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Vietnamese immigration in Poland: issues of education and integration for children

Summary

This paper investigates the issues of education and integration conditions for Vietnamese immigrants' children in Poland. These points of interest were primarily treated as the additional research connected with our teaching practices. It was conducted as an empirical study with three non-standardised interviews with the families, informal observations, and group discussions. Regardless of the limitation of a perhaps not significantly substantial range of data, the study led to the outlining of some concerns connected with the process of education and integration of the children in these Vietnamese families. The main four findings which are related to the research question are: the cultural differences and expectations of the parents, the language barriers of the parents, the typical stereotypes of educating children at home, and the conflicts of self-identification in the future. The research implied that children from all the immigrant groups should be assessed as to their growth as well as to the quality of their adaptation into the society.

Keywords: immigration, issues in education with immigration, Vietnamese children, issues of education and integration

Our preparations for the course of Childhood in Emigration and on the Borders of Cultures for Polish pedagogy students led to awareness and of understanding about the community of the Vietnamese and some difficulties for their children in becoming educated and integrated within this society. This could be seen as the first reason for our on-going observations and studies on the different generations of Vietnamese immigration in Poland. Although the primary purpose was to search for material that could be useful for future teachers of early education, it resulted in finding the reasons why people from our Vietnam longed to live in a new and different country. Further research questions also include: "who are they?", "what do they do for living?", and "how do they live?". Last but not least, we wanted to know more about how their children learn as well as wishing to have a closer look at their perceptions on education, and this issue is going to be the main theme of the article presented.

Following Cline et al. (2009: 29), the concern about children learning probably would not allow any migratory parents to satisfy it, although:

Childhood is assumed to be a time for play, education and socialisation.

That statement is another important reason for the quest connected with the real situation of the children from Chechenia staying in Gdańsk as applicants for the status of refugee. The information was obtained during our participation in a project called: “Program Aktywności Obywatelskiej” in 2014. When it comes to educational situations, it must be stated that the children from Chechenia failed to learn and communicate with their teachers and friends. They did not meet the requirements of their schools. The cultural differences created a barrier among them and Polish pupils and their language also made better integration through learning impossible. The members from our programme applied for a grant from the Rada Miasta of Gdańsk and invited teachers from Warsaw to teach these children during the summer of 2014. The reason for inviting teachers from the capital city of Poland was the fact that they were much more experienced in working with immigrant children. They all had to overcome their stressful moments, but at the same time had great achievements after the summer. This situation provoked questions as to how Vietnamese children would do in similar cases and how they would solve their problems.

The experiences from meetings with our international and Polish friends in that programme gave us a lot of ideas for teaching materials. However, when we met our students in the classroom, it turned out that our understandings about the immigrants and their problems were not accepted by the pedagogy students. For example, at first the students did not believe that they would need to teach children from other countries in Gdańsk because – as the students replied – they did not see many immigrants around. A similar perception was recognised and admitted by the Rada Miasta of Gdańsk when about twenty people from other countries in that programme went to meet them. The vice President of Gdańsk was surprised to get to know that the city has been lived in by many immigrants and international citizens. The situation alerted both sides, and for us it was another motivation to continue to write this article to share with the academic community our observations about issues in educating childhood immigrants.

These reasons were the most essential motivations for writing this paper aimed at finding the issues of education and integration of Vietnamese children in northern Poland (Pomerania Region). This is an empirical study using three short interviews with Vietnamese parents who have children from 2 to 6 years old in Trójmiasto, the observations conducted while visiting the families, and the group discussions. All sources of data collection focused on finding the answers to the following question:

What are the educational and integration issues for children of Vietnamese immigrants to Poland?

In order to fully understand and root the issues related to immigrants from Vietnam, this paper starts with a review of the literature related to problems of education for immigrants retrieved from “Taylor and Francis Online” for social sciences.

A review of literature

It is undeniable that immigration brings to Poland both problems and benefits because it is “multi-faceted and not something that can be simply explained or argued against” (Allan 1989: 156). However, it could become a concern for any immigrants from any non-European country, not just the Vietnamese, to be aware of the patriotic slogan of “Polska dla Polaków”.

According to Allan (1989), the case of Australia emphasised that “immigration is not merely a question of economics, race, or ethnicity” (p. 154). It is not only a political, but an ethical decision which may lead to more questions about the process and belief about assimilation, integration, and multiculturalism. This notion points out the general views on immigration in which the immigrants will assimilate into the targeted community or will be assimilated to that community with the long process of integration in multicultural environments. Differently from Allan (1989), Witmer and Culver (2001) figured out immigration as a potential source of a traumatic stressor. Similarly to the view of immigration as causing traumatic effects to any individual, Berger & Weiss (2003) found that:

Immigration involves separations, losses, changes, conflicts and demands that severely challenge or shatter individuals’ past ways of making meaning and defining themselves, it could be conceptualized as a traumatic stressor (Berger & Weiss 2003: 22).

In addition, the trauma of immigration should be considered to be vital for increasing posttraumatic growth with effective strategies, because it is often not recognised owing to the loss of social support.

The absence of social recognition further exacerbates the sense of loneliness and being misunderstood among new immigrants. Furthermore, because society often fails to recognise and validate immigration-related losses...it is more difficult for immigrants to give themselves permission to recognise and mourn these losses (Tedescgi, Park, and Calhoun 1998: 34).

Although multi-faceted immigration may bring both good and bad influences to societies, more concerns related to that field were recognised in Witmer and Culver (2001), Berger & Weiss (2003), and Drachman & Shen (1991). Immigration pushes the immigrants to the multi-phase process with plenty of stressors (Drachman & Shen 1991). In order to understand these elements which are stressful for immigrants, the review will later be devoted to the literature on the issue of immigration as well as some aspects connected with immigrant children in education and integration. However, because of the

limited sources of data collection, and the research sample limited to the cases of some Vietnamese families living in Trójmiasto, the review will also involve the section devoted to the differences of Vietnamese immigrants in Poland thematised from the perspectives of an insider.

Immigrants and their situation

As mentioned earlier, Polish citizens are, to a certain extent, aware of the new period of international migration in Europe, in which the characteristics of the newcomer differentiate immigration from its previous stages. According to Nguyen and Siciarek (2015), there are big groups of migrants from Ukraine, Vietnam, China, India – including the applicants for refugee status, and those who are at times called *illegal immigrants*.

In the nineties, Campani (1993) categorised the important features of the new groups of migration to Europe as:

- (i) the growing importance of clandestine migrants and refugees as a consequence of both European migratory policies and the degrading life conditions in the Third World and eastern Europe;
- (ii) the growing importance of unaccompanied women, migrating to enter the labor force, along with the migration of unaccompanied children;
- (iii) the involvement of ethnic and social groups traditionally not migratory (e.g., the case of the Tamils from Sri Lanka);
- (iv) the involvement of more and more countries, both as receivers and senders of migrants (some countries being both of emigration and immigration, e.g., Portugal and Poland), in the course of which certain countries, especially in southern Europe, have made the transition from emigration to immigration countries;
- (v) a new East-West migration which had been stopped in the post-1945 years and;
- (vi) the increasing importance of the service sector (including services to private persons) and of the informal economy for the absorption of the immigrant labor force (Campani 1993: 507–508).

The current trends of immigration are somehow different from those listed by Campini (1993). However, some characteristics from the current wave of immigrations are not different from previous stages. Among them one might think of the adaptive process of the local social structures that are, from now on, to respond to the huge changes in a society when there is more and unknown labour, more unaccompanied family members, and more social needs. In particular, immigration brings important issues which require the reaction of civil society for a movement of social tolerance (Campini 1993).

These lie mainly in the fact that immigration has become a symbol of the difficulties and contradictions of Italian society: the poor delivery of social services, the problems of housing, the ‘management’ of the labor market (for example, the inability of labor offices and agencies to find work, especially in southern Italy) and the spread of the informal economy.

The arrival of a limited number of immigrants has provoked the explosion of these contradictions (...) (Campini 1993: 511).

Another important issue which should be taken into consideration when regarding immigration is education for the children. According to Kong, Yoon, and Yu (2010: 267), “education is highly correlated to high paying employment in the future. The children of international marriages suffer from language problems, bullying and various other types of discriminations”. Beside education, the issues of ethics in human rights should be noticed. It is related to the treatment of immigrants in a country.

Immigration policies determine which people enter, their characteristics, from where they come, and in what numbers, while policies toward immigrants determine whether they and their families have access to education, housing, employment, welfare benefits, and citizenship (Weiner 1995: 75).

It could be seen obviously from Weiner (1995) that immigrants are both officially or unofficially categorised when they enter a country. The issues from paying less attention to human rights would lead the immigrants to become subject of discrimination and that would later influence the ability for the unaccompanied members of immigrant groups to access housing, education, employment, social benefits, and attain normal legal status. Similar situations are found in Portugal. Cardoso (2007) reveals new concerns of public policy regarding access to services, education, health care, and safety at work for the new groups of immigrations. However, the concerns are different from previous reviewed cases because they do not refer to the situation in Eastern Europe.

In short, no matter what may be the origin of immigrants or their reasons for leaving their own homelands, immigration creates more concerns as well as potentials for the city that they settle in. Since the potentials of immigration will not be focused on in this paper, the issues or concerns are ranged from national policies to lower levels of services. From the review, several issues can be connected to the areas of local law, labour work force, the features of legalising the migratory status, education, social services, human rights, health care, and a new definition of social tolerance.

Issues for immigrant children in education and integration

The issues that immigrant children confront when living in foreign countries are diversified and different for every single child and this can be identified from many aspects of one's life, both spiritual and physical. However, within the scale of this study, these are aspects of education and integration for immigrant children that are reviewed for deeper understanding the research area.

In the first place, some generalisations related to the challenges or problems immigrant children face will be presented from a number of studies from different contexts (Olsen

1997; Shields & Behrman 2004; Toppelberg & Collins 2010; Tienda & Haskin 2011). Among the researchers, Shields & Behrman (2004) seem to synthesise the whole picture of the main challenges during an immigrant child's life in both his family and society recognised as (1) *Less-educated parents*, (2) *Low-wage work with no benefits*, (3) *Language barriers*, (4) *Discrimination and racism*, (5) *Poverty and multiple risk factors*, and (6) *Lack of supports*. Similarly though more straightforwardly, Tienda & Haskin (2011) determined that *education*, *health*, *poverty*, and *assimilation* are the issues immigrant students face with serious problems. Regardless of what and how the problems or challenges are specified by various researchers, it is realised that all these sets of categories or taxonomies are related to each other and presumably cause difficulties for immigrants trying to integrate into a new society. Specifically, the educational environment in which immigrant children are involved when they move to a new country may be the first-place-challenge that the immigrant children experience.

One of the most important challenges specified by the above-mentioned researchers is the language barrier, which is obviously one of the biggest problems hindering an immigrant's full potential at school. In this sense, Tienda & Haskin's (2011: 6) study results show that:

... minority students who begin kindergarten with limited oral English proficiency fall behind native speakers in their reading ability, resulting in a substantial achievement gap by fifth grade.

The problem of the language barrier becomes even more serious when the parents are less-educated and cannot speak the host language. In such circumstances, students must deal with almost all of the difficulties and problems at school themselves owing to their parents' inability to communicate with the school (Shields & Behrman 2004). Besides, in comparison with the previous generations of immigrants, in correlation with a period of high socio-economic inequality, contemporary immigrant children are recognised as facing a higher risk of living in poverty, having fewer chances to access medical care, having a higher rate of high school dropout, and many problems with behaviour (Tienda & Haskin 2011).

Apart from the language barrier, discrimination is identified as another vital cause in the academic setting leading to challenges for immigrant children. Discrimination happens in education when children who come from different cultures cannot get along with the host countries and especially, they are not accepted by their classmates and even the teachers as mentioned by Gregor and Green (2011: 423)

... teaching and learning, **and** they **too** face a racially and linguistically altered community.

The consequence of discrimination against immigrant children is pointed out by Shields & Behrman (2004) as follows:

Thus, while children from immigrant backgrounds enter school with very positive attitudes toward education, by adolescence they can become disillusioned, and their attitudes toward teachers and scholastic achievement can turn negative. (p. 7)

Adair (2015) strengthened Shields & Behrman's findings by demonstrating that discrimination causes adverse effects on children's development and their academic performance.

Secondly, the integration which immigrant children must undergo to become part of the host society, is connected with some problems that are found both in their families and in stereotypes cultivated by a given society. A major issue leading to conflict between the generations in many immigrant families is identified as an *acculturation gap*. The acculturation gap emerges when members of a family do not share "the same voice" in language usage, behaviours, attitudes and values. It is, as specified by Marsiglina, Kulis, Fitz Harris and Becerra (2013: 2), "a process of cultural adaptation characterised by changes in different psychosocial dimensions of individuals, families, and communities". In immigrant families, the conflict and discord between parents and children occurs because of an acculturation gap leading to the children's deviant behaviour (Mogro-Wilson 2008). In other words, the acculturation gap in such families leads to difficulties in "children's adjustment psychologically at school and in other life domains" (Birman and Poff, 2011). As a result, this makes children feel lost in both their families and the society as they cannot determine what would be better for them when standing between two options of integrating into the new culture or keeping their heritage culture. The stereotypes or prejudices about Asian students from Western teachers or students such as "passiveness", "quietness", and "indecision" (Coll, Basel, Karger 2012) may prevent immigrant children from being willing to socialise or communicate with the people around.

In a study about Vietnamese immigrants in the Polish context, Nowicka (2014) states that:

Poles find it difficult to deal with the Vietnamese because of their low expressiveness, i.e. not showing emotions and not expressing opinions, which is perceived as "secretiveness. (p. 218)

On the other hand, from the Vietnamese side, the researcher recognised that the privacy characteristic for the Poles might provoke the immigrant perceptions of Poland to be closed and sad. The wrong assumptions about each other may lead to difficulties in smooth integration among Vietnamese and Poles.

In short, the process of adaptation to the education and integration of children from Vietnamese immigrants causes serious problems for their comprehensive development.

The differences between of Vietnamese immigrants in Poland

Similarly to other groups of immigrants in Poland, Vietnamese people “move to wealthier western countries” (Tedescgi, Park, and Calhoun 1998) for multiple reasons, which could serve as the key to classify and describe the characteristics of different waves of immigration (Nowicka 2014).

People who leave developing countries to move to wealthy western countries are frequently looked on as fortunate winners of a better life while their pain goes invalidated (Tedescgi, Park, and Calhoun 1998: 34).

However, Vietnamese immigrants differ from other Asian groups in many ways that could not be easily identified and statistically mapped. They inherit the stereotypes of being obedient and oppressed which is better than being confronted from generations to generations with the philosophy of Confucius.

Stereotypes of Asian students among Western teachers and students include “silent”, “quiet”, “passive”, “non-assertive”, and “poor communicators”... These cultural values of quietness and restraint of self-assertion are reflected in parenting styles (Coll, Basel, and Karger 2012: 3).

According to Nowicka (2014), the Vietnamese community in Poland is the largest immigrant group whose culture is non-European with a current estimate of around 35 thousand people. Two big waves of Vietnamese immigrations are recognised and each wave has different features. However, regardless of the communicative and cultural values for the next generations of these waves who are born and grown up in Poland, being, learning, and living in the same political system and environment would not allow Vietnamese to be less different.

The young Vietnamese have a feeling that it is difficult for them to fully “melt” into the Polish society because of physical differences which Poles perceive as noticeable and big (Nowicka 2014: 215).

If we bear in mind that each community is unique and realise as well the fact that the Vietnamese are the largest group of immigrants in Poland, usually misidentified as Chinese or other groups from South-East Asian countries, this is one of the most unwanted and annoying phenomena for any Vietnamese.

In addition, Vietnamese people are different within the immigrant community of those from Vietnam. According to Nowicka (2014), there are people from two waves and each wave has a third group as the next generation. However, we would like to present the differences from our undocumented observation during our connections and integrations with the community.

As for all other immigrants, the policies for foreigners in Poland classify Vietnamese to be (1) with legal documents and (2) illegal documents. For those with legal documents, people are categorised into having (1) visas, (2) a temporarily living card for the first period of 15 months, (3) a temporarily living card for second period of 1 to 3 years, (4) 5-year living card, (5) 10-year living card, and (6) Polish citizenship for those married to Poles. For cases of illegal documents, the Vietnamese are classified into illegal immigration and expired-legal documents with no conditions to re-apply for new status. According to Celna (2016), the cases of Vietnamese illegally entering Poland were still on top of the statistics¹.

Vietnamese children can be grouped differently in accordance with their reasons for moving to Poland, their complicated connections with this society, their learning capacities, and so on.

Table 1. Major differences among Vietnamese immigrants concerning children

Self-identification of Vietnamese Immigrants in Poland						
<p>The first wave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Started in 1950s, came to a peak in the 1960s to 1980s – Young elite Vietnamese to study and stay in Poland (Nowicka, 2014) 		<p>The second wave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Started 1990s – Vietnamese come to Poland for multiple reasons, but majority for economic reasons (Nowicka, 2014) 				
<p><u>Children of the first wave</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Born in Poland – Learning is priority for their parents. – No problems with languages or cultural integration with Poles. 	<p>The third group</p>	<p><u>Children of the second wave</u></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Born in Poland – Learning can be or not be a priority depending on a given family’s background and economic conditions </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Born in Vietnam – Learning might take place but it is not the priority in one’s family life </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Problems with language and cultural integrations </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Born in Poland – Learning can be or not be a priority depending on a given family’s background and economic conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Born in Vietnam – Learning might take place but it is not the priority in one’s family life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Problems with language and cultural integrations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Born in Poland – Learning can be or not be a priority depending on a given family’s background and economic conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Born in Vietnam – Learning might take place but it is not the priority in one’s family life 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Problems with language and cultural integrations 						
<p>All cases may get married to Poles or other Vietnamese which may lead to the differences in the quality of the long process of education of their children in Poland.</p>						

¹ Celna I.(2016): Ze statystyk straży granicznej wynika, że w 2015 roku zatrzymano na wschodniej granicy 239 osób, które nielegalnie przekroczyły granicę. 203 z nich to Wietnamczycy. W tym roku zatrzymano 89 osób, z czego 64 to obywatele Wietnamu, którzy, jak widać, wciąż są najbardziej liczną grupą podejmującą tego rodzaju nielegalne próby.

Both Vietnamese parents of the first wave	Vietnamese and Poles' parents of the first wave	Both Vietnamese parents of the second wave		Vietnamese and Poles parents of the second wave	New young couples of the second wave with 1–6 year-old children
– Children had good conditions and were as fluent in Polish as Poles.		Children were born in Vietnam and brought to Poland	Children were born in Poland	– Children had good conditions and were as fluent in Polish as Poles. – Children may not know any Vietnamese. – Language at home is both Polish and Vietnamese, depending on the family it could be only Vietnamese at home.	– Children were born in Poland. – Parents have limited knowledge of language. – Speaking Vietnamese at home and Polish at school. – It depends on the family circumstances and whether they had Polish babysitters before being sent to nursery schools with other Polish children.
– Children may communicate in Vietnamese, but limited. – Language at home is both Polish and Vietnamese, depending on the family it could be only Vietnamese at home.	– Children may not know any Vietnamese. Only Polish. – Language at home is Polish.	– Parents have limited capacity of Polish fluency. Vietnamese is the only language at home or broken Polish (limited cases). – Depends on the economic conditions of the parents; children will study with Poles and like Poles. – Language and culture differences are the problems		– Children had good conditions and were as fluent in Polish as Poles. – Children may not know any Vietnamese. Only Polish. – Language at home is Polish.	

The self-identification of Vietnamese children can be partially found in Nowicka (2014). The reality of Vietnamese differences should also be clear and known for policy-makers in order to enable them to take care of the new generations better, and also when the children were born in Poland both with and without legal documental status of their parents. There must be reasons for them to focus on earning money only, but not lead a normal life. The differences were also claimed by Vietnamese originated from the first wave of immigration.

All Vietnamese people of my generation learned a lot and they study abroad or at some prestigious institutions, but these new generation pupils get mediocre grades. So that has changed somewhat; they are average pupils. My generation had parents who came here to study at universities, as my father did. In my family, much emphasis was put on education, and now the majority of Vietnamese people come from Vietnam to earn money only (Nowicka 2014: 217).

In conclusion, although the Vietnamese are still judged as difficult to deal with by the Poles (Nowicka 2014) because their culture is far from showing emotions openly or expressing opinions, they work hard, respect the system, and understand the limits of our strange non-European appearance as not to annoy others. However, the issues brought into this paper will be mainly concentrated around education and integration for Vietnamese children regarding their different family conditions as well as historical reasons of immigration.

Research methods

This empirical study was conducted to find out the issues of children of Vietnamese immigrants in Pomerania (North Poland) related to their education and integration.

With the aim of understanding the difficulties of our people in this country and preparing updated knowledge for our course preparation that links to the teaching of lessons, the review of literature guided us to collect the data using informal interviews with three families who have children who are less than 6 years old. The observation was applied when visiting the families and the focus was on how the communicating process happened between the parents and their children. The data for group discussions were unintentionally collected during one available meeting to discuss how different children will grow up in Poland in terms of education and integration into the Polish culture.

The research participants in this study were limited to families living in the Pomerania Region with their children aged from 1 to 6 years old. They belong to the category of new young couples of the second wave who have recently immigrated to Poland. These participants were both Vietnamese parents and all their children are now learning at kindergartens. The first family has one three year-old son. The second family has one three and a half year-old daughter and a six year-old son. The third family has one two year-old daughter and five year-old son.

The interview was non-standardised with only one main theme about the issues that the children are facing. Similarly to the interviews, the observation and group discussions were informal to understand the problems each family has been struggling with. These research tools were used to collect data for the research question of *what are the educational and integration issues for children of Vietnamese immigrants to Poland?* Since the limitation of this study was the range of data collection, it was analysed with the use of the technique of data mining.

Findings

From the data analysis, the findings show that the children of young Vietnamese immigrants may potentially encounter problems in their education and integration due to the current constraints. These constraints include: the cultural differences and expectations of their parents, the typical stereotype of educating children at home, and future issues rooted in the family

and its economic conditions. Although the data from group discussions and observations were somehow different from the interviews, the results shared following common issues which possibly influence children's education and integration process in Poland.

Cultural differences and expectations of their parents

Cultural differences was the first issue that the data from all research tools has had in common. When the groups of Vietnamese families were asked about how differently their children would be educated and integrated, they all discussed and agreed that the differences between Vietnamese and Polish cultures in nurturing children would confuse their children. A similar perception was found from our observations about the ways these participants' children were educated at home. It was shown in their communications among the family members. It could be seen that children were treated differently by their families of KT, TD and BQ². A child from KT appeared to be under pressure and controlled by his parents during the meetings. This KT's child had to ask his parents for every movement to play, to eat, or to interact with other children. And if an action was done without permission, it would be assumed as disobedience and misbehaviour. Different cases were found in the families of TD and BQ where the children had more freedom in doing anything to do with eating, playing, learning, and other activities during the meetings. These children appeared to be more independent with their own decisions and no sign of being oppressed could be found.

However, there was something that these children had in common – the failure to express their feelings or desires with people other than their parents. They showed no interest in sharing their ideas with the visitors. When asked, the action of ignoring or not answering the friends' of their parents was considered to be misbehaviour. It is rooted in the tradition of respecting the elderly, especially their parents' friends or older generations.

This finding somehow annoyed or made Vietnamese children in Poland confused about how they should behave in a Vietnamese community or in the context of the daily basis of Polish society. At school, children may be educated with individual responsibilities for what they do and what they want. However, the Vietnamese believed that children must obey their parents and do whatever is permitted by their parents or do as they are told. Two opposite practices of cultures confuse Vietnamese children now and will do so in their future until they fully recognise their rights.

In addition to these findings, the data from the interviews also presented the in-depth understandings of the differences which clarified the cultural differences in details in the other categories.

No, in the first few weeks, he did not want to go into the class. Now, he does not even want to kiss goodbye when I take him to school [CT03].

² Name codes for 3 families of Vietnamese participants.

The case of TD's family with 3 year-old son was paid attention to because this boy was a little slow with language in both Vietnamese and Polish. Different situations were found in the families of BQ and KT: each has one younger daughter and an older son. When asked about how their children integrated with friends, the mothers perceived as follows:

They talked and played with each other, not with us much. They studied at school in Polish while we don't. We are too busy with earning the living so we cannot expect much from them as in Vietnam [CK05].

Oh, you must know that we have to accept the fact our children in the future will not know anything about Vietnamese culture. They will have to decide, not that we can force them as our parents do to us. They have not much to learn and to do with Vietnamese within small Vietnamese community in our neighbours. And what they learn and practice from school will be for the different styles of living in Poland [CB06].

These mothers accept the fact that their children will possibly have different perceptions about cultures. They respect that their children are learning within the Polish system of education although they all knew and were worried that the next generations would be totally different from their origins.

Although all families in this research noticed the possibilities of losing their cultural heritage, they valued highly the educational conditions for their children since they enable their children to become more independent and adaptable to the society here, not in Vietnam.

The typical stereotypes of educating children at home

The data analysis also presents the findings that Vietnamese children might be passive, silent, and quiet... as other Asian people. (Coll, Basel, and Karger 2012). However, the participants in this study reflected the cases of unexpected stereotypes. Children from all cases were active, noisy, and interacted with other children including the case of KT's family after having been given permission by the parents. When bringing up this concern and asking the participants about it during the meetings, all pairs of parents decided that their children integrated well in the classroom with Polish children.

The stereotypes were also found in the interview data with the mothers. When asked about their children, the fathers contributed in general during the communication in groups. They all believed that the children would be fine at school because the schooling conditions were good. However in the interviews, the data was mainly from the female members of each family. The mother of TD's family confirmed:

His teacher says that he adapts well and integrates well with his Polish friends. He has no problems to play with friends [ST01].

The other two cases had similar perceptions about their children.

He is a bit quiet but his teacher says that he is good at math [SK04].

No, both the kids are active and have fun at school because they are used to be with Polish cultures from their babysitters and friends from nursery schools in a few years [SB02].

The reasons for not mentioning the girls in these families were because they were still not learning as much at school as the boys were. The two girls in the families of BQ and KT were similar to the case of the boy in TD's family because they could not share much with their mothers with limited language ability and capacity to talk about schooling.

Language barriers of the parents

Another problem for the children's conditions of education and integration could be the language barriers of the parents. It was because the parents in this research were from the current wave of immigrants to Poland. This wave was different from the first wave who had good language skills and knowledge to settle well in the society. The families in this context cared less about cultural adaptation; however they accepted the differences and ignored the problem of communicative abilities.

The issue of the parents' language barriers could be used as a voice in the debate on the values of mother tongue or the language in the migratory country. The parents wanted their children to keep using the mother-tongue not only because of keeping the traditions, but also to reduce the gap arising from the limitations of their Polish language capacity.

According to Hu, Torr, and Whiteman (2014), the values of home language or the language in the migratory country were perceived differently by educators, but fundamentally all agreed to focus on the best interests of children.

The language barriers might limit their children from learning and the growth of their educational process because the educational roles from parents should not be excluded.

Parents often assume didactic and dyadic roles in motivating their children to learn and are involved with many other social participants in the process (Corson, Bernhard, and Gonzalez-Mena 1998: 246).

The reasons are however not so obvious if we take into consideration the results of the data analysis. All the families agreed that their Polish language capacity would make a distance between them and their children in the future, create a gap of education at home due to the lack of in-depth communication with the teachers of their children, and in supporting them with doing homework or solving educational problems. The following extracts from the interviews would partly clarify this point.

Now, it would not be a problem because they mainly play at school. But I am worried that in the future I may not help them to learn or do homework. It could be worse when I seldom understand what the teachers mean. We mainly say "dzień dobry, dziękujemy, and do widzenia [LK08].

I agree with you. We have no time and energy to study Polish at school now. This limited Polish cannot help much. If the teacher wants to tell me something long, I will ask someone to help [LT06].

It could be seen from the families of KT and TD that they visualise the possible issues for the future condition of their children's education. It would not stop at that point because the limited ability of Polish speaking would kill the chances for further interactions or integrations with Polish friends' and families' of their children. Any efforts to celebrate the integrated activities would end with uncomfortable feelings if both sides did not have a common language for communication other than Polish and Vietnamese as sign language or English, for example. This case would hinder the chance for their children to be more "melted" into the cultures of Poles. However, the family of BQ had different idea.

Don't worry. The children will find out how to deal with their learning and socialising. I do not think of interrupting or intervene into our children's learning [LB07].

The extract LB07 showed that they accepted the situations and would let their children grow as naturally as possible in the context. However, we thought that the other two perceptions should be considered in the long run.

The conflicts of self-identification in the future

The next discussed issue was connected to one obvious point from Nowicka (2014).

The trouble is rooted in the multilayered thinking about the Vietnamese identity. Although that identity is a matter of choice, it is not acceptable to refer to a person born to Vietnamese parents in a different way (e.g. a Pole). Such a person is described as "a Vietnamese who does not feel being a Vietnamese" (Nowicka 2014: 225).

Although the data from all research tools did not focus on this issue, the families implied different points of view. They all confirmed their knowledge and experiences from cases of other Vietnamese families that no matter how Vietnamese children tried to be one with the Polish system and with its education, society would still discriminate against them. There is only one exception, and that is the physical image of the child – in the case of their Vietnamese parent's marriage with a Polish spouse, resulting in their looking more Polish than Vietnamese. Such children seem to not be discriminated against.

Conclusions

Bearing in mind the statistics from Nowicka (2014), the following data require better understanding for children of Vietnamese immigrants.

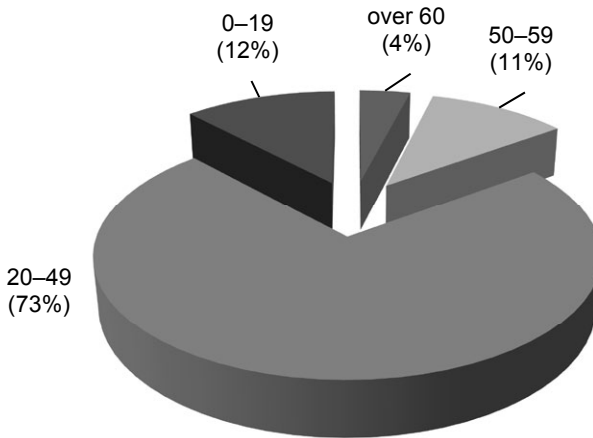


Chart 1. The distribution of age in Vietnamese group of immigrants

Source: developed from Nowicka (2014: 223).

It can be seen from Chart 1 that the possibility of 85% of young Vietnamese would bring about a huge group of possible newborn children in the forthcoming future in Poland. As education is always considered important from a Vietnamese perspective, the conditions for this new generation might create a lot of problems and worries for their parents, related to proper education for their children.

From the findings, it can be concluded that the children of Vietnamese immigrants will possibly have more issues in their education and integration. It may influence greatly the growth of children even more when the issues are not properly recognised by Polish teachers, educators, and educational policy makers. It is because “immigration experience is a developmental process in which children juggle cultural and linguistic differences between home and society, and discusses ways in which the process of the immigrant experience affects psychological development” (Jensen 2007: 38).

Although the language barriers of the parents in this research were never recognised from the previous cases of Vietnamese immigrants, more and more cases will be similar to those from this research participants. It is because the origins of the current wave are not similar to the cases of elite young Vietnamese students from the 1950s. In addition, other issues should be managed to facilitate children of young Vietnamese immigrants because of the possibility to encounter the problems from cultural differences and expectations of their parents, the typical stereotypes of educating children at home, and the conflicts of self-identification in the future.

As a conclusion, we “borrow” the concept from Kimberlin (2009) to emphasise on the call for being aware of the issues for Vietnamese children living in Poland now and in the future.

The only successful immigrant adaptation process was full assimilation into the new culture, with abandonment of the culture of origin. However, more recent sociological theory has acknowledged that successful cultural adaptation can take many forms. Theories of segmented assimilation propose that immigrant acculturation occurs at different rates and in different ways for different immigrants and immigrant groups, influenced by both individual and contextual factors. Kimberlin (2009: 764–765)

It was believed that full assimilation into new culture could be classified as successful adaptation. However, the European Union respects the diversities, and Vietnamese groups of immigrants have well adapted to the current society. In order that Vietnamese children may be better balanced to grow up safely and successfully in the national system, it is essential to pay attention to these and other unexplored issues for them to learn, to integrate, and to be members of the society with multicultural backgrounds.

To conclude, the following statement would generally support our implications from the educational aspect of this paper.

If the educational system functions properly, they should acquire all of the social tools required to function effectively in the society, including mastery of the official language and many other social capacities as well. This does not mean, however, that the children of immigrants can be expected to be like the children of the majority in every respect or that the immigrants themselves have to conform to every established practice (Carens 2014: 545).

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