2016, vol. 35.

¹² M. Bamberg, A. Georgakopoulou, *Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis*, "Text & Talk" 2008, vol. 28.

actualization of the problem through individualized or typified experience, which serves to engage the reader and establish communicative closeness.

In particular, this strategy is realized through an appeal to the author's professional experience: *As a clinical psychologist with a long-standing private practice*¹³. Similarly, the author emphasizes her own expertise while simultaneously categorizing the problem: *I've been a therapist for fourteen years. People don't come to therapy knowing they have boundary issues*¹⁴.

Alongside career prospects, personal experience plays a significant role, enhancing the sense of authenticity and emotional engagement: *For most of my childhood, life was a struggle*¹⁵; *For three years of my childhood, I had no fixed home*¹⁶. The experiential framework is also often realized through highly emotional narratives that simulate critical life situations: *It hit me like a ton of bricks. I felt as though the wind had been knocked out of me*¹⁷.

In addition, the use of situational and everyday micro-narratives is common; these reflect everyday experiences and help the reader understand the author: *I was a new parent with a five-month-old. I'm not sure who was flailing around more frantically, me or little Finn, him trying to explore everything and me trying to stop him from swallowing pen lids, bottle caps*¹⁸.

Thus, narrators establish a sense of trust and emotional engagement from the outset, thereby effectively drawing the audience into the unfolding narrative. Personal and quasi-personal narratives define structural characteristics of psychological discourse, as they make complex issues accessible and facilitate the effective adoption of strategies to resolve them. This type of narration is oriented towards individualized experience, presented in the form of stories that model typical life situations¹⁹, and gives coherence to experience, allowing individual events to be integrated into a meaningful structure of cause and time.

This approach is realized through a combination of the author's professional and personal experience, which helps to build trust and foster an empathetic

¹³ B. Kennedy, *Good Inside...*, p. 9.

¹⁴ N.G. Tawwab, *Set Boundaries...*, p. 11.

¹⁵ V. King, *Things No One Taught Us About Love: How to Build Healthy Relationships with Yourself and Others*, London, p. 13.

¹⁶ V. King, *Good Vibes...*, p. 10.

¹⁷ V. King, *Closer to Love: How to Attract the Right Relationships and Deepen Your Connections*, London 2023, p. 16.

¹⁸ N. Joyce (comp.), *Lockdown Parenting Fails (Because It's Not All F**king Rainbows)*, London 2020, p. 5.

¹⁹ J.S. Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, Harvard 1986.

connection with the reader. In particular, Anna Mathur's texts show a clear focus on a quasi-personal narrative that combines elements of therapeutic discourse and autobiographical reflection: *This is not a parenting book. You won't find any parenting tips. Instead, I'm going to help you gain the headspace, rest, and confidence you need to be the best version of yourself. I am not a parenting therapist who provides advice on how to parent, what to do, and what to say. Instead, I am a therapist to parents*²⁰. This strategy is reinforced by the metaphorical representation of inner states, which heightens the emotional impact on the reader: *Anxiety didn't just hit me like a broken dam. It chipped away like a small hammer, slowly sending hairline fractures throughout the core of who I knew myself to be, both as an individual and as a mother*²¹. In this case, the narrative serves not only an explanatory but also an expressive function, allowing the reader to identify with the author's experiences.

The personal and quasi-personal narrative ensures the cognitive accessibility of complex psychological concepts through their interpretation in the form of stories, fosters the reader's emotional engagement and the formation of an identification effect, and fulfills a pragmatic function, as they allow for describing and solving the problem through the modeling of experience.

Furthermore, the introduction is systematically characterized by a dialogization of discourse, which is determined by their clear addressee orientation. The text is constructed to establish direct contact with the reader, stimulate their cognitive activity, and ensure maximum communicative impact. Dialogization is realized through the use of interrogative constructions, addresses, and retorts, which form both explicit and implicit dialogue.

Explicit dialogue is primarily represented through direct address and the reproduction of clients' speech, mimicking the situation of a therapeutic consultation. In particular, the introduction contains a series of standardized questions: *Dr. Becky, my five-year-old is in a stage where she's mean to her sister, rude to us, and melting down at school. Can you help?; Dr. Becky, why is my potty-trained child suddenly peeing all over the house? Can you help?; Dr. Becky, my twelve-year-old never listens to me! It's infuriating. Can you help?*²² Such passages simulate an authentic communicative situation, creating the effect of a 'live dialogue' and positioning the text as a direct response to the audience's query.

²⁰ A. Mathur, *Raising a Happier Mother: How to Find Balance, Feel Good and See Your Children Flourish as a Result*, London 2023, p. 7.

²¹ A. Mathur, *Mind Over Mother: Every Mum's Guide to Worry and Anxiety in the First Year*, London 2021, p. 9.

²² B. Kennedy, *Good Inside...*, pp. 35, 42, 40, 36.

Implicit dialogue is realized through cognitive transformations, generalized statements, and appeals to an imaginary addressee. In particular, in Becky Kennedy's narrative, a dialogical opposition can be traced, reflecting a shift in the interpretative model: *What's wrong with my child... → What is my child struggling with...*²³, which represents a cognitive shift from evaluation to understanding. In Terry Real's text, implicit dialogue is formed through generalized statements directed at a collective addressee: *the price we pay as a society...; we belong to one another; we all have to learn...*²⁴ In Nedra Glover Tawwab's psychological narrative, a similar function is performed by generalized maxims: *People don't come to therapy knowing they have boundary issues; People don't know what you want. It's your job to make it clear; Throughout this book, you will learn*²⁵. All these constructions create the effect of a conversation with the reader without any formally structured dialogue.

Rhetorical questions serve as a distinct mechanism of implicit dialogue; they do not require a direct answer, but stimulate the recipient's cognitive activity and structure the discourse. Thus, in Terry Real's narrative, they frame the problem: *So how do you transform that legacy?; How do you break the chain of trauma and illness...?*²⁶ In Becky Kennedy's narrative, the question *What do I recommend?* serves as a transition to the author's concept, whereas in Nedra Glover Tawwab's narrative questions *What can I do?; How do I tell them?* represent typical queries from the audience. Rhetorical questions facilitate the transition from individual experience to generalization and serve as a means of formulating the text's central theme.

Thus, the dialogization of discourse is a systemic feature of introductions in English psychological narratives. Such multi-level dialogue creates an engaging effect, facilitates cognitive re-evaluation of the issue, and enhances the pragmatic effectiveness of the text, transforming it from an informative message into an interactive communicative practice.

3.2.2. Main Body as the Explication of Psychological Ideas

The main section is structured as a sequential unfolding of the material through a combination of a narrative-interpretative block and a practice-oriented component. This structure ensures its cognitive processing, interpretation, and subsequent integration into the recipient's experience.

²³ Ibidem, p. 36

²⁴ T. Real, *Us: Getting Past...*, pp. 37, 39, 42.

²⁵ N.G. Tawwab, *Set Boundaries...*, pp. 20, 33, 36.

²⁶ T. Real, *Us: Getting Past...*, pp. 32, 35.

The narrative-interpretative block emerges as an integration of personal stories or generalized scenarios that serve to explain internal states, behavioral patterns, and cognitive processes. Analysis of such blocks reveals a typical three-component structure: a conceptual core, narrative illustrations, and interpretative unfolding.

Conceptual core is represented by generalized theses of a normative and explanatory nature: *you are all good inside; we all, at our core, are compassionate, loving, and generous*²⁷; *Boundaries are the gateway to healthy relationships; Boundaries are expectations and needs that help you feel safe...*²⁸; *You tell yourself... you will not lose it... But in the heat of the moment... there it goes...*²⁹ Such statements serve as cognitive anchors, setting the primary framework for interpreting behavior and inner states.

The second component consists of narrative illustrations or microscenarios that model the reader's everyday experience and evoke recognition. These are presented through brief situational fragments or case studies that concretize abstract principles: *When you call your child 'a spoiled brat'...*; *When your child denies knocking down his sister's block tower...*³⁰; *I feel overwhelmed; Being the best for Kim meant always saying yes*³¹; *you will not lose it... but... the unkind word; you shut down...*³² Such micro-scenes serve as empirical illustrations, help engage the reader, and bring their own experience to the fore.

The third structural element is interpretative elaboration, within which a cognitive explanation of behavior is provided through a previously introduced principle. At this stage the author establishes phenomena and cause-and-effect relationships, and proposes a new interpretative model: *The principle of internal goodness drives all of my work...*; *This curiosity enables me to develop frameworks and strategies...*³³; *Kim had an issue with setting boundaries...; her level of willingness... was impossible to sustain*³⁴. Thus, the interpretative component serves to cognitively reconfigure experience, translating it from the level of description to understanding. Consequently, the narrative-interpretative block in psychological narratives

²⁷ B. Kennedy, *Good Inside...*, pp. 25, 28, 31.

²⁸ N.G. Tawwab, *Set Boundaries...*, pp. 31, 34, 35.

²⁹ T. Real, *Us: Getting Past...*, pp. 43, 45, 48.

³⁰ B. Kennedy, *Good Inside...*, pp. 36, 42, 46.

³¹ N.G. Tawwab, *Set Boundaries...*, pp. 48, 49, 50.

³² T. Real, *Us: Getting Past...*, pp. 42, 48, 56.

³³ B. Kennedy, *Good Inside...*, pp. 48, 51, 55.

³⁴ N.G. Tawwab, *Set Boundaries...*, pp. 58, 60, 65.

functions as an integrative structure that facilitates the transition from a generalized principle to empirically relevant scenarios and their explanation, thereby forming a coherent model of cognitive and behavioral reinterpretation.

The practice-oriented component of psychological narratives aims to provide recommendations, advice, behavioral strategies, and exercises to develop self-reflection and self-regulation. However, the narrative emerges not merely as a form of representing experience, but as an instrument of transformation: individuals acquire new models of action, alter behavioral patterns, and change the ways in which they construct interpersonal relationships.

The transmission of individual experience occurs through storytelling, which integrates life events into a coherent structure of meaning. Such a narrative functions as an internal dialogue and as communicative interaction with others (interpersonal level), acting as a process of meaning-making within a social context³⁵. The practice-oriented function of psychological narrative is clearly evident in illustrative material, where specific behavioral instructions are formulated and realized through directive speech constructions, such as: *I won't let you hit your brother; I won't let you run with scissors; Screen time is over now, I'm going to turn off the TV*³⁶. These examples serve as ready-made communicative templates that model effective interaction and simplify decision-making in real-life situations.

3.2.3. Final Parts of Psychological Narratives

The final sections of the psychological narrative are realized in a functionally differentiated manner through the use of compositional elements such as the 'conclusion', 'epilogue', 'final words', and 'author's note'. Their organization serves as a cognitive, emotional, and ideological generalization aimed at transforming the reader. An analysis of the illustrative material allows us to conclude that the final parts of the narrative correspond to a series of stable thematic blocks that constitute the core of psychological influence.

Conclusion³⁷ is dominated by the thematic complex of the individual's inner value as a condition for change. This is realized through the representation of a cycle of self-criticism and avoidance of change (vicious cycle), where a linear cause-and-effect model is constructed: the desire for change → self-condemnation → emotional overload → avoidance → reproduction of old patterns.

³⁵ H. Nomura, *Reorganization of life-history...*

³⁶ B. Kennedy, *Good Inside...*, pp. 58, 69, 78.

³⁷ Ibidem.

Epilogue³⁸ is thematically focused on overcoming individualism through ecological, spiritual, and relational consciousness. The central concept is the illusion of separateness, understood as a fundamental cognitive error among modern humans. In a broader context, this section integrates with spiritual and philosophical categories (unity, wholeness, interdependence), which shifts the narrative from the level of individual psychotherapy to that of ontological and ethical reflection. Thus, the epilogue serves to broaden the worldview and shape a new paradigm of thought.

The author's note³⁹ foregrounds the theme of the authenticity of the author's experience and the verification of ideas in life. Here, the narrative shifts into the realm of meta-reflection, where the conditions of the text's writing and its existential validity are described. Elements such as crisis experience (curve balls), which serve as a practical test of ideas, vulnerability as a strategy of openness, and the anchor metaphor, which symbolizes stability in an unstable life environment, play a particular role. In this case, the concluding section serves to legitimize the text by grounding it in the author's personal experience.

Final words⁴⁰ include the concept of purpose, presented as the result of personal development and inner realization, as well as the idea of social media as a platform for influence, scaling individual experience to a collective level. The author positions themselves as a bearer of knowledge and an agent of transformation, bringing the discourse closer to a motivational-charismatic model.

An analysis of the 'acknowledgments' section in the works of Terry Real, Becky Kennedy, Nedra Glover Tawwab, and Vex King, demonstrates that this component extends far beyond the traditional function of etiquette and acquires a clearly defined narrative-semantic and ideological status, integrating organically into the overall concept of psychological discourse. In the compositional model of the concluding sections (Conclusion / Epilogue / Final words / Author's note / Acknowledgements), the acknowledgements section serves as a kind of final transition from a theoretical and reflective exposition to an interpersonal dimension, personalizing knowledge while simultaneously demonstrating its collective nature. By appealing to specific individuals, professional communities and the author's immediate circle, the ethos of the text is formed, legitimizing the author's voice as the result of interaction rather than an autonomous intellectual act.

³⁸ T. Real, *Us: Getting Past....*

³⁹ A. Mathur, *The Uncomfortable Truth....*

⁴⁰ V. King, *Good Vibes....*

The lexical level of acknowledgments is characterized by a high concentration of affectively marked vocabulary (*love, gratitude, joy, belief, support, privilege*), intensifiers (*deeply, truly, forever*), and bodily-emotional metaphors, such as *heart of my heart, breath of my breath* in Terry Real's text. This creates an emotional intimacy, ensuring the narrative's authenticity and bringing the author closer to the reader. In Becky Kennedy's case, family-oriented discourse dominates: the husband appears as a "grounding force", the children as a source of identity, and the parents as the foundation for the formation of an inner sense of "good inside". This thematic focus directly reflects the key idea of her concept, namely that a person's inner value is formed through experiences of early attachment and support.

The spiritual-existential dimension takes on additional significance, as expressed in gratitude to God in Nedra Glover Tawwab's narrative, or in appeals to teachers, tradition, and intellectual heritage in Terry Real's. As a result, a two-dimensional structure of meaning emerges: the horizontal (social connections) is combined with the vertical (transcendent source), which enhances the text's axiological richness. At the rhetorical level, devices such as anaphora ("Thank you..."), inclusive pronouns (we, us), personification, and hyperbole ("never fail", "beyond words") dominate, ensuring the text's cohesion and amplifying its emotional impact.

4. Conclusion

The textual foundation of psychological narrative is a multi-level system of lexical, syntactic, compositional, and narrative devices that, taken together, ensure the integration of the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of experience. An analysis of the introductory, main, and concluding components shows that English psychological discourse is oriented not so much towards abstract-theoretical explanation as towards experiential representation, realized through personal and quasi-personal narratives, dialogisation, and illustrative micro-scenarios. This organization of the text ensures the cognitive accessibility of complex concepts, fosters the reader's emotional engagement, and creates conditions for identification with the experience described. At the same time, the combination of narrative-interpretative and practice-oriented components transforms the text from a descriptive tool into a transformational one, capable of modeling new behavioral strategies and ways of making sense of reality. As a result, the psychological narrative emerges as a holistic communicative-cognitive system, within which textual markers do not function in isolation but as interrelated elements aimed at achieving the main goal – the interpretation, reinterpretation, and potential transformation of the reader's experience.

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