Youth Culture and Net Culture:
Online Social Practices

Elza Dunkels
Umeå University, Sweden

Gun-Marie Frånberg
Umeå University, Sweden

Camilla Hällgren
Umeå University, Sweden

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Chapter 16
Electronic Aggression among Adolescents:
An Old House with a New Facade (or Even a Number of Houses)

Jacek Pyżalski
Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Łodzi, Poland & Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine, Poland

ABSTRACT

The chapter is focused on the problem of electronic aggression (conducted via the Internet or mobile phones) in the context of young people as potential victims and perpetrators of such aggression. The text addresses two main issues: the potential novelty of electronic aggression and its potential distinctive features and the diversity of electronic aggression acts (with a proposal of typology). The first aspect is analyzed through the new model – ABACUS that could be used to compare electronic and traditional aggression. The chapter presents also a typology of electronic aggression based on the victim's identity and his/her relationship with a young person who is a perpetrator. The presented theories and discussions are illustrated with new data from two Polish projects on students and teachers experiences with electronic aggression.

INTRODUCTION

The fact that new communication technologies (mostly Internet and mobile phones) can be used as tools to conduct hostile acts is obvious for both the scientific community and the general public. The cases where the electronic aggression attacks led to disastrous effects particularly among young people e.g. suicidal attempts are causing much alarm in the popular media. Those emotional transmissions often reinforce an oversimplified and exaggerated picture of the phenomenon of aggression conducted via ICT (electronic aggression), as well as its causes and effects. This attitude sometimes affects scientists as well with a kind of "moral panic" about the phenomenon. Not neglecting the potential negative consequences of electronic aggression, I stand on the position that in order to obtain a real picture of this phenomenon, two main areas should be scientifically explored and discussed. First, we should find out to what extent electronic aggression is qualita-

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tively new, comparing to traditional aggression (where the new technologies are not involved) in terms of influencing factors, psychological and social mechanisms and potential consequences. The answer is interesting for scientists, but is also of importance for practitioners involved in prevention and intervention in electronic forms of aggression. Still the aggression where the new media are used as tools is an important topic, since in the modern society media "emerged as a social institution, assuming many of the functions formerly served by traditional social institutions such as the church, school, government and family" (Silverblatt, 2005, p. 35.). This may be reinforced by the extensive usage of new media by young people and their significant role in development of young people (Living and Learning with New Media, 2008). Taking this into account, the media used to conduct aggression may cause a serious danger particularly for the contemporary young generation.

The second important issue concerns the diversity of electronic aggression acts that have one thing in common – a usage of new communication technologies as a tool to conduct hostile acts. In reality, it is vital to develop a typology that will enable us to make some order in electronic aggression variety. Some kind of typology should be developed since electronic aggression acts differ substantially when the psychological and social mechanisms involved as well as their consequences are considered.

In this chapter we will start from the overview of terms and definitions concerning the aggressive acts conducted through new communication technologies. Here we will also look closer at the features that various authors typically attribute to electronic aggression. Although electronic aggression is not exclusive for children and adolescents most of the chapter is based on research in this age group. That does not limit the validity of majority of presented interpretations to electronic aggression in other age groups.

Afterwards, a new theoretical model useful for the analysis of distinctive features of electronic aggression will be presented (ABACUS model). The proposed model underlines that a particular act of electronic aggression may be more or less distinctive according to how many "new" features are present. It also shows that all features referred to sometimes as typical for electronic aggression may be present while acts of traditional aggression are conducted. Despite this some mechanisms lying behind those electronic aggression features are novel in the context of electronic aggression due to specific qualities of computer mediated communication (CMC) and online interactions in a broader sense; this back up a position that electronic aggression is a qualitatively different phenomenon comparing to traditional aggression.

Then the need for typology of electronic aggression will be underlined and the proposal of such typology based on the victim's identity and his/her relationship with a perpetrator will be presented and discussed in terms of their potential harmful effects.

The discussion will be illustrated by partial data from two research projects described briefly at the end of the chapter[1].

ELECTRONIC AGGRESSION: DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

Electronic aggression is a general term that defines all hostile acts conducted with a help of new communication technologies or new media (often referred as the Internet and mobile phones) (David-Ferdon, Herz, 2007). Technically speaking, what distinguishes electronic aggression from its traditional version is a tool used by perpetrators to conduct harmful acts. Lists of such behaviors included in various definitions vary sometimes significantly from one study to another. To complicate issues more, till now many researchers use different terminology (e.g. electronic harassment, cyberbullying, etc.) without distinguishing the

terms used, particularly when they operationalize the different concepts in measuring tools. Usually, regardless of the terminology, the definition consists of longer of shorter lists of hostile behaviors that can be conducted via the Internet or mobile phones. For example the long definitional list presented by Aricak, et al. (2008) includes lying, hiding the user identity, introducing oneself as someone else, threatening, teasing, insulting, defamation, intimidation, rumor, displaying others' pictures without their consent. But those authors include also different types of computer criminal acts as hacking or sending infected software to other users. Such a list is only one example as other researchers present different lists which add other activities and skip others.

In one of their studies, Patchin & Hinduja (2006) use the term "online bullying" and define it as "bothering someone online, teasing in a mean way, calling someone hurtful names, intentionally leaving persons out of things, threatening someone and saying unwanted sexually related things to someone". Some other authors include also such activities as spamming (sending unwanted electronic messages) or impersonation (stealing someone's electronic identity, e.g. through password theft). It is worth emphasising that some of the listed behaviors are distinguished based on the descriptive technical aspects of behavior (what the perpetrator actually does – e.g. publishing pictures without consent). At the same time, the others are distinguished based on perpetrators' and/or victims' feelings/interpretations (e.g. insulting, teasing in the mean way, doing those acts purposefully).

In reality, broadly defined and operationalized electronic aggression (also when the other terms are used) covers a wide range of behaviors that differ substantially in terms of victim identity or the technical methods of conducting aggression. For example, electronic aggression may be targeted against a victim known in a real world, at a person known only in the cyberspace or a stranger (e.g. a celebrity person) or a group of people (e.g. racial/sexual minority). That issue was taken into account by some researchers. Wolak, et al. (2007) explored the aspect of identity of a harasser from a victim's perspective and proved that harassment by a known peer and an online only contact are different particularly when potentially hurtful effects are discussed. Another aspect is connected to the fact that some electronic aggression acts are targeted directly at a victim (e.g. someone sends vulgar e-mails, MNS messages) while the other harm a victim indirectly (e.g. someone posts unwanted visual material about a victim on the Internet or spreads rumors).

All those problems with definitions and operationalizations are particularly true in terms of cyberbullying that should not be simply defined and operationalized as the aggression conducted by electronic means, but the aggression with certain characteristics described below. In this case the definition goes beyond the "technical" description of the act but moves rather to the question "how" the act is conducted also in terms of psychological and social mechanisms present.

The roots of the term 'cyberbullying' should be placed in the classical research of Olweus (1978; 1993), who clearly differentiates school bullying from the general school aggression. Based on his definition most authors agree that bullying should be defined as aggression with a number of specific features. Those distinctive aspects are: the negative intentions of perpetrators, the repetition of hostile acts and the imbalance of power between perpetrator(s) and victim(s), so that the latter have difficulty in defending themselves from aggressors. Most researchers agree on those three distinctions[2] (Monks, et al., 2009). Additionally, hostile acts are to be found in traditional bullying carried out by the people from familiar social groups – a class, a school, or neighborhood or at least the group of people that are frequently met in a spatial world (e.g. prison, children's home, etc.) (Stassen-Berger, 2007; Griffin & Gross, 2004; Monks, et al., 2009). One should note that to define a series of acts as bullying, all the above

listed features must appear simultaneously. To sum up, "not all aggression is bullying, but bullying is always aggression" (Stassen-Berger, 2007, p. 194). Unfortunately, some authors use the term cyberbullying without clearly mentioning those characteristics, associated with bullying – they are more focused on electronic tools to conduct aggression. In some other cases they do involve those characteristics in the definition but they do not operationalize them in the research project. It seems that in many cases the term cyberbullying is used in too broad a sense, defining many aggressive acts even when the vital bullying characteristics are not present (Wolak, et al., 2007). Another issue is that bullying characteristics are sometimes problematic and not easy to operationalize when describing the cyber form of bullying (Agatson, et al., 2008; Slonje&Smith, 2008) – that important issue will be analyzed later in the chapter.

To sum up, what we need at this stage of research on electronic aggression is an awareness concerning the variety of electronic aggression types and clear definitions of them – as well as the measurement tools that take this diversity into account. This is inevitable in order to achieve relevant data that can be used in practice to prevent electronic aggression conducted and experienced by young people and its consequences.

Electronic Aggression: New or Old Phenomenon?

Most of the authors of the above-cited definitions state that if we use new media (the Internet/ mobile phones) to conduct aggression/bullying or harassment we will produce electronic forms of those phenomena, respectively electronic aggression, cyberbullying and electronic harassment (Williams&Guerra, 2007). Additionally, when certain characteristic should be present in traditional forms (e.g. repetition in bullying), they are expected to occur in electronic forms as well. However, is the new tool enough to speak about the novel phenomenon? If yes, the question is why such an issue is raised with the Internet and mobile phones (referred also as new media) and had not been put forth so strong in the past, e.g. in case of traditional phone that may be used as a tool to conduct hostile acts as well? Some researchers define "new" features characteristic for electronic aggression but at the same time they underline that such particularities of online communication technology are present only in some electronic aggression cases (Juvonen&Gross, 2008). Thus, it is worth exploring them to find out whether there are any characteristics we can perceive as ambiguous attributes of the electronic form of aggression. Last but not least, what are the potential consequences of the presence of those potential new features at least in some electronic aggression cases? Below I will analyze three characteristics that are perceived as attributes of electronic aggression, namely anonymity, unintentionality and continuity.

Anonimity

Anonymity is often perceived as a basic characteristic of all communication that takes place in online environment (McKenna&Bargh, 2007; Wang et al., 3009), though its continual and common presence is far from the true. In many cases people who communicate via the Internet know each other from spatial world or have exchanged so much information during online interactions that full anonymity is clearly not existing in their relationships (Subrahmanyam,, et al., 2008).

When focusing on electronic aggression, anonymity seems to be the main justification and facilitator of hostile acts particularly when the Internet is in use (Juvonen&Gross, 2008). But what actually is meant by this anonymity? There are some vital aspects that should be taken into consideration. Part of them are connected to a potential perpetrator while the others lay on a victim's side. Starting from a perpetrator, we should discuss a mechanism of deindividuation (McKenna&Bargh, 2007). This mechanism con-

nected to anonymity means that an individual experiences problems to control his/her own behavior and tends to react immediately according to external cues without making rational decisions. It is also connected to the tendency of ignoring how others assess the behavior of an individual. All those states are also associated with presence of a large number of people and feeling unity with them. (McKenna&Bargh, 2007).

Anonymity often means a lack or a great reduction of nonverbal cues in CMC – in cases when it takes textual form. In traditional communication, those cues play an important role in both relationships formation and its later maintenance. They are also vital for proper recognizing emotional states of those involved in communication act. Due to this lack of nonverbal cues may lead to situations where potential perpetrators will be unaware of actual consequences of their behavior online on the other people. They may also easily engage in the communication that they assess to be a hoax or a joke, while the other side will "read" them as aggressive acts – this will be further described below. On the Internet is also easier to reshape and construct someone's identities that are different from those in offline world (McKenna&Bargh, 2007). This is particularly important when an individual communicates with the others not known from offline environments. This may mean that those young people who do not engage in traditional aggression would engage in its electronic form in online environment.

On the side of someone attacked through new communication technologies anonymity of a perpetrator may reinforce victimization. When a perpetrator is hidden, even a trivial case may be assessed as a very serious issue. Also the possibilities to defend are restricted as there is no one who can be approached.

Unintentionality

Most scholars perceive negative intention as the feature that distinguishes aggression from other behaviors (Hasset&White, 1989; Wang et al., 2008). Although it is reasonable not to call aggression the acts that were not intended to harm another person that are a few things to consider in case of electronic form of aggression. First of all, a lot of electronic aggression perpetrators claim not to be aware of the fact that they online behavior and communications could have seriously harm anybody. In some cases we may assess those statements are mere excuses but taking into account the features of CMC (e.g. reduced nonverbal cues) it may be also their true experience. At the same time those unintentional acts may have really negative impact on the victims. Moreover, when we take into account the dimension of intentional harm on the side of a perpetrator and the dimension of being harmed on the side of a victim we can analyze four situations visualized in the Table 1.

The most obvious case of electronic aggression is presented in Situation 1 (Table 2.). There a perpetrator intended to harm a victim and they succeed with it. Such situations were described by some adolescents - respondents in the qualitative part of one of my studies (Pyżalski, 2009) – they claimed that their intention was to harm someone and then they were describing the subsequent consequences proving they have reached their aim (for example a victim's breakdown or refusal to go to school).

However, a lot of perpetrators engaged in behaviors that were "aimless" or that they had some other goals far removed from harming their victim (Situation 3). Still, they may claim that

Table 1. Perceived and intended harm in electronic aggression from the perspective of a victim and a perpetrator

		Victim's subjective feeling of being harmed	
		Yes	**No**
Perpetrator's intention to harm the victim	Yes	Situation 1	Situation 2
	No	Situation 3	Situation 4

Table 2. Involvement of Polish adolescents as perpetrators of different electronic aggression types in the previous 12 months.

Target of electronic aggression	% of respondents that attacked the target in the previous year	Type of electronic aggression
People known only from the Internet	42,5	Cyberbullying ?
Young people known from school/class or the place of living who are not close friends of a respondent	39	Cyberbullying ?
Close friends	26,8	Cyberbullying ?
Unknown people, totally randomly chosen	24,2	Random electronic aggression
Former girlfriend/boyfriend	16,9	Cyberbullying ?
Not individuals but groups of people, e.g. fans of the particular football team or a musician.	15,8	Electronic aggression against groups (bias cyberbullying)
Popular people, e.g. singers, actors, etc.	11,1	Electronic aggression against celebrities
Other people like homeless/alcoholics	10,8	Electronic aggression against the vulnerable/ Cyberbullying?
Teachers	9	Cyberbullying ?
Known adults	8,9	Cyberbullying ?

In all cases indicated by (?) the classification of electronic aggression act as cyberbullying is not obvious.

they were very surprised when some real problems and consequences for the victim occurred.

Among those reasons some respondents indicated that electronic aggression acts brought them respect among their peers, linked to high competences in using new communication technologies. The good example was one of the perpetrators who used to break into accounts of others and then using their e-mail addresses to send out fake messages or to break into their accounts in online games to steal their "identities". When asked about the advantages of such behavior he said that everyone living in neighborhood knew him as "hacker" and that gave him a high social position. One of the respondents a teacher from a secondary school describes the similar experience: *"The student has put on his blog vulgar comments about some of his teachers. He used really vulgar and insulting language. When asked about the reasons for his behavior he said he wanted to show off in front of peers. (...) A teacher (victim) was really touched and her self-esteem decreased."*. This finding is in line with study of Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput (2008). Some of the perpetrators of cyberbullying were claiming that through the acts they wanted to show their computer skills.

Additionally, involvement in the acts that are not intentionally harmful but end badly for someone may be particularly facilitated by electronic communication features. For example, perpetrators do not experience the emotional reactions of their victims that could have act as emotional meter that serves to temper (…) behaviors (Kowalski, Robin&Agatson, 2008, p. 65).

There were also many situations described by a victim (Situation 2) where someone attacked them electronically by way of chat, but they were not harmed at all and simply ignored or blocked the perpetrator. Such situations were often claimed when only a single attack occurred and the perpetrator was thought to be a stranger. The victims simply defined such perpetrators as "stupid" and were also saying that such situations were numerous but it was hard to recollect details as they are not important.

The most difficult to interpret is situation 4, where neither intention to harm nor the harm itself is present. How then do we know that what has taken place is electronic aggression? The only perspective we can adopt here that of the social norms of an external observer. Such norms are sometimes not accepted by the participants involved. For example, the respondent was involved for a long time in exchanging vulgar insulting chat messages with his peer. However, both involved were presenting the belief that there is nothing wrong with such behavior and what they do is a normal way to talk *"in the chat"*. Of course, it is disputable whether such a situation should be labeled aggression – still this is an interesting point for discussion – as those involved even have been exosed to extremely vulgar language.

Continuity

Some authors state that electronic forms of aggression may be a novel phenomenon since the impact of aggressive act is ongoing (Slonje&Smith, 2008; Walrave&Heirman, 2009). Victims of cyberbullying have no place to escape from electronic aggression acts as materials placed on the Internet are persistent, replicable and easy to find by the interested users (Boyd, 2007). That means that a young victim is never safe – there is no place and time when hostile acts are not present. This is analyzed as completely different to traditional aggression, where the hostile acts could have been conducted only when a victim and a perpetrator were situated in the same place at the same time (Walrave&Heirman, 2009). The same is sometimes extended even to those electronic aggression acts where there are no materials published on the Net. The so-called "always on" generation uses new communication technologies extensively as a tool to socialize with peers (Living and Learning with New Media, 2008). That means that even a young person that is targeted directly, through, say, unwanted messages may perceive it as ongoing as he/she is always possible to reach through the Internet or a mobile phone. Additionally, decision about giving up the usage of communication technologies would often mean social exclusion from a peer group (Kowalski, et al., 2008).

The ABACUS Theory of Electronic Aggression

While we analyze the features of electronic aggression (e.g. anonymity, unintentionality, continuity) we should put forth the most important question: Is there, except the tool used to conduct hostile acts (namely new communication technologies), any distinctive feature there is present in electronic aggression acts and is not present in traditional aggression at the same time? The answer to this question seems to be negative. In order to explain this I designed the simple theoretical Abacus model. Its aim is to compare different electronic aggression acts as well as electronic and traditional aggression as separate phenomena. The model uses the picture of abacus to explain the differences between electronic aggression and traditional aggression (Figure 1).

In the model there are horizontal rods serving as symbols for criteria that are used to analyze the features that are often referred as typical for electronic aggression. We have also the left and right frames that respectively illustrate electronic and traditional aggression. Then there are beads that can be moved to the traditional or electronic frame according to the situation of the particular act of aggression. The model clearly shows that all the characteristics may be present (or absent) in both kinds of aggression.

To sum up the presented model allows "dynamically" analyze the aggression acts on the framework that uses criteria described as typical for electronic aggression. Below I use the Abacus model to discuss three key features described above: anonymity, unitentionality and continuity.

Anonymity is present only in some electronic aggression acts while it is completely absent in others – so according to the ABACUS model the

Figure 1. The ABACUS model of electronic aggression

beads only sometimes can be moved in the direction of electronic aggression. For example, in a big study conducted by me on the representative sample of Polish adolescents (N=2143), only about one third of respondents admitted to having sent something unpleasant to the other person and purposefully hiding his/her identity, although a lot more admitted perpetration of electronic aggression. The findings of the other authors also show that anonymity is only potentially present in electronic aggression acts. Juvonen and Gross (2008), in the study of American adolescents discovered that two thirds of cyberbullying victims knew their perpetrators and a half of them revealed that it was someone they know from a school. In the research of Hinduja and Patchin 80% of the victims knew the perpetrators' identity. Thus, anonymity cannot be treated as the distinctive feature of electronic aggression in general sense. Additionally, some of traditional aggression acts where young people are involved may also be anonymous. For example, someone may spread rumors or scrap insulting words about a victim in the school toilet. According to the ABACUS model, in this case the beads on the "anonymity" rod will be moved towards traditional aggression frame. Taking this into account one can ask why anonymity is so much discussed as the hallmark of electronic aggression? The answer seems to lie in mechanisms connected to anonymity and described in the first part f this chapter (e.g. deindividuation). To sum up, anonymity should be considered when electronic aggression is discussed, as it brings with it a lot of significant psychological mechanisms (and potential consequences) on the side of a victim and a perpetrator.

The same refers to unintentionality, which is present only in some electronic aggression acts. In the research on a big sample of Polish adolescents more than 37% revealed that they have send something via the Internet that was intended to be a joke, but actually harmed someone seriously. But at the same time more than 25% revealed that during the previous year they were harassing intentionally some peers via a mobile phone or the Internet for a longer period of time. That means that we can witness traditional intentional acts while considering electronic aggression. Unintentional acts that led to disastrous consequences may also be present in in a number of traditional aggression cases where a perpetrator is not able to predict consequences of his/her actions. Again then uninentionality cannot be treated as the distinctive feature of electronic aggression. However, in case of electronic aggression unintentionality may be facilitated by some features of CMC (e.g. lack of nonverbal cues in textual communication). Those features may cause problems on the side of a perpetrator to read early signs of negative emotions in a victim and make him/her to continue unconsciously harmful attacks.

Unintentionality, as research shows, may be a feature of many electronic aggression acts. Thus, it would be not reasonable to exclude unintentional acts from the scope of interest of those exploring electronic aggression as a social phenomenon. It is a big challenge for both scientific methodology (how to measure the prevalence of unintentional acts? – where in many cases perpetrators are unaware of their actions' consequences). It is also an important aspect to be considered while preventive strategies are discussed. For example, how can we prevent someone from being victim to unintentional aggressive acts?

The third feature – continuity, is similarly to anonymity and unintentionality, is also present only in some electronic aggression acts. It is worth underlying that this feature is present mainly in case of those electronic aggression acts where a perpetrator publishes online some materials about a victim. As Boyd (2007) states, electronic publication makes the material persistent, replicable and searchable by what she calls *invisible audience*. Due to this, hostile attacks are not dependant on the place and time where they occur (Walrave&Heirman, 2009) and make a potential victim more vulnerable. This seems to be a difference when compared to the majority of traditional aggression attacks. However, continuity is not completely absent in traditional aggression. The situation where the student is attacked publicly in a way that many students also those not involved are aware of the attack also causes a kind of continuity. This is reinforced by a victim's awareness that his/her situation is known to many people. Of course, here we should take into account the scale – in traditional aggression the group of people is restricted to those from the same institution or neighborhood but in electronic aggression this group may be and sometimes is extended to a significantly great number of other people that watch the materials on the Internet. It is also worth underlying that potential harmful effect of those electronic aggression acts where the material is published is higher comparing to the other electronic aggression acts. Victims usually report more intensive negative emotions connected to those electronic aggression acts where the publication of visual materials was involved (Slonje&Smith, 2008; Wojtasik, 2009). Additionally, such acts where the visual material is used are in minority. For example in the sample of Polish adolescents above 35% had ever received an unpleasant mobile message, while only 13% experienced the situation where their photo was published on the Internet without consent.

In conclusion – The ABACUS model clearly visualizes that dimensions used to describe electronic aggression, namely anonymity, unintentionality and continuity are only potential features of this kind of aggression and may be also present in a traditional version of that phenomenon. Based on this we can analyze such electronic aggression acts that are anonymous, unintentional and continuous making electronic aggression really different from typical traditional aggression where those features are absent. In such cases the situation will involve many additional mechanisms connected to the specifity of computer mediated communication and human behavior in the cyberspace.

Electronic Aggression: Not All Cats are White

Electronic aggression is too complicated a phenomenon to be analyzed without a typology that allows us to recognize the variety of its different types. Depending on who is attacked and what is the actual behavior of a perpetrator, we can have diverse electronic aggression types that vary in terms of potential mechanisms and consequences involved. For example swearing once at unknown user in the chat room is completely different to regular publishing on the Internet offensive materials about a classmate. Those differences are influenced by the actual relationships between perpetrator and victim and the perceived importance of a perpetrator to a victim as well as the seriousness of the electronic aggression act itself.

Based on this five different electronic aggression types are recognized: cyberbullying, electronic aggression against the vulnerable, electronic aggression against random victims, electronic aggression against celebrities and electronic aggression against groups.

Cyberbullying

As stated above, cyberbullying is an electronic form of bullying – so it should be described and analyzed through the lens of bullying theory (Due at al., 2005; Monks et al., 2008). In the case of young people, cyberbullying is a particular kind of peer aggression.

The first problem with cyberbullying is connected to the fact that traditionally both victims and perpetrators belong to the same social groups in a spatial worlds, e.g. classroom, family or at least have to live and/or meet in the same institutions, e.g. prison, children's home, etc.(Monks, et al., 2009). Of course, when cyberbullying is an extension of traditional bullying – just using "electronic" means it is very easy to claim the situation is similar. In my research on the sample of Polish adolescents (N=2143) 33% were the victims of bullying or cyberbullying in the past year. 61,3% of the victims suffered only from traditional bullying; 12% from cyberbullying and 26,7 from both forms. For perpetration, the respective figures were: 48,6%; 11,2% and 40,2%. This means that in schools, both phenomena of bullying and cyberbullying are connected, but the relation is not perfect. Indeed, it is very seldom that someone involved in cyberbullying without being a perpetrator or a victim of traditional bullying at the same time. Some authors claim that the term cyberbullying should be restricted only to the situations where online aggression is connected to peer aggression and school relationships (Wolak, et al, 2007). This seems to be a valuable attempt to be more precise with the terminology concerning electronic aggression. But maybe that attitude is too restrictive and does not take into account that a lot of Internet users gather online only groups where the close interpersonal links and relationships develop (McKenna, 2008). If we acknowledge that interpersonal aggression in such groups can also take a form of cyberbullying. To make things more complicated, cyberbullying should have all three explicitly defined characteristics as described above, namely the imbalance of power, negative intentions on the side of perpetrators, and repetition. Those features, relatively easy to operationalize, are obvious in the spatial world. In cyberspace, those features may have different mechanism or even become questionable due to specific characteristics of CMC (Dooley, et al., 2009). It may be the case with the imbalance of power that can be caused by mechanism that, as stated above, may be potentially present in CMC, e.g. anonymity. Sometimes those features are even used purposefully. One of the respondents who encouraged his peers to send threatening mobile messages to his friend from many unknown numbers openly expressed such awareness:

"the guy is in real trouble....he doesn't know who is sending this – doesn't know what can happen – it's better when he's uncertain what can happen..."

Sometimes the imbalance of power attributed to some specific features of electronic communication is also expressed by victims. One of the 15 year-old girls described a situation where she had received a series of anonymous cell phone messages criticizing her harshly. When she was asked about her subsequent emotions she confessed to having cried nearly all night after the incident. Following this, she was asked about the worst aspect of that situation that caused such strong emotions. She immediately said that it was not the content of the messages but their anonymity that felt most threatening. One of the respondents describes the situation of her friend who has made herself a photo while taking a bath. The film was stored in the phone. Then a girl was encouraged by some friends to lend a phone as they wanted

to steal a video. Then the video was placed on the Net. Although it was published only in one portal and has been quickly withdrawn a girl was convinced that everybody has seen the video and she stopped attending to school for a longer period. Such mechanism is labeled by Danah Boyd (2007) as an invisible audience – a potentially huge, impossible to estimate number of people that may have seen a film clip.

The issue of intention is also ambiguous. As presented in the first part of the chapter some CMC features makes it difficult for the perpetrator to see the effects of his/her actions that makes it easier to engage in potentially harmful behavior even without negative intentions. Here in large number of cases we will have can have different opinions on intentionality depending on who will be asked: a victim or a perpetrator. For instance, a perpetrator, who once published a victim's photo on the Internet may resist the opinion that he did it in order to harm another person. However, for a victim who suffered a lot after such a publication has been viewed by a lot of people, the perpetrator's fault and negative intentions may be obvious.

Electronic Aggression Against the Vulnerable

Another electronic aggression type is targeted at "vulnerable" people, namely alcoholics, mentally disabled, mentally ill, etc. This type of aggression is often conducted by way of the unwanted filming of the victims and then the publication of the material on the Internet, mostly on the sites where the clips of the users may be uploaded. Victims are often depicted in a humiliating way and are probably unaware of the situation. The films seldom present physical aggression – they rather show actions like encouraging the victims to do "funny things" like undressing, showing physical imperfections, missing teeth, etc. Of course, such acts are harmful to the victims, even in cases when they are not aware that their human right are violated. On the other hand, a perpetrator of such acts becomes desensitized and probably more prone to repeat his/her behavior. It is worth underlying that this kind of aggression is an example of an overlapping of electronic aggression and traditional aggression. Perpetrators here conduct traditional aggression act, in the real world (e.g. insulting someone) and then record and publish the act. This resembles a phenomenon called *happy slapping*, which is conducted by young people; they approach another young person, conduct a simple physical aggression act, e.g. a kick, and then publish or disseminate electronically the recorded act (Saunders, 2005).

We should not forget that publicly presented aggressive media pictures showing hostile acts against the vulnerable persons may have a negative influence on all the viewers, particularly children and adolescents. It is worth underlying that in those cases, violence is usually presented in a way that is perceived as the most dangerous in terms of potential imitation. Those risks as meta-analysis show (Browne & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005) is higher when in a media picture there is no criticism or remorse to the violence, aggressive acts are often associated with humour and the violence is perceived as realistic. All those features are usuallly present in case of new media aggression against the vulnerable. Additionally, the aggressive acts are often conducted by the young people – that means those similar to the viewers what makes the risk of imitation even higher. Of course, those mechanism has been also present in some traditional media, e.g. reality news programs on TV (McCleneghan, 2002). The difference with the Internet is connected to scale – the number of users that can upload such kind of materials is really high – that means that the accessibility level is also very high – what is particularly dangerous in case of young audience. It is worth here to underline the active role of the viewers who by leaving they comments may reinforce the author of aggressive clips or on the contrary criticize his/her behavior. From this point of view, the activities of the audience can

make the risk of negative media influence higher or lower; this active and influencing role of an audience seems to cause a substantial difference between traditional media (particularly television) and the new media. Moreover, this difference is also present in other electronic aggression types, not only that one against the vulnerable.

Aggression Against Random Victims (Random Electronic Aggression)

Cyber environment is a place that gives opportunity to contact a great variety of people, maintain existing relationships as well as start the new ones (Mishna at al. 2009). Young people meet the others while using synchronic and a-synchronic communication channels: chat rooms, discussion forums, instant messengers or e-mails. So it is very easy to start communication with totally unknown people, without the psychological restrictions that are normally present in the traditional offline communication. This may be perceived as an advantage for those from stigmatized groups (McKenna, 2008).

On the other hand, in the cyberspace it is convenient to attack verbally other people – particularly those that are not in a relationship with a perpetrator (neither online nor offline). Due to relative perceived anonymity is also much more safe to conduct such acts comparing to the similar acts in the offline environment. The potential consequences both legal as well as retaliation are more likely to occur in the real world comparing to the cyberspace.

Due to the fact that random aggression in the cyberspace takes place it is anyone present in the Internet (e.g. possessing a profile in social networking) may be victimized electronically.

Electronic Aggression Against Celebrities

Cyberspace, offers celebrities (e.g. actors, singers, etc.) and entertainment industry many channels to promote themselves. Of course this was also present in the traditional media e.g. newspapers. However, the Internet facilitates that kind of contact with general public, using also the advantages of interactivity that enables spectators to involve actively in communication acts. The same mechanisms may be also adopted to conduct harsh critics or electronic aggression against well-known people. In this case those attacked may be not treated by perpetrators as the actual individuals but more as a kind of a symbol. Electronic aggression against celebrities may be perceived as individual acts of the users as well as a part of "gossip industry" that makes profits from publishing "shocking" materials about the celebrities in a more organized way. Of course, both types of electronic aggression against celebrities are overlapping: gossip news portals are the preferred space for the users wanting to leave insulting or hostile comments.

Although in electronic aggression against celebrities victims are often perceived as "icons" or "symbols" sometimes the individual consequences of being a victim of electronic aggression are disastrous for them. The example of such situation is a suiceide of A Korean actress Jin-Sil who had been overwhelmed by the Internet users harm criticism (More on Jin-sil suicide, 2008).

Electronic Aggression Against Groups (Bias Cyberbullying)

Cyberspace is a place where the certain groups or individuals are represented through websites, forums, etc. Using those facilities, people representing certain ideas share their outlook with the general public or change information and ideas within their groups. This provides channels for potential aggressors to harass or insult groups. Indeed, vicious comments can be left in a portal's guest-book.

At first glance, this kind of electronic aggression may be perceived as less harmful since nobody is directly attacked. However, such aggression,

as research shows, may be very frequent and the single act influences a great number of victims at the same time. The good example is a research by Tynes, et al. (2008) on behavior at chat rooms. Almost 60% of young people taking part in an unmoderated chat room face racist communications made by the other users. That means that everybody belonging to a racial minority may have been affected negatively by disparaging remarks. This kind of e-aggression is also difficult to target by way of legal intervention as there is no individual victim harassed by perpetrators.

Five electronic aggression types described above are not completely separated and may sometimes overlap. Despite this fact, it is clearly seen that there are substantial differences among them and that their potential consequences on the side of a victim vary substantially. Situation is completely different when a young person is victimized regularly by classmates (cyberbullying) comparing to a single attack by someone unknown in a chat room(random aggression).

Different Types of Electronic Aggression: A Quantitative Aspect

The involvement in different types of electronic aggression has been tested empirically within the study on the representative sample of 14-15 y.o. Polish adolescents (N=2143). The adolescents who revealed that in the last year they conducted at least one kind of specific electronic aggression acts (out of 20) were asked to indicate who their target was. The results reflecting their answers – the prevalence of different electronic aggression types are presented in the Table 2.

Analysis of the data in the table shows Polish adolescents were involved in the previous year in all types of electronic aggression as described above. The most prevalent was electronic aggression against the people a perpetrator knows only from cyberspace (42,5%). This is a qualitatively new situation as both: the relationship with a person and aggression are taking place in cyberspace. That means there are no "real" links between a perpetrator and a victim. Nevertheless, a perpetrator may have established a closer relationship with a victim online, e.g. they could have been friends from the same discussion forum. When the subsequent aggressive acts are regular, with accompanying intention to harm and abuse of power – then according to the definition this situation may be labeled as cyberbullying. (Wang, et al. 2009). Obviously, in many cases it will be hard to state that both sides of aggressive act belong to the same online group (comparable to the class or school in spatial world). Additionally, the hostile acts are not always intentional, regular and do not always overwhelm a victim. That means that electronic aggression acts against people known only from the Internet may take a specific form of cyberbullying only in some cases when the specific characteristics are present. Then we have peer aggression against young people known from "real" interactions – both close friends (26,8%) and young people who are known but not defined as close friends by perpetrators (39%). Similarly, as in case of aggression against people known only from the Internet, such acts may be in particular situations characterized by the distinctive cyberbullying features. Quite prevalent were also electronic aggression acts against totally random individuals – here neither online nor offline relationships between a perpetration and a victim were present. Aggression against a former boyfriend/all girlfriend (16,9%) may be interpreted as a specific kind of cyberbullying or a phenomenon referred in literature as cyberstalking (Spitzberg&Hoobler, 2002). The specifity of this electronic aggression type is connected to the formerly intimate relationship what can make the future attacks more damaging for a victim. Aggression against groups is also quite common and has been conducted by almost 16% of respondents in the previous year. One in nine adolescents revealed engagement in electronic aggression against celebrities or aggression against the vulnerable. About 9% of respondents attacked electronically teachers or

other known adults – those acts may have been cyber bullying acts provided that all vital characteristics were present. In conclusion, it should be stated that although attacking people who are the same age (peer aggression) is the most prevalent, young people are involved in many other electronic aggression acts where the targets are the other people not those from a peer group.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The reflections and data presented above clearly show that electronic aggression is not a homogenous phenomenon. The characteristics that are referred as attributes of electronic aggression are present only in some electronic aggression acts making them sometimes more harmful for the victims. This should be reflected in the research tools in order to explore in depth the variety of electronic aggression acts in which young people may be involved as victims or perpetrators.

This is also true when we analyze different electronic aggression types depending on the relationship between a victim and perpetrator (e.g. is a victim a classmate or randomly chosen person on the Internet). If we do not take it into consideration asking our respondents whether they insulted someone on the Internet without precise distinction we will obtain only general statistics. They provide insufficient data on qualitatively different types of electronic aggression (e.g. aggression against the vulnerable, aggression against people known only from the Internet). This is an important issue also from the perspective of potential preventive measures. We have to analyze and check whether we have "one cure" for all the electronic aggression types or we have to plan and implement different measures against each type.

The involvement of young people in electronic aggression has been of growing concern in the recent years. A lot of action in this respect is asked from professional educators who should prevent electronic aggression as well as intervene when such aggression is conducted or experienced by their students.

Based on the empirical data and discussion presented in the chapter emerge a few practical issues that are important for professional prevention and intervention of electronic aggression among students.

The vital aspect is the knowledge of professionals concerning the "new" characteristics of electronic aggression (e.g. anonymity or unintentionality) and they awareness that those features are present only potentially in some electronic aggression acts. Educators who understand those features and accompanying psychological mechanisms may assess in a particular situation to what extent a particular act is distinctive and differs from typical traditional act. That should subsequently influence the type of intervention offered. For example, a student that unintentionally harmed someone else should be treated differently to someone who had hostile intentions. In the first case, awareness raising activities seem more reasonable than disciplinary consequences. Professionals ought to consider also new content of preventive programs where awareness concerning specific features of CMC will be raised. Knowledge on those features of CMC that may facilitate electronic aggression should act as a factor that discourage potential young perpetrators and helps the victims to cope with hostile acts.

On the other hand, it seems very rational to target all the electronic aggression types. That requires preparation of the specific programs targeting different electronic aggression types. For example, cyberbullying is usually connected to the offline relations of young people involved and all the actions may be conducted there, e.g. mediation sessions, etc. The situation seems complicated when the other types of electronic are analyzed. For instance, random aggression targeted against totally unknown victims met on the Internet, requires different measures, involving for example some online activities.

At this stage of research not enough is known to enable us to propose detailed actions tailored to the different types of electronic aggression. Still, the gathered data suggests that this "differential treatment" concept should be developed in the future.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Ellison&Akdeniz (1998) state that "the internet tends to produce extreme versions of problems, it rarely produces genuinely ones (1998, p. 29). This seems to have been proved by the data presented in the chapter. All the electronic aggression features may be also present in traditional aggression and all the electronic aggression types can have some parallel phenomena in the offline world. This gives a solid reason for research projects exploring both involvement in electronic aggression as well as traditional forms of this phenomenon. Some studies (e.g. Yan, 2005; Ybarra, et al., 2007) show that young people engaged in electronic aggression tend to exhibit other risk behaviors like substance use, sexual solicitation or school related problems. This involvement means both perpetration and victimization. It seems that exploring those online and offline risk behaviors together may be beneficial for future research projects. Here the relation between offline and online lives of young people should be the key problem needing exploration.

Serious consideration has to be given to research methodology on the variety of electronic aggression types. That is a big challenge when a construction of new tools is taken into account – they should reflect the richness of electronic aggression acts and at the same time be "plain" enough to be understood by young respondents.

Another issue is the developmental level of a young person. It influences both the involvement in electronic aggression as well as efficacy of any preventive activities is a developmental level of the child. Yan's research (2005) indicates that understanding of the complexity of the Internet is connected to the age of the child. An interesting finding here is that many of 11-12 years old adolescents understand the social aspects of the Internet only partially. This is absolutely important when we focus on risks and potential self -regulation of the internet behavior exhibited by a young user. The developmental aspect should be considered in terms of research (comparative aspects) as well as planning and implementing preventive strategies (e.g. educational programs). Thus, those aspects should be involved in the models so we can understand electronic aggression of young people from a broader perspective. Such approach takes into account the role of new media in young people' lives, development, and broadly understood health. Some researchers warn that the influence of the media has been neglected and often excluded from the significant big-scale projects relating to young people's health and wellbeing (Strasburger, 2009).

CONCLUSION

In the chapter, I have attempted to analyze two important issues concerning electronic aggression in young people – its distinction comparing to traditional aggression as well as diversity of electronic aggression acts.

The first issue has been analyzed with the help of ABACUS model that illustrates the potential character of features attributed to electronic aggression. Then the typology of electronic aggression types has been proposed using the identity of a target and his/her relationship with a perpetrator as a key criterion. All those reflections have been illustrated by research data, but we must remember that conceptual and theoretical clarity relating to electronic aggression has not been obtained, and still requires future research activities.

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ENDNOTES

1 In the Project the data from two research projects was used:

1. Cyberbyllying as a new peer aggression type (Grant No. 106 067735) – a qualitative and quantitative research on a sample of 2143 Polish adolescents (14-15 y.o.). The grant is affiliated in Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Łodzi. All the quotes of students' words in this chapter are taken from the data gathered during interviews in this study.
2. Electronic aggression as a new problem of teachers' occupational health (grant no. IMP 8.5). – a survey on 600 teachers. The grant is affiliated in Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine. All the quotes of teachers' words In this chapter are taken from the data gathered during interviews in this study.

2 Those three characteristics are sometimes discussed in the literature and some authors raise doubts about them. However for the clarity of this chapter I adopt the most common definition (Monks, et al., 2009).