AGNIESZKA WOYNAROWSKA
University of Gdańsk

The meanings of intellectual disability in the Internet users' discourse[1]

ABSTRACT: Agnieszka Woynarowska, *The meanings of intellectual disability in the Internet users' discourse,* Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 22, Poznań 2018. Pp. 259–287. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14746/ikps.2018.22.15

In the following article, the author presents an analysis of meanings projected onto intellectual disabilities by the Internet users by referring to the cultural model of disability, the theory of social constructivism, as well as, to the post-structuralist discourse theories. In accordance with the cultural model of the disability theory, the author perceives intellectual disability as generated by social practices, and as a "product" of discourse. A discourse understood as a "system of statements" and as a practice that shapes the subjects which it refers to. From this perspective, the intellectual disability is perceived as a phenomenon created by its continuing interpretations. By applying the critical discourse analysis, the article presents an answer to the question: how is intellectual disability defined and interpreted within the Internet users' discourse, what meanings are projected onto intellectual disability by the network users? The presented means of comprehending and perceiving intellectual disability, its revealed meanings included in the Internet user's discourse determine the contemporary assortment of practices regarding how society responds to otherness.

KEY WORDS: meanings of intellectual disability, discourse, social constructivism, cultural model of disability

_____

[1] This text includes a part of studies, meanings of intellectual disability in the online space, which were published in full in the book: *Experiences of Disability in Meeting Spaces (Doświadczenia niepełnosprawności w przestrzeniach spotkania)*, J. Belzyt, J. Doroszuk, A. Woynarowska. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Katedra, Gdańsk 2015.

Disability comprises an inseparable element of human existence. Very differently experienced, perceived and felt, it has ceased to be an element of individual experience or personal tragedy and became a phenomenon inseparably consistent with social reality and given culture. Disability constitutes a permanent element of social scenery and its presence in the culture and social life determined by the norm-centred discourse, forces members of a given group to take some standpoint. Recognising disability as "a social fact"[2] requires a given community to establish social mechanisms of dealing with this fact. Groups of disabled persons emancipating themselves and environments of disabled persons aware of own rights fight for the opportunity to fulfil the idea of an independent life. Nowadays, social media give a chance of swift unification and joining forces. Appearing initiatives and social movements: Chcemy całego życia (We want a whole life), Komitet Społeczny #Jesteśmy (#WeAre Social Committee), Rodzice osób niepełnosprawnych (Parents of the Disabled), Koalicja 21 (Coalition 21) or Autyzm Polska (Autism Poland) constitute a group putting pressure on decision makers and demand an actual, not apparent, exercise of rights included in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The disabled fight for a voice that would be meaningful in the public discourse, validating their alternative versions of reality and alternative manners of existence. Currently, we witness such activity, a kind of civil rebellion of parents of disabled adult children, who are incapable of independent existence, whose voice has remained unnoticed and unheard. The sit-in protest at the Seym of the Republic of Poland is aimed at increasing funds on rehabilitation and existence, but predominantly demonstrates the situation of living with disabilities to the citizens of our country. Heated discussions in the media, online[3] reminded abled citizens of our country of the exist-

---

[2] See: A. Gustavsson, E. Zakrzewska-Manterys, *Disability in Social Reflection (Upośledzenie w społecznym zwierciadle)*, Wydawnictwo Żak, Warsaw 1997.

[3] Currently, in the online space, in social media, there is a heated discussion regarding the protest of parents of disabled children. The majority of commenters support the protest. The value added of the protest comprises media interest in the

ence of disability and forced them to take a relevant standpoint. Once again one can ask a question, what "an ordinary citizen" knows about disability, how do they understand it and what kind of meaning do they associate therewith?

Studies presented herein were inspired by my long-lasting fascination with studies on the discourse perceived in the perspective of linguistic and social practice. Practice, which orders the world, constructs social reality and shapes the subject it discusses. Practice, which is a tool of constraint, exclusion or emancipation. The studies were inspired by texts on the intellectual disability, which I, as "an ordinary citizen", found on the Internet and in which I, as a researcher, discovered a variety of clashing meanings in the discourse of the Internet users commenting thereon, providing information on the contemporary understanding of the phenomenon of intellectual disability.

Meanings, language and discourse. Intellectual disability as a creation of cultural practices

The social world both, real and cyber, is continuously filled with meetings, experiences and meanings. Meanings, that is, linguistic interpretations with which we give sense to everything that surrounds us and due to which we reconstruct experiences and express thoughts. The theory of social constructionism assumes that the social world is created during its continuous interpretations. Social reality has a value of reality only so far as it is equipped with meanings.[4] According to the conception of P. Berger and T. Luckmann,

───────────────

fate, life and existence of the disabled, as well as appearance therein of a public/virtual discourse of many reports and voices of the disabled themselves. Their silence has been broken. The debate over the protest transformed into a debate over disability. The situation and the discourse of the protest of parents of the disabled happening in the social media space shall constitute a subject of studies and analyses in another text.

[4] J. Niżnik, *Foreword (Słowo wstępne)*, [in:] P. Berger, T. Luckmann, *Social Establishment of Reality (Społeczne tworzenie rzeczywistości)*. Warsaw. PIW 2010, p. XVI.

solely in those meanings and through the agency thereof the social reality can exist. Specific phenomena can be perceived as processes, facts and relations solely so far as they obtain meaning, some symbolic content. A human functions in their own world by referring to what they know about this world, therefore, by referring to their knowledge. Boundaries of their knowledge constitute, in practical sense, boundaries of their reality.[5] In terms of this theory authors assume that language is the most important system of signs in human society. Language originates from direct contacts, yet, it can be easily separated therefrom, generated knowledge is constructed during language negotiations, by evaluating and correcting own judgements and mutually negotiating meanings. The identity and personality are socially constructed.[6] Language typifies experiences and allows implementing them into broader categories, and, as a result, they have meaning not only for an individual, but also for other persons. With this typification, experiences gain anonymity, since a typified experience can be repeated by anyone, who fits into a given category.[7] Through the agency of language, one can refer to the whole world at any time and exceed the reality of everyday life. Any important part of language that joins various spheres of reality can be recognised as a symbol.[8] Furthermore, language creates semantic fields, that is, spheres of meanings, the scope of which is limited linguistically. A social knowledge is created, which is passed on from generation to generation and which is available to an individual in everyday life.[9] People live in common everyday life world equipped with specific knowledge and they know that others share at least some of this knowledge.[10] In G.H. Mead's opinion,

_____

[5] Ibidem, p. XVII.

[6] L. Miś, *Constructivism, Constructionism in Sociology, Social Work, Therapy. (Konstruktywizm, konstrukcjonizm w socjologii, pracy socjalnej, terapii.)* Zeszyty Pracy Socjalnej 14/2008, pp. 27–47.

[7] P. Berger, T. Luckmann, *Social Establishment of Reality (Społeczne tworzenie rzeczywistości)*. Warsaw. PIW 2010, pp. 55–57.

[8] Ibidem, p. 59.

[9] Ibidem, p. 60.

[10] Ibidem, p. 61.

due to language we become self-aware and thus, we have a sense of own individuality and can look at ourselves from the outside, the way others see us. A key element of this process comprises a symbol. A symbol is something that replaces something else. According to Mead, people in their interactions use common symbols and meanings.[11] In terms of Gadamer's idea, a human belongs to the language. The language describes and decodes us in any communicative event, reveals the manner of our private or environmental experience of the world. Each understanding has, in fact, a character of a linguistic event.[12] As written by Gadamer, rather everything what is reflects in the language. Something that cannot be met anywhere else, since this something is us, appears in the language and only therein. Finally, language is not a mirror at all. What we notice therein, does not reflect our being or not being in general, however, it comprises an interpretation and feeling what is happening with us, as in real dependencies of work and rule, as in everything else which our world consists of.[13]

Language, interaction or communication are sometimes determined as a discourse.[14] Discourse constitutes a communicative activity, in which meanings are continuously constructed. As written by A. Duszak, a user and a text as a process, dynamic act of creating and interpreting meanings in context, occur in the centre of interest"[15]. Communicative practices are usually related with negotiations and compromises which constitute a result of requirements of the current context and more general social and cultural principles. In the discourse, the power of a group can either be undermined or respected. Social norms can be creatively modified or overcome and such communicative "disruptions" can contribute to the establish-

––––––––––––

[11] A. Giddens, *Sociology (Socjologia)*. Warsaw 2005, p. 42.

[12] H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method (Prawda i metoda)*, translated by B. Baran, Krakow 1993, "Inter Esse", p. 88.

[13] Ibidem, p. 88.

[14] See: T.A. van Dijk, *Discourse as Structure and Process (Dyskurs jako struktura i proces)*, translated by G. Grochowski, Warsaw 2001.

[15] A. Duszak, *Text, Discourse, Intercultural Communication (Tekst, dyskurs, komunikacja międzykulturowa)*. Warszawa 1997, p. 28.

ment of a new social order.[16] The discourse can be understood as a system of knowledge, which constructs the reality surrounding us and gives sense to everything surrounding us. N. Fairclough perceives discourse as varied manners of representing various aspects of the world: processes, relations and structures of material world, mental world: thoughts, feelings, believes, as well as social world.[17] T. van Dijk believes that discourse can be described in categories of social activities performed by users of languages, who communicate between themselves in various situations and within a specific society and a given culture.[18] On the other hand, M. Foucault perceives discourse as "a system of human statements", as a practice shaping objects discussed by the discourse. It is a system of knowledge, competences and/or thoughts, which is embodied within social practices having a given place in the real world. [19] Poststructuralism, as stated by Z. Melosik, "gives priority to the theory of discourse as a method of analysing social reality. Discourses are treated as socially constructed "systematic arrangements of relations" within which ideas, statements, practices and institutions obtain a new meaning and their own "reality". We do not speak through discourses, the discourses speak through us. Therefore, discourses "stabilize" continuous inflow of phenomena and impressions in "selectively recognisable forms". They stipulate assumptions concerning the image the reality wants to adopt in order to "be a reality and determine the manners of studying thereof, as well as standards of truth and falsehood. Thus, discourses "put the world in order".[20] Furthermore, as Z. Melosik continues, "therefore, the aim of

---

[16] See: T.A. van Dijk, *Discourse as Structure and Process (Dyskurs jako struktura i proces)*, Warsaw 2001.

[17] N. Fairclough, *Analyzing Discourse. Textual Analysis for Social Research*, London and New York, 2004, p. 124.

[18] T. van Dijk, *Discourse as Structure and Process (Dyskurs jako struktura i proces)*, PWN, Warsaw 2001, pp. 9–10.

[19] M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge (Archeologia wiedzy)*, translated by A. Siemek, PIW, Warsaw 1977, p. 10.

[20] Z. Melosik, *Poststructuralism and Society (Reflections on the M. Foucault's Theory) (Poststrukturalizm i społeczeństwo (refleksje nad teorią M. Foucaulta))*, [in:] *Education*

the discursive practice is to obtain power over meanings (and replacing certain "speakers" with others), and each discourse participates in the fight for validation in the society of stipulated "versions of reality" at a cost of alternative versions. Such validation constitutes "an operation of closing", protects certain interpretations and marginalises and forces others to keep silence with social sanctions. Thus, metanarratives are determined, through which the society live; whereas, alternative versions of reality are repressed. Alternative "versions of reality" are delegitimized by excluding discursive practices constructing them.[21]

In 1994, Tom Shakespeare called for paying more attention to cultural representations of the disabled. Inspired with feminist debates, he discussed various theoretical approaches and suggested that "the disabled are objectified by cultural representations". As cultural representations he understood theatre, literature, pictures, films and media.[22] In the following years, scientists in the Anglo-Saxon world such, as: R. Garland-Thomson, R. McRuer, D.T. Mitchell and S.L. Snyder, T. Siebers[23] published a wide assortment of cultural and literary analyses presenting the effect of perceiving "disability as a source of culture". In 2006 S. Snyder and D. Mitchell introduced the conception of "cultural model of disability". In their assumptions "the cultural model ensures fuller conception than the social model, in which "disability" means only discriminating meetings. Defining the cultural model allows theorising a political act of change, which stipulates disability as a place of resistance and

_____

and Social Change (Edukacja wobec zmiany społecznej), ed. J. Brzeziński, L. Witkowski, Poznan–Toruń 1994, p. 200.

[21] Ibidem, p. 203.

[22] T. Shakespeare, *Cultural Representation of Disabled People: Dustbins for Disavowal?*, Disability & Society 9.3 (1994), pp. 283–299

[23] See: Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. Columbia University Press. 1997; Sharon L. Snyder, David T. Mitchell, *Cultural Locations of Disability*, Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 2006; Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability (Cultural Front)*. New York University Press, 2006; Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory (Corporealities: Discourses Of Disability)*, University of Michigan Press, 2008.

a source of previously suppressed culture"[24]. Moreover, in Snyder's and Mitchell's perspective, the approach based on the cultural model has a tendency to recognise the identity and body as constructed.[25] A. Waldschmit referring to the Anglo-Saxon conception of a cultural model of disability draws attention to the fact that in the perspective of this model, the disability is not perceived through the prism of a single fate, as in the individualistic-reductionist model of disability. It is also not a regular effect of discrimination and exclusion as in the social model. On the contrary, the cultural model questions the other side, commonly not threatened "normality" and studies, how practices of (de-)normalisation lead to the social category that has been called "disability".[26] As further explained by this author, the cultural model of disability should not treat disability as an unequivocal category of pathological classification, which automatically, in a form of causal link, causes social discrimination. On the contrary, this model takes into consideration disability and normality as effects generated by academic knowledge, media and daily discourses. [27]In each culture, in a given moment, such classifications depend on structures of power and historical situation, are dependent and determined by hegemonic discourses. In short, the cultural model recognises disability not as a given individual or fact, but describes it as a discourse or process, experience, situation or event. Both, disability and ability refer to dominant symbolic orders and institutional practices of creating normality and deviation, known and unknown. By assuming a constructivism and discursive character of the disability, the following factors can be taken into consideration: the historical and cultural perspective of creating processes of inclusion and exclusion, stigma, as well as socio-cultural models of experiencing and identity, creating meanings and

_____

[24] Sharon L. Snyder, David T. Mitchell, *Cultural Locations of Disability*, Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 2006, p. 10, own translation.

[25] Ibidem, p. 10.

[26] A. Waldschmit, *Disability Goes Cultural*, [in:] *Culture-Disability-Theory*. ed. A. Waldschmit, H. Berressem, M. Ingwersem. Bielefeld, 2017, p. 22, own translation

[27] Ibidem, p. 24.

social practices, power and resistance.[28] Whereas, B. Borowska-Beszta states that "the cultural model of disability in its broadest sense covers particular cultures of disability".[29]

The cultural model of disability describes the intellectual disability as a product of cultural practices[30], as a socially and discursively constructed phenomenon. While considering the intellectual disability in the perspective of a cultural model and social constructionism, one can recognise it as a certain social construct and a product of meanings created within social relations, dependent on people's knowledge and experiences, and context.[31] Whereas, with regard to the conception of symbolic interactionism, as was already noticed in 1997 by A. Gustavsson and E. Zakrzewska-Manterys, disability is also defined by reference to the meaning we attribute to various forms of physical or mental deviations.[32] As written by A. Gustavsson, there are many evidences that everyday life of the disabled depends on the meanings other attribute to their disability.[33] In terms of the aforementioned definitions of discourse and in the perspective of a cultural model of disability, I deem the intellectual disability as a social phenomenon defined, interpreted and constructed in discourses, in a specific manner of using the language and speaking thereof. Generated disability discourse forwards various ideas, beliefs and meanings constituting grounds for relevant social practice. Situations are defined and interpreted through the

---

[28] Ibidem, p. 23.

[29] B. Borowska-Beszta, *Disability in Cultural and Theoretic Contexts (Niepełnosprawność w kontekstach kulturowych i teoretycznych)*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, Krakow 2012.

[30] D. Goodley, *Disability Studies. An Interdisciplinary Introduction. Sage Publication*s. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi 2017, own translation.

[31] T. Żółkowska, *Social (De)valorisation of the Role of A Disabled Person (Społeczna (de)waloryzacja roli osoby niepełnosprawnej)*, [in:] *The Disabled in the Public Space Reserve (Człowiek z niepełnosprawnością w rezerwacie przestrzeni publicznej)*, ed. Z. Gajdzica, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, Krakow 2013, p. 40.

[32] A. Gustavsson, E. Zakrzewska-Manterys, *Disability in Social Reflection (Upośledzenie w społecznym zwierciadle)*, Żak, Warsaw 1997, p. 12.

[33] Ibidem, p. 116.

agency of a specific understanding presented in meanings or recognition of intellectual disability. During the communication process of persons discussing this issue, we deal with not only an exchange of communications and negation of meanings, but also with partners influencing each other in the discussion to undermine mutual beliefs. Deconstruction of those meanings, disclosure of dominant ideologies and social practices constitute areas of studies most frequently conducted in the area of the cultural disability model.

The Internet as a space for social communication, exchanging and constructing meanings

The Internet has become a part of life of contemporary communities and it could be stated that it is a parallel space, where human communities live an alternative life. The Internet has opened a new dimension of human co-being, cyberspace or cyber world dimension, which is created by all users thereof. Due to the developing technology, communication via the Internet has been increasingly common. Moreover, the Internet globalised communication allowing users around the world to communicate with each other. W. Gustowski defines the Internet as a multimedia and global communication channel enabling bilateral communication, used for sending image, sound and text, as well as a new society existing in the virtual space[34].

The network constitutes means of communication and producing knowledge, which is nowadays a parallel cyberspace, where social life takes place. As summarised by B. Aouil, the Internet is characterised and distinguished with the possibility of bilateral communication, swiftness and ease of exchanging and sending information. The Internet is a community with which, through the agency of tools thereof, it is possible to communicate, process in-

---

[34] W. Gustowski, *Communication in Social Media (Komunikacja w mediach społecznościowych),* Wydawnictwo NOVAERES, Gdynia 2012, p. 31.

formation without losing value thereof and gain access thereto irrespectively of living conditions and cultural differences[35]. The Internet has many advantages such, as: ease of use, anonymity, accessibility, equality of the roles of a sender and a recipient. This anonymity and a lack of censorship encourages communication users to freely express their thoughts which, on the one hand, discloses opinions free of political correctness, which perhaps would not be spoken "face to face"; however, on the other hand, it opens the space for the hate speech. In the online space, where a word rules next to an image, we deal with dialogicality, exchange of thoughts and opinions, creating meanings. On the Internet anyone can be a sender and a recipient. As noticed by W. Gustowski, every group member communicates with others for some reason: to obtain information, get to know new people, find love, find appreciation, confide, find help, discuss, entertain and so on. It is also true that each community is based on technology. Without "a physical network infrastructure" there would be no "global communication forum"[36]. The network enables discussing various topics, playing games with others online, searching for love or creating a better image of oneself. The Internet users have an opportunity to learn about topics and threads that are foreign to them in the real world, therefore, the network and contents included therein as an element of public discourse, create, transfer and consolidate knowledge on many social phenomena. Moreover, the network user has an opportunity to comment on any topic or thread they happen to come across in the cyberspace at a given moment. Such an anonymous comment discloses ways of understanding many social phenomena. One of them comprises the way of perceiving, understanding and recognising intellectual disability. The cyberspace can be also perceived as a kind of culture text, which generates meanings.

_____

[35] B. Aouil, *Communication in the Internet – Tools, Characteristics and Features (Komunikowanie się w Internecie – narzędzia, specyfika i właściwości)*, [in:] *Social Communication in Virtual World (Komunikacja społeczna w świecie wirtualnym)*, ed. M. Wawrzak-Chodaczek, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2008, p. 11.

[36] Ibidem, p. 94.

Methodology of own tests

In this article I would like to present answer to the question: how is the intellectual disability defined and interpreted in the Internet users' discourse, what meanings are given thereto by network users? Conducted by me analyses were inspired with comments online regarding the intellectual disability. Those comprise comments given to articles, topics and threads regarding the intellectual disability. Articles resulted in activating meanings, discussing comments regarding intellectual disability given by "ordinary persons", citizens. Analysed comments refer to four[37] articles published online: text by Sylwia Chutnik, *What does "normality" mean? (Co to jest „normalność"[38]?),* which discusses the issue of (non-)acceptance of otherness/disability in the public space, the article by Aneta Wawrzyńczak, *How do mothers of children with the Down syndrome live? (Jak żyją matki dzieci z zespołem Downa?)*[39]. Text by Dorota Karaś, *Next to my house, they call me: Down. In theatre no one has ever said anything bad to me (Pod domem krzyczą na mnie: ty Downie. W teatrze nikt nie powiedział mi nigdy nic złego)*[40], which presents the occupational activation project of Gdańsk Fundacja Ja Też (Me Too Foundation), thanks to which persons with the Down syndrome work at the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre, at the customer service office; and the article by M. Kossobucka, *What is the Down syndrome and what is the risk of falling ill? (Czym jest zespół Downa i jakie jest*

---

[37] Analysed comments to two first articles come from 2014; in order to update the material, I added to analyses comments to randomly selected articles on disability from 2016 and 2017. However, first impression from the analysis shows a lack of significant changes in the discourse and an appearance of threads resulting from social and political events.

[38] http://www.styl.pl/magazyn/felietony/sylwia-chutnik/news-co-to-jest-normalnosc,nId,1084492 [access: 30.10.2014].

[39] http://kobieta.wp.pl/kat,132000,title,Jak-zyja-matki-dzieci-z-zespolem-Downa,wid,14490561,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=113a9a [access: 30.10.2014].

[40] http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/1,35612,20923616,mt-w-gdanskim-teatrze-szekspirowskim-pracuja-osoby-z-zespolem.html [access: 7.05.2018].

ryzyko zachorowania?)[41] As I have already mentioned, as a member of community I also function in the parallel space, that is, the Internet. I read, publish, discuss. And as a member of this community, as "the average Joe", I come across texts on disability. As a researcher, I curiously read comments and with great interest search for the answer to the question: what does a Pole know about disability? What kind of knowledge do they have, how do they construct and discuss this social phenomenon? As a consequence of meanings free from political correctness, then, various social practices are generated with regard to the disabled. One can ask why these particular articles? Since I "came across" them online as any other ordinary citizen. Why only four? Since my intention was not to study the whole virtual discourse of disability, but to disclose meanings included in those randomly read texts. I treated comments of the Internet users as "a social text"[42] and used a critical analysis of the discourse. The critical analysis of the discourse comprises a form of critical social researches "studying manners of reducing our freedom by our own thinking categories blocking noticing what could have been".[43] It is aimed at educating people that language is not something natural, a neutral tool, but a carrier of a system of individuals' beliefs and values dependent on their positions and broader social and historical conditions.[44] It includes an element of a detailed analysis of the text, whereas, "a text" is understood as spoken interactions, a "multimodal" text on the television and the Internet,

_____

[41] http://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,20829541,czym-jest-zespol-downa-i-jakie-jest-ryzyko-zachorowania.html [access: 7.05.2018].

[42] S. Talija as cited in K. Starego, *Discourse (Dyskurs)*, [in:] *Discursive Construction of Subject. Contribution to Pedagogy of Culture Reconstruction (Dyskursywna konstrukcja podmiotu. Przyczynek do rekonstrukcji pedagogiki kultury.)* M. Cackowska, L. Kopciewicz, M. Patalon, P. Stańczyk, K. Starego, T. Szkudlarek, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Gdańsk 2012, p. 34.

[43] Calhoun as cited in, Duszak A., Fairclough N., *Critical Analysis of Discourse (Krytyczna analiza dyskursu)*. PWN, Krakow 2008, p. 10.

[44] A. Grzymała-Kazłowska, *Sociologically Oriented Discourse Analysis in Comparison with Contemporary Studies on Discourse (Socjologicznie zorientowana analiza dyskursu na tle współczesnych badań nad dyskursem)*. Kultura i Społeczeństwo, 1/2004, p. 26

in written and published texts.[45] Forms of text analysis used in the critical analysis of the discourse greatly differ from each other, they can be based on an intertextual and interdiscursive analysis, a text analysis or a semiotical analysis of the image. Selection of a method depends on a particular draft of studies.[46] Within the critical analysis of the discourse, in this research project, I conducted a qualitative analysis of the contents of comments, which allowed discovering meanings given to the intellectual disability, polemic within various manners of understanding, "fight for meanings" and declared social practices following specific meanings. The fight for meanings constitutes an attempt to convince to own understanding and an attempt to impose own conception of the intellectual disability. From the analysed material I selected particular areas of meanings forming categories of perception and understanding, I contrasted them to find "a social contrast" and a clash of various conceptions. Then, I disclosed "clashing" points, that is, polemics. Presenting long fragments of comments is purposeful, as it provides an evidence of language contemporarily used by "an ordinary citizen" attempting to grasp the essence of disability.

Definitions, meanings and interpretations of the intellectual disability in the Internet users' discourse

Conducted analysis discloses an attempt to cope with the definition of "the other" – a human with the Down syndrome, handicapped, disabled. Naming their otherness, attributing some meanings thereto, fitting in known analogies. It is an attempt to linguistically "grasp" the essence of otherness of the individual discussed, it constitutes a kind of response to the experience of "anxiety induced by the Other"[47] in a meeting. In the thick of various

_____

[45] A. Duszak, N. Fairclough, op. cit., p. 18.

[46] Ibidem, p. 18.

[47] See: B. Waldenfels, *Topography of Foreign: Studies on the Phenomenology of Foreign (Topografia obcego: studia z fenomenologii obcego)*, Warsaw, Oficyna Naukowa, 2002.

comments, one was especially interesting to me: *this is a boring topic, who cares?*[48] This opinion, certainly not isolated, perhaps shows a not-so-comfortable truth on our society in the times of integration, that is, the issue of intellectual disability is somebody else's problem.

Analysed comments present a wide variety of manners of defining intellectual disability, as well as polemics carried between authors of this discourse. The said discourse becomes a field to fight for meanings and a place of undermining opinions. Nevertheless, the variety of comments polarises meanings and creates explicit three pillars of meanings of a person with intellectual disability. These are: a person with intellectual disability/better; a person with intellectual disability/the same; a person with intellectual disability/worse, abnormal, deviant.

A person with intellectual disability, **better person** is someone who loves the whole world, is sensitive and makes the world truer. We can learn from such a person gifted with the ability to love and a person who knows the truth. The thread of learning from persons with intellectual disability: the ability to love, the skill of looking at the world "truly" and noticing what is the most important very frequently occurs in comments. Furthermore, thus defined persons with intellectual disability are a gift from God and a trace of His presence on the earth, as God hides in them. As can be read in the comments:

> Some people are stupid, I have worked with the disabled with the Down syndrome and I think that such persons **are not so much different from abled persons, the only difference is that they are disabled; besides that they are great, they joke and laugh**. If anyone thinks otherwise, they should not speak. Regards, the Internet user.[49]

> For 30 years I have taught in a special school, which was also attended by children with the Down syndrome. I have always asked the head-

---

[48] http://kobieta.wp.pl/kat,132000,title,Jak-zyja-matki-dzieci-z-zespolem-Downa, wid,14490561,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=113ca7 [access: 30.10.2014].

[49] http://kobieta.wp.pl/kat,132000,title,Jak-zyja-matki-dzieci-z-zespołem-Downa, wid,14490561,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=113ca7 [access: 30.10.2014].

master to allocate as many of such children to my class as possible. Why? – because they **are nice, kind, loving, sensitive, no aggression, they love the whole world.** They are always smiling, they can enjoy anything, they are sensitive to music, art, willing to do all activities. You cannot shout at them, because due to their sensitivity, they will not listen. "My" children were writing beautifully, reading, telling stories. Of course, there were exceptions, but completely healthy children also have troubles with reading. The principle is that you have to treat them as you treat children normally, do not do things instead of them and do not continuously remind them of the **illness.** Now I am on retirement, I miss children and youth, but especially those with the "Down syndrome", who were always smiling, waited for me at school doors, noticed that I am sometimes sad, wanted to cheer me up. They were **simply kind, sensitive children, and if a little different?** So what![50]

I have someone close with the Down syndrome and this is a person, who **gives me a lot of joy and happiness**, like no-one else. I love her very much. **We, people should learn from such people – sincerity, simplicity, smile and, above all, love, because no-one can love as they can.** Comments given by people, who do not know such persons, but write about them, are sad…[51]

At work I have a girl with cerebral palsy, a colleague has an autistic son, other colleague a son with the Down syndrome….and so what…**all of them are valuable, sensitive people, even if other than us…** They also need human kindness, warmth and smile… it is up to us, so-called normal, how they are going to look at and perceive the world…..you might not empathise with them, but **you should not be afraid of them.**[52]

Listen Michał, I address these words to you: I have graduated from philosophy, I have met many intelligent people, I recognise a sensitive and wise person at first sight **– such as you, and you are much more intelligent than many people. You are great,** you have excellent and

---

[50] http://kobieta.wp.pl/kat,132000,title,Jak-zyja-matki-dzieci-z-zespolem-Downa, wid,14490561,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=113ca7 [access: 30.10.2014].

[51] Ibidem.

[52] Ibidem.

accurate observations. **You are a valuable** person and you do something great. Huge respect, keep going Michał. Do not worry about the stupid people, who shout at you at the housing estate; unfortunately, they are less intelligent than you and they know nothing.[53]

Some time ago I was at holidays with my son, when we met a 5 year old girl with the Down syndrome. **She was exceptionally cute,** always smiling, friendly. Such children are less clever, but they wholeheartedly **love the world and we should learn this from them**.[54]

A person with intellectual disability is perceived as **the same**, constitutes an attempt to grasp the category of otherness in the field of familiarity. Therefore, the comments include an element of eliminating the difference, a person with the intellectual disability is "the same as us, they do not differ from us – able persons at all", they are humans just as we are. The community of humanity is added with one more mutual element: being ill. Illness is a denominator for all people and the intellectual disability is degraded to an illness and becomes a common experience, we are the same, since all of us have some kind of illness. The same human beings, so they have equal rights and deserve to be treated equally. As written by the Internet users:

This is **the same child** as any of us!!!! Being **ill** is not their whim!!!! They also deserve love and respect!!!! With reference to Zośka's comment…. You are pitiful writing something like this!!!! I wonder, if you were happy, if you had the Down syndrome and your mother gave you away somewhere!!!! It is apparent you know nothing about life and your thinking is shallow!!!! Regards to all mothers and kiddos.[55]

At the waiting room, at the orthodontist I met a girl with the Down syndrome, **a cute child,** pretty, nice, polite… At the stop I met a blind

_____

[53] http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/1,35612,20923616,mt-w-gdanskim-teatrze-szekspirowskim-pracuja-osoby-z-zespolem.html [access: 7.05.2018].

[54] http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/1,35612,20923616,mt-w-gdanskim-teatrze-szekspirowskim-pracuja-osoby-z-zespolem.html [access: 7.05.2018].

[55] http://kobieta.wp.pl/kat,132000,title,Jak-zyja-matki-dzieci-z-zespolem-Downa,wid,14490561,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=113ca7 [access: 30.10.2014].

young woman, I walked her home, because she was standing as if waiting for help. **A super nice, joyful** girl, student of the Polish philology. **I think that the last thing such persons need is pity… Some kind of grievance "you are so poor"…** I cannot image such rudeness and I know that people can act like this… Instead of asking out of pure kindness, if we can help, **approaching them as equal**, rather than "poor thing", over whom you have to fuss…[56]

A person with intellectual disability, **worse,** is an abnormal deviant, someone who threatens with their otherness. They are opposed to a better normal person, they are unknown and incomprehensible. In the Internet users' comments, one can notice a lack of knowledge and a stereotypical knowledge developed thereon; there are also comments regarding experiences of others' reactions to the intellectual disability in the public space, as well as own opinions regarding those reactions. In those opinions, a person with intellectual disability is somebody, who is poor and unhappy, inducing compassion and pity, somebody from whom you "can be infected with disability", oversexed and thus, a dangerous, aggressive, suffering and salivating dimwit, not independent. Furthermore, opinions on the Godly interference in the birth of a child with disability can be observed; as opposed to the previous comments, God does not give a gift, God does not hide in disability, He is cruel and, in fact, punishes with birth of a disabled child.

My mother-in-law (60 years) has been strongly criticising me since she found out I have been attending general development classes with my son (he was born prematurely) and at these classes I sometimes meet children with the Down syndrome. **She claims that, if I "stare", something bad may happen to my baby boy.** The woman is educated, she is a lawyer. Awful…[57]
:(**poor children**:(((a heart breaks!!!!!!!!!![58]

_____

[56] Ibidem.
[57] Ibidem.
[58] Ibidem.

Children with the Down syndrome: ok, they are nice and acceptable, but they will grow up! **And an adult with the Down syndrome: this is a problem!** Who will take care of them, when their parents are gone?[59]

Well, is it normal that a young man with the Down syndrome, when he notices a woman on the bus almost pokes her eye out with a crazy "whip", or a girl with the Down syndrome hoovering around a guy at a PKP waiting room, staring at him as if hypnotised and ready for anything? **Is it normal? You cannot stop or control it from a certain age.**[60]

This is the truth! **Those people are oversexed!** Near me, there is a day care centre for the disabled. When I am waiting at the stop I often see that girls with the Down syndrome chat up strange men and boys even salivate when they see women. Why do you not write about the fact **that they can be dangerous?**[61]

As far as persons with the Down syndrome. **They are not and will not be normal.**[62]

A few days ago, at Biedronka I saw a mother with a girl at the age of 3–4 years with the Down syndrome, the mother could not do shopping peacefully, the girl was shouting, cast herself onto the floor. I thought **to myself, for what sins was this child given and that the mother is suffering,** how can God look at this, why both of them **were punished.** At my housing estate there are many mothers with children on wheelchairs, they are shouting, salivating, bending every possible way. Why??????[63]

On the other hand, the text by S. Chutnik encouraged reading Internet users to attempt answering the question: what is otherness and normality and why does the intellectual disability come up in

_____

[59] http://www.styl.pl/magazyn/felietony/sylwia-chutnik/news-co-to-jest-nor malnosc,nId,1084492 [access: 30.10.2014].

[60] http://www.styl.pl/magazyn/felietony/sylwia-chutnik/news-co-to-jest-nor malnosc,nId,1084492 [access: 30.10.2014].

[61] Ibidem.

[62] Ibidem

[63] http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/1,35612,20923616,mt-w-gdanskim-teatrze-szekspirowskim-pracuja-osoby-z-zespolem.html [access: 7.05.2018].

the context of abnormality? The comments include the following questions: who is the Other? Who is he? What criteria define otherness and familiarity?

> **Maybe it is US who are others?** Maybe WE only think we are normal? **What does normality really mean???** Calling each other names?, A lack of interpersonal communication? Not smiling at everybody? A "rat race"?, etc.??? And what if we have the ability to work, but we get nothing from it… We (supposedly healthy) love only ourselves, people with the Down syndrome love others and even more, they prove it with their simple, because carefree joyfulness…[64]

> **The word "normal" means compliant with the norm, therefore, someone over the median, thus, as majority. In itself it does not have a pejorative meaning.** Worse, if this word is given such meaning. All geniuses, the wisest people are also abnormal; even their fate proves that they are perceived as such. Thus, in such a context I would like to say that each **"abnormality" can be interesting, if it distinguishes us from the crowd**.[65]

In the said discourse one can notice polemics and undermining each other's interpretations. I can even state that there is a kind of fight for understanding the situation of persons with intellectual disability, a fight for abandoning hurtful definitions, a fight for changing meanings. The Internet users accuse one another of a lack of tolerance, knowledge and acceptance of otherness. They postulate for starting a change in the way of thinking of the Other from learning what otherness mean and learning to accept it. They point out social arrogance and ignorance with regard to this social issue. Those comments are made by persons who do not agree with this social arrogance and ignorance, a lack of knowledge or discrimination. In polemic comments we read as follows:

> A person learns by copying, irrespectively of the race and place where they live. This is a way of learning about the world, about everything

---

[64] http://www.styl.pl/magazyn/felietony/sylwia-chutnik/news-co-to-jest-normalnosc,nId,1084492 [access: 30.10.2014].

[65] Ibidem.

that is new. **I teach children and adults that disability is in every person; no one is 100% able.** Everyone should start with themselves, with the willingness to **learn what is different, unknown, even terrifying, but only in the beginning. Later, it is only a norm.** Let us copy wise, good or simply normal attitudes.[66]

A lot of people are simply uneducated dimwits. **They are afraid to be infected with the Down syndrome, diabetes** etc. They are the ones we should avoid, because you can get infected with stupidity!!![67]

I have a question. Who is responsible for the contents of comments? If I find one more comment **offending** persons with the Down syndrome, I will accuse WP of **intolerance**. Each portal should control the contents of posted comments. And now the essence: for me, having an ill sister with the said syndrome is a sense of life. And I think it has been planned in advance. Even if I had all the reaches of the world and I would not have my sister, life would be senseless to me. It is incomprehensible, how those persons can fight with suffering, illness. I could do anything for her.[68]

Perception of social practices

The Internet users participating in the discussion often ask about the sense of life of persons with the disability[69], they also point out the support system and discuss in a manner characteristic for the online space, the approach of our society to the disabled. Recent social and political events include not only parents' protest at the Seym, but also another debate on tightening the anti-abortion act. This comprises proceeding of the ban on terminating pregnancy

---

[66] Ibidem.

[67] Ibidem.

[68] http://kobieta.wp.pl/kat,132000,title,Jak-zyja-matki-dzieci-z-zespolem-Downa,wid,14490561,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=113ca7 [access: 30.10.2014].

[69] In the book, *Experiences of Disability in Meeting Spaces (Doświadczenia niepełnosprawności w przestrzeniach spotkania)*, in the chapter written by myself, I discuss the discourse of abortion applied by the Internet users in comments to articles by S. Chutnik and A. Wawrzyńczak.

in case of a serious and irrevocable foetal damage.[70] These events are reflected in comments and proclaimed views on said social practices undertaken with regard to the disabled also originate from meanings attributed to the disability itself. The Internet users allow choosing abortion and criticise for this solution. Radical users believe that persons, who decide to give birth to a disabled child should do so at their own cost, since disability is a burden on state. They offend each other criticising their way of thinking. The discussion is initiated by the post:

> And women **murderers** want to kill such people before birth. The same ones that steal the logo of Solidarity and adopt bees after the murder is done[71].

The discussion started with an ideological statement "women murderers" raises a subject of a lack of system solutions, sufferings of "irrevocably damaged" children and questions about the sense of suffering, the society's stigmatising attitude to the disabled, as well as refers to the philosophical and ethical issue: when a being becomes a human? In reply to the above post we can read the following:

> Surely a **Catholic**?[72]
>
> If EVERYONE was guaranteed with the **future:** rehabilitation, education, health care and predominantly, a job (occupation giving opportunity to leave home), perhaps it would be different[73].
>
> **No, in fact you are wrong.** If you think that the Down syndrome is a disability that pregnant women are afraid of, you are mistaken. They are afraid of children without brain, without cerebral cortex, without the most important organs, children whose life will consist of only suf-

_____

[70] Debates on the ban on abortion appearing in the public space require separate analyses. In this text I only signal the thread, without delving into the ideological and linguistic postulates of engaged parties.

[71] http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/1,35612,20923616,mt-w-gdanskim-teatrze-szekspirowskim-pracuja-osoby-z-zespolem.html [access: 7.05.2018].

[72] Ibidem.

[73] Ibidem.

fering. They do not want to condemn children to **years of suffering** (or only hours), after which they will be slowly dying. You have no idea what you are writing about. How many families with such children are you helping? In which hospice for such infants are you volunteering? And perhaps you have already adopted a child with tetraplegia, severe intellectual disability (does not speak, does not see, does not think, does not hear, because the hearing nerve does not function); howls or squeals all day long, is frail, too frail for a wheelchair, covered in bedsore, with refractory epilepsy. Give an address: many people will willingly turn to you for help.[74]

On the one hand, they bawl out **not to abort**, but when someone with the Down syndrome does something, is an actor, then, the same trash that protected against abortion, **bawl out: DOWN!**[75]

Why, when the human's beginning is unlucky and medicine can detect it, this human development has to be continued until the end, for their **misfortune, suffering**; after all, **a human has not yet been formed**, there is only matter, nothing more, is it not better to stop this unlucky process of nature.[76]

Another thread of quite a turbulent exchange of opinions is directed at the rights of the disabled and the unfavourable social policy, which is confronted with "encouraging to giving birth to disabled children".

Children with moderate disability are in minority, and persons like Michał, with mild disability, constitute perhaps a permille. Besides, on the one hand, Kaczor encourages to give birth to children with the Down syndrome and on the other hand, "colleagues got to the group therapy workshops, but for me there is no place for now". **This is how our Polish pro-family policy look like: give birth, give birth and what then, it does not matter**. And parents of such children living a normal life are the least important.[77]

_____

[74] Ibidem.

[75] Ibidem.

[76] http://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,20829541,czym-jest-zespol-downa-i-jakie-jest-ryzyko-zachorowania.html [access: 7.05.2018].

[77] http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/1,35612,20923616,mt-w-gdanskim-teatrze-szekspirowskim-pracuja-osoby-z-zespolem.html [access: 7.05.2018].

Whereas, other user deems persons with disability as useless bread eaters and a burden for the state and claims that anyone, who decides to give birth to a disabled child should bring them up at their own cost. In this thread, the Internet users also clash with their opinions.

> If someone **consciously** gives birth to a child with the Down syndrome or other developmental defect, they should **cover the costs of treatment with their own funds**. The state should not sponsor **production of invalids**. Let us remember that the expensive treatment of developmental defects causes shortages in money for other methods of treatment. That is why I believe that, if you want to have a child with the Down syndrome or e.g. a serious heart defect, then, sponsor them **at your own cost**.[78]

> **You are an imbecile** and I do not wish on you or on your children ever having to take such a difficult decision… and maybe it would be good… You have no guarantee on living in health and full fitness until the end of life. By analysing your way of thinking, if you, God forbid, had an accident and became an invalid unable to provide for yourself, then, you should be euthanized. Will you not agree?[79]

> **You are the imbecile**, because you do not understand, what has been written. **I simply disagree with playing "sweet children with the Down syndrome" at my cost**. I wish it on no one, but there are situations when you have to face the truth, even if it is brutal. With regard to persons already living, I have never written that the disabled should be eliminated. You added it yourself; perhaps, you have such hidden wishes. Persons who were a victim to an accident paid social insurance and should be covered with protection.[80]

Comments added to articles disclose a certain fragment of social mechanisms of dealing with otherness of the disabled. Mechanisms based on meanings and discourses. An unproductive bread eater,

---

[78] http://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,20829541,czym-jest-zespol-downa-i-jakie-jest-ry zyko-zachorowania.html [access: 7.05.2018].

[79] Ibidem.

[80] Ibidem.

unnecessary element of the society or a rightful citizen having the right to support and a dignified life?

The Internet users also review the Polish social reality of the relation with disability and to be precise, present their manner of perception.

> A nice article about nice people, **only comments are disgusting.** Those are Catholics full of compassion and love for fellow human beings. It is wonderful, how people are encouraged to give birth to disabled children and later call after them "look, a Down". Only conceived children are important and what then? This is parents' business, usually a heroic mother, because only one in eight loving daddies stays with the family and the rest vanish. Surely, they go to the rotten West with a mission to profess Polish, Catholic values. There, patriots. It is a pity that what is a cultural norm in the liberal West, seems to be a sensation in Poland![81]

Summary

Analyses carried out by me, situated in the cultural model of disability, concerning the methods of defining and interpreting the intellectual disability, meanings attributed thereto, present a great diversity of social understanding of this phenomenon, or "a social fact".[82] Authors of analysed comments are first of all, parents and persons connected with the environment of persons with intellectual disability and persons who have professional experience and maintain private contacts with persons with intellectual disability. In their comments they present an interpretation of own experiences and usually those are far from the stereotypical perception of the intellectual disability. The second group of authors of analysed comments consists of persons who have never dealt with persons

---

[81] http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/1,35612,20923616,mt-w-gdanskim-teatrze-szekspirowskim-pracuja-osoby-z-zespolem.html [access: 7.05.2018].

[82] See: E. Zakrzewska- Manterys, A. Gustavsson, *Disability… (Upośledzenie…)*, op. cit.

with intellectual disability. They saw or rather "watched" them in public places, experienced a random meeting "face to face", swift, superficial, inclining to run away. Those authors, referring to the theory of Berger and Luckmann, by describing this Other, used typifying schemes, and in particular, by interpreting this "encounter with otherness", they referred to the sphere of meanings, which the society attributes to persons defined as handicapped/abnormal. The cultural imperialism referred to by C. Barnes and G. Mercer, where "able normality" [83] constitutes a privileged and desirable status is very visible in those comments. Despite this being the year 2014, it is worth referring to the model of social representations of disability established in 1995 by the London-based researchers, since, in spite of the fact that almost twenty years have passed, it remains up-to-date. In 1995, a group of researchers of the London School of Economics presented a two level model of social representations of the intellectual disability. This model shows that the first level of representation was established on the grounds of social representations treated as obvious and understandable, rooted in the tradition of social awareness of a society or a group. At this level, one can find traditional social constructions of the intellectual disability, which associate/identify people with intellectual disability as stupid, dangerous, condemned to God's punishment, unhappy, helpless etc. At the second level of the model there are people in everyday social interactions with others engaged in discussions and disputes. In these everyday life struggles and in experiencing the intellectual disability, people act in a shared social reality including, together with many others deemed as obvious, traditional social representations, own, different definitions resulting from their individual experience.[84] Online comments of the second group of authors can be deemed as those from the first level of social representations of the intellectual disability, obvious and stereotypical. As

---

[83] C. Barnes, G. Mercer, *Disability (Niepełnosprawność)*. Warsaw, Sic, 2008.

[84] See: A. Gustavsson, E. Zakrzewska-Manterys, *Disability… (Niepełnosprawność…)*, op. cit.

presented by carried out analyses, those stereotypical and socially obvious meanings of disability "are well", conditioning social dislike and full of disdain superiority among people copying them. Comments of the first group of authors, who develop own and different manners of interpretations and join discussions as well as disputes with the representatives of obvious meanings have one basic aim to change the meaning and, in consequence, negative social practices. Clashing of opinions, as observed, has been continuing for a very long time and the first level of social representation is very well established. I believe that the discourse in the Internet space is deprived of political correctness, since users thereof are anonymous and they can express their opinions freely. This fragment of comments found online, to my mind, presents very up-to-date manners of social understanding of the intellectual disability and certain variety of attitudes, which are, nevertheless, subject to polarisation. The intellectual disability ceases to constitute otherness and remains so. A person with intellectual disability is discriminated in the public space and is accepted therein. They have the right to live and, as useless bread winners wasting social money they are deprived of this right. Negotiating and constructing meanings of the intellectual disability, experiencing a meeting with the Other, becoming accustomed to their otherness, those are simply everyday tasks that belong to the public space. Studying those meanings and discourse in the reality that is changing on a daily basis, must continue, since, referring once again to the A. Gustavsson's view, there are many evidences that everyday life of the disabled depends on the meanings others attribute to their disability.[85]

Bibliography

Aouil B., *Komunikowanie się w Internecie – narzędzia, specyfika i właściwości*, [in:] *Komunikacja społeczna w świecie wirtualnym,* ed. M. Wawrzak-Chodaczek, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2008.

---

[85] Ibidem, p. 116.

Barnes C, Mercer G., *Niepełnosprawność*. Wydawnictwo Sic, Warsaw 2008.

Berger P., Luckmann T., *Społeczne tworzenie rzeczywistości*. PWN, Warsaw 2010.

Borowska-Beszta B., *Niepełnosprawność w kontekstach kulturowych i teoretycznych*. Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls", Krakow 2012.

Dijk van T.A., *Dyskurs jako struktura i proces*, translated by G. Grochowski, PWN, Warsaw 2010.

Duszak A., *Tekst, dyskurs, komunikacja międzykulturowa*. PWN, Warsaw 1997

Fairclough N., *Analysing Discourse. Textual Analysis for Social Research*, Routledge, London and New York 2004.

Fairclough N., *Krytyczna analiza dyskursu*. Universitas, Krakow 2008.

Foucault M., *Archeologia wiedzy*, translated by A. Siemek, PIW, Warsaw 1977.

Gadamer H.G., *Prawda i metoda*, translated by B. Baran, "Inter Esse", Krakow 1993.

Garland-Thomson R., *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. Columbia University Press. Columbia 1997.

Giddens A., *Socjologia*. PWN, Warsaw 2005.

Goodley D., *Disability Studies. An Interdisciplinary Introduction. Sage Publications*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi 2017.

Grzymała-Kazłowska A., *Socjologicznie zorientowana analiza dyskursu na tle współczesnych badań nad dyskursem*. Kultura i Społeczeństwo, 1/2004.

Gustavsson A., Zakrzewska-Manterys E., *Upośledzenie w społecznym zwierciadle*, Wydawnictwo Żak, Warsaw 1997.

Gustowski W., *Komunikacja w mediach społecznościowych,* Wydawnictwo NOVAERES, Gdynia 2012.

Melosik Z., *Poststrukturalizm i społeczeństwo (refleksje nad teorią M. Foucaulta,* [in:] *Edukacja wobec zmiany społecznej*. ed. J. Brzeziński, L. Witkowski, Poznan–Toruń 1994.

Miś L., *Konstruktywizm, konstrukcjonizm w socjologii, pracy socjalnej, terapii*. Zeszyty Pracy Socjalnej 14/2008.

Niżnik J., *Słowo wstępne*, [in:] *Społeczne tworzenie rzeczywistości*, (ed.) P. Berger, T. Luckmann, PWN, Warsaw 2010.

McRuer R., *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability (Cultural Front)*. New York University Press, New York 2006

Tobin Siebers, D*isability Theory (Corporealities: Discourses Of Disability)*, University of Michigan Press, Michigan 2008.

Snyder S.L., Mitchell D.T., *Cultural Locations of Disability*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2006.

Shakespeare T., *Cultural Representation of Disabled People: Dustbins for Disavowal?*, Disability & Society 9.3 (1994).

Starego K., *Dyskurs*, [in:] *Dyskursywna konstrukcja podmiotu. Przyczynek do rekonstrukcji pedagogiki kultury*. M. Cackowska, L. Kopciewicz, M. Patalon, P. Stańczyk, K. Starego, T. Szkudlarek, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Gdańsk 2012.

Waldenfels B., *Topografia obcego*. Oficyna Naukowa, Warsaw 2002.

Waldschmit A., *Disability Goes Cultural*, [in:] *Culture-Disability-Theory*, ed. A. Waldschmit, H. Berressem, M. Ingwersem. Verlag Bielefeld, 2017.

Żółkowska T., *Społeczna (de)waloryzacja roli osoby niepełnosprawnej*, [in:] Z. Gajdzica (ed.), *Człowiek z niepełnosprawnością w rezerwacie przestrzeni publicznej*. Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls", Krakow 2013.

Internet sources

http://www.styl.pl/magazyn/felietony/sylwia-chutnik/news-co-to-jest-normalnosc, nId,1084492, access: 30.10.2014

http://kobieta.wp.pl/kat,132000,title,Jak-zyja-matki-dzieci-z-zespolem-Downa,wid, 14490561,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=113a9a, access: 30.10.2014

http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/1,35612,20923616,mt-w-gdanskim-teatrze-szekspirowskim-pracuja-osoby-z-zespolem.html, access: 7.05.2018

http://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,20829541,czym-jest-zespol-downa-i-jakie-jest-ryzyko-za chorowania.html, access: 7.05.2018