

Streszczenie rozprawy w języku angielskim

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The doctoral dissertation entitled “‘Crises of Contemporary Times’ in 21st-Century Children’s and Young Adult Fiction: Contexts of Polish Language Education in Primary School” is an interdisciplinary study of the relationship between contemporary literature for young readers and the teaching of Polish in primary schools. The dissertation combines literary, sociological, and pedagogical perspectives, demonstrating the need to transform Polish language education in response to the rapid changes affecting the contemporary world.

The dissertation situates its diagnosis of the contemporary condition within the frameworks of “liquid modernity,” “risk society,” and “polycrisis.” It shows that young generations, particularly Generation Z and Generation Alpha, are confronted with multiple, overlapping global threats, from climate and economic crises to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, young people experience intensified mental health problems, defined in the dissertation as the “triad of psychological crisis,” comprising loneliness, low self-esteem, and a diminished sense of agency. The chapter also examines the challenges faced by the school subject of Polish at the primary school level, understood as encompassing both language and literary education.

The second chapter analyses children’s and young adult literature published after 2010 and identifies a significant shift away from traditional didacticism towards an approach grounded in “anthropological sensitivity.” Drawing on literary thematology, it examines contemporary prose for young readers alongside selected primary school textbooks. The study shows that contemporary literary texts engage with difficult issues such as violence, exclusion, depression, addiction, and death, thereby offering a safe space for reflection and for processing challenging experiences. The dissertation argues that this body of literature has considerable educational potential and may support students’ emotional and social development.

A significant part of the dissertation is devoted to empirical research conducted among 239 teachers of Polish working in primary schools. The findings show that, although teachers are aware of the problems faced by contemporary young people, they make only limited use of the potential of contemporary young adult literature. The main obstacles include the dominance of the compulsory reading canon, with its emphasis on historical and national themes, as well

as pragmatic criteria for selecting supplementary readings, such as their availability or usefulness in exam preparation.

In the final chapter, the author proposes the concept of “crisis-oriented reading,” which involves using literary texts as tools for developing students’ self-reflection and social competences. As part of this concept, the article presents an original reading list for grades 4–8 of Polish primary education, addressing key contemporary issues such as otherness, neurodiversity, the impact of new technologies, disinformation, and mental health. At the same time, it proposes a range of teaching methods designed to support teachers in their everyday practice.

The dissertation demonstrates that Polish language education should move beyond a transmission-based model and instead foreground students’ agency in the reading experience. This requires both a revision of reading lists and greater openness on the part of teachers to contemporary cultural texts and students’ needs. The study argues for transforming Polish language education into a space that fosters conscious, reflective, and psychologically resilient young people.