

**NON-NATIVE SPEAKER CHILDREN IN THE MOSCOW SCHOOL
SYSTEM: INTEGRATION PATH**

Tatyana N. Yudina

Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia,
e-mail: judinatn@rgsu.net

Abstract. The urgency of this topic is due to the increasing migration activity in Moscow, including educational migration. Migration flows are changing both quantitatively and qualitatively. Family migration takes place that requires not only employment for adults, but education for children. In the opinion experts, the total number of children of foreign migrants in Moscow schools is no less than 50 thousand people. The children of foreign citizens in Moscow schools became a “visible” group.

The school as a social institute has faced new problems, including education for non-native speaker kids. Here we proceed from the definition that “non-native children are the group of students whose families have recently moved to Russia, their parents also have problems with the Russian language, they speak their own native language at home. These are kids for whom the Russian language is not a native one, it is difficult for apprehension, understanding, and communication”.

At present, the problem of non-native student education remains poorly studied: lack of statistical data, information on their educational and professional climates and intensions, and interaction with peers and teachers. Moscow schools are not ready to educate foreign students. Educational programs do not take into account quite large share of non-native kids who should adapt to new cultural environment supposing changes of their values and standards but not requiring their identity change.

To reveal integration paths of non-native speaker children, the inquiry among the teenager students in comprehensive Moscow schools, as well as in-depth interviews of school teaching staff had been carried out. The obtained results have allowed us to reveal main pressure points which non-native speaker students face in the Moscow school system, to reveal their motives to study Russian language, and determine their life strategies. We have managed to reveal high motivation interest among migrants in host society language study: more than 80 % of non-native speaker children admitted that learning Russian is their top priority. Already in their teens, migrants realize that learning Russian can provide them with additional opportunities later in life in a new place: getting higher education, good work, appropriate communication with others. Being very interested in studying Russian, not all migrants want to forget their native language and

refuse to study it further. At present, comprehensive schools, unlike schools having an ethnocultural component, cannot provide children with the opportunity to learn the language of their people. 26 % of respondent migrant-kids expressed their concern that did not have the opportunity to learn their native language, although they would very much like to. 18 % of respondents told that they kept on studying their own language in their family, at evening classes, and at ethnocultural centers. We have discovered that the assimilation model of adaptation, which until recently was considered to be the most successful among specialists, is often not accepted by the migrants themselves. They are rather prone to an integration strategy when the assimilation of behavioral models and values of the host society does not demand full or partial giving up their own cultural identity.

Our research have confirmed the results obtained by other authors, it is necessary to develop state and municipal programs for including migrant children into the Russian educational system through Russian language teaching. Adaptation of foreign children would go faster if there were programs for teaching Russian as a foreign language in schools, including more information about the culture and traditions of other nations. It would be useful for teachers to attend training courses dedicated to work with multi-ethnic classes. The financial rewards for school teachers for additional work with migrant children is required, because the existing payment system does not provide for this.

For more complete inclusion of foreign children in the Russian-speaking environment, it is necessary to develop out-of-school activity, especially teamwork; create special programs for working with children during summer holidays, more actively involve them in hobby clubs. For each migrant child, an individual accompaniment system should be developed as a part of the educational process. It is also necessary to use such relatively low-cost measures as regular meetings with parents of migrant children.

Keywords: non-native speaker children; school education system; integration path

Introduction

Moscow historically attracts large flows of migrants. Those who arrived earlier and has been living in Moscow for several years bring also their families (Demintseva E.B., Peshkova V.M., 2014). About a third of migrants come with their children. The number of migrant kids increased owing to female migration. Migrants actively start families and have children in Moscow, who already attend Moscow schools or will attend soon. (Zayonchkovskaya Zh., Florinskaya Yu., Poletaev D., et al., 2014). As a result, in the recent five or six years the migration load on Moscow

schools has increased significantly. According to the Center for Sociological Research of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, in total, children from 80 foreign countries study in Moscow schools (Arefiev A.L., 2015). There are no accurate data on the number of migrant kids from the CIS countries in Moscow schools.

Taking into account the abovementioned, the aim of this research is to reveal the degree of non-native kid integration at different levels of social interaction: macro and micro environments, and individual level, as well as to study their integration paths in the Moscow formal education system.

Research method

The object of the research were the students of comprehensive megacity schools. The sample included teenager schoolchildren (12-16-year-old). A questionnaire survey has been used by the authors.

Students living in Moscow for different periods had been included in the sample, what allowed us to study the integration path of migrant children in the dynamics. Apart from the CIS migrant kids, Russian children were also included into the sample. It helped to understand the specific behavior and the features of social interaction of migrant kids and host nation kids.

As an additional study, we chose a method of in-depth talks with teachers in Moscow.

Results

Non-native students in the Moscow education system. Experts note that migration flow in Moscow leads to quite inhomogeneous distribution of migrant by districts and schools of the capital. They believe that in some of the metropolitan schools there are 4-10 % non-native kids, and in other there are 30-50 % of them (Vyzhutovich V., 2016), and this value sometimes reaches 70 % (Martynova M., 2014: 177).

Non-native children also experience difficulties when entering schools. Some school authorities do not want to accept migrant students and reject them referring to overpopulation. As a rule, these are high performance schools. Thus, segregation occurs at the school level, some schools select the best students, others take all the “remaining” (Konstantinovskiy D.L., Spakovskaya L.L., 2015). Parents-Muscovites try to avoid such schools, fearing that there would be a general low level of education and an unstable situation with discipline (Blagoveshchenskiy A., 2016).

One of the school principals gave a typical answer to the following inquiry question, “What are the criteria for the enrollment of migrant children into a comprehensive school?” “*We are obliged to take a kid because every kid has to learn, even if it is a kid from another country*”.

Below is the description of the situation with Russian language knowledge among migrant kids given by one principal of a Moscow school. She was

answered: “What problems, in your opinion, do migrant children face when they arrive in Moscow?” She answered: “*People who do not speak Russian can come in September, in May. A kid speaks in signs. We are used to body language. We recommend to send such a kid in a Russian language school, however parents often do not want to bring him/her there*”. Thus, school administrations look for various ways to solve such problems, “*We offer parents to put the child in the class that suits him in terms of knowledge. So, often eleven-year-old kid (the sixth-year students) attends lessons with the third-year students. We do not show off such situations*”.

There are difficulties in education. If earlier the team of a single class was stable for quite a long period of time, now, according to the figurative expression of the gymnasium No. 1540 director M.V. Moiseeva “*a class may be compared with a bus, in which someone will travel from the first to the final station, and someone will enter the bus just to ride to the next stop*” (Moiseeva M.V. et al., 2011).

Often migrant parents do not wish or refuse to concern themselves with their child education. “*The problem is not that we can't get through to the children, but that we can't get through to their parents. For migrant kids to be integrated into the host society, the whole family must make efforts*”, that is the typical answer of many school teachers (Kalinin A., 2016).

For teaching non-native speaker children in Moscow schools, extra classes are being practiced, guidance by a high-achieving student, etc. As school teachers themselves say, the main focus is on the quality of knowledge, “*The requirements are the same for all, regardless of the specifics of national character and traditions. The requirements are the same for migrants and for Muscovites*”.

The idea of cultural educational centers as an additional education structure is supported now in Moscow. Such centers operate on the basis of comprehensive schools in the afternoon. Teaching in other languages also begins. This avoids excessive closeness of the environment, facilitates organizational problems (taking into account the extensive territorial scale of the megacity) and allows a kid of any nationality to obtain the desirable knowledge (Martynova M., 2014: 183).

The Moscow Education Department has taken legislative and organization measures to include additional Russian language lessons for migrant kids. The Program for foreign migrant children integration into the Moscow educational environment has been developed, including a network of one-year Russian language schools - basic centers of social and cultural migrant adaptation. School administrations are aware of it. When asked, “*Do you know about special educational programs for migrant children?*” They usually answered, “*In each district there is a school that allows children*

who do not speak Russian to adapt and learn the language so they can go further on the program of Russian-language subjects.

Life strategies of non-native speaker children. To reveal main life strategies of migrant children, we have investigated their system of values and goals. We tested the following hypothesis: the higher the significance of traditional values of their peoples (family, child rearing, religious and social inclusion) and the lower the adaptive potential of these children themselves, the more difficult it is for them to integrate into the new society. Doubtless, that such universal traditional values (children, family, and national culture) get a greater role among foreign children, while the values responsible for successful integration in the host society remain secondary. There are gender differences. More than 60 % of girls-migrants called happy family and children their priorities, while only 48 % of their Muscovite peers agree with such values. About a half of migrant kids (6-8 grades) are focused on traditional values. But to the 10-11 grades we considered, traditional values no longer dominate, although they are still more significant than for adolescents of the ethno-dominant group.

Our conclusion is confirmed by the answers to the questionnaire, which related to the attitude of the respondents to the culture, traditions, and customs of their people. Among migrant kids of 6-8th and even 9th grades, few of them deeply interested in their national culture. Among high-school students, 36 % are actively interested in their own culture; 40 % has an average level of involvement in the native culture. However, such an interest is often passive: only 10 % of non-native speakers always read books and/or magazines about their native history and culture, and 21 % do it on occasion. The percentage of those who named works of national writers among their favorite books (9%) is insignificant.

Meanwhile, families of foreign schoolchildren carefully maintain interest in the culture of their people. About 59 % of students indicated that their families often read national books or the press, in about of 30 % of families the national language is used along with Russian, more than 40% of children said that their families celebrate national and religious holidays. It is fair to assume that such a reverent attitude to their national culture among parents and, above all, among the older generation causes in their children a heightened interest in their native culture. It should be noted that the assimilation model of adaptation, which until recently was considered to be the most successful among specialists, is often not accepted by the migrants themselves. They are rather prone to an integration strategy when the assimilation of behavioral models and values of the host society does not demand full or partial giving up their own cultural identity. Therefore, answers to the following question were especially interesting for us: “How

should people coming in another country behave?” Answers of respondents showed that ideas about this among migrant children and children of native Muscovites differ. So, Moscow children in 55% of cases indicated that migrants should follow the lifestyle and customs of local residents, and only 30% of them thought that “*visitors along with their customs should follow the lifestyle of the local population*”. Migrant children chose the latter answer in 58% of cases. It is important to emphasize that 15% of migrant schoolchildren are confident that it is in a foreign country new-comers first of all should preserve the national culture with its customs and standards of behavior. That is, this contingent of children is to a certain extent inclined to an isolation strategy of behavior. At the same time, the rejection of their own identity is considered acceptable by about 20% of migrants.

Discussion

Today in the World, there is a global tendency to recognize the need to provide migrants with active assistance, including language training, the provision of other educational services, and job search. Teaching migrant children the language of the local population is an important component of migrant integration projects, since language skills can be considered the first step to their successful adaptation (Martynova M., 2014: 173-195).

According to many researchers, it is the host society language skills that is the most important aspect of more easy assimilation and key success factor during teaching migrant kids in schools (Rumbaut R.G., 1997; Genesee F. et al., 2006; Christensen G. Stanat P., 2007). Rumbaut indicates that the younger a kid comes to a new country the faster he/she learns the language of the country. In the period between his/her six years and early teenage a kid learns new language easily. Note, that the school environment plays a special role.

Scientists note, that migrant kids especially those who poorly speak host society language or not speak at all require additional knowledge which local children do not need (Vernez G., Abrahamse A., 1996; OECD, 2015). Such kids face specific for migrants problems which may hinder their adaptation in school and communication with peers. Such problems include the high mobility of their families (migrant families change places of residence more often than local people); they are more susceptible to emotional stress when entering school, as they find themselves in new conditions of social and ethical standards; many of them have to part with some family members what is also a big burden on the psychological state of the child (Rumbaut R.G., 1995; Alba R., Holdaway J., 2013).

The answers of our respondents, to one degree or another, coinciding with the results of other scientists suggest that the education of migrant children

does not always take place in a friendly atmosphere; unfavorable inter-ethnic relations in the school is one of the aspects of this process.

At the same time, we believe that sometimes the scientific literature, which reveals the problem of the isolation of non-native speakers, does not always correctly interpret the causes of this phenomenon (Kotovskaya M.G., 2014:107-117). We believe that often the social isolation of migrant children in children's groups is associated with anti-migrant sentiments of adults in our society (Sadykova R., 2015: 68-73; Tanatova D.K., 2015:68-73), lack of social efforts directed to the necessary measures aimed at migrant schoolchildren support (Yudina T.N., Kireev E.Yu., 2016: 166-173). Sometimes, negative attitude toward foreign children results in their isolation. For example, native Muscovites-schoolchildren noted that one of the difficulties of communicating with newcomer children is “*that they don't want to communicate with others, communicate only among themselves*” (22 %).

Conclusion

Due to the widespread migration processes of the last decades, schools with mixed students have spontaneously appeared on the territory of Moscow. Migrant children mostly attend ordinary schools, where their socialization takes place in a low competitive environment among children from working families, often with social or medical problems. As for learning, there is no difference in academic achievements of migrant children compared to Russian children. There is no difference in their plans for higher education.

References

- Alba R., J. Holdaway. 2013. The children of immigrants in school: a comparative look at integration in the United States and Western Europe. NY: New York university press. 350 p.
- Arefiev, A.L. 2015. Obuchenie detey iz semey inostrannykh grazhdan v shkolakh Moskvy (The Education Of Children From Families Of Foreign Citizens In Moscow schools). *Vestnik RUDN, seriya Voprosy obrazovaniya: yazyki i spetsialnost* 5:149-160. (In Russian)
- Christensen G., Stanat P. 2007. Language policies and practices for helping immigrants and second-generation students succeed. The Transatlantic Task Force on immigration and integration. Washington DC: Migration policy institute. URL: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/ChristensenEducation091907.pdf>. [Accessed October 01 2018].
- Demoscope 2014. Demintseva, E.B., Peshkova, V.M. Migranty iz Sredney Azii v Moskve (Migrants from the Central Asia in Moscow) *Demoscope*

- Weekly*: 597–598. URL: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2014/0597/tema01.php> [Accessed September 9 2018]. (In Russian)
- Demoscope 2014. Zayonchkovskaya, ZH., Florinskaya, YU., Poletaev, D., Doronina, K. Migranty glazami moskvicey (Migrants through the eyes of Muscovites) *Demoscope Weekly* 605-606. 1-24 August 2014. URL: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2014/0605/tema06.php> [Accessed November 14 2018]. (In Russian)
- Genesee F., Lindholm-Leary K., Saunders W., Christian D. 2006. Educating English language learners: a synthesis of the empirical evidence research. NY: Cambridge university press. 245 p.
- Iyazyki.prosv 2016. Sadykova, R. Problemy obucheniya detey-inofonov \Russkiy yazyk kak inostranny (Problems of education of non-native speaker lerners\Russian language as a foreign). August 19 2016. URL: <http://iyazyki.prosv.ru/2016/08/children-volunteer/> [Accessed November 15 2018] (In Russian)
- Konstantinovskiy, D.L., Vakhshayn, V.S., Kurakin, D.Yu. 2008. Beg s prepyatstviyami. Komu dostupno kachestvennoe obshchee obrazovanie? (Hurdle race. Who can get quality general education?) In: M.K.Gorshkov (Ed), Rossiya reformiruyushchayasya. Annual. Issue 3. Moscow. Institute of Sociology of the RAS, pp. 142-158. (In Russian)
- Kotovskaya, M.G. 2014. Integratsionnye protsessy v molodezhnoy srede: problema adaptatsii migrantov (Integration processes among the young people: the migrant adaptation problem). *Dizayn i tekhnologii* 40(82): 107-117. (In Russian)
- Martynova, M. 2014. Shkolnoe obrazovanie v adaptatsii migrantov (zarubezhnye i rossiyskie modeli) (Formal education and migrant adaptation (foreign and Russian models). *Bulletin on Russian nation* 2: 173 – 195. (In Russian)
- OECD .2015. Immigrant students at school. Easing the journey towards integration. OECD publishing. URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264249509-en> (дата обращения: 01.10.2018).
- RG.RU 2018. Blagoveshchenskiy A. Shkolnaya zadacha postavila internet v tupik (School problem has put the Internet to a standstill) URL: <https://rg.ru/2016/02/18/shkolnaia-zadacha-postavila-internet-v-tupik.html> [Accessed October 1 2018]. (In Russian)
- RG.RU 2018. Vyzhutovich V. Obshchaya parta. Kogda deti migrantov i russkie deti uchatsya vmeste, ehto na polzu i tem i drugim? (Shared desk. When migrant and Russian children learn together, is it useful for both?) *Rossiyskaya gazeta* 6915(47). URL: <https://rg.ru/2016/03/03/reg-urfo/komu->

- na-polzu-sovmestnoe-obuchenie-detej-migrantov-i-russkih.html [Accessed November 1 2018]. (In Russian)
- Rosbalt 2016. Kalinin, A. Zhdet li Rossiyu bunt migrantov? (Is a riot of migrants expected in Russia? URL: <http://www.rosbalt.ru/piter/2016/06/16/1523448.html> [Accessed November 15 2018]). (In Russian)
- Rumbaut R.G. 1995. The new Californians: comparative research findings on the educational progress of immigrant children // *California's Immigrant children: Theory, research, and implications for educational policy* / R.G. Rumbaut, ed. San Diego: University of California. 17-70p.
- Rumbaut R.G. 1997. Assimilation and its discontents: between rhetoric and reality // *International migration review*. 31: 923–960p.
- School. Msk. 2011. Moiseeva, M.V., Rozenblyum, S. A. Obuchenie detey-migrantov v rossiyskikh shkolakh kak odin iz aspektov inklyuzivnogo obrazovaniya (Teaching migrant children in Russian schools as one of the aspects of inclusive education). URL: https://school.msk.ort.ru/integration/files/moiseeva-rozenblum_v02.doc [Accessed December 15 2018]. (In Russian)
- Tanatova, D.K. 2015. Xenophobia as a socially dangerous factor of the current world. *Social policy and sociology*. Vol. 14. No. 3 (109). Part 1. P. 68-73. DOI: 10.17922/2071-3665-2015-14-3-1-68-73.
- Ushakov, N.Ya. 2015 Obuchenie russkomu yazyku detey-migrantov na stupeni osnovnogo obshchego obrazovaniya v shkole s poliehtnicheskim sostavom: problemy i sposoby ikh resheniya (Teaching Russian language to migrant children at the level of basic general education in a multiethnic school: problems and ways of their solutions). *Molodoi uchenyi*. 10.1: 30-32. URL: <https://moluch.ru/archive/90/18676/> [Accessed December 8 2018]. (In Russian)
- Vernez G., Abrahamse A. 1996. How immigrants fare in U.S. education. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. 83 p.
- Yudina, T.N., Kireev, E.Yu. (2016) Social Work with Migrants and Refugees in the Subject Field of Sociology: Establishing the Problem. *Social Policy and Sociology*. Vol. 15. No. 5 (118). P. 166–173. DOI: 10.17922/2071-3665-2016-15-5-166-173