

**Abstract of Dissertation under the title**

**„ Hungarian Pupils Linguistic Achievements in Romania and the Social Environment”**

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**Key words:** linguistic achievements (Hungarian), social environment, linguistic environment, reading habits, genre differences

This work approaches the relation of linguistic achievements of Hungarian pupils of Romania and the social environment.

Subject selection was grounded on the need of having concrete information about Romania Hungarian pupils' knowledge, skills and linguistic competences level in their mother tongue, a key competence of the learning process and school results obtaining. PISA surveys, the Romania partakes to from 2000, do not approach the minorities achievements, as such, this survey has been conducted in this respect.

The survey belongs to a series of surveys aiming to different mother tongue elements of linguistic competences: an orthographic survey has been conducted and also another one aiming to Hungarian pupils' written expression competences.

The aim of the work was that of bringing to light the social-linguistic environment impact upon pupils' linguistic achievements, offering on one hand an overview upon pupils' school results but also a starting point for those working for school plans drawing up / reforming.

The hypotheses from where the work started were formulated on the basis of various surveys and theories: namely, the social environment affects pupils' achievements. In this respect, we aimed to identify those factors of the social environment influencing the most pupils' results, but we wanted to see to what extent minorities' situation affects, more precisely the bilingualism, Hungarian pupils from Romania linguistic achievements in their mother tongue.

The introduction presents the contexts the survey was conducted and a brief structure of this work.

In the first chapter the first surveys and theories are presented upon pupils' achievements and social environment. We have observed from Bernstein's first studies in this respect that the idea of reproduction and social – cultural transmission occurred. Although his basic notions of linguistic codes and social classes were not used as employed by him, the idea of reproduction and social – cultural transmission went further, as many researchers have developed and pointed it out.

This chapter also deals with the emergence of the ethnographical theory of linguistic disadvantage, according to which different school results related to social differences are explained mainly (although not exclusively) through the differences of linguistic socializing, through the differences of the language employed, the differences of communication competences particular to the community the child comes from. In this respect there are not only two different linguistic codes characterizing two social classes but the whole linguistic means, the methods of language use both written and spoken by the community and the individual.

This chapter ends with the theories of the cultural capital.

Bourdieu's theories are approached as referring to different capitals, insisting upon the forms of the cultural capital and the role they play in pupils' school results. His conclusions are presented as concerning the role of the education system in social reproduction and its legitimation, but also the role the language plays (especially the academic language) in this transmission and social legitimation process.

DiMaggio's theory is also presented as going further and pointing out the theory of cultural capital and the role played by it in obtaining Bourdieu's school results. He found out genre differences in children's attitudes considering cultural capital assimilation, in partaking / consumption of different cultural activities and events, and also a difference in the role played by the cultural capital and girls and boys strategies of mobility. In certain cases he has also found a relation between the attitudes considering cultural capital assimilation and the social status of the family the young individual comes from.

Coleman's theory adds a reference note to DiMaggio's theory, considering that the rebel teenagers have a more negativist attitude considering the "conformist" activities within school, while the girls do not present the same negative attitude.

The third chapter presents the first educational researches considering the school results and the ethnic minorities' equal educational changes. This type of surveys emerged in the United States as focused on immigrants' assimilation and their integration. These surveys were interesting in consideration of this work, to the extent that these theories comprise also the linguistic achievements.

The American surveys model supposed a welcoming majority and an immigrant minority who integrates, taking over majority's rules and values.

In this model, the immigrants must be the active part adapting and integrating, as an irreversible process of assimilation, achievable by linguistic competences acquiring. The surveys underlined a persisting unequal educational changes for which a lot of explanations were provided but have not succeeded to change the situation.

Ogbu's theory is presented in detail at the end of the chapter as on one hand brings forward a new surveying model, succeeding to explain pupils' differences regarding school results as belonging to different immigrants minorities and on the other hand because his model was employed also in Europe, with application also upon Hungarian minority in Romania.

The fourth chapter of the work presents the linguistic achievements and the social environment in the specialty literature.

In the first part of this chapter are presented the radical changes occurring in the educational surveys by computer emergence and use within these surveys and consequently by the emergence of the great international surveys as PISA and PIRLS. New possibilities have also emerged as conducting surveys encompassing more States, different educational systems, results comparison and the efficiency of different systems of education, following the tendencies and changes occurred in time etc. This chapter presents organizers reasoning, basic notions definition (as for example, what it is understood among this surveys by linguistic achievement), their research methods and instruments and of course the results of the researches. The research

methods and instruments are interesting as the survey this work was based on inspired (also) from these methods and instruments. We insisted on PISA surveys as Romania participates to them, as the Romanian sample comprises also Hungarian pupils / classes / schools, so the results obtained are also the Hungarian pupils' results. Nevertheless, PISA surveys do not approach minorities' results (neither in Romania's situation nor in other countries' situation having ethnic minorities), fact that justifies this survey for having an overview upon Hungarian pupils' linguistic achievements.

The second part of this chapter presents studies referring to Hungarian pupils from Romania. These studies have different approaches, processing various issues of the education in Hungarian language from Romania. The studies dealing with subjects emerging to a great extent in this work are presented more broadly while those reminding the issues dealt with in this work are briefly presented.

Among these studies are presented Obgu's theory and model application upon Hungarian pupils' from Bihor County by Adrian Hatos, the weak point of this study and the conclusions the author has reached are by comparing Hungarian and Romanian pupils' school results respectively.

At the same time it is presented in detail Magyari Tivadar's study about the reasons of Hungarian families' option for the language of education.

In this chapter are also presented two works which are firstly demographical, those of Kiss Tamás and Veres Valér, dealing with the level of education of country's people, implicitly of Hungarian people as the survey deals also with the relation among the parents' level of education and the linguistic achievements in Hungarian language.

It is also provided a brief presentation of the articles dealing with educational subjects, based on MOZAIK research upon young Hungarians. The studies present a few school inequalities, the relation of parents' level of education and school success and the projects of studies continuing.

At the end of the chapter are reminded the studies of a researchers group from “Babeş-Bolyai” University, Social Assistance Department, who have composed a research dedicated to school success and to psycho – social factors focusing to the identification of vulnerable groups.

The chapter concludes with some studies presented at different conferences held by the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities, with the subject of school bilingualism.

The fifth chapter presents the hypotheses of the work and the reasoning these hypotheses are based on.

In chapter six the research methodology is presented. The previous surveys are presented on short as conducted on the same work group, research methods and instruments, the sample, the methods of data gathering and processing.

The seventh chapter comprises the results of the survey. The first sub-chapter presents the characteristics of the Hungarian school network in Romania, then some general characteristics of Hungarian pupils. The third sub-chapter presents the general results of the survey and the following ones hyphenate these results depending on the type of town of the attended school respectively the type of town they reside in, depending on ethnographic – demographic region and their linguistic environment, the reading habits, genre, as well as depending on parents’ level of studies. We have also analyzed the relation of the obtained results and the future plans of those wanting to continue their studies after high school diploma obtaining, examining also the factors considered in choosing one study language or another.

Data processing through bivariate statistical methods is followed by a multivariate analysis with linear regression method. We have used two regression models for the two types of linguistic achievements indicators, both tested with or without variables control, measuring the number of book read by the pupils.

The eighth chapter comprises the following conclusions:

The pupils from the Romanian education system prove weak enough linguistic achievements both at national examinations and within the international surveys (PIRLS, PISA). This fact was the ground of the first hypothesis, according to which the Hungarian pupils shall prove weak enough linguistic performances. Their results prove that the moment they are in a

situation when shall apply practically their knowledge and their theoretical knowledge is not assessed as in the classroom they manage it very poorly.

Girls' linguistic achievements are superior to boys'. Girls' superiority manifests both in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade in all regions, type of towns and schools. In search of an explanation for girls' linguistic achievement, we started from Bourdieu and DiMaggio's theory referring to the relation of the cultural capital and school results.

In compliance with DiMaggio's theory, girls indeed proved more interested in gaining integrated cultural capital: they constantly read more than boys (the girls read more in the 7<sup>th</sup> and in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, both in Hungarian and in Romanian, independently of the region, type of place or school). As such, due to a reason or another, integrated cultural capital gaining is more important for girls than for boys, investing more in assimilation of this type of capital along the years. Our survey has not revealed the causes leading to this differences of girls and boys attitude towards reading, as Coleman's explication may be that the rebel teenagers have a more negative attitude related to all the activities considered "conformist", as reading may be classified, while the teenager girls do not show this negative attitude.

Girls advantage do not limit only to mother tongue linguistic achievements and reading – it is a fact ascertained by Adrian Hatos and also by Papp Z. Attila (Hatos had studied school results based on the grade point averages of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and Papp Z. studied the future plans of the Hungarian teenagers to continue their studies after obtaining the high school diploma).

As DiMaggio ascertained, parents' level of education has a certain influence upon the results obtained by the pupils (although he talks only about father's level of education we included both parents' level of education): the children whose parents do not graduated high school are less interested in reading and have less achievements than the children whose parents have secondary or upper studies (this fact is valid also in relation to mother's level of education not only as related to father's one).

At the same time it is possible that the children with upper level studies parents (with a higher social status) to embrace other cultural activities, not those required and appreciate by the school (as the reading is).

The novelty of this survey is the minority dimension: we were curious if the minority aspect of the pupils, especially bilingualism affects or not the native linguistic achievements. The data revealed the fact that ethnic – demographic and linguistic areas influence both mother tongue text understanding and interpretation and also pupils' reading habits. If at secondary school level, the preponderantly Hungarian region pupils prove to be the best achievers, at high school level the best achievements are obtained by mix region pupils. It seems that when bilingualism reaches a certain level, it helps to mother tongue text understanding and interpretation. Nevertheless, if the mother tongue is effectively dominated by a certain language use (as in the preponderantly Romanian region), the native linguistic achievements are suffering.

The bilingualism puts his mark also on reading habits. The presence of Romanian language in pupils' lives stimulates them to read more in Romanian language. Nevertheless not the preponderantly Romanian region shall be the one where is read more in Romanian, but the mix region. This time also is important proving that mother tongue to not be effectively dominated by the presence / use of another language.

DiMaggio and Mohr's finding seems valid also for the Hungarian pupils from Romania referring to the association of pupils' cultural capital and the level of education they shall reach. At least this is the outcome of pupils' future plans: the ones wanting to continue their studies have read more and obtained better results than those not having such plans – namely the studies learning better and who have gained an higher integrated cultural capital plan to reach a higher level of education than those who have not gained this type of capital.

If pupils' linguistic achievements and gained cultural capital influence their decision upon the level of education they want to reach, the linguistic environment influences the language the Hungarian pupils want to attend their studies: although their majority wants to continue their next level studies in the native language, the more significant presence of Romanian language in the daily relations of the pupils, leads to a slight increase of pupils percentage wanting to continue their studies in Romanian language. In another words: the Hungarian pupils who effectively use Romanian language (and not only at the Romanian language lessons at school), are more tempted to also study in Romanian language.

The work also comprises the bibliography employed for work drawing up and the appendixes with research instruments, the list of the initially drawn schools, respectively those which have effectively partaken to the survey, scale of assessment of the works.

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