

Schooling adaptation of Romanian remigrants pupils to the primary education in Romania

**Claudiu Langa¹,
Florentina Dumitru²**

¹ University of Pitesti, Romania

² Piatra Primary School, Romania

Abstract

The way and the level a school-aged pupil adapts to different learning systems are mainly influenced by the family, the social background, the educational background, all of which will later reflect upon school success. The theme of the present study places us on a new territory, being of interest for the specialists in the field of educational sciences, for all those who have concerns in the field of education, as well as for parents. Its main purpose has been the research of the impact this fact has on the students that returned to their homeland, who are at the early schooling stage, as well as how elementary teachers respond to the real needs of their adaptation through specialized psycho-pedagogical assistance to such children. The method used in this investigative approach was the questionnaire-based research. The study was carried out on elementary teachers from the Olt county, who, during the current school year, have enrolled remigrants pupils in their classroom.

The study objectives were aimed at analyzing the factors involved in adapting remigrants pupils to schools: the environment in which we find the school establishment, the essential term to adapt, the difficult school subjects; the ways in which teachers mediate the adaptation to school for the remigrants pupil, as well as the correlations between school adaptation and the call of teachers for psycho-pedagogical counseling to remigrants pupils.

Keywords: remigration; school; adaptation; teachers; pupils.

JEL classification: A2

1 PAPER RATIONALE

The topic concerning the adaptation of the remigrants school children to the education system requirements of their native country has become an important subject for study worldwide, because of the increasing number of families who return to their native country after having been residents in a foreign country for a longer or shorter period of time.

The case with the adaptation of the young schoolchildren to the elementary school has been of great importance, hence the child's future school performance and stream depend on this adaptation, on the child's success or lack of success at this very point.

Family is of much importance, as important as the way the child perceives school as a challenging, constructive and stimulating fact; last, but not least, the teacher's pedagogical skills are important, as well.

Pupils' adaptation to school refers to their compliance with all school rules and regulations. The adaptation process becomes enhanced, it is more focused on the attention towards a new adult and is no longer limited to the child's parents. This adult – the he or she elementary school teacher – starts to play a leading role in the life of such child, for he or she represents the society, watches for the rules to be applied in the society and at school, at the same time being the person who trains the psychic energy, shapes the child's intellectual activity and organizes the school life, sets patterns for thinking and acting.

One of the stages of development is represented by starting school at a small age, the so-called third childhood, which develops between 6/7 – 10/11 years of age. This stage is representative as being a stage of acquiring solid general adaptive experience for life, which is mainly analyzed in terms of school and learning, two defining processes for shaping a human being. „Learning has been so profoundly lodged in human mind, that it has become almost automatic, our skill, as a species, is skill in learning” (J. S. Bruner et al., 1966).

Therefore, when starting education process, the child will be taught learning strategies, contributing to the structuring of the child's own identity and own proficiency, traits specific to each individual. The first school years, even if the children have been previously accommodated with it in consequence of having attended kindergarten, still change the condition, behavior, pressure and the plan of the leading events in the child's life. Along with the integration into the school community, it starts the accommodation with the prerequisites of the social life. The

child gradually assimilates rules of individual and collective behavior, according to which he adjusts his position and his relationships with other persons.

The pupil's social life is now becoming arduous, as well. We can talk about the "age of friendship", of "amity". The pupil's need to live in collective community, his need to take part in the team work activities becomes more striking. The lack of adaptation is being shown forth through an improper attitude or through an attitude of rejection of these traits, which further on is materialized into several forms of deviant behavior: lies, theft, running away from school, violence etc. Some of these causes are emotional and they can be observed with children who experience lack of affection from one of the parents; some other reasons are of socio-cultural origin and they affect mainly the children who returned to their native country, but more precisely the remigrants, because most of their parents returned home due to lower economical possibilities they encountered in the country they had previously settled; these children were educated either in a very strict and authoritative manner or, on the contrary, in a very liberal manner. Irrespective of the reasons that have led to this deviant behavior, educational therapy has to be applied hand in hand with the other class teachers and most importantly, with parents.

Depending on the age group of the child, pupils act disparate. The maladjustment to a new learning system, to a new timetable implemented in the pupil's life, is a consequence of several factors, among which we can mention: a teacher / an elementary teacher who stigmatizes, or wrongs pupils, or an educator who believes that the problems and issues raised by such a child would be solved by themselves, an aggressive classmate (we mention physical, as well as psychic aggressiveness, even if the children are of small age), but mainly that group aggression, known as bullying- which is becoming more and more common (<http://www.unicef.ro/media/fenomenul-bullying-cum-il-depistam-si-cum-il-combatem-pentru-scoli-mai-sigure/>)

In Greece the problem of the remigrants has been studied extensively (Hatzichristou, Chryse, and Diether Hopf 1995, 1992). The aim of their study was to explore the patterns of adjustment of Greek remigrants children (coming from the former Federal Republic of Germany) as compared to their peers in the Greek public schools. Another topic of their study explores the adjustment of Greek remigrants students in Greek public schools after their families' return to Greece from the Federal Republic of Germany.

In Portugal, Neto, Felix (2012) conducted a study in order to investigate the degree of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation among adolescents from returned Portuguese immigrant families and the factors that may predict adaptation.

In Puerto Rico, the growing number of Puerto Rican remigrants face sociological, psychological, linguistic and social adaptation problems. Some studies indicate that, compared to non-migrant students, remigrants students are more poorly adjusted to school, lack confidence, feel inferior, have low self-esteem, and are often described by teachers as low achievers, troublemakers, aggressive, undisciplined, disrespectful, lacking identity and unable to speak either English or Spanish well. However, some teachers believe that remigrants will react positively when they feel that teachers and their non-migrant peers are trying to understand them (Nogueras, Juan A., and Joseph O. Prewitt-Diaz, 1980.). The problem of the remigrants student should be regarded not only as a linguistic problem, but also as one of adjustment to two cultures.

In Romania, we can only find a few case studies regarding this phenomenon for our country. Brebulet, Silviu-Daniel. et all. (2013) by using a child-focus methodology has made a research that provides empirical evidence of the effects of migration and remigration on children.

Pupils have returned to our country to attend Romanian school, some of them having nice memories, some others having bad memories, some of them after having returned after short periods of time, holidays, while some others having returned to the home country after longer periods of time, after some years. The time they spent outside the country has had a certain influence on the small children mostly, especially because most of them have been impaired while returning, because in most cases, this meant they have been set apart the previously whole- gathered family.

In the year 2014, in the on-line magazine kidsnews.ro, Antonia Noël reckoned that „when a change in the environment of living occurs, there comes a change in the behavior as well, inherently, which can lead to very good results when the change is anticipated and the preparation is made progressively. When we talk about the remigration phenomenon, the change is unexpected most of the times, and there can be no such thing as preparing for this change in the way of living.

Most simple definition of migrate is: to move from one country or place to live or work in another. This word, remigrate, doesn't usually appear in our dictionary, but we can accept this meaning: to migrate again or back. The origin of remigrate can be the latin *remigratus* past participle of *remigrare* to remigrate, from *re-*+ *migrare* to migrate (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary).

The remigrant student may be defined as the student who moved with his/her migrant parents to a different country in view of eliminating the “orphan” children with alive parents phenomenon and of being raised, educated and taken care of by them, later relocated in Romania, due to the remigration of both parents, which was mainly caused by social and/or cultural lack of adaptation and financial difficulties (Catalano, 2014).

Very few of the migrants have thought that, when leaving the country, among the consequences of this freedom / choice, they might face the phenomenon of their children remigration. From this point of view, in this study case has been carried on an instructive and illustrative example on how a major change on a social, political and economic level can generate a new social issue, very little known so far, and to which the society should turn their utmost attention.

The statistics available at the time clearly show that the phenomenon of Romanian children remigration is considerable. Between 2013-2015, just at the level of the primary school in the Olt county have been reported 65 pupils who have returned home with their families and have enrolled into the Romanian school system.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives of the research

The purpose of the study is to investigate:

1. The factors involved in the adaptation of remigrants pupils: school area, time required for adaptation, difficult subject matters;
2. The manner in which the educators mediate the remigrants pupil adaptation to school;
3. The association between school adaptation and the call of the educators/ teachers to psychological and pedagogical guidance for remigrants pupils.

2.2 The working hypotheses of the study:

1. There is a significant difference between experienced teachers and the less experienced ones in point of the call for psycho – pedagogical guidance for primary school remigrants pupils, with a view to their swifter adaptation to the Romanian school prerequisites.

2. There is a significant difference between experienced teachers and the less experienced ones as regards the time required for adapting primary school remigrants pupils to the Romanian school prerequisites.

2.3 Description of the instrument:

The method used in this investigative approach was the questionnaire-based investigation. The questionnaire was structured based on the following dimensions:

4. Extracting information from the teachers on the subject of the adaptation issues of the remigrants primary school pupils to the Romanian school prerequisites, as well as to the time required for accomplishing this process and regarding the difficult subject matters of study.
5. Extracting information from the teachers regarding the ways they help these pupils in their adaptation process;
6. Factual data – socio- professional statute, proficiency at desk, school.

2.4 Target group:

The study was carried out on a group of 60 primary school teachers from rural and urban area, who are very widely experienced teachers from the Olt county.

3 FINDING AND RESULTS

In order to check the working theories, we have implemented the method of variance analysis ANOVA One-Way.

Statistically speaking, based on the results obtained, significant dissimilarities have been observed, dependent on the variable *didactic proficiency*, regarding the *call to psychological and pedagogical guidance of the teachers* in order to help remigrants pupils to easier adapt to Romanian school system. [$F(3, 54) = 6,784, p < 0,01$] (Table 2).

Table 1. Standard averages and deviations for the variable *call to psychological and pedagogical guidance of the teachers*, dependent upon *didactic proficiency* variable.

Didactic proficiency	N	Call to psychological and pedagogical guidance	
		M	SD
From 0 to 5 years	14	1.14	.363
From 6 to 15 years	15	1.47	.640
From 16 to 25	15	2.40	.828

years			
Over 25 years	16	2.50	.730
Total	60	1.90	.877

Table 2. Variance analysis ANOVA One-Way for comparing averages to the variable *call to psychological and pedagogical guidance of the teachers*, dependent on the variable *didactic proficiency*

Source of variance	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	20.352	3	6.784	15.168	<0,01
Within Groups	25.048	56	.447		
Total	45.400	59			

In order to verify for which of the four age groups the dissimilarities are of a certain importance, we have applied the post hoc *t* Turkey test. The results obtained showed the existence of some significant dissimilarities between the teachers whose working experience, on the one hand, varies between 0 to 5 years and those teachers whose experience varies between 6 to 15 years and those whose working experience varies between 16 to 25 years, and over 25 years, on the other hand, as regards the *call to psychological and pedagogical guidance* meant to help the remigrants pupils to easier adapt to the Romanian school prerequisites. In this manner, the less experienced teachers, with a seniority of 0 to 5 years, 6 to 15 years, resort to a greater extent to *psycho-pedagogical guidance*, relatively to the teachers whose working experience is longer, from 16 to 25 years (Turkey $t = 5,01$, $p < 0,05$), (Turkey $t = 3,82$, $p < 0,05$) and those with a working experience over 25 years (Turkey $t = 5,44$, $p < 0,05$), (Turkey $t = 4,14$, $p < 0,05$) (Table 3).

Table 3. The results from the post hoc *t* Turkey test

	From 0 to 5 years	From 6 to 15 years	From 16 to 25 years	Over 25 years
From 0 to 5 years	-	1,30	5,01*	5,44*
From 6 to 15 years		-	3,82*	4,14*
From 16 to 25			-	0,40

years

Over 25 years

-

Note: level of statistical significance: * $p < 0,05$

Statistically speaking, based on the results obtained, (table 5) significant differences have been observed, dependent on the variable *didactic proficiency*, regarding *the time required by the remigrants pupils to adapt to the Romanian school system*. [$F(3, 54) = 4,739, p < 0,01$].

Table 4. Standard averages and deviations for the variable *the time required to adapt and integrate to the Romanian School system*, dependent on the *didactic proficiency*.

Didactic proficiency	n	Time required to adapt to Romanian school	
		M	SD
From 0 to 5 years	14	1.50	.650
From 6 to 15 years	15	1.73	.799
From 16 to 25 years	15	2.27	.594
Over 25 years	16	2.75	.683
Total	60	2.08	.829

Table 5. The ANOVA One-Way analysis of variance in order to compare averages to the variable *the time required to adapt to Romanian school system*, dependent on the variable *didactic proficiency*.

Source of the variance	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	14.217	3	4.739	10.065	<0,01
Within Groups	26.367	56	.471		
Total	40.583	59			

In order to verify for which of the four age groups, the differences are of a certain importance, we have applied the post hoc t Turkey test. The results obtained showed the existence of some significant dissimilarities between the teachers whose working experience, on the one hand, varies between 0 to 5 years and those teachers whose experience varies between 6 to 15 years and those whose working experience varies between 16 to 25 years, and over 25 years, on the other hand, as regards *the time required for the remigrants pupils to adapt to the Romanian school system*. In this manner, the less experienced teachers, with a seniority of 0 to 5 years, 6 to 15 years,

believe that the pupils can adapt to school more rapidly, while teachers whose working experience is longer, from 16 to 25 years, consider it takes them a longer period of time to adapt (Turkey $t = 3,00$, $p < 0,05$), on a par with those with a working experience over 25 years (Turkey $t = 4,98$, $p < 0,05$), (Turkey $t = 4,11$, $p < 0,05$) (Table 6).

Table 6. Results for the post hoc t Turkey test

	From 0 to 5 years	From 6 to 15 years	From 16 to 25 years	Over 25 years
From 0 to 5 years	-	0,91	3,00*	4,98*
From 6 to 15 years		-	2,12	4,11*
From 16 to 25 years			-	1,95
Over 25 years				-

Note: level of statistical significance: * $p < 0,05$

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Most teachers from our country consider that a successful adaptation/re-adaptation of the pupils to a learning system is firstly due to the learning procurement background from the Mathematics and Communication subject matters (conversation and written message), unlike the teachers from other European countries who consider that school success depends mainly on the social skills development – responsibility, cooperation, independence – and on the emotional skills development – acknowledging the importance of emotional intelligence for shaping small children personality. This fact has some repercussions on the children who have returned to their home countries, because most of them have enrolled to one or two-lower classes than their current level of education. On the other hand, due of the period of time spent abroad, children have more or less forgotten Romanian language, thus becoming more difficult for them to adapt to Romanian school system.

The results of the study show that the turn to psychological and pedagogical experience for remigrants primary school pupils, induces a better adaptability to school prerequisites in a shorter or longer period of time, for all these children.

Nevertheless, the teacher with more professional background experience, due to the fact that do not resort to psycho-pedagogical guidance in their area of competence, consider that the period of time needed by the remigrants pupils to adapt to Romanian school system is far more increased. On the other hand, the less experienced teachers have resorted to psycho-pedagogical guidance and have noticed a faster adaptation of the remigrants pupils to the prerequisites of the Romanian primary school system.

Considering that the generalized economical imbalance and the fact that Romanians still have the desire to migrate, the remigration phenomenon could repeat itself. The issues connected to this successive migration/ remigration can be of major importance regarding these children's adaptation to different school systems.

The periodical changes of the social climate should bring forth a deeper analysis of the impact these phenomena have on children and, at the same time, there should be a greater willingness towards the psycho-pedagogical guidance offered by the Romanian school system.

REFERENCES

Brebulet, S. D. et all. "The Remigration of Romanian Children." *Migrant Children in Europe: The Romanian Case* (2013): 123.

Bruner, J., Oliver, R.R. and Greenfield, P. M. *Studies in Cognitive Growth*, London: Wiley (1966)

Catalano, H., "Readjustment and Learning Difficulties Specific to the Remigrant Child." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 149 (2014): 158-163.

Hatzichristou, C., and Diether H., "School Adaptation of Greek Children after Remigration Age Differences in Multiple Domains." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 26.5 (1995): 505-522.

Hatzichristou, C., and Diether H., "School performance and adjustment of Greek remigrant students in the schools of their home country." *Applied Psycholinguistics* 13.03 (1992): 279-294.

Neto, F., "Re-Acculturation and Adaptation Among Adolescents from Returned Portuguese Immigrant Families." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 42.1 (2012): 133-150.

Nogueras, J.A., and Prewitt-Diaz J. O., "The Remigration of the Puerto Rican Student as a Factor in School Adjustment." (1980).

WEBOGRAFY

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary
<http://www.unicef.ro/media/fenomenul-bullying-cum-il-depistam-si-cum-il-combatem-pentru-scoli-mai-sigure/>
www.kidsnews.ro