

MAŁGORZATA GRUCHOŁA

## EMOTIONS AND EDUCATION: MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS IN THE DISCOURSE ON SCHOOL CLOSURES IN POLISH AND BRITISH INTERNET PORTALS

### INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is accompanied by an unprecedented “infodemia”, i.e. an excessive amount of information, also related to the domain of education, which hinders its objective evaluation. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), a flood of information on COVID-19,<sup>1</sup> often false or inaccurate, spread via the internet, causes disinformation and mistrust, hinders effective reactions and decisions related to public health and public safety, stirs up fear and manipulates human emotions. School closures, distant learning, social isolation forced millions of students to study at home, having a profound effect on their emotions.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The aim of this article is to present the results of a study on how emotions (happiness, anger, sadness, fear, worry, compassion, stagnation, humiliation,

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Dr hab. MAŁGORZATA GRUCHOŁA, Associate Professor at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Institute of Journalism and Management, Department of Visual Communication and New Media; address for correspondence: Instytut Dziennikarstwa i Zarządzania KUL, Al. Racławickie 14, 20-950 Lublin, Poland; e-mail: [malgorzata.gruchola@kul.pl](mailto:malgorzata.gruchola@kul.pl); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2367-0416>.

<sup>1</sup> Everyday monitoring of the media by the European Commission is related to thousands of articles appearing on the internet in relation to COVID-19.

<sup>2</sup> EUROPEAN COMMISSION, *Tackling Coronavirus Disinformation. Getting the Facts Right*, Brussels, June 10, 2020. JOIN(2020) 8 final.

stuckness, guilt, hope, hate, privilege, solidarity, dumbing, boredom, banality) are represented and expressed in the articles of the Polish opinion-forming portal *polityka.pl* and the English online edition of the weekly *The Spectator*. The selection criteria were related to the opinion-forming character, similar range and thematic scope of the portals. The articles refer to decisions to close schools and their consequences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The media representations of emotions are described as related to public life (the perspective of teachers, school headmasters, government representatives, experts), private life (the perspective of students and parents), from a processual perspective (a catalogue of events), from the perspective of technological development (distant learning), from a socio-cultural perspective (educational problems, human relations, domestic violence), from an economic perspective (care allowance, meals for students).

In the context of the main research topic, the question arises concerning what types of emotions are connected with school closures and how they are represented in the media. What emotions were evoked in various groups by school closures and what emotions appear as the consequences of such decisions (e.g. distant learning or social, educational and economic costs)? Our hypothesis is that, in line with the concept of *culture of fear* by Frank Furedi<sup>3</sup> and Barry Glassner,<sup>4</sup> the way online content related to school closures and distant learning is formulated and presented is supposed to evoke the emotion of fear and insecurity. Our research of online media materials helped us to determine the issues which were used as keywords in the selection of source materials.

– Media representation of schools being closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the social, cultural, educational, health (mental), ethical, economic costs imposed on children, their parents, teachers, headmasters, the government representatives (Ministry of National Education/Department for Education and Skills [DfES], Welsh Government Department for Training and Education, Chief Sanitary Inspector, Ministry of

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<sup>3</sup> Frank FUREDI, *The Culture of Fear: Risk-Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1997, 2002); Frank FUREDI, *How Fear Works: Culture of Fear in the Twenty-First Century* (London–New York: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018); FUREDI, “The Only Thing We Have to Fear is the ‘Culture of Fear’ itself,” accessed March 27, 2020, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238082918\\_The\\_only\\_thing\\_we\\_have\\_to\\_fear\\_is\\_the\\_%27culture\\_of\\_fear%27\\_itself\\_NEW\\_ESSAY\\_How\\_human\\_thought\\_and\\_action\\_are\\_being\\_stifled\\_by\\_a\\_regime\\_of\\_uncertainty](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238082918_The_only_thing_we_have_to_fear_is_the_%27culture_of_fear%27_itself_NEW_ESSAY_How_human_thought_and_action_are_being_stifled_by_a_regime_of_uncertainty).

<sup>4</sup> Barry GLASSNER, *The Culture of Fear* (New York: Perseus–Basic Books, 2005).

Health/Department of Health and Social Care), evokes various emotions in the pandemic discourse.

- School closures result in new educational practices such as distant learning, which shapes the media representation of emotions.

I assume that emotions are “encoded” in many media forms, however, in the analysis I rely only on the verbal texts. I distinguish between two aspects of school closures:

- media representations of emotions in the public discourse: which particular emotions are expressed and how they are expressed in public/by public figures (teachers, headmasters, government representatives, experts);

- media representations of emotions in the public-private discourse: which particular emotions are expressed and how they are expressed in public by private figures: students, parents.

In order to address the research topic I have performed a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the content published at [polityka.pl](http://polityka.pl) and [spectator.co.uk](http://spectator.co.uk) portals in terms of media representations of emotions.

## 2. THE CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

The information on the epidemic hit the headlines on 23 January 2020. In March 2020 WHO officially informed about the COVID-19 pandemic. On 4 March the Italians closed schools, then they were followed by the French (8 March), the Czechs and Greeks (10 March). Other countries followed suit: USA (43 states; 11 March), Denmark (16 March), UK (18 March). Most countries took this precaution, apart from Sweden and Iceland. Polish schools were officially closed on 15 March 2020, even though classes were called off as early as 12 March. In Britain, schools were closed on 20 March 2020. The decision to close schools did not include special-needs schools. On 20 March, the Polish Minister of National Education announced that starting from 25 March 2020 schools must switch to a distant learning mode, with the headmasters responsible for the process. According to the regulations, distant learning can be realised with the use of materials provided by teachers, preferably recommended by the Ministry of National Education (educational platform: [www.epodreczniki.pl](http://www.epodreczniki.pl)), the Central and Regional Examination Boards, also available through the programmes of Polish Television and Polish Radio. The government provided extra funds (186 million

złoty) to purchase computer equipment, launched an e-platform to facilitate distant learning ([epodreczniki.pl](http://epodreczniki.pl)), and offered online teacher training.

25 March 2020 was officially the first day of distant learning in Poland, while in Britain it started on 20 March 2020. In April, the Minister of Education announced new dates of school final examinations. A similar announcement was made in Britain.

In April we also witnessed a gradual re-opening of schools, e.g. on 15 April in the UK, in China's capital, in Denmark (first, primary schools, followed by secondary schools in May) and Norway (20 April). The Germans went back to school on 4 May, but only those students who need to take final exams. Primary schools in France re-opened on 11 May, with a reduced number of students in class. A similar situation occurs in the Netherlands. Some schools were re-opened in Czechia, just like in Switzerland, where stationary primary schools and lower secondary schools were re-opened from 11 May. New Zealand opened its schools on 18 May 2020. Joint classes for 1–3 primary school grades as well as tutorials for students taking school-leaving exams were made available from 25 May in Poland. From 1 June, the same offer was made available to all Polish primary and secondary students.

The decision to close schools influenced the education practices during the pandemic (forced the authorities to change the forms and terms of final examinations, terms of recruitment; the school calendar was modified, students exchanges and school trips were cancelled, school ceremonies were celebrated online). It imposed new forms of educational experience: distant learning, e-platforms, webinars, online tutorials, joint classes for 1–3 grades, new forms of examinations, preference of the written exams. Students were forced to replace traditional coursebooks and notebooks with electronic equipment. The Ministry of National Education considered introducing electronic school certificates and online school recruitment.

School closures, together with the related educational challenges, give rise to all sorts of social, cultural, health (mental health), behavioural, ethical, and economic issues. Not all of the issues appearing in the emotion-laden media discourse refer to students, parents, teachers, headmasters, experts, or the government to the same extent. The same issue can evoke different media representations of emotions and affect these groups variously. Selected educational issues (school closures, distant learning) will be subject to further scrutiny in the context of media representations of basic emotions: sadness, fear, anger, happiness, boredom, guilt, privilege, solidarity, compassion, hope, stagnation, worry, hatred in the public and public-private discourse.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In order to collect research material for this study, I searched the online archives of *Polityka* and *The Spectator* magazines, using their internal search engines, based on the following keywords: ‘coronavirus’, ‘school closures’, ‘distant learning’, ‘MEN’, ‘Ministry of Education’, ‘Department for Education and Skills (DfES)’, ‘The Welsh Assembly Government’s Department for Training and Education’. I went through the content published from 1 March 2020 to 30 July 2020. The configuration of the key words yielded the following results:

- 1) coronavirus, school closures, distant learning: MEN/Ministry of Education: PL = 6 articles, UK = 0 articles;
- 2) coronavirus, school closures, distant learning: PL = 11, UK = 3;
- 3) coronavirus, school closures, MEN/Ministry of Education: PL = 21, UK = 2;
- 4) coronavirus, distant learning, MEN: PL = 10, UK = 1;
- 5) coronavirus, distant learning: PL = 31, UK = 5;
- 6) coronavirus, school closures: PL = 107, UK = 14.

In order not to limit the research material, I focused on the combination ‘coronavirus’ and ‘school closures’, with the research material of 107 articles from *Polityka* and 14 articles from *The Spectator*. After initial screening focusing on media representations of emotions, 78 Polish articles and 12 English articles were qualified for further study.<sup>5</sup> The key to determine the emotions were our interpretations based on the linguistic level, excluding the psychological level. I assume that the mere presence of emotion cues in a text is not a sufficient condition for an emotion to be felt or experienced.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Emotions can be encoded in various media forms: in pictures and in texts. In this study I focus only on the analysis of the linguistic level: logosphere.

The first stage of the research was to determine two major research areas: school closures related to COVID-19 (as a media phenomenon) and distant learning (as new school practices). Media representations of emotions are reflected in the evaluation of the abovementioned areas by ministry rep-

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<sup>5</sup> URL addresses for the referenced articles on the *Polityka* and BBC websites are listed in the Bibliography.

representatives, experts, school headmasters, teachers, parents, students, and are related to some costs:

- social and cultural,
- health (mental health),
- behavioural, ethical,
- economic (material).

In the second area of analysis, distant learning, emotions are related to:

- standards of distant learning, a lack of appropriate equipment and infrastructure,
- the government's (Ministry of Education) actions and initiatives,
- educational costs.

Emotions are also evoked by schools being re-opened.

#### 4.1 EMOTIONS IN THE DISCOURSE ON SCHOOL CLOSURES RELATED TO THE PANDEMIC

**Table 1.** Emotions in the media discourse on the *Polityka* (PL) and *The Spectator* (UK) websites

| Emotions in the discourse on school closures related to pandemic (opinions and evaluation) |                        |    |         |    |                       |    |              |    |             |    |         |    |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----|---------|----|-----------------------|----|--------------|----|-------------|----|---------|----|--------------------|
| Emotions                                                                                   | Private discourse: 104 |    |         |    | Public discourse: 124 |    |              |    |             |    |         |    | Total              |
|                                                                                            | Children               |    | Parents |    | Teachers              |    | Head-masters |    | Govern-ment |    | Experts |    |                    |
|                                                                                            | PL                     | UK | PL      | UK | PL                    | UK | PL           | UK | PL          | UK | PL      | UK |                    |
| Fear                                                                                       | 5                      | 1  | 8       | 6  | 6                     | 2  | 3            | 1  | 1           | 2  | 6       | 6  | 61; PL: 42, UK: 19 |
| Sadness                                                                                    | 6                      | 0  | 4       | 4  | 2                     | 0  | 3            | 1  | 1           | 1  | 4       | 6  | 41; PL: 29, UK: 12 |
| Anger                                                                                      | 3                      | 1  | 4       | 4  | 3                     | 1  | 1            | 2  | 1           | 0  | 1       | 1  | 22; PL: 13, UK: 9  |
| Worry                                                                                      | 9                      | 0  | 6       | 3  | 1                     | 0  | 2            | 0  | 3           | 1  | 0       | 4  | 22; PL: 14, UK: 8  |
| Stuckness                                                                                  | 4                      | 0  | 4       | 2  | 0                     | 1  | 0            | 0  | 1           | 1  | 1       | 3  | 17; PL: 10, UK: 7  |
| Compassion                                                                                 | 0                      | 0  | 1       | 2  | 0                     | 0  | 2            | 0  | 0           | 2  | 0       | 4  | 10; PL: 3, UK: 7   |
| Dumbing                                                                                    | 1                      | 1  | 3       | 3  | 0                     | 0  | 0            | 0  | 0           | 0  | 0       | 1  | 9; PL: 4, UK: 5    |
| Stagnation                                                                                 | 3                      | 0  | 1       | 1  | 0                     | 0  | 0            | 0  | 1           | 0  | 2       | 0  | 8; PL: 7, UK: 1    |
| Humiliation                                                                                | 1                      | 0  | 3       | 0  | 2                     | 0  | 1            | 0  | 0           | 0  | 0       | 0  | 7; PL: 7, UK: 0    |

|           |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |   |    |   |    |    |                            |
|-----------|----|---|----|----|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|----|----------------------------|
| Happiness | 3  | 0 | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0 | 2  | 0 | 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 7; PL: 6,<br>UK: 1         |
| Other*    | 3  | 0 | 4  | 5  | 1  | 1 | 2  | 0 | 0  | 2 | 1  | 3  | 22; PL: 11,<br>UK: 11      |
| Total     | 30 | 3 | 40 | 31 | 16 | 5 | 16 | 4 | 30 | 8 | 16 | 29 | 228;<br>PL: 148,<br>UK: 80 |
| Total     | 33 |   | 71 |    | 21 |   | 20 |   | 38 |   | 45 |    | 228                        |

Source: own study.

\* Other emotions (sense of guilt, hope, hate, sense of privilege, neighbourly solidarity, boredom or banality) were found in the research material less than 3 times.

**Table 2.** Instances of emotions found on *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites

|                 | Emotion | Articles | Emotions per article (mean) |
|-----------------|---------|----------|-----------------------------|
| polityka.pl     | 148     | 78       | 1.89                        |
| spectator.co.uk | 80      | 12       | 6.66                        |

Source: own study.

In the emotion-filled media discourse related to school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, instances of emotions were identified in 228 cases (*Polityka*: 148, *Spectator*: 80). Emotions were mostly expressed by parents (PL: 40, UK: 31), children (PL: 30) and government representatives (PL: 30) and experts (*Spectator*: 29). The saturation of texts with emotions is diverse. The mean average number of emotions per article in the Polish texts is nearly 2, but in the English articles it is over 6.

Emotions appearing in the media discourse, both in the public-private discourse (104 instances of emotions) and public discourse (124 instances) are: fear (61; PL: 42, UK: 19), sadness (41; PL: 29, UK: 12), anger (22; PL: 13, UK: 9) and worry (22; PL: 14, UK: 8). In the public-private discourse, shaped by students, the dominant emotion in the Polish texts is sadness (6), while in the English texts it is sadness, anger, dumbing (1 instance each). Parents express mostly fear (14; PL: 8, UK: 6), worry (10; PL: 7, UK: 3), and sadness (8; PL: 4, UK: 4), anger (8; PL: 4, UK: 4), and stuckness (6; PL: 4, UK: 2). Public figures express fear (40; PL: 28, UK: 12), sadness (27; PL: 19, UK: 8), worry (11; PL: 6, UK: 5) and anger (10; PL: 6, UK: 4). Many emotions (i.e. sense of guilt, hope, hate, sense of privilege solidarity, boredom or banality) were identified more than three times in the research material. The least frequently appearing emotion in the media discourse was

banality (1). It was identified in the private-public discourse in *Polityka*: “When schools closure was announced and most of the public stormed the hypermarkets, buying pasta, rice, toilet paper, Justyna bought eight bags of cat food.”<sup>6</sup> Occasionally, boredom could be identified in the Polish texts (2): “The last day of school, the first day of boredom.”<sup>7</sup> Emotions such as a sense of privilege, solidarity and hope appear three times each in the English articles, in the public discourse.

In this context, within the examined groups, the reaction to schools being re-opened comes as a surprise. Contrary to the expected emotion of happiness, the articles in *Polityka* more likely reveal sadness and anger, with fear and happiness appearing with the same intensity. In the private discourse students express sadness<sup>8</sup> and anger,<sup>9</sup> while parents point to fear and anger,<sup>10</sup> as an effect of looking after their children.<sup>11</sup> In the public discourse, both teachers in Poland and in England, similarly to students, express sadness<sup>12</sup> and anger,<sup>13</sup> while headmasters point only to sadness.<sup>14</sup> Foreign government representatives point to sadness,<sup>15</sup> while in Poland they indicate happiness.<sup>16</sup> In *The Spectator*, some experts and parents expressed concern over the government’s neglect in reopening schools: “In spite of growing evidence of educational disadvantage through the continued closure of many schools, the

<sup>6</sup> Juliusz ĆWIELUCH, “Dlaczego w sklepach brakuje akurat papieru toaletowego?” *Polityka*, March 18, 2020, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Joanna CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły, początek nudy,” *Polityka*, June 23, 2020, 36.

<sup>8</sup> Marcin PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania kraju,” *Polityka*, May 26, 2020, 84.

<sup>9</sup> PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania,” 84.

<sup>10</sup> Joanna CIEŚLA, “Żłobki otwarte od 4 maja? PiS oświatę odmraża chaotycznie,” April 28, 2020, 1; PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania,” 84.

<sup>11</sup> CIEŚLA, “Żłobki,” 1; PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania,” 84.

<sup>12</sup> Łukasz WÓJCIK, “Jak wrócić z pandemii,” *Polityka*, April 29, 2020, 10; PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania,” 84; “Covid-19 Update: Lockdown Attainment Gap Could Wipe Out a Decade of Education Gains,” *The Spectator*, June 3, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> “Rząd luzuje restrykcje. Co nas czeka w trzecim etapie ‘odmrażania gospodarki?’” *Polityka*, May 13, 2020, 1; “Już 300 tys. ofiar wirusa na świecie. Trzaskowski kandydatem PO?” *Polityka*, May 14, 2020, 2; “Covid-19 Update: Lockdown”; James KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour ‘Welcome’ School Closures?” *The Spectator*, June 9, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> “Kampania prezydencka na ostatniej prostej. Trzaskowski prezentuje program,” *Polityka*, June 25, 2020, 1; PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania,” 84.

<sup>15</sup> “PiS i Porozumienie: Wybory będą hybrydowe,” *Polityka*, May 11, 2020, 1; “COVID-19, tydzień dwudziesty czwarty,” *Polityka*, May 12, 2020, 8; Jędrzej WINIECKI, “Wirus znowu w Chinach i Korei. Szybko się go nie pozbędziemy,” *Polityka*, May 12, 2020, 1; “333 nowe zakażenia w Polsce. Grecja nas nie wpuści,” *Polityka*, May 29, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> “Kampania prezydencka,” 1: “333 nowe zakażenia,” 1; “Rząd luzuje restrykcje. Co nas czeka w trzecim etapie ‘odmrażania gospodarki?’” May 13, 2020, 1.



government last week abandoned plans to get all primary school children back in the classroom at some point before the end of term in July.”<sup>17</sup>

Media representations of emotions in the public-private discourse will be described on the basis of students’ and parents’ opinions, while media representations of emotions in the public discourse will be described after a detailed analysis of the texts portraying emotions of teachers, headmasters, government representatives, experts.

On the basis of the analysis of the source materials it can be concluded that there are at least three sources of information on emotions in the media discourse:

- the main figure in the article (interpretation at the linguistic level of the sender);
- author/editor of the article, making a certain (objective and/or subjective) interpretation of emotions (linguistic interpretation of the gatekeeper);
- reader (linguistic interpretation of the addressee).

Media representations of linguistic narration of emotions are formed by:

- the name of the main emotion or the background emotion, which provides objective research material, even though it may be just a manifestation of subjective interpretations made by the sender;
- utterance (quote): interpretation of a situation may be liable to subjective evaluation; it is a challenge to determine the level of identification of the speaker with the emotion they express. The emotions can be culture and context dependent. They are expressed on the spur of the moment rather than formed by way of objective linguistic interpretation of a speaker’s utterance;
- situational context (contextual emotions)—interpretation of emotions is based on the previous experience, stereotypes, media habits, cultural practices;
- non-verbal messages and physiological reactions of the organism, the interpretation of which is culturally-determined.

#### 4.1.1 *Media representations of fear*

Fear, identified in 61 cases, is the dominant emotion in the pandemic discourse related to school closures, both in *Polityka* (42) and *The Spectator* (19). In the Polish texts it comprises 28% of all the identified emotions,

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<sup>17</sup> KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour”; ROSS CLARK, “What School Closures Are Doing to Our Children,” *The Spectator*, June 15, 2020.

while in the English texts it comprises less than 24%. There are two main perspectives on *fear*, available in the literature:

1) as a reaction to a clearly formulated threat (e.g. pandemic as a media phenomenon, school closures, distant learning), which is defined as the subject of fear; the problem does not lie in a feeling of fear but in things that an individual/society is afraid of, e.g. disease, death, economic and educational costs;<sup>18</sup>

2) as a threat as such<sup>19</sup> rather than a specific thing (e.g. pandemic) that we should be afraid of. It is a kind of fear that requires a constant monitoring of all aspects of life, as even the most prosaic activities can be viewed as risky and dangerous. It is often the effect of *culture of fear* created by the media. According to Stefanie Grupp,<sup>20</sup> particular fears are cultivated by the media and less frequently are the result of direct experience. Fear is experienced on a discursive and abstract level. Hence, it is the media representations of emotions in the pandemic discourse rather than a personal experience of school closures that may evoke the most intense feelings of fear.<sup>21</sup>

Our analysis of the research material shows that the first understanding of fear, i.e. as a reaction to a specific threat, prevails. Its source is school closure, which generates consequences on many levels of social and economic life. Even though in the analysed portals it appears more frequently in the public rather than private discourse, unpleasant psychological (paralysis, anxiety, fear, uncertainty) phenomena as well as unpleasant somatic reactions (e.g. shivering of the body, pounding of the heart) are more frequently expressed by parents in the private discourse. An emotional reaction, or even thinking about a potential threat, can be regarded as anxiety,<sup>22</sup> that manifests itself in the comments and behaviour of students, parents, and teachers. Anxiety

<sup>18</sup> Peter N. STEARNS and Jan LEWIS, eds., *An Emotional History of the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 7; Philip STRONG, "Epidemic Psychology: A Model," *Sociology of Health & Illness* 3 (2010): 249–60; Małgorzata SZATAN, "Strach a lęk w ujęciu nauk humanistycznych," *Studia Gdańskie* 31 (2012): 325–42; Józef KOZIELECKI, *Psychologia nadziei* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> FUREDI, *The Culture of Fear*, 36–78; FUREDI, *How Fear Works*; FUREDI, "The Only Thing."

<sup>20</sup> Stefanie GRUPP, *Political Implications of a Discourse of Fear* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> Małgorzata GRUCHOŁA and Małgorzata SŁAWEK-CZOCHRA, "'The Culture of Fear' of Inhabitants of EU Countries in Their Reaction to the COVID-19 Pandemic – A Study Based on the Reports of the Eurobarometer," *Safety Science* 135 (2021): 105140.

<sup>22</sup> Kasia KOZŁOWSKA, Peter WALKER, Loyola McLEAN, and Pascal CARRIVE, "Fear and the Defense Cascade: Clinical Implications and Management," *Harv Rev Psychiatry* 23, no. 4 (2015): 263–87.

and fear are communicated through the use of first person singular forms, they have individual psychological background, are determined by culture, history, economic situation, geographical location and subjective feelings. The intensity of fear is not directly proportional to the objective character of a threat, which is confirmed by a diversity of parents' and teachers' comments. In the public context, fear is objectified, collective, construed and controlled by the cultural script,<sup>23</sup> which instructs people on how to react to threats for their safety. It is particularly evident in the article's referring to the UK. They employ more contextual fears, coming from the description/narration of the situation, expected consequences rather than a literal description of the interpreted emotions.

In private discourse, fear has a negative function, evidenced by unpleasant bodily reactions, as well as a demotivating function leading to irrational actions and to a paralysis—mostly on the part of parents. In one of the articles published on the *Polityka* website, Ernest Kuchar points out that an overwhelming sense of fear may paralyse rational actions: "Panic-stricken parents plus vulnerable medical staff, besides sensation-seeking media, and we end up with a hotch-potch of emotions, where it is difficult to be on top of the situation."<sup>24</sup> In the Polish texts, fears connected with school closures surpass negative experience (distant learning), while in *The Spectator* I observed an opposite tendency, i.e. fear is mostly generated by the perspective of distant learning, and educational chaos in particular: "One of the big sources of confusion in the Government's latest advice on coronavirus is about schools."<sup>25</sup> The positive function of fear is its acting as a warning against a threat, which helps to take action, by the government, school headmasters, that aim at ensuring safety in the public sphere and is visible in the public discourse: "Nearly 700,000 people have backed a petition calling on the PM to 'consider closing schools/colleges down in the coming weeks or as soon as possible'."<sup>26</sup>

Fear management is a process that was perceptible in the stages of closing Polish school: from the sanitary regulations of the Ministry of National Edu-

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<sup>23</sup> Norbert ELIAS, *The Civilizing Process*, vol. 2, *State Formation and Civilization* (London: Blackwell, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> Paweł WALEWSKI, "Alert w Wielkiej Brytanii. Nietypowe objawy Covid-19 u dzieci," *Polityka*, April 29, 2020, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Tom GOODENOUGH, "Why Schools Haven't Shut Yet in Response to Coronavirus," *The Spectator*, March 17, 2020.

<sup>26</sup> GOODENOUGH, "Why Schools Haven't Shut."

cation and the Chief Sanitary Inspector for school headmasters<sup>27</sup> to their actual closing.<sup>28</sup> The minister of education, Dariusz Piontkowski, announced that the order to close schools **could be** issued in a couple of days. So far, there are **only guidelines** from the Ministry of National Education and the Chief Sanitary Inspector directed at school masters.<sup>29</sup> **“Various scenarios** are considered, including schools being closed”;<sup>30</sup> **“In Poland, the government decided to close** all schools.”<sup>31</sup> **“A special legal act gives the minister of education a possibility to introduce changes to the academic schedule”**;<sup>32</sup> **“The government can make school closures last longer** than expected.”<sup>33</sup> Piontkowski announced that “schools will remain **closed**.” The minister announced new dates of the examinations. “The exams will be conducted **only in the written form (with no oral examinations)**” (the bold type is mine).<sup>34</sup>

Fear motivates and encourages school and state authorities to properly prepare to new challenges in the face of school closures: “The government is going to have to find a way around the unions’ reluctance to get teachers back into the classroom.”<sup>35</sup> Public figures (ministers, experts, school headmasters) inform about the pandemic, say how to react and feel. Arlie Hochschild termed these informal guidelines, instructions of how to react directed at students and teachers as “rules of feeling”.<sup>36</sup> These rules shape our behaviour, instruct what we should be afraid of and how to express it. Even though emotions are biologically programmed, socialisation and cultural processes can modify human reactions to stimuli/threats, which is confirmed in the analysed research material.

Apart from fear, the following backgrounds to emotions can be found in the texts published on the *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites:

<sup>27</sup> Joanna CIEŚLA, “Pediatria i immunolog: Zamknijmy wszystkie szkoły,” *Polityka*, March 10, 2020, 1.

<sup>28</sup> “61 zakażeń koronawirusem. Polska w stanie zagrożenia epidemicznego,” *Polityka*, March 13, 2020, 1.

<sup>29</sup> CIEŚLA, “Pediatria i immunolog,” 1.

<sup>30</sup> “Prezydent zwołuje posiedzenie Rady Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego,” *Polityka*, March 10, 2020.

<sup>31</sup> “61 zakażeń,” 1.

<sup>32</sup> “238 zakażeń. ‘Pacjent zero’ wyleczony,” *Polityka*, March 17, 2020, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Łukasz LIPiŃSKI, “Koronawirus zmieni polską politykę na dłużej,” *Polityka*, March 17, 2020, 1.

<sup>34</sup> “W ciągu doby na Covid-19 zmarło w Polsce 40 osób. Najwięcej od początku pandemii,” *Polityka*, April 24, 2020, 1.

<sup>35</sup> “Covid-19 update: Lockdown attainment gap.”

<sup>36</sup> Arlie HOCHSCHILD, “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure,” *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 3 (1979): 585.

- **concern** (“Some parents are concerned that the developmental problems that their children are experiencing are the infamous ‘coexisting illnesses’”<sup>37</sup>);
- **anxiety** (“They send anxiety-stricken emails to school masters: ‘What preventive measures have been taken to minimise the risk of my child getting infected with the coronavirus?’”<sup>38</sup>);
- **fear** (“First I was scared myself, I imagined that I am suffocating because of the virus”<sup>39</sup>);
- **terror** (“Parents are terrified by the chaos”<sup>40</sup>);
- **panic** (“It is no laughing matter, we do not want to spread panic”<sup>41</sup>);
- **uncertainty** (“Most of my classmates are exhausted by a sense of uncertainty”<sup>42</sup>);
- **scare, frightening** (“When, on 11 March, the government announced school closures, Poles did not feel anxious [9% of those surveyed admitted to being scared, out of which 3% admitted to being terrified]. However, within the next couple of weeks the number of those scared increased exponentially. The level of fear of getting infected correlates with being scared”<sup>43</sup>);
- **threat, threatening**.<sup>44</sup>

One of the students wrote, “I am suffocating because of the virus.”<sup>45</sup> This points towards a physiological reaction of the organism to a threat.

<sup>37</sup> PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania,” 84; CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” *Polityka*, May 26, 2020, 15.

<sup>38</sup> Joanna CIEŚLA, “‘Oby do nas to nie przyszło’. Szkoły boją się koronawirusa,” *Polityka*, July 10, 2020, 1; Agata CZARNACKA, “Francja otworzyła szkoły. Teraz musi zrobić krok w tył,” *Polityka*, May 24, 2020, 1.

<sup>39</sup> CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy bawicie,” 15; Jędrzej WINIECKI, “Wirus znowu,” *Polityka*, May 12, 2020, 1.

<sup>40</sup> Joanna CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36.

<sup>41</sup> Agata SZCZERBIAK, “Szkoły zamknięte, dzieci i rodzice przytłoczeni. Co robić w domu?” *Polityka*, March 16, 2020, 1; “Kwarantanna, kontrole na granicach, odwołane imprezy,” *Polityka*, March 10, 2020, 1.

<sup>42</sup> CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” 15.

<sup>43</sup> Rafał KALUKIN and Marcin DUMA, “Koronawybory,” *Polityka*, April 7, 2020, 22.

<sup>44</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36; Dariusz CHĘTKOWSKI, “Polska szkoła staje do góry nogami, a nauczyciele robią fikołka,” *Polityka*, March 26, 2020, 2.

<sup>45</sup> CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” 15.

#### 4.1.2 Media representations of sadness

In the analysed research material, sadness was identified in 41 cases (*Polityka*: 29, *Spectator*: 12). In the Polish texts, sadness constitutes 19% of all the instances of emotions, while in the English texts it is 15%.

Sadness is a type of emotion defined as a temporary emotional state characterised by disappointment, regret, hopelessness,<sup>46</sup> stagnation, a lack of interest, a suppressed mood: “In Kacper’s place, there are no holiday plans, but rather great sadness instead”<sup>47</sup> (a sense of guilt). In the articles published by *Polityka* and *The Spectator*, it is mostly the result of humiliation, hopelessness,<sup>48</sup> being stuck,<sup>49</sup> compassion.<sup>50</sup> Sadness can be experienced with various intensity, beginning from light melancholy due to monotony, through worries, to despair or desperation (being sad),<sup>51</sup> hurt, in agony, unhappy,<sup>52</sup> yearning,<sup>53</sup> rejected, alienated,<sup>54</sup> disappointed, broken, in grief, dissatisfied, hopeless, inert<sup>55</sup>). “Their [parents’] situation in the face of school closures is becoming **dramatic**”;<sup>56</sup> “It is **difficult to breathe a sigh of relief** that the school year is over.”<sup>57</sup>

Sadness was expressed in many ways: suppressed mood, indifference, apathy, isolation, crying: “A student was crying during an online lesson because he did not understand the material.”<sup>58</sup> The type and intensity of sadness varied depending on its cause and individual’s mechanisms of coping with such an emotion, e.g. avoiding other people: “Poles did not fully close the door. The Italians closed the door and bolted it,”<sup>59</sup> and avoiding negative

<sup>46</sup> “COVID-19,” 8.

<sup>47</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36.

<sup>48</sup> “COVID-19,” 8; CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” 15.

<sup>49</sup> SZCZERBIAK, “Szkoly zamknięte,” 1.

<sup>50</sup> Dariusz CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach wszyscy są wściekli i skołowani,” *Polityka*, March 13, 2020, 1; SZCZERBIAK, “Szkoly zamknięte,” 1; Joanna ROSSITER, “Parents Deserve Answers on Schools and Coronavirus,” *The Spectator*, May 12, 2020, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/parents-deserve-answers-on-schools-and-coronavirus>.

<sup>51</sup> “COVID-19,” 8; CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” 15; CIEŚLA, “Maturzyści dostali prezent. A co dla młodszych?” *Polityka*, April 24, 2020, 1; CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36.

<sup>52</sup> Joanna CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” *Polityka*, April 2, 2020, 1.

<sup>53</sup> PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania,” 84; “Kampania prezydencka na ostatniej prostej. Trzaskowski prezentuje program,” *Polityka*, June 25, 2020, 1.

<sup>54</sup> CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” 15.

<sup>55</sup> SZCZERBIAK, “Szkoly zamknięte,” 1.

<sup>56</sup> CIEŚLA, “Maturzyści dostali prezent,” 1 (emphasis mine).

<sup>57</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36 (emphasis mine).

<sup>58</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>59</sup> “Rząd luzuje restrykcje,” 1; “WHO ogłasza pandemię. A maseczek i żeli antybakteryjnych nie kupisz już na Allegro,” *Polityka*, March 11, 2020, 1.

thoughts: “Don’t you die here in these two weeks.”<sup>60</sup> They intensify the experience of sadness and extend its duration. Just as any emotion, sadness plays an important role for the organism: it is a natural and normal reaction to a feeling of loss of a close person (social isolation, no contact with peers and family members), a loss of an objective, a loss of opportunities (education, work) and a means of communicating our needs to others.

The source material shows that the direct naming of emotion of sadness and the background emotions, i.e. emotions interpreted within the context of sadness (sadness<sup>61</sup>), great sadness,<sup>62</sup> being stuck,<sup>63</sup> hopeless,<sup>64</sup> dramatic,<sup>65</sup> devastated,<sup>66</sup> terrible, tragic) is typical mostly of articles published on the *Polityka* website in the private discourse and in the statements by government representatives. Sadness is the dominant emotion among Polish children during the pandemic.

As an individual emotion, it is expressed mostly by particular individuals. This type of emotions is typical of students, sometimes also of parents. Students share the experienced emotions. In the articles published at *spectator.co.uk* the emotion of sadness is found in the public discourse (experts’ language). A diagnosis of the experienced emotions can be found but also an assessment of the consequences of school closures (e.g. tragedy, disaster<sup>67</sup>): “This is a disaster. Long absences from school are bad for all children, but especially bad for children from low-income households ... long holidays can widen educational gaps between rich and poor.”<sup>68</sup>

Both in the private discourse as well as the public discourse most of emotions are the result of the situational context. These are mostly the so-called emotions of the background. Even though all the utterances refer to the same media-related phenomenon, different groups reveal different contexts and varieties of a given emotion, its intensity and duration. What is dominant are the descriptions of physical symptoms of sadness and the sadness-related

<sup>60</sup> Dariusz CHĘTKOWSKI, “Odwołanie zajęć dotyczy tylko uczniów? Szkoły po decyzji ministra,” *Polityka*, March 12, 2020, 1.

<sup>61</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1; CIEŚLA, “Maturzyści dostali prezent,” 1.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> SZCZERBIAK, “Szkoły zamknięte,” 1.

<sup>64</sup> “COVID-19,” 8; CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1; CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” 15.

<sup>65</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>66</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>67</sup> John MARENBO, “The Tragedy of Our Children’s Lost Education,” *The Spectator*, June 12, 2020.

<sup>68</sup> KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour.”

behaviour: sad facial expressions,<sup>69</sup> being upset,<sup>70</sup> decrease in/a lack of activity (also professional): “People became professionally inactive,”<sup>71</sup> “Reality became monotonous”;<sup>72</sup> less energetic: “The young say they are devoid of energy, sad,”<sup>73</sup> “it was no laughing matter.”<sup>74</sup>

People feel low: “I am in no mood to plan anything. Instead of the summer of our lives, we have the summer of depression”;<sup>75</sup> lonely, isolated,<sup>76</sup> indolent;<sup>77</sup> overwhelmed: “Schools are closed, parents are overwhelmed,”<sup>78</sup> “The worst was left out of school”;<sup>79</sup> despondent: “they have the right to have enough”;<sup>80</sup> battered: “Sponges—they do not work the whole hour as lessons last only 45 minutes”;<sup>81</sup> missing something in their lives;<sup>82</sup> taciturn, focusing only on sadness: “the world as was known to kids and teenagers got destroyed”;<sup>83</sup> showing their moods: “The oppressed civil servants oppressed teachers”;<sup>84</sup> complaining about their sadness: “The situation in the context of school closures seems dramatic”;<sup>85</sup> expecting support: “Will only deaths convince the authorities what is most important is support, not oppression of subordinate workers”;<sup>86</sup> hopeless: “The young believed that their parents would protect them, but they saw their hopelessness, the pointless character of bans. They have the right to have enough and they need to be treated more seriously than before”;<sup>87</sup> bitter,<sup>88</sup> full of bitterness: “Out of bitterness, and

<sup>69</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1; Joanna CIEŚLA, “Maturzyści dostali prezent,” 1; CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36.

<sup>70</sup> Ewa WILK, “Epidemia zmienia nasze życie,” *Polityka*, April 7, 2020, 12.

<sup>71</sup> Hanna CICHY, “Tarcze (powoli) się kończą, pandemia trwa,” *Polityka*, July 11, 2020, 2.

<sup>72</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Odwołanie zajęć,” 1.

<sup>75</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36.

<sup>76</sup> WILK, “Epidemia,” 12.

<sup>77</sup> Katarzyna MIERZEJEWSKA, “Szwajcaria. Narodowa specjalność: zapasy,” *Polityka*, April 20, 2020, 44.

<sup>78</sup> SZCZERBIAK, “Szkoły,” 1.

<sup>79</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Jędrzej DUDKIEWICZ, “Czego (jeśli dobrze pójdzie) nauczyci nas koronawirus,” *Polityka*, March 29, 2020, 1.

<sup>82</sup> PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania,” 84.

<sup>83</sup> SZCZERBIAK, “Szkoły zamknięte,” 1.

<sup>84</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>85</sup> CIEŚLA, “Maturzyści dostali prezent,” 1.

<sup>86</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>87</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin”; “COVID-19,” 8.

<sup>88</sup> Joanna CIEŚLA, “Żłobki otwarte od 4 maja? PiS oświatę odmraża chaotycznie,” *Polityka*, April 28, 2020, 1.



out of feeling ashamed in front of the janitresses, whom I like, appreciate and admire, I decide to sit idly on my chair for two hours.”<sup>89</sup> In the public discourse, sadness results from a real threat, envisaged consequences and experienced situations. It is rarely expressed through non-verbal messages.

#### 4.1.3 Media representations of anger

Anger is the third most frequent emotion, equally with care, with 22 instances identified. It was identified in 13 cases at *polityka.pl* and in 9 cases at *spectator.co.uk*. In the Polish texts it constitutes less than 9% of all the interpreted emotions, while in the English texts—11%. It prevails in parents’ comments (4 in Polish, 4 in English), hence in the private discourse.

Anger is a strong negative emotion, characterised by:

- **hostility** (“In their minds **cursing** those who did not make the decision to close schools”<sup>90</sup>);
- **nervousness** (“Among this year’s Matura exam takers, there were significantly more instances of **nervousness and irritation** observed”<sup>91</sup>);
- **frustration and antagonism towards others** (“Assaulting the school principal”<sup>92</sup>);
- **fury, chaos, irritation** (“At schools everyone is angry and confused”;<sup>93</sup> “It makes me feel exhausted, I sweat my gut out here”;<sup>94</sup> “Angry pupils and parents are piling in, calling for schools to shut their doors”<sup>95</sup>; “Both Antek and his parents are furious after another couple of weeks of being squeezed into 42 square meters”<sup>96</sup>);
- **ridicule** (“In the last days of February, as the winter holidays were coming to an end, the parents’ emotions started to change, turning either into hysteria, ridicule or ignorance of the coronavirus”<sup>97</sup>);
- **humiliation** (“Either the headmasters went crazy, or they became ill-treated by the officials, and now they are taking it out on us”<sup>98</sup>);

<sup>89</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>90</sup> Anna DZIEWIT-MELLER, Kawiarnia literacka, *Polityka*, March 17, 2020, 1.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.; CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>92</sup> Joanna CIEŚLA, “Lekcje na odległość,” *Polityka*, March 12, 2020, 15; CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1; WILK, “Epidemia,” 12.

<sup>93</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> GOODENOUGH, “Why Schools Haven’t Shut.”

<sup>96</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36; PIĄTEK, “Raport z rozmrażania,” 84; CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>97</sup> Kamila SZCZERBIAK, “Dlaczego nie zamknięto szkół dla osób z niepełnosprawnością?” *Polityka*, March 19, 20; CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

- **dislike** (“The janitor looked at me with such a dislike that I got really scared”<sup>99</sup>);
- **discontent** (“Parental discontent is only going to grow”<sup>100</sup>);
- **irritation, exhaustion**;<sup>101</sup>
- **pressure** (“Headteachers are piling pressure on the Government to announce closures imminently”<sup>102</sup>);
- **anger**;<sup>103</sup>
- **aggression** (“Perhaps this way I can contain the beast inside me, which wants to get out of me and grab someone by the throat. Just anyone, the beast does not mind who to tear apart. It is bloodthirsty and it wants to give vent to the humiliation it experienced”<sup>104</sup>);
- **agitation** (“We were hit mostly by the restrictions, which were not observed even by the elderly”<sup>105</sup>);
- **impatience, irritability** (“As a result, middle class parents are taking matters into their own hands”<sup>106</sup>).

The authors in the media discourse avoid naming anger directly—instead, they refer to it with epithets resulting from anger: *offending, oppressing, insulting, attacking verbally*. Anger hinders rational decisions: “I am reporting the kindergarten to the educational authorities and the sanitary-epidemiological station”;<sup>107</sup> “Why aren’t you checking the passports?!”;<sup>108</sup> “breaking and demolishing things.”<sup>109</sup> Anger affects making rational decisions: “headmasters came back from a meeting in the city council so **angry** that they couldn’t talk to their staff.”<sup>110</sup>

Anger as a negative emotion is observed on both websites and it dominates in the private domain in the comments made by students and parents: “Dear Professor, teachers **went crazy**. They give so much homework as if

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.; “243 nowe zakażenia w Polsce. Weszły w życie nowe restrykcje,” *Polityka*, April 1, 2020, 1.

<sup>99</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>100</sup> ROSSITER, “Parents Deserve Answers.”

<sup>101</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1; Hylton MURRAY-PHILIPSON, “Faith, Hope and Charity: How I Survived Coronavirus,” *The Spectator*, April 18, 2020.

<sup>102</sup> GOODENOUGH, “Why Schools Haven’t Shut.”

<sup>103</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Polska szkoła,” 2; WILK, “Epidemia,” 12.

<sup>104</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>105</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36; CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>106</sup> CIEŚLA, “Żłobki,” 1; ROSSITER, “Parents Deserve Answers.”

<sup>107</sup> CIEŚLA, “Lekcje na odległość,” 15.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

schools were to reopen in a year. They are **completely crazy**.”<sup>111</sup> A Matura-exam taker from Warsaw wrote: **“We got education messed up with, our plans got destroyed, our projects, the ones that we spent months working on, are ruined.”**<sup>112</sup> An **angry** father states: “Cut this crap, why weren’t we told from the very beginning?”<sup>113</sup> Anger was sporadically expressed in an unhealthy, dangerous way, harmful to others. It should be noted that uncontrolled anger may quickly turn into aggression or domestic violence, which is confirmed by comments made by experts working for the portals. Domestic violence, together with assaults, hatred, invasion, jealousy, aggression,<sup>114</sup> was often mentioned in the context of social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anger also plays a constructive, positive role, mostly in the public discourse, helping to explain headmasters’ decisions to teachers and experts. “In the face of oppression, we look for others to oppress. Civil servants in the city council of Łódź were relieved when they oppressed headmasters. Headmasters got relieved when they put pressure on their staff: How shall we behave when the authorities provide pressure instead of support?”<sup>115</sup> Anger can spur us to take action and find solutions to the existing problems: “I am not so **angry** at the headmaster, I still believe that the threat will not take as long as expected. But only on one condition: that **instead of abusing and oppressing, we will start supporting each other**.”<sup>116</sup> “Why can’t the Minister of Education decide, together with the unions of teachers, parents, and experts, what to do with the school schedule, examinations, holidays? And announce it together with them?”<sup>117</sup>

Anger in interpersonal relations is often expressed through non-verbal messages (facial expressions: frowning, body language: a strong posture, turning one’s back to someone, tone of voice: shouting, sounding rough, physiological reactions: “I was so nervous that I couldn’t eat whole day, I had a big lump in my throat”<sup>118</sup>), which could be found in the analysed material. Even though aggressive behaviour (e.g. hitting, kicking, throwing things) was not observed, the analysis of the media discourse points towards

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>113</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36.

<sup>114</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Polska szkoła,” 2; WILK, “Epidemia,” 12.

<sup>115</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Jerzy BACZYŃSKI, “W zawieszeniu,” *Polityka*, April 21, 2020, 5.

<sup>118</sup> DZIEWIT-MELLER, “Kawiarnia literacka,” 1.

a need to give vent to anger: “When I come back home, I need an hour’s rest to cool down. Then another hour so that I don’t act silly.... Perhaps this way I can contain the beast inside me, which wants to get out of me and grab someone by the throat. Just anyone, the beast does not mind who to tear apart. It is bloodthirsty and it wants to give vent to the humiliation it experienced. One, two, three, out goes he!”<sup>119</sup>).

#### *4.1.4 Media representations of worry/care*

Instances of worry, in analogy to anger, was found 22 times (*Polityka*: 14, *The Spectator*: 8). It constitutes about 10% of all the emotions found in the research material (PL: 10.5%, UK: 10%); these indexes are comparable. It can be interpreted as a malady, unhappiness, nuisance, affliction, strait, concern. In the research material it was mostly expressed by parents, primarily from Poland (7) and experts from the UK.<sup>120</sup> Polish parents accused the authorities of “prioritizing the budget over children’s health.”<sup>121</sup> British parents noted: “To send your child back in June would be irresponsible parenting. Several said they refused to let their child be used as a ‘guinea pig’ for the virus and many emailed the headteacher to say so.”<sup>122</sup> Experts from both countries stress out that the authorities, while caring about students’ and teachers’ health, neglected the material situation of poorer students benefitting from free meals programmes.<sup>123</sup> They suggest introducing remedial classes for students from poor families so that they could catch up with the material: “A near six-month closure of schools could lead to an attainment gap of between 11 per cent and 75 per cent, with a median figure of 36 per cent.”<sup>124</sup>

The synonyms of worry, as interpreted on the basis of the material from *polityka.pl* and *spectator.co.uk* are:

– **problem**: “I don’t worry as much about being infected as about organisational problems, e.g. due to an unexpected quarantine”;<sup>125</sup> “Problems are experienced by students of vocational and technical schools.... We were told that no employing establishment, working in cooperation with schools, will accept students for internship this year”;<sup>126</sup> “No matter what sort of decision

<sup>119</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>120</sup> “Covid-19 Update: Lockdown.”

<sup>121</sup> CIEŚLA, “Maturzyści dostali prezent,” 1.

<sup>122</sup> ROSSITER, “Parents Deserve.”

<sup>123</sup> CIEŚLA, “Lekcje na odległość,” 15; MARENBNON, “The tragedy.”

<sup>124</sup> “Covid-19 Update: Lockdown.”

<sup>125</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36.

<sup>126</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

we make, we are in for criticism. Either we risk students' health by not closing schools or, by closing schools, we cause a problem to parents who need to take care of their children on their own";<sup>127</sup>

– **concern**: "I was concerned that I am left only with a TV set. The women assured me that they would care for a diversity of choices. And that they will turn a blind eye to the no-contact rule";<sup>128</sup>

– **upset**: "upsetting obsessions";<sup>129</sup>

– **trouble**: "Before the outbreak of the pandemic, 85% of teachers did not have any experience of distant teaching";<sup>130</sup>

– **fretting**: "The boy's mother adds that she is worried whether she made a right choice: Perhaps it is risky? How long can healthy, energetic kids sit at home, together with their parents, seeing their peers only on the screen?";<sup>131</sup> "Tension grew too strong—a friend from Denmark worried about her children, another turned ill due to nerves";<sup>132</sup>

– **care**: "It could take load off the parents' mind, who are burdened with taking care of their children and are not able to come back to work."<sup>133</sup>

#### 4.1.5 Media representations of happiness

Happiness is one of the least frequently represented emotions in the media discourse related to school closures, as presented by *Polityka* and *The Spectator*. It is mostly expressed through students' comments. It is defined as a pleasurable emotional state, characterized by joy,<sup>134</sup> rejoicing,<sup>135</sup> euphoria,<sup>136</sup> satisfaction,<sup>137</sup> good mood, satisfaction: "thanks a whole lot".<sup>138</sup>

<sup>127</sup> CIEŚLA, "Lekcje na odległość," 15.

<sup>128</sup> PIĄTEK, "Raport z rozmrażania," 84.

<sup>129</sup> "243 nowe zakażenia," 1.

<sup>130</sup> CIEŚLA, "Koniec szkoły," 36.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> DZIEWIT-MELLER, Kawiarnia literacka, 1.

<sup>133</sup> BACZYŃSKI, "W zawieszeniu," 5.

<sup>134</sup> Bartek CHACIŃSKI, "Korona na języku, czyli pandemia w polszczyźnie," *Polityka*, July 4, 2020, 1; CHĘTKOWSKI, "Odwołanie zajęć," 1.

<sup>135</sup> CIEŚLA, "Lekcje na odległość," 15; CHĘTKOWSKI, "Odwołanie zajęć," 1.

<sup>136</sup> CHACIŃSKI, "Korona na języku," 1; CIEŚLA, "Lekcje na odległość," 15.

<sup>137</sup> CIEŚLA, "Oby do nas," 1.

<sup>138</sup> CIEŚLA, "Czy e-nauka zda egzamin," 1; Władysław TATARKIEWICZ, *O szczęściu* (Warsaw: PWN 1979); Wolfgang GLATZER, "Happiness: Classic Theory in the Light of Current Research," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 1, no. 4 (2000): 501–11; Melanie McDONAGH, "School Closures Leave Parents with a Serious Headache," *The Spectator*, March 18, 2020.

Happiness can be expressed through non-verbal clues: facial expressions (e.g. smiling),<sup>139</sup> body language (e.g. relaxed posture),<sup>140</sup> a pleasant tone of voice (e.g. optimistic),<sup>141</sup> and specific actions: “Having found out that the classes are dismissed for two weeks, some students **rejoiced**, they were **jumping up with joy** in the corridor.”<sup>142</sup>

Happiness understood as a primary emotion is present in the analysed material, similarly to pride, a secondary emotion. Background emotions appear occasionally: good mood, enthusiasm, satisfaction,<sup>143</sup> joy.<sup>144</sup> Happiness understood as an interpersonal emotion and emotion of cooperation is experienced by teachers when they get negative Covid-19 tests:<sup>145</sup> “Luckily, in Mazańcowice these concerns were not confirmed.... In Kołobrzeg the test results also prove it was a false alarm”;<sup>146</sup> or when they show or receive signs of kindness from others: “I was moved by students who decided to take pot plants back home from school”;<sup>147</sup> or when they cooperate with others: “Students were **overjoyed** to send each other greetings from ‘corona-holidays’”—to mention but a few situations of students’ **euphoria** and confusion at school.<sup>148</sup> Happiness is a result of receiving an emotional and financial support.<sup>149</sup>

#### 4.2 SITUATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE ANALYSED EMOTIONS

Emotionalization of the media discourse related to the situational context of fear pointed to its strong negative evaluation: “Long and deep ditches dug to prepare graves for those who died of the virus”;<sup>150</sup> “To bury thousands of the dead? It is a controversial, cruel way to ‘herd immunity’”;<sup>151</sup> “Economic

<sup>139</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Odwołanie zajęć,” 1.

<sup>140</sup> CHACIŃSKI, “Korona na języku,” 1; CHĘTKOWSKI, “Odwołanie zajęć,” 1.

<sup>141</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka,” 1; JUNE GRUBER, ed., *Positive Emotion, Integrating the Light Sides and Dark Sides* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 53–72.

<sup>142</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Odwołanie zajęć,” 1.

<sup>143</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka,” 1.

<sup>144</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Odwołanie zajęć,” 1.

<sup>145</sup> Antonio DAMASIO, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (London: Penguin 2005), 50.

<sup>146</sup> CIEŚLA, “Oby do nas,” 1.

<sup>147</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Odwołanie zajęć,” 1.

<sup>148</sup> CHACIŃSKI, “Korona na języku,” 1.

<sup>149</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec,” 36; CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>150</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Odwołanie zajęć,” 1.

<sup>151</sup> Marek RYBARCZYK, “Premier Boris Johnson pandemii się nie boi, a powinien,” *Polityka*, March 15, 2020, 1.

crisis”;<sup>152</sup> “A lack of restrictions will lead to the death of 400,000 British citizens”;<sup>153</sup> “Will not be able to manage much longer,” he said. “One said he had 17 members of staff call in sick”;<sup>154</sup> “The economy will rebound, but educational damage can be permanent,”<sup>155</sup> etc.

Similarly, the pandemic-ridden media discourse at polityka.pl and spectator.co.uk related to sadness also came with a negative evaluation: “The atmosphere was **nightmarish**”;<sup>156</sup> “Now Janek and his whole generation became **grounded**”;<sup>157</sup> **indolence of the authorities**;<sup>158</sup> “Young people hoped that their parents would protect them, but what they saw was hopeless, **unreasonable** bans. They have the right to have enough and they need to be treated more seriously than before.”<sup>159</sup> What is more, in many cases, the discourse is inextricably linked to fear: “black humour”;<sup>160</sup> “cacophony”;<sup>161</sup> “a cart of death”;<sup>162</sup> “a method to kill the elderly”.<sup>163</sup>

A negative, emotional situational context of anger is indicated by “being squeezed” and thus: “Both Antek and his parents are furious after another couple of weeks of being squeezed into 42 square meters.”<sup>164</sup>

## 5. MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF EMOTIONS IN THE WAKE OF SCHOOL CLOSURES

School closures, together with their consequences, generates emotions among representatives of the analysed groups. The consequences interpreted

<sup>152</sup> Mateusz MAZZINI, “Epidemia koronawirusa blokuje i rujnuje Włochy,” *Polityka*, March 7, 2020, 1; MAZZINI, “Niektóre kraje odnoszą sukcesy w walce z Covid-19,” *Polityka*, March 3, 2020.

<sup>153</sup> Marek RYBARCZYK, “Brytyjski tygodnik: bierność Johnsona zabiła tysiące ludzi,” *Polityka*, April 20, 2020, 2.

<sup>154</sup> GOODENOUGH, “Why Schools Haven’t Shut.”

<sup>155</sup> “Covid-19 update: Only a Third of Children Are Given Online Learning,” *The Spectator*, April 20, 2022.

<sup>156</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> MIERZEJEWSKA, “Szwajcaria,” 44.

<sup>159</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>160</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Odwołanie zajęć,” 1.

<sup>161</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1.

<sup>162</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “W szkołach,” 1.

<sup>163</sup> Wiktoria BIELIASZYN, “‘Myjcie ręce, pijcie wódkę’. Białoruś lekceważy zagrożenie,” *Polityka*, March 22, 2020, 1.

<sup>164</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec,” 36.

in texts published by *Polityka* and *The Spectator* concerning many areas of social life, are in most cases parallel for both analysed countries. Sometimes they differ in terms of intensity of a given emotion and its media representation or in terms of a social group diagnosing problems. “The collateral damage alone is serious enough: millions of parents unable to carry on with their work, abused and vulnerable children left without support, children without the social life, routine and need to accommodate others which trains them to be proper members of society. But it is the central damage which is gravest. From 5 to 18 all but the smallest percentage of pupils at the best independent schools will have lost between three months and half a year of their schooling. To be deprived of education is incommensurably worse a loss than all these others.”<sup>165</sup> Below I present a qualitative and quantitative analysis.

### 5.1 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COST

Social and cultural consequences of school closures, understood in terms of emotions, are: sadness (33 = PL: 23, UK: 10), fear (22 = PL: 15, UK: 7), and anger (14 = PL: 12, UK: 2).

Sadness, with 33 instances, is the dominant emotion found in the research material, both in *Polityka* (23) and *The Spectator* (10). It constitutes 25.5% of all the emotions identified in the Polish texts, and 22.7% in the English texts.

**Table 3.** Emotions generated by the social and cultural cost of school closures as represented in the media discourse in *Polityka* and *The Spectator*

| Social and cultural cost |                       |    |         |    |                      |    |                   |    |            |    |         |    |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----|---------|----|----------------------|----|-------------------|----|------------|----|---------|----|
| Emotions                 | Private discourse: 72 |    |         |    | Public discourse: 62 |    |                   |    |            |    |         |    |
|                          | Children              |    | Parents |    | Teachers             |    | School principals |    | Government |    | Experts |    |
|                          | PL                    | UK | PL      | UK | PL                   | UK | PL                | UK | PL         | UK | PL      | UK |
| Sadness                  | 5                     | 0  | 4       | 4  | 2                    | 0  | 2                 | 0  | 1          | 2  | 9       | 4  |
| Fear                     | 1                     | 0  | 7       | 6  | 2                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 3          | 0  | 2       | 1  |
| Anger                    | 1                     | 0  | 8       | 1  | 2                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 1          | 0  | 0       | 1  |

<sup>165</sup> MARENBN, “The tragedy.”



|                    |    |   |    |    |    |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |                        |
|--------------------|----|---|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|------------------------|
| Worry              | 1  | 0 | 3  | 2  | 1  | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2  | 3  | 13; PL: 8,<br>UK: 5    |
| Happiness          | 2  | 0 | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1  | 0  | 6; PL: 6,<br>UK: 0     |
| Stuckness          | 0  | 0 | 2  | 2  | 2  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 6; PL:4,<br>UK: 2      |
| Sense of privilege | 0  | 0 | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3  | 2  | 6; PL: 3, UK: 3        |
| Compassion         | 0  | 0 | 1  | 2  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 3  | 6; PL: 1,<br>UK: 5     |
| Hope               | 1  | 0 | 0  | 1  | 2  | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 5; PL: 4,<br>UK: 1     |
| Hate               | 0  | 0 | 2  | 1  | 1  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 4; PL: 3,<br>UK: 1     |
| Boredom            | 4  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 4; PL: 4,<br>UK: 0     |
| Sense of guilt     | 1  | 0 | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 2  | 4; PL:1,<br>UK: 3      |
| Humiliation        | 2  | 0 | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 1  | 4; PL: 3,<br>UK: 1     |
| Other*             | 0  | 0 | 1  | 3  | 2  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 1  | 7; PL: 3,<br>UK: 4     |
| Total              | 18 | 0 | 30 | 24 | 15 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 17 | 18 | 134; PL: 90,<br>UK: 44 |
| Total              | 18 |   | 54 |    | 15 |   | 5 |   | 7 |   | 35 |    | 134                    |

Source: own study.

\* Other emotions (solidarity or banality) did not appear in the research material more than 3 times.

**Table 4.** Emotions aroused by social and cultural consequences as presented by *Polityka* and *The Spectator*

|                 | Emotions | Articles | Emotions per article (mean) |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|
| polityka.pl     | 90       | 78       | 1.15                        |
| spectator.co.uk | 44       | 12       | 3.66                        |

Source: own study.

The mean number of emotions per article in the Polish texts is 1.15 and in the English texts it is 3.66, which indicates a significantly different level of emotional intensity in the analysed texts.

School closure generates and deepens social injustice; it exposes poverty. This issue is more frequently present in the texts published by *The Specta-*

*tor*: every week of absence can permanently stymie the life chances (and earnings potential) of children affected. As Rod Liddle observes, “lockdown hits the poorest hardest,”<sup>166</sup> it puts children from affluent families in a privileged position. The Education Endowment Foundation estimated that a six-month period of schools closure can lead to a 36% discrepancy in educational attainment between children from the poorest and wealthiest families,<sup>167</sup> which generates the emotions of compassion, worry, guilt.<sup>168</sup> According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, children from wealthy families spend statistically 30% more time studying than those from poor families. Wealthy parents can afford to buy laptops and have a greater chance to work flexible hours, have money, self-confidence, which can help their children to achieve academic success. Children from independent schools can often attend 20 hours of classes per week more than children from state schools.<sup>169</sup>

The pandemic destroys students’ education, holidays, and life plans, both in Poland and in the United Kingdom.<sup>170</sup> “Missing a third of a year of school could cut pupils’ lifetime earnings by 4%.”<sup>171</sup> It imposes social isolation: students who stay at home miss school, miss their peers and direct contact. The quarantine extends the time spent in front of the computer, changes our lifestyle. “Closing schools forced British people to stay at home, thus changing their behaviour patterns. Strong family relations are rare, people are mobile looking for work (hence families are scattered all over the country)”<sup>172</sup>. The pandemic leads to greater divorce rates.<sup>173</sup> According to Co-op Legal Services, the number of divorce cases in the period between the introduction of the lockdown till the middle of May increased by 42% in Britain in comparison to the analogous period of 2019.<sup>174</sup>

Cultural change, observed mostly in the texts published at polityka.pl, manifests itself also through language change and new phrases being intro-

<sup>166</sup> KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour”; CLARK, “What School Closures Are Doing”; Katy BALLS, James FORSYTH, and Fraser NELSON, “Is Labour’s Stance on Reopening Schools Worsening the Education Gap?” *The Spectator*, May 18, 2020; “Covid-19 Update: Only a third.”

<sup>167</sup> CLARK, “What school closures are doing.”

<sup>168</sup> STEERPIKE, “If Only Michael Gove Was Still Education Secretary,” *The Spectator*, May 18, 2020.

<sup>169</sup> KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour.”

<sup>170</sup> “Covid-19 Update: Measuring the Damage of Lockdown School Closures,” *The Spectator*, May 18, 2020.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> Marek RYBARCZYK, “Premier Boris Johnson pandemii się nie boi, a powinien,” *Polityka*, March, 15, 2020, 2; “Covid-19 Update. Measuring the Damage.”

<sup>173</sup> “Covid-19 update: Lockdown.”

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

duced: *coronaholidays*, *coronavirus party*, *coronawix*, *coronalia*, *coronaidiots*, *covidiot*, *antisocial nehrling*, *to unfreeze*, *boomer remover*, *Corona Zombies*;<sup>175</sup> cultural and educational practice: “webinar” as an educational form, a certificate of “master of distant learning”;<sup>176</sup> and new behaviour patterns: “distant learning” became synonymous to “day off”. Some students claim that this year instead of saying “I passed the exams”, they should stick to “I passed the exams online”.<sup>177</sup> “Trikini”, a three-part swimming costume (with a face mask), became a global term, introduced by an Italian fashion designer.<sup>178</sup> “The pandemic changed not only our daily routine but the world, known to our children, teenagers, collapsed in a sense.”<sup>179</sup> A new form of education was proposed “in the pre-pandemic time, education was compulsory. Students had to attend classes physically, willy nilly. Today new rules apply. If the education system is to be maintained, it should be attractive to students. It should be attractive from the very first words uttered.”<sup>180</sup>

In the texts published by *The Spectator*, anxiety combined with worry generates a risk of abandoning the written part of public exams, so far the traditional forms of testing students’ knowledge and skills.<sup>181</sup>

## 5.2 HEALTH (MENTAL HEALTH) COSTS

Health costs generate the emotion of fear (11), mostly interpreted in parents (PL: 3, UK: 3), Polish teachers (2), and English experts (2). It constitutes 16.2% of all the emotions identified in the texts published at *polityka.pl*, and 22.7% of those identified at *spectator.co.uk*. Another emotion, worry (11), was identified among parents, experts, and students in Poland. It constitutes 18.9% of all the emotions identified in the Polish texts. Sadness (10) was identified in the comments made by Polish students (2), teachers (2), and English experts (2).

<sup>175</sup> CHACIŃSKI, “Korona na języku,” 1.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> SZCZERBIAK, “Szkoly zamknięte,” 1.

<sup>180</sup> Dariusz CHĘTKOWSKI, “Polska szkoła,” 1.

<sup>181</sup> MARENBON, “The tragedy.”

**Table 5.** Emotions aroused by the health (mental health) cost of school closures as represented in the media discourse on the *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites

| Health (mental health) costs |                       |    |         |    |                      |    |                   |    |            |    |         |    |                    |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|----|---------|----|----------------------|----|-------------------|----|------------|----|---------|----|--------------------|
| Emotions                     | Private discourse: 33 |    |         |    | Public discourse: 26 |    |                   |    |            |    |         |    | Total              |
|                              | Children              |    | Parents |    | Teachers             |    | School principals |    | Government |    | Experts |    |                    |
|                              | PL                    | UK | PL      | UK | PL                   | UK | PL                | UK | PL         | UK | PL      | UK |                    |
| Fear                         | 0                     | 0  | 3       | 3  | 2                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 1       | 2  | 11; PL: 6, UK: 5   |
| Worry                        | 2                     | 0  | 3       | 2  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 2       | 2  | 11; PL: 7, UK: 4   |
| Sadness                      | 2                     | 0  | 1       | 1  | 2                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 1  | 1       | 2  | 10; PL: 6, UK: 4   |
| Stagnation                   | 1                     | 0  | 2       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 1       | 2  | 6; PL: 4, UK: 4    |
| Anger                        | 1                     | 0  | 2       | 1  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 0       | 1  | 5; PL: 3, UK: 2    |
| Compassion                   | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 1  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 3       | 1  | 5; PL: 4, UK: 1    |
| Stuckness                    | 2                     | 0  | 0       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 2       | 1  | 5; PL: 4, UK: 1    |
| Other*                       | 3                     | 0  | 1       | 2  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 0       | 0  | 6; PL: 4, UK: 2    |
| Total                        | 11                    | 0  | 12      | 10 | 4                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 1  | 10      | 11 | 59; PL: 37, UK: 22 |
| Total                        | 11                    |    | 22      |    | 4                    |    | 0                 |    | 1          |    | 21      |    | 59                 |

Source: own study.

\* Other emotions (dumbing, hope, sense of guilt, humiliation, happiness) did not appear in the research material more than 3 times.

**Table 6.** Number of emotions aroused by health, social and cultural consequences found on the *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites

| Website         | Emotions | Articles | Emotions per article (mean) |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|
| polityka.pl     | 37       | 78       | 0.47                        |
| spectator.co.uk | 22       | 12       | 1.83                        |

Source: own study.

In the pandemic discourse related to health (mental health) consequences of school closures, the mean number of emotions per article in the Polish

texts was below zero (0.47), while in the English texts it was less than two (1.83).

Health consequences encompass diseases of civilization, mostly depression and a bad mood experienced by students. A team of researchers from Cambridge University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology warns that a lack of social contacts with peers can severely affect the teenagers' brain work, leading to fear, depression, and violence. It is believed that for the brain to develop properly, children need to have contact with their parents. Between the age of 10 and 24, people go through a period of a greater sensitivity to social stimuli and experience a greater demand for interactions with peers.<sup>182</sup> According to a charity organisation preventing suicides, in recent months more than 500,000 volunteers participated in training aimed at preventing suicide in the UK.<sup>183</sup>

School closures and the need of 24/7 parental care over children may, in pathological cases, lead to domestic violence, aggressive behaviour, a lack of contact with others.<sup>184</sup> Isolation can empower oppressors. A special decree suspends all eviction notices. "No intimacy and privacy can lead to nervousness... for some people the quarantine entails stretching loneliness to the limits of the human mind."<sup>185</sup> "Missing people is one of the strongest emotions evoked by the pandemic. Ignacy says that he misses playing chess with friends on the school corridor, drinking coffee on their way back home, riding a bike with a friend at the weekend."<sup>186</sup>

### 5.3 EDUCATIONAL AND ETHICAL COST

An analysis of the research material shows that educational and ethical consequences were mostly visible in the Polish pandemic-related discourse in the form of the emotion of sadness and fear. Sadness was identified in the comments made by experts (8), parents and teachers (5 each), and government representatives (4). These emotions constitute 37.2% of all the emotions identified in the Polish texts, and 25.3% in the English texts. Fear was dominant in the comments made by parents (5), teachers (3), and govern-

<sup>182</sup> CLARK, "What School Closures Are Doing."

<sup>183</sup> "Covid-19 Update: Measuring the Damage of Lockdown School Closures," *The Spectator*, May 18, 2020.

<sup>184</sup> MARENBN, "The tragedy."

<sup>185</sup> WILK, "Epidemia," 12.

<sup>186</sup> CIEŚLA, "Czy e-nauka zda egzamin," 1.

ment representatives (3). What should be noted was the scarce representation of the emotion in the texts by *The Spectator*.

**Table 7.** Emotions aroused by the educational and ethical cost of school closures as represented in the media discourse on the *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites

| Educational and ethical cost |                       |    |         |    |                      |    |                   |    |            |    |         |    |                    |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|----|---------|----|----------------------|----|-------------------|----|------------|----|---------|----|--------------------|
| Emotions                     | Private discourse: 30 |    |         |    | Public discourse: 57 |    |                   |    |            |    |         |    | Total              |
|                              | Children              |    | Parents |    | Teachers             |    | School principals |    | Government |    | Experts |    |                    |
|                              | PL                    | UK | PL      | UK | PL                   | UK | PL                | UK | PL         | UK | PL      | UK |                    |
| Sadness                      | 1                     | 0  | 5       | 1  | 5                    | 0  | 1                 | 0  | 4          | 0  | 8       | 3  | 28; PL: 24, UK: 4  |
| Fear                         | 0                     | 0  | 5       | 2  | 3                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 3          | 0  | 0       | 1  | 14; PL: 11, UK: 3  |
| Anger                        | 0                     | 0  | 1       | 0  | 5                    | 0  | 1                 | 0  | 2          | 0  | 1       | 1  | 11; PL: 10, UK: 1  |
| Worry                        | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 2  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 2          | 0  | 0       | 2  | 6; PL: 2, UK: 4    |
| Humiliation                  | 2                     | 0  | 0       | 0  | 1                    | 0  | 1                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 0       | 0  | 4; PL: 4, UK: 0    |
| Stuckness                    | 1                     | 0  | 1       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 1       | 0  | 3; PL: 3, UK: 0    |
| Sense of guilt               | 0                     | 0  | 2       | 1  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3; PL: 2, UK: 1    |
| Solidarity                   | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 1          | 0  | 1       | 1  | 3; PL: 2, UK: 1    |
| Stagnation                   | 1                     | 0  | 1       | 0  | 1                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3; PL: 3, UK: 0    |
| Compassion                   | 0                     | 0  | 1       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 1       | 1  | 3; PL: 2, UK: 1    |
| Dumbing                      | 1                     | 0  | 1       | 0  | 1                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3; PL: 3, UK: 0    |
| Other emotions*              | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 1  | 0                    | 0  | 1                 | 1  | 0          | 0  | 3       | 0  | 6; PL: 4, UK: 2    |
| Total                        | 6                     | 0  | 17      | 7  | 16                   | 0  | 4                 | 1  | 12         | 0  | 15      | 9  | 87; PL: 70, UK: 17 |
| Total                        | 6                     |    | 24      |    | 16                   |    | 5                 |    | 12         |    | 24      |    | 87                 |

Source: own study.

\* Other emotions (hope, dumbing, sense of privilege happiness) did not appear in the research material more than 3 times.

**Table 8.** Number of emotions aroused by educational and ethical issues found on the *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites

|                 | Emotions | Articles | Emotions per article (mean) |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|
| polityka.pl     | 70       | 78       | 0.98                        |
| spectator.co.uk | 17       | 12       | 1.41                        |

Source: own study.

We can observe a discrepancy of the mean number of emotions per article as identified in the emotional media discourse related to education and ethical consequences of school closures: 0.98 in the articles published by *Polityka* and 1.41 in those of *The Spectator*.

The pandemic shows what family life and home education look like. The analysis of the Polish texts suggests that parents cannot cope with their children being present at home all the time, cannot motivate children to study online. Distant learning can diminish students' self-discipline, can lead to problems with students' participation in classes, their doing homework on their own, and it can lead to unfair grading. Chaos is produced by a lack of unified COVID-19-related guidelines, no unified prevention against the virus: "Each school uses different strategies of prevention against COVID-19."<sup>187</sup>

Different problems were identified in the discourse of *The Spectator*. What these texts show is the educational gap in terms of school achievement between students of public and state schools.<sup>188</sup> "Education lets them live worthwhile human lives. Children and young people will indeed resume their classes eventually. But the loss is more than a mere percentage (about 5 per cent) of teaching foregone. Continuity, too, is important and so is the habit of study."<sup>189</sup>

#### 5.4 ECONOMIC (MATERIAL) COST

The pandemic discourse related to economic consequences of school closures is mostly visible in the English texts. The mean number of emotions per article at spectator.co.uk was 3.83, while in the Polish texts it was less than one (0.64). The discourse is dominated by sadness: 23 (PL: 13 [24%], UK: 10 [22%]).

<sup>187</sup> Dariusz CHĘTKOWSKI, "Każda szkoła ma swój sposób na koronawirusa," *Polityka*, March 11, 2020, 1.

<sup>188</sup> KIRKUP, "Why Does Labour."

<sup>189</sup> MARENBN, "The tragedy."

**Table 9.** Emotions aroused by the economic cost of school closures as represented in the media discourse of on the *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites

| Economic (material) cost |                       |    |         |    |                      |    |                   |    |            |    |         |    |                    |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----|---------|----|----------------------|----|-------------------|----|------------|----|---------|----|--------------------|
| Emotions                 | Private discourse: 36 |    |         |    | Public discourse: 60 |    |                   |    |            |    |         |    | Total              |
|                          | Children              |    | Parents |    | Teachers             |    | School principals |    | Government |    | Experts |    |                    |
|                          | PL                    | UK | PL      | UK | PL                   | UK | PL                | UK | PL         | UK | PL      | UK |                    |
| Sadness                  | 0                     | 0  | 4       | 3  | 1                    | 0  | 1                 | 0  | 0          | 1  | 7       | 6  | 23; PL:13, UK:10   |
| Fear                     | 0                     | 0  | 6       | 3  | 0                    | 0  | 2                 | 0  | 3          | 1  | 2       | 3  | 20; PL: 13, UK: 7  |
| Anger                    | 0                     | 0  | 4       | 3  | 1                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 1          | 0  | 0       | 0  | 9; PL: 6, UK: 3    |
| Worry                    | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 1  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 1          | 0  | 2       | 4  | 8; PL: 3, UK: 5    |
| Dumbing                  | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 4  | 0                    | 3  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 0       | 0  | 7; PL: 7, UK: 0    |
| Sense of guilt           | 0                     | 0  | 1       | 1  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 1  | 0       | 3  | 6; PL: 1, UK: 5    |
| Sense of privilege       | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 3       | 2  | 5; PL: 3, UK: 2    |
| Humiliation              | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 1  | 1                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 0       | 2  | 4; PL: 1, UK: 3    |
| Stuckness                | 0                     | 0  | 3       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 0       | 1  | 4; PL: 3, UK: 1    |
| Compassion               | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 1  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0          | 0  | 1       | 1  | 3; PL: 1, UK: 2    |
| Happiness                | 0                     | 0  | 1       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 2          | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3; PL: 3; UK: 0    |
| Other*                   | 0                     | 0  | 0       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 2                 | 0  | 1          | 0  | 0       | 1  | 4; PL: 3, UK: 1    |
| Total                    | 0                     | 0  | 19      | 17 | 3                    | 3  | 5                 | 0  | 8          | 3  | 15      | 23 | 96; PL: 50, UK: 46 |
| Total                    | 0                     |    | 36      |    | 6                    |    | 5                 |    | 11         |    | 38      |    | 96                 |

Source: own study.

\* Other emotions (solidarity, hope, stagnation, banality) did not appear in the research material more than 3 times.



**Table 10.** Number of emotions aroused by economic consequences found on *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites

|                 | Emotions | Articles | Emotions per article (mean) |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|
| polityka.pl     | 50       | 78       | 0.64                        |
| spectator.co.uk | 46       | 12       | 3.83                        |

Source: own study.

School closures and the need of 24/7 parental care over children determines the economic situation of families. The care benefit does not compensate for losses in salary. “It was clear a rapid class divide was emerging between middle class parents with work from home jobs for whom keeping their kids at home had little financial consequences and working class parents for whom the school hours would be a game changer when it came to going back to work.... Parents are quickly separating themselves into two camps: those who think the government is being reckless and those who worry about the economic impact of carrying on with the status quo.”<sup>190</sup> It generates a decrease in parents’ professional activity and productivity: “For parents, except the rich, the whole working from home thing will not turn out quite as planned. For the self-employed it’s especially tricky.... For most of us, there are two incompatible things happening right now: compulsory working from home and the presence in that home of children.”<sup>191</sup> It brings a decrease in workers’ time flexibility of national health service workers, coupled with massive leaves from work taken, job quitting, unemployment.<sup>192</sup> What is more, the “hot meal” campaign, directed at the poorest students, had to be cancelled at schools, not only in Poland but also in Great Britain and other countries.<sup>193</sup> “All over the world, 1.6 billion children and teenagers stopped going to school, where 25% of them could eat their main meal.”<sup>194</sup> “Some children are undoubtedly going hungry because their schools aren’t feeding them at least one meal a day.”<sup>195</sup> In April 2020 Trussell Trust provided 89% more food parcels than in the analogous period in the previous year.<sup>196</sup> The pandemic is a burden to Catholic schools in Poland and state

<sup>190</sup> ROSSITER, “Parents Deserve.”

<sup>191</sup> McDONAGH, “School closures.”

<sup>192</sup> “Covid-19 update: Only a third.”

<sup>193</sup> KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour”; “Covid-19 update: Only a third”; Anna CZARNACKA, “Wybory lokalne we Francji: niska frekwencja, wysokie ryzyko infekcji,” *Polityka*, March 15, 2020.

<sup>194</sup> Jerzy WINIECKI, “Nadmiar niedoborów.” Czy przyjdzie głód,” *Polityka*, May 3, 2020, 49.

<sup>195</sup> KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour.”

<sup>196</sup> “Covid-19 update: Lockdown.”

schools in the United Kingdom.<sup>197</sup> High costs of equipment and applications aimed at distant learning prevent the poorest children, mostly from multi-child families (PL) and state schools (85) from taking part in distant education. “It pushed the economy into a state of decay.”<sup>198</sup> It should be noted that the question of material consequences of the pandemic are raised more often by *The Spectator*.

### 5.5 EDUCATIONAL COST OF DISTANT LEARNING

Sadness is the dominant emotion (37 instances) identified in the research material, both at polityka.pl (29) and spectator.co.uk (8). It constitutes 28.7% of all the emotions in the Polish texts, and 20.5% in the English texts.

**Table 11.** Emotions aroused by the educational cost of school closures as represented in the media discourse on the *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites

| Educational cost of distant learning |                       |    |         |    |                      |    |                   |    |             |    |         |    |                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|----|---------|----|----------------------|----|-------------------|----|-------------|----|---------|----|-------------------|
| Emotions                             | Private discourse: 66 |    |         |    | Public discourse: 74 |    |                   |    |             |    |         |    | Total             |
|                                      | Children              |    | Parents |    | Teachers             |    | School principals |    | Govern-ment |    | Experts |    |                   |
|                                      | PL                    | UK | PL      | UK | PL                   | UK | PL                | UK | PL          | UK | PL      | UK |                   |
| Sadness                              | 5                     | 0  | 2       | 2  | 9                    | 0  | 2                 | 0  | 3           | 0  | 8       | 6  | 37; PL: 29; UK: 8 |
| Anger                                | 5                     | 0  | 4       | 3  | 4                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0           | 0  | 1       | 1  | 18; PL: 14; UK: 4 |
| Worry                                | 1                     | 0  | 4       | 2  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 3           | 0  | 1       | 4  | 15; PL: 9, UK: 6  |
| Fear                                 | 2                     | 0  | 3       | 3  | 2                    | 0  | 1                 | 0  | 1           | 0  | 0       | 2  | 14; PL: 9; UK: 5  |
| Compassion                           | 2                     | 0  | 1       | 2  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0           | 0  | 2       | 5  | 12; PL: 5; UK: 7  |
| Stuckness                            | 2                     | 0  | 3       | 0  | 0                    | 0  | 0                 | 0  | 0           | 0  | 2       | 0  | 7; PL: 7, UK: 0   |
| Sense of guilt                       | 1                     | 0  | 0       | 1  | 1                    | 0  | 1                 | 0  | 0           | 0  | 0       | 1  | 5; PL: 3, UK: 2   |

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Adam GRZESZAK, “Biznes w zapaści – przedsiębiorcy o tym, z czym się dziś muszą mierzyć i ile jeszcze przetrwają,” *Polityka*, April 17, 2020, 34.

|                       |    |   |    |    |    |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |                         |
|-----------------------|----|---|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|-------------------------|
| Solidarity            | 2  | 0 | 2  | 0  | 0  | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 5; PL: 4,<br>UK: 1      |
| Dumbing               | 2  | 0 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 5; PL: 4,<br>UK: 1      |
| Happiness             | 0  | 0 | 2  | 0  | 1  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 1  | 4; PL: 3;<br>UK: 1      |
| Hope                  | 1  | 0 | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 4; PL: 4,<br>UK: 0      |
| Humiliation           | 0  | 0 | 2  | 0  | 2  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 4; PL: 4,<br>UK: 0      |
| Boredom               | 3  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 3; PL: 3,<br>UK: 0      |
| Sense of<br>privilege | 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 3  | 3; PL: 0,<br>UK: 3      |
| Other<br>emotions*    | 0  | 0 | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0  | 1  | 4; PL: 3,<br>UK: 1      |
| Total                 | 26 | 0 | 26 | 14 | 22 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 14 | 24 | 140; PL: 101,<br>UK: 39 |
| Total                 | 26 |   | 40 |    | 23 |   | 4 |   | 9 |   | 38 |    | 140                     |

Source: own study.

\*Other emotions (hate, banality, stagnation) did not appear in the research material more than 3 times.

**Table 12.** Number of emotions aroused by distance learning found on the *Polityka* and *The Spectator* websites

|                 | Emotions | Articles | Emotions per article (mean) |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|
| polityka.pl     | 101      | 78       | 1.29                        |
| spectator.co.uk | 39       | 12       | 3.25                        |

Source: own study.

The mean number of emotions per article, related to educational consequences of school closures, was more than one (1.29) in the Polish texts and more than three (3.25) in the English texts.

A lack of unified guidelines, modification of schools' internal evaluation systems, growing demands, isolation, a nervous atmosphere, neglecting the needs of the disabled students all lead to reluctance, sadness, anger, and boredom on the part of students: "Many of us spend all days at home. We are presented as **brainless public enemy**."<sup>199</sup> Parents experience anger, worry

<sup>199</sup> CIEŚLA, "Czy e-nauka zda egzamin," 1.

and fear. Vocational school students have trouble in passing students' practice. Students' participation in classes decreases, there is no way to effectively measure the progress that students make. "All that was a key to success in the traditional education is useless now."<sup>200</sup> Students and parents get angry at an excess of homework, and no effects of distant learning. The authors of the report *Młodzież w czasie pandemii* (Youth in the pandemic) note that 63% of students complain about being overloaded with school material.<sup>201</sup> "Many [teachers] are physically and mentally tired by the contradictory expectations coming from students' parents, and by being neglected by the authorities."<sup>202</sup> "Some parents send **angry emails** to schoolmasters, claiming that they need to do the teaching at home", complains a teacher.<sup>203</sup> "Some students behave as if they didn't understand how much I do for them. Distant learning entails more work for me than the traditional process. It ruins my health, please respect it and appreciate my work. I do my best, work my fingers to the bone and all for nothing! **Spoilt brats! Unruly, ill-mannered!**"<sup>204</sup> The editors of *The Spectator* write mostly about "summer learning loss" and "the way long holidays can widen educational gaps between rich and poor."<sup>205</sup> Researchers from the Institute of Education at University College London observed that there is a substantial difference when it comes to the amount of homework assignments that children are supposed to do at home during the lockdown and the workload of online lessons. On average, children spend 2.5 hours a day on homework (however, 17% of them spend more than four hours a day on homework, 20% less than an hour, and some of them do not do homework at all. 31% of private schools provides four or more online lessons a day, while 71% of state schools provides less than an hour's share of classes a day.<sup>206</sup> The *Polityka* articles draw the readers' attention to the issue of an excessive workload of homework assignments, while the English articles highlight fear and worry connected to an excess of online classes.

A lack of necessary facilities and infrastructure, both on the students' and schools' side (no access to the internet, no equipment), technical problems, low streaming quality contribute to the emotions of sadness and fear, usually

<sup>200</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, "Polska szkoła," 1.

<sup>201</sup> CIEŚLA, "Źle się, starzy, bawicie," 15.

<sup>202</sup> CIEŚLA, "Koniec szkoły," 36.

<sup>203</sup> CIEŚLA, "Czy e-nauka zda egzamin," 1.

<sup>204</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, "Polska szkoła," 1.

<sup>205</sup> KIRKUP, "Why Does Labour."

<sup>206</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, "Odwołanie zajęć," 1.

combined, experienced by students in Poland. “How to support when there is no equipment?”<sup>207</sup> “According to the Ministry of Education, computers should be provided by self-governments, whose budgets have been cut by the government.”<sup>208</sup> Many students were deprived of a chance for distant learning, especially from poorer backgrounds in Poland,<sup>209</sup> and state schools in Great Britain.<sup>210</sup> Only one third of school children have taken part in any online lessons since the lockdown began.<sup>211</sup> In Great Britain, 20% of school pupils who are entitled to free school meals do not have a computer at home.<sup>212</sup> Sadness was also generated by teachers not being trained and prepared to teach online (according to a survey by Centrum Cyfrowe, 85% of the teachers did not have any experience with distant education before the pandemic<sup>213</sup>), as well as their low involvement in the online process (“mostly in the form of guidelines concerning what to study or in the form of exercises sent through the electronic register or by email”;<sup>214</sup> a teacher instructs: “watch the YouTube video, do the quiz and send a picture on my email; another states that he won’t be teaching through the Librus platform, another shares files via Google drive, some want the files to be sent back in .doc, some in .txt, yet others want the files as MMS”;<sup>215</sup> no lessons provided: “My son did not attend any single distant lesson.”<sup>216</sup> Of essence is also failure to take into account of students’ psychological needs, who, more than ever, need support and understanding. Sadness is also caused by a lack of unified system of work, no funds to purchase necessary equipment, software, e.g. access to e-platforms, no online trainings for teachers. “The system (with a few exceptions) proved to be ineffective.”<sup>217</sup> In Britain, sadness is caused by state school students having no access to the equipment/laptops.<sup>218</sup> According to an expert: “Illusionary distant learning, imposed on the Polish stu-

<sup>207</sup> CIEŚLA, “Lekcje na odległość,” 15.

<sup>208</sup> CIEŚLA, “Czy e-nauka zda egzamin,” 1; Anna DĄBROWSKA, Agnieszka ZAGNER, and Zbigniew PENDEL, “W sklepach nie ma Armagedonu,” *Polityka*, March 14, 2020.

<sup>209</sup> CIEŚLA, “Żłobki otwarte,” 1.

<sup>210</sup> “Covid-19 Update.”

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> CLARK, “What School Closures Are Doing.”

<sup>213</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec,” 36.

<sup>214</sup> CIEŚLA, “Lekcje,” 15; “Covid-19 Update: Measuring the Damage.”

<sup>215</sup> CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” *Polityka*, May 26, 2020, 15.

<sup>216</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec szkoły,” 36.

<sup>217</sup> CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” 15.

<sup>218</sup> KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour.”

dents, exists only in the propaganda reality.<sup>219</sup> Teachers do not get the hang of the internet and computer software. It was witnessed by students, for whom these things are a piece of cake.”<sup>220</sup> The clearest message, in the context of the pandemic, coming from distant learning is a chaotic process of digitisation.<sup>221</sup>

According to the decree by the Ministry of Education, schooling was supposed to temporarily take place at home, with “teachers in charge of the process.”<sup>222</sup> Distant learning generates new tasks for parents: on the one hand they take over the role of teachers, on the other hand, they take over the role of students. Both children and parents are overloaded with homework, “exhausted by distant learning.” The burden of distant learning is experienced more heavily by women, especially single mothers, who take over educational duties. “90% of women and less than 66% of men spend at least one hour of their time on taking care of children or their education. 43% of women and 6% of men are involved in doing homework with their kids.”<sup>223</sup> The quality of distant learning, especially in the lower grades of primary school, depends on how much parents care, no matter if they are away at work, if they work at home, or if they benefit from care allowance or they are basically absent.<sup>224</sup> School closure cannot flatten social injustices. Parents need to juggle their professional duties with something that can be called: “unplanned experiment on massive home education. It is a challenge not only to take care of children participating in online lessons but also to plan a day.”<sup>225</sup> Hence, any hints of announcements that distant learning will be continued in September triggered a series of questions coming from teachers and parents: “How is it going to work with the 1st graders? How can you teach them to write online?”<sup>226</sup> How to teach the youngest ones?”<sup>227</sup> Simultaneously, “private schools managed well to meet this challenge,”<sup>228</sup>

<sup>219</sup> Juliusz ĆWIELUCH, “Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz: Jedziemy z PiS na ścianę,” *Polityka*, May 23, 2020, 25.

<sup>220</sup> CIEŚLA, “Źle się, starzy, bawicie,” 15; “Kwarantanna, kontrole na granicach, odwołane imprezy,” *Polityka*, March 10, 2020.

<sup>221</sup> CIEŚLA, “Lekcje na odległość,” 15.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Aleksandra POLAK, “Dlaczego skutki pandemii mocniej uderzają w kobiety,” *Polityka*, April 14, 2020, 1.

<sup>224</sup> CIEŚLA, “Lekcje na odległość,” 15.

<sup>225</sup> SZCZERBIAK, “Szkoly zamknięte,” 1; KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour.”

<sup>226</sup> CIEŚLA, “Koniec,” 36.

<sup>227</sup> KIRKUP, “Why Does Labour.”

<sup>228</sup> CIEŚLA, “Lekcje na odległość,” 15.

both in Poland and in the UK. “Well-resourced private schools have comprehensive week-long plans and even an 8.30 a.m. virtual roll-call with punishments for lateness. According to the Trust, between 51 per cent and 57 per cent of private pupils have accessed online lessons every day “compared to just 19 per cent of state primary and 22 per cent of state secondary students.”<sup>229</sup>

In both countries there is a heated debate on “examinations”, their forms, dates, or abandoning them altogether. “It was precipitately decided to abandon GCSEs and A-levels and rely on teacher assessments instead.... The worst case, however—and unfortunately, perhaps the most likely one—is that traditional, written, externally set, marked and moderated public examinations will disappear for ever.”<sup>230</sup>

Single cases of happiness in Poland were identified in the context of students receiving mental support from their teachers<sup>231</sup> or jokes such as “Help! The chemistry teacher wants me to report via Messenger,”<sup>232</sup> or a school certificate being given to “masters of online education”.<sup>233</sup> According to some teachers, “distant learning is even more effective than the traditional one, if only because students don’t talk in class.”<sup>234</sup> According to British researchers, a source of happiness for students could be the abandoning of examinations: “Many would be happy if Covid-19 and its disruptions provide an excuse to do away with them.”<sup>235</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

In the studied texts, there are at least three possible source levels of information about emotions experienced by members of the research groups: the characters in the article (the perspective/interpretation of the sender), author/editor of the article, who interprets the characters’ emotions (the perspective/interpretation of the gate-keeper), and the reader (the perspective/interpretation of the addressee).

<sup>229</sup> “Covid-19 Update: Only a Third.”

<sup>230</sup> MARENBN, “The tragedy.”

<sup>231</sup> CHĘTKOWSKI, “Polska szkoła,” 1.

<sup>232</sup> Cieśla, “Lekcje na odległość,” 15.

<sup>233</sup> CHACIŃSKI, “Korona na języku,” 1.

<sup>234</sup> Agnieszka SOWA and Cezary KOWANDA, “Jak wygląda zdalna praca,” *Polityka*, March 25, 2020, 18.

<sup>235</sup> MARENBN, “The Tragedy.”

On the abovementioned levels, emotions can result from: 1) their direct naming, labelling; the least frequent strategy in the analysed material; 2) subjective interpretation of a given situation, often based on the previous experience, and 3) situational context (contextual emotions), the most frequent strategy in the analysed material, and 4) verbal description of non-verbal behaviour and physiological reactions of the organism. The first option provides a reliable and object research material, not being subject to readers' evaluation, even though it can be a manifestation of the sender's subjective feelings as the one who experienced a given emotion. The second option may be problematic due to the degree of authors' identification with the emotion expressed by them. Some emotions can be deeply rooted in cultural environment. They exist on the spur of the moment, as an impulse in a given situation. The third option is based in the previous experience, stereotypes, educational habits concerning the media. Finally, the fourth and the least common one, is based on cultural interpretations.

The articles published at [polityka.pl](http://polityka.pl) usually presented one dominant emotion, which entailed analogous opinions on school closures. Such an emotion imposed a type and range of the media discourse, and the other way round. The articles published at [spectator.co.uk](http://spectator.co.uk) present many instances of emotions, they include discussions related to the scale, evaluation, and overlapping of emotions. Each of the emotions is treated separately, with secondary emotions, the so-called background emotions, being taken into account. Even though the expressed emotion is a result but also a manifestation of subjective feelings and ideas, it is typical of a given research group (e.g. teachers—anger, parents—fear). Sometimes different groups express the same emotions in relation to a given issue. The emotion is conditioned by a group's level of safety and social role in the educational system.

The analysis of the research material shows that the dominant emotion identified in the pandemic discourse of *Polityka* and *The Spectator* was sadness.



**Table 13.** Dominant emotions in the pandemic discourse of *Polityka* and *The Spectator*

| Dominant emotions in the pandemic discourse                        |                        |                        |                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Themes                                                             | <i>Polityka</i>        | <i>The Spectator</i>   | <b>EDUCATION<br/>SADNESS</b> |
| Media phenomena: school closures                                   | <b>Fear</b>            | <b>Fear</b>            |                              |
| New education practices—distant learning                           | Sadness                | Sadness/compassion     |                              |
| New phenomena—consequences<br>Exception: health consequences—fear. | Sadness<br><b>Fear</b> | Sadness<br><b>Fear</b> |                              |

Source: own study.

The dominant emotion is dependent in the thematic threads picked up by the portals.

- **School closures, presented as a media phenomenon in the pandemic discourse as presented in both portals, generate mostly the emotion of fear** (*Polityka*: 42; *The Spectator*: 19). It constitutes 28% of all the emotions identified in the Polish texts, and 24% in the English texts. Similarly, fear (PL: 24, UK: 19) dominates in the public-private discourse (104) and public discourse (124), which conforms the hypothesis of *culture of fear* present during the COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, it should be noted that fear is the main emotion present among government representatives (PL: 14 out of 30, UK: 3 out of 8), parents (PL: 8 out of 40, UK: 6 out of 31), experts (PL: 6 out of 16, UK: 7 out of 29) and teachers (PL: 6 out of 16; UK: 2 out of 5), constituting over a third (38%) of all the emotions identified in the texts published by *Polityka* and *The Spectator*.

- **New phenomena: consequences/costs of school closures.** Sadness dominates the emotion-ridden pandemic discourse related to the consequences of school closures, as presented by *Polityka* and *The Spectator*. The dominant emotion is shaped by the consequences of the pandemic. Sadness is the most frequent social and cultural consequence as presented by both portals. Health consequences (least frequently presented in the pandemic discourse) generate the emotion of worry and concern in Poland, and sadness in the UK. Sadness also dominated the *Polityka* discourse, while worry and concern dominated *The Spectator* discourse in relation to educational and ethical consequences of the coronavirus. Sadness, combined with fear, permeates the pandemic discourse in Poland in relation to economic consequences of the virus. The obtained results confirmed our hypothesis.

• **Distant learning as new educational practices.** The hypothesis considering fear as the most dominant emotion of the COVID-19 pandemic was not confirmed in the media discourse related to distant learning. It is sadness that dominates in the texts published at *polityka.pl* (29 instances in 78 texts). It is sadness and compassion that dominates in the texts published at *spectator.co.uk* (8 instances in 12 texts).

Below I present a table summarising the dominant emotions in the area of education, as identified in the analysed web portals.

**Table 14.** Three dominant emotions in the media discourse on the *Polityka* and *Spectator* websites relative to education

| Three dominant emotions in the pandemic discourse     |                          |                  |                                         |                                |                                 |                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Education                                             | <i>Polityka</i>          |                  |                                         | <i>The Spectator</i>           |                                 |                                              |
|                                                       | 1.                       | 2.               | 3.                                      | 1.                             | 2.                              | 3.                                           |
| Media phenomenon: school closures                     |                          |                  |                                         |                                |                                 |                                              |
| School closures                                       | <b>Fear</b>              | Sadness          | Care                                    | <b>Fear</b>                    | Sadness                         | Dumbing                                      |
| New phenomena: new consequences                       |                          |                  |                                         |                                |                                 |                                              |
| Social and cultural                                   | <b>Sadness</b>           | Fear             | Anger                                   | <b>Sadness</b>                 | Fear                            | Care                                         |
| Health (mental health)                                | Care                     | Fear/<br>sadness | Stagnation/<br>compassion/<br>stuckness | Fear                           | Care/<br>sadness/<br>stagnation | Anger                                        |
| Educational and ethical                               | <b>Sadness</b>           | Fear             | Anger                                   | <b>Care</b>                    | Fear                            | Sense of guilt/<br>neighbourly<br>solidarity |
| Economic (material)                                   | <b>Fear/<br/>sadness</b> | Stuckness        | Anger                                   | <b>Sadness</b>                 | Fear                            | Care/<br>sense of guilt                      |
| New forms of teaching and learning: distant education |                          |                  |                                         |                                |                                 |                                              |
| Educational: distant learning                         | <b>Sadness</b>           | Anger            | Care/<br>fear                           | <b>Sadness/<br/>compassion</b> | Care                            | Fear                                         |

Source: own study.

In the domain of education, concerns of the Polish journalists connected with school closures proved to be greater than the negative experience of distant learning. The British press noted an opposite tendency: fear was mostly generated by the perspective of distant learning, or rather the lack

thereof and its uncertain efficiency. Unpleasant mental phenomena (e.g. paralysis, uncertainty, fear, anxiety), and unpleasant somatic reactions (e.g. shivering, heart pounding) were most commonly experienced by parents (the private sphere). Fear performed a negative function, related to unpleasant bodily reactions, and a demotivating function, encouraging irrational actions and ending up in paralysis, mostly on the parents' part. The positive function of fear reduced it to a warning against a threat, which helps to take certain actions, on the part of the government, school masters, aiming at health safety (in the public sphere). Anger performed a constructive, positive function, mostly in the public sphere, for example, helping the teachers and experts to understand school masters' decisions.

What is important, separation of particular emotions for the analytical purposes did not mean that they appeared separately in the research material. For instance, fear was accompanied by the emotions of terror, anxiety, guilt. Anger was accompanied by wrath, fury, irritation, hatred; sadness was accompanied by depression, grief, boredom; joy was accompanied by satisfaction, happiness, hope, pride.

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## EMOTIONS AND EDUCATION.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS IN THE DISCOURSE ON SCHOOL CLOSURES  
IN POLISH AND BRITISH INTERNET PORTALS

## Summary

The aim of the article is to present the representations of emotions (happiness, anger, sadness, fear, worry, stuckness, compassion, dumbing, stagnation, humiliation, sense of guilt, hope, hate, sense of privilege solidarity, boredom, banality), neighbourly solidarity in the texts of the opinion-forming portals *Polityka* (PL) and *The Spectator* (UK), referring to school closures due to the



Covid-19 pandemic, and their media representations in the public (the perspective of a teacher, school headmaster, member of the government, expert) and private domain (the perspective of a student and parent), in the processual approach (a catalogue of events), in the context of technological changes (distant learning), as well as socio-cultural (human relationships, domestic violence) and economic (social benefits) contexts.

Our hypothesis is that, in line with the concept of the culture of fear by Frank Furedi, the way the internet content is created and construed is supposed to evoke the emotion of fear. We performed a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the content of 78 articles published in *Polityka* and 12 in *The Spectator*, between 1 March 2020 and 30 July 2020, found with the use of a search engine.

We observed at least three levels of information sources on emotions in the studied groups: the main character of the article, the one who experiences emotions (perspective of the sender); the author/editor of the article, who does evaluation and interpretation (perspective of the gatekeeper) and the reader (perspective of the addressee). On these levels, emotions can result from their literal identification; from an interpretation of a given situation, from the situational context (contextual emotions) and from the non-verbal clues and physical reactions of the organism.

The hypothesis was partially confirmed. Despite the fact the school closures, as represented by the media, generates mostly the emotion of fear, the emotion prevalent in the discourse on the consequences of school closures and on the evaluation of remote education is sadness (*Polityka*) and compassion (*The Spectator*). However, the dominant emotion, both in the public-private and public domain, is the one of sadness.

**Keywords:** emotions; education; COVID-19; pandemic; closure of schools; remote learning.

#### EMOCJE I EDUKACJA. MEDIATYZACJA EMOCJI W DYSKURSIE O ZAMKNIĘCIU SZKÓŁ W POLSKICH I BRYTYJSKICH PORTALACH INTERNETOWYCH

##### Streszczenie

Celem artykułu było przedstawienie wyników badań dotyczących sposobów prezentacji emocji (radość, złość, smutek, strach, troska, współczucie, ośpienie, stagnacja, upokorzenie, poczucie winy, nadzieja, nienawiść, solidarność sąsiedzka, nuda, banalność) w materiałach tekstowych portalu opiniotwórczego *Polityka* (PL) i *The Spectator* (UK), odnoszących się do zamknięcia szkół z powodu pandemii COVID-19 – i ich mediatyzacji w życiu publicznym (perspektywa nauczyciela, dyrektora szkoły, przedstawiciela rządu, eksperta), i prywatnym (perspektywa ucznia i rodzica), w ujęciu procesualnym (katalog wydarzeń), w kontekście przeobrażeń technologicznych (zdalne nauczanie), społeczno-kulturowych (relacje międzyludzkie, przemoc domowa) oraz ekonomicznych (zasilek opiekuńczy).

Przyjęto hipotezę, iż zgodnie z koncepcją *kultury strachu* Franka Furediego sposób formułowania i konstruowania materiałów internetowych ma wzbudzać przede wszystkim emocję strachu. Dokonano ilościowej i jakościowej analizy treści 78 artykułów zamieszczanych na *polityka.pl* i 12 na *spectator.co.uk*, w okresie od 1.03 do 30.07.2020 r. wyszukanych przy pomocy słów-kluczy.

Zauważa się co najmniej trzy poziomy źródła informacji o emocjach przeżywanych przez przedstawicieli badanych grup: osoba doświadczająca emocji, bohater artykułu (perspektywa nadawcy); autor/redaktor artykułu, dokonujący oceny i interpretacji (perspektywa *gate-keepera*) oraz czytelnik (perspektywa odbiorcy). Na wyróżnionych poziomach emocje mogą wynikać z do-

słownego ich nazwania; interpretacji danej sytuacji, kontekstu sytuacyjnego (emocje kontekstowe) oraz z opisu komunikatów niewerbalnych i reakcji fizycznych organizmu.

Hipoteza została częściowo potwierdzona. Chociaż zamknięcie szkół jako wydarzenie medialne w dyskursach pandemicznych obu analizowanych portali generuje przede wszystkim emocję strachu to w dyskursie odnoszącym się do konsekwencji decyzji o zamknięciu szkół oraz ocen zdalnego nauczania przeważa smutek (w *Polityce*) i współczucie (w *The Spectator*). Zarówno w sferze publiczno-prywatnej, jak i publicznej dominuje emocja smutku (48 wobec 98).

**Słowa kluczowe:** emocje; edukacja; COVID-19; pandemia; zamknięcie szkół; nauczanie zdalne.