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進入初始的同儕文化

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中文摘要

關鍵詞：社會化、同儕、兒童、幼稚園、台灣

本研究的目的為探討兒童進入初始同儕文化的歷程。雖然文獻指出同儕關係和友誼對兒童的學校適應和學業表現有重大的影響，我們對台灣兒童進入同儕文化及同儕文化的發生過程所知非常有限。本研究以民族誌研究法進行為期三年的縱貫式研究，深入訪談兒童的家庭和觀察兒童的日常生活。本報告的重心在於以下的主題：(1) 兒童進入幼稚園第一年的哭泣行為，(2) 分享的社會化，(3) 害羞小孩發展為主動的學生的歷程，(4) 如何應對同儕負面言論的社會化歷程，及(5) 幼稚園中年齡與社會化。本研究對文化與社會化歷程的理論建構有所貢獻，也可提供父母、教師及兒童工作者，對兒童由家庭到同儕文化的轉接較深刻的瞭解，作為和兒童互動時的參考和依據。

英文摘要

Keywords : socialization, peer, children, preschool, Taiwan

The goal of this study was to investigate children's entry into initial peer cultures. Although studies have pointed to that children's peer relationship and friendships are key to school adjustment and academic performance, little is known about the process of how Taiwanese children entering peer cultures and how peer cultures emerge in the preschool. To fill this gap, this project was longitudinal in design and ethnographic in approach involving in-depth interviews with families and thorough observation and investigation of children's transition from families to preschool over a period of three years. This report centers on the following topics: (1) children's crying in their first-year preschool life, (2) the socialization of sharing, (3) the process of how a shy child developed into an active student, (4) the socialization of reacting to peers' negative comments, and (5) age and socialization in the preschool. The information yielded from this study will contribute to the construction of cultural theories and socialization process. It will also be informative to parents, teachers and other professionals who work with children and need a deep understanding of children's transition from families to peer groups.

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The goal of this study is to investigate children's entry into initial peer cultures. Parents usually make decisions about children's initial interactions with peers and when children move outside families to preschool. The nature and timing of these decisions relate to parental cultural belief systems and practices (Corsaro, 1996). Yet, the process is not solely decided by parents. Children themselves also play important roles. By viewing socialization as the process of how children grow up to be cultural beings, children's active role in selecting from cultural resources, using resources in creative ways, and contributing to the production of adult culture is revealed (Gaskins, Miller & Corsaro, 1992). The influence of peer relationships and friendships in the classroom environment has been extensively studied in the past decades. Evidence supports that children's classroom peer relationships may operate as relational supports or stressors (e.g., Furman & Robbins, 1985; Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman, 1997). Friendships have been viewed as support systems that facilitate school adjustment (Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman, 1996). Therefore, how parents, children themselves and their classroom peers jointly participate in the socialization process in the home-school transition is an important area for investigation.

Because the increasing number of children who now are attending preschools in Taiwan, for example, a recent study showed that majority of 3- to 6-year olds (64.8%) attended preschool (Lin & Fung, 1999), preschool as well as family has become an important context for preschool-aged children's socialization. By 3 years of age, many Taiwanese youngsters have entered their initial peer cultures from families to preschool.

Socialization in Taiwan

Research on children's everyday socialization in families is rare but growing. Studies have covered children's early years in the family, entering preschool and attending elementary school. Miller, Fung, and their colleagues have published several reports based on their observations of the daily practices of a sample of middle-class Taiwanese families in Taipei. For example, Fung (1999) examined the socialization of shame in these families. Her study indicates that even at this very young age of 2 1/2, caregivers use various shaming techniques in everyday life as a way of correcting children's misdeeds and instruct proper conduct. Fung also found that parents believed in "opportunity education," namely that parents should take advantage of every opportunity to teach lessons that are concretely situated in the child's immediate experience. A similar didactic tendency was found by Miller, Fung, and Mintz (1996) and Miller, Wiley, Fung, and Liang (1997). They studied personal stories as a medium of socialization. They found that personal storytelling involving 2 1/2-year olds was a routine socialization practice that conveyed moral and social standards. In these Taiwanese families, transgressions were very "storyworthy": 35 % of the stories that parents told with or about their children involved a past transgression committed by the child. These findings are consistent with the high value placed on didactic narrative within the Confucian tradition. Liang's (1998) study of child-caregiver disputes in the same middle-class Taiwanese families reveals that daily disputes operated as a routine socialization practice. At age 2 1/2 years, the child and caregiver often engaged in disputes in daily activities of play, bookreading, caretaking, and conversation. Disputes were often settled and the findings suggested that the repeated experience of managing conflict and achieving resolution would actually serve to promote harmony in these families, which is an essential value in the Confucian tradition.

Despite the increasing number of children who now are attending preschools in

Taiwan, the body of literature on socialization in preschool in Taiwan is very small. Shing (1998) investigated why parents choose a particular kind of preschool for their children, parental beliefs on how teachers help children to learn numerical concepts, and preschool curriculum goals. Among the several findings of this study, one is that most of the Taiwanese mothers interviewed thought that children should learn how to adjust to group life and gain necessary knowledge to make a successful transition to the elementary school. In other words, these mothers were concerned both with children's social adjustment in school and with opportunities for future academic success in elementary school. Farris (1988) examined children's language use in a Taiwanese preschool in Taipei in 1984. She found that girls younger than 3 in the preschool tended to have a babyish/very feminine communication style, whereas older preschool girls, age 5 to 6, tended to develop a dual communication style involving both a babyish style and an authoritarian/"mothering" style. She related the girls' dual style to the women's role in the family, suggesting that women needed to play both soft and strong roles when communicating with her husband. In a later report, Farris, (1991) described a preschool girl leader, who was assertive and outgoing but with a stereotypically feminine communication style. This girl appeared to take advantage of the constraints of being feminine by speaking softly and broke the gender boundary by interacting with boys. Farris (1992) also found female preschool teachers switching between the babyish and authoritarian styles, depending on the situation.

The literature on socialization in schools is fairly dated. In the 1960s, Wilson (1970) studied socialization of elementary school children in Taiwan by using multiple methods including observation, questionnaires, interviews, and examination of educational materials. Wilson's work demonstrates the importance of group orientation, leadership and political style, and hostility taboos in socialization in Chinese cultures in the 1960s. The three themes are still relevant to the current situation in Taiwan. When parents send their young children to preschools, they want to make sure that their children learn how to get along with others in group life (Shing, 1998). Parents feel obligated to be a good example for their children (Kau, 1994), which is consistent with Wilson's findings on leadership. When dealing with hostility or conflict at the child's young age, caregivers tend to take the opportunity to restore harmony (Liang, 1998).

Another source of information about socialization in school is from the work of Stevenson, Stigler, and their colleagues (e.g., Stevenson, Lee, & Stigler, 1986) on school achievement. Chinese cultures have a long history of emphasizing academic achievement. Stevenson, Stigler, and their colleagues have investigated various aspects of education in Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. They found that Taiwanese elementary school children on average performed better in mathematics than their American counterparts. In their study, Taiwanese students were more likely to see mathematical ability as a matter of effort rather than innate ability (Stevenson, Lee, & Stigler, 1986). Taiwanese students spent more time in academic-related activities and parents spent more time helping their children in school work (Stevenson & Lee, 1990).

Stevenson and Lee (1996) suggest that motivation for academic achievement in Chinese society is multiply determined. In addition to the recognition that education brings increased opportunities for economic and social advancement, there is the assumption that education provides an avenue through which one can advance as a moral person.

Across the several available studies, a strong Confucian thread shows emphasis on training and teaching. Some scholars are interested in how Confucian values have

influenced socialization. Most studies following this line are on how Confucian values, mostly filial piety, have influenced parent-child relationships. Ho (1996) argued that filial piety grants parents and teachers absolute authority that leads to authoritarianism and brings negative consequences, including overemphasis on the development of moral character through education and neglect of the psychological aspect of children. He also concluded that traditional filial piety is declining and the relationship between generations is changing in Chinese societies.

The Transition from Families to School Peer Cultures

The body of literature on Taiwanese children's transition from families to school peer groups is rare. A related study by Shing (1998) investigated why parents choose a particular kind of preschool for their children, parental beliefs on how teacher help children to learn numerical concepts, and preschool curriculum goals, rather than the transition per se from families to preschool. Haight, Wang, Fung, Williams, and Mintz (1999) found that school scenes emerged in pretend play of Taiwanese families. Children were instructed how to behave in school through play to facilitate their transition from families to school. Also, issues concerning interactions with peers were discussed between children and parents in the context of personal story telling (Miller, Wiley, Fung & Liang, 1997).

In sum, current studies have shown that contemporary Taiwanese parents believe that their role as a socializing agent is a very significant one. They take many opportunities to teach their children and feel that they themselves must set an example for their children's moral character. These views are consistent with the Confucian emphasis on teaching. How children make a transition from families to preschool and how they construct peer cultures in the preschool is largely unknown. The present study aims to fill this gap.

This report centers on the following topics: (1) children's crying in their first-year preschool life, (2) the socialization of sharing, (3) the process of how a shy child developed into an active student, (4) the socialization of reacting to peers' negative comments, and (5) age and socialization in the preschool.

Methods

This longitudinal project has been extended to a third-year observation and the children are expected to graduate from the preschool in July 2006. This longitudinal project is ethnographic in approach, involving in-depth interviews with families and thorough observation and investigation of children's transition from families to preschool over a period of three years.

The research site is a private preschool serving a community in Taipei City, the capital of Taiwan. In 2003 and 2004, there were 7 groups in the preschool, including a 2-year-old group, two 3-year-old groups, two 4-year-old groups and two 5-year-old groups. The total number of children was about 120. The preschool accepted new students any time of the year. The arrangement of space and schedule allowed children from different groups to interact with each other during part of the school day.

During the first year of the observation, 18 children were in the 3-year-old target group at the beginning of fall and 20 children at the end of spring. 14 of the 20 children attended a preschool the first time. In the second year, 4 children transferred to other schools or temporarily stopped schooling and 16 children stayed. They were arranged into two classrooms, each consisted of 19 children. 13 children of the first-year target group went on to their third year in the preschool. Children again were split into two classrooms in their third year. About 19 children were in each classroom. The philosophy of the preschool was to provide children opportunities to interact with different children.

Most of the parents were college graduates from middle-class backgrounds. They were professionals in fields such as insurance, computer, architecture, fabrics, music, graphics, biology, education, and medicine. A few parents ran their own business. Most families owned their own homes.

Ethnographic fieldwork was combined with extensive audio and video recording of naturally occurring daily activities in the preschool for almost three years. The fall and spring semester usually began in September and January respectively. In 2005, the preschool started the fall semester in mid-August to accommodate the family needs. The research team, including the researcher and a video-recording assistant, regularly participated in the preschool activities one day per week, approximately from 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM. The researcher also participated in special school events such as concerts and sports day on the weekends. The researcher was able to establish a special role in the preschool to access the children's peer groups that were not otherwise accessible to adults (Corsaro, 1985). The role of the researcher was partially revealed from a 3-year-old girl's comment when the researcher tried to ask the 3 year old to clean up a pile of toys-- "You are not an adult! How can you talk to me like this?" Most children treated the researcher as a person somewhat different from regular adults. Over the years, the children gradually discovered the researcher's occupation as a professor yet the children continued to treat the researcher as a friend or peer who was invited and allowed to participate in peer activities in the preschool. During the video recording, one child wore a wireless microphone at a time. In other words, the recording centered on one particular child at a given time and included other participants who interacted with the child. The researcher carried an audio recorder as a supplement to fieldnotes taking.

Results

Crying of 3-Year-Olds

Crying is an issue that parents often face when their children attend school the first time. This section describes the phenomenon of 3-year-old children's crying in the preschool.

Past studies indicated variations on emotional display rules in different cultures and the way of how adults teach children to control negative emotion. Studies of the process of crying events were comparatively rare in the literature. Investigation of the process of crying in this middle-class Taiwanese cultural case will be illuminating to educators in other cultures.

Several key findings emerged. First, 16 of the 20 children ever cried during the observation period. The reasons included missing their parents, health problems, physical harm or object damage caused by peers, conflict with peers, eating problems, being caught of transgressions, being late of school, and fear of dental check. By the end of the first semester, all children did not cry due to missing their parents except a new child. Crying for missing their parents was highly tolerated. They were offered to stay close with the teacher until they recovered from their emotional breakdowns. Children rarely teased crying peers but explained to onlookers, "(S)he is missing Mommy." with an empathetic tone. By the end of their first semester, children often said, "Only babies cry. We have grown up." The 2-year-olds were referred as babies. The 3-year-olds called themselves "elder brothers/sisters." The sense of growing up seemed a valid reason of not to cry. In addition, children sometimes said "crying is useless" in their conversations, which echoed what the adults often said, "Crying is useless. You've got to stop crying then you can say it clearly."

The instrumental nature of crying was salient on occasions when children cried because of transgressions or refusing to eat certain food. The protagonists usually recovered from crying soon after the adults were absent or when they were allowed to skip certain food. The teacher often activated a drama involving all possible adults in the preschool. The teachers, the bus uncle (the bus driver), the kitchen aunty (the cook) would talk publicly about the harm of a misdeed or the benefits of certain food. Children were often invited to echo their conclusions. Such procedure seemed quite effective.

The way children talked about their peers' crying revealed their norm of keeping such topic low-key. The teller usually quickly said a sentence such as "Jing-Hao (child's pseudonym) cried yesterday." All participants then would remain silent for seconds before they went on for other topics. If the protagonist was present, (s)he might look (sometimes stared) at the teller. No more discussion took place.

For most children observed in this study, crying was a common experience. At times parents worried about their children would continue to cry after they went to work. The fact that 3-year-olds usually stop crying after parents left surprised their parents. Several mothers who worked long hours as professionals expressed a strong sense of guilt that they could not spend more time with their children. They were very worried that their children could be crying all day long in the preschool. The researcher reported some of the findings to the parents and teachers in a talk organized by the preschool, which seemed to ease some worries that some working mothers had by mentioning that children usually happily participated in school activities soon after their parents left.

Learning to share in the first year of preschool life

Learning to share is an important task for preschool children especially when

they first enter preschool. When children enter into preschool, their membership in the local culture and their participation in sociocultural activities change over time (Rogoff, 1996; Corsaro, 2002). Upon entering into preschool, a child becomes a member of the preschool in addition to a member of the family. He/She faces new demands to be a good student and a good peer-group member (Hadley, 2003). The issue of sharing becomes important due to the differences in ownerships and ecological demands.

By viewing socialization as the process of how children grow up to be cultural beings, children's active role in selecting from cultural resources, using resources in creative ways, and contributing to the production of adult culture is revealed (Gaskins, Miller & Corsaro, 1992). This section describes the development of children's sharing with peers as a culturally situated phenomenon. Children's development and socialization is viewed as dynamic processes that can be observed and analyzed through studying children's engagement in daily activities with other people.

Overall, this study provides a basic understanding about children's development of sharing with peers in a Taiwanese middle-class preschool. Such understanding is important for educators and any adults who work with young children. In multi-culture societies such as the United States, the case of Taiwanese middle-class preschool provides an alternative way of viewing children's development of sharing with peers.

The development of sharing

The development of sharing in the preschool was ecologically demanded and culturally supported. It became complex as children's friendships developed. Children's personal style also played an important role.

The preschool ecology required children to share with peers. Because most children in the 3-year-old group were first time students of the preschool, their development of sharing with peers was very dramatic during the first two months of their school life. Most children were not used to sharing with others when school started, as a grandmother commented, "He is very stingy at home. He does not share toys with his baby sister." Conflict about who had the right to use school objects occurred frequently. The teacher claimed the ownership of all classroom objects and children needed to obtain her permission to use school objects. She also set up rules that one who got the object first had the right to use it.

Children were encouraged to share with peers. Children often brought their own food, toys and books from home to share with peers. The public routine of sharing often brought children positive feelings. Taking sharing food as an example, a child would distribute food that she brought from home and every child receiving food would say "thank you" to her. At the end of the distribution, all class would say "thank you" loudly all together to the child. The classroom rule required children to share if they wanted to bring things from home.

Children seemed to gain rewards to share with peers. A major sharing event was birthday cake time. A child would share cake, candy and small toys with classmates and teachers on her birthday. It is worth to note that it is a day to give. The child usually did not receive gifts from her peers.

Children constantly faced the issue of making decisions about whom they wanted to share with. The development of friendships among children in this 3-year-old group became quite stable by the end of the first semester. Also, children's individual ways of sharing seemed to be stable at about the same time. Children seemed to have different styles. For children who had regular playmates, they would

share with playmates first. Other children would give to ones who made requests first. Because the classroom rule stated that children needed to share with others, children usually would share with anyone who made a request. The number of children being chosen to share with differed greatly among children, which seemed to reflect children's social relations.

What to share

What children shared with peers included the following categories:

- (a) Things provided by the preschool. Play instruments, toys, books and play space were included in this category.
- (b) Things to be giving away. These were concrete things that children brought from home to give away. Crackers, candy, small toys, stickers, paper and pens belonged to this category.
- (c) The right of usage. Children would give permission to use toys and stationary items brought from home.
- (d) The right to take a look. Children sometimes brought items that were worth a look but they would not give away the items. This included a wide range of possibilities. A special piece of paper, a necklace, a card, a tattoo sticker, a shopping center ad and a doll were examples.
- (e) To "be a cartoon figure." When a child wore a T-shirt or clothes with cartoon figures, other children might come over and ask, "Can I be this one?" They would ask the permission of the clothes owner to let them be the figures on the clothes. The owner did not give anything concrete but an oral permission to her peers. The researcher sometimes wore a T-shirt with "Ultraman" (a cartoon figure) to the preschool and children would come over and asked, "Can I be the one on your back?" The other similar occasion was when a child held a book and a group of peers might request to be certain figures in the book. Children were satisfied if they got a positive response.
- (f) Sharing personal information. Children talked about their family frequently. Personal stories about family life were among the major topics children talked with peers. At times they shared secrets to a limited number of peers.

Sharing in appropriate time

The classroom rule stated that children should discuss with the teacher about the time to share what they brought from home. However, children might take advantage of the time when they arrived at school in the morning to share items with peers. At times children might took out things and shared with peers during lunch hour or snack time without prior discussion with the teacher. The issue of time revealed features of children's underlife (Corsaro, 1997) in which children escape from adult rules and attention and engage in activities that they want to do.

The development of children's sharing seemed to be stable by the end of the first semester in this preschool. It is important that the school estimates the approximate time that children need to establish stable social relationship and help new preschoolers establish routines.

The school culture seemed to influence children's motivation to share greatly. As children gradually develop the identity of members of the preschool, they seemed very willing to be good students in the preschool. Comparing to a working-class Taiwanese preschool where the researcher conducted a study across three years, the middle-class preschool was more lenient to children's sharing routine and relaxed on ways of children's sharing. Children in the working-class preschool were not

encouraged to bring sweets from home except for birthday celebration. Other items such as toys were not allowed in the preschool except on special days. The rationale was that children would compare with peers and requested parents to buy the same toys or sweets, which would bother the parents greatly. In contrast, in the middle-class preschool, this was not a big concern. Parents sometimes consulted each other about where to shop for children's clothing and goods. Starting from early age, children from different backgrounds had different experience in the material culture.

Children had many things to share with peers. They shared not only concrete and tangible objects, but also things quite symbolic. The sharing of "to be a cartoon figure" was especially interesting in that there was no object exchange. It was more a sense of sharing and inclusion that children wanted to obtain. In the sharing routines of other concrete objects such as food revealed a similar trend. During the process of distributing food, children would say, "I want it too!" They wanted to be part of the activity and not to be left out. Parents sometimes laughed at the phenomenon that their children loved certain food or toys at school, which they did not particularly like at home. Although adults often provide sweets and toys as rewards to children, in the peer world, the sense of inclusion and participation seemed more important than the material goods.

The essence of children's sharing practice seems to be a sense of participation. In conversations with parents and grandparents, their emphasis usually was on sharing objects with peers. From observation data, children not only shared concrete objects but also engaged in sharing routine in a quite symbolic or "psychological" way. In the routine of gaining permission to be a cartoon figure, no concrete object exchange occurred. In the practice of sharing personal information, the key was to jointly know the information.

Although it was found that children's social relationship became stable by the end of the first semester, it seemed that children became friends with almost all classmates by the end of the first year. This might be due to the great emphasis on membership of the classroom. In summer, half of the children of the 3-year-old group were mixed with children from another group because the other half of the children chose to take a summer break. They named peers from their original group as friends and often played with each other. Also, there were children who did not play together very often in the first two semesters of their preschool life became playmates in summer. The influence of children's identity of being classmates was obvious.

In sum, children learn to share in a different way from their home environment during their first preschool year. The cultural influence on children's socialization of sharing is very significant. Past studies have pointed the importance of friendships to children's adjustment (e.g., Ladd, 1990, 1999; Ladd & Kochenderfer, 1996). The Taiwanese middle-class case expands the idea of friends to members of a group. Because the cultural framework sets a separate identity of classmates in addition to friends, children may benefit from having many classmates which may be similar to having many friends in an American classroom.

For parents and educators, it is important to understand young children's psychological needs such as a sense of participation or inclusion. In daily interactions and educational contexts, adults may utilize this understanding to design rewards for children's good performance and discipline plan.

They used to be shy: The process of shy children becoming active students

Being shy and not participating in school activities is an issue in the preschool. To investigate the process of how shy preschoolers became active students, a

comparative framework is used in this section. In addition to the current project, data from a past research project conducted in a research site of a working-class preschool in rural Taiwan is included. Through long-term close observation of children's daily activities in a wide range of social contexts, this section describes two shy children, who later changed into active students. The children's changes were typical in their preschools, although past studies indicate that shyness is moderately to highly stable from early childhood through adolescence. This study contributes to the theorization of shyness by looking at the cultural nature of shy children's development. In addition, implications of this study may be useful to parents and educators.

The two girls were in two ethnographic research projects respectively. One was conducted in a working-class private preschool in rural Taiwan. Children were observed at regular intervals over a period of three years. The other is the current ongoing project in a private middle-class preschool in Taipei City since September, 2003. The 2 girls included in the analysis were both viewed as very shy children by their teachers and mothers when they first entered preschool at age 3. They both were soft-spoken and occasionally cried in school, usually interacted with only one or two particular children. It took about two years for Mei-Yin of the rural preschool to become an active student. In contrast, Pei-Ling of the Taipei preschool became an active student by the end of her first semester.

The children's transformation into active students can be linked to the cultural conceptualization of children's shyness and practices of interacting with shy children. In both the working-class and middle-class preschools, shy children were well accepted and considered malleable. Their timidity was attributed to their young age. Time was granted for the children's nature to unfold. Such expectation leaves room for children to change in the future.

Differences in values, practices and ecological layout of the two schools seemed to influence the pace of becoming active students. The Taipei preschool placed high value on children's becoming courageous social beings, who could interact with various kinds of people. Such value was not particularly emphasized in the rural preschool. Discipline was highly emphasized in both preschools, yet many more classroom rules were enforced in the rural preschool, especially not to make noises. Reticent children were preferred by the teachers in the rural preschool. The child-teacher relationship also showed differences. Children were more obedient in the rural preschool and less frequently engaged in negotiations with their teachers.

The space arrangement of the Taipei preschool (see Figure 1) seemed to encourage frequent interaction. In addition to regular whole-school activities, children met each other on the hallway on their way to the bathroom, sink, water fountain and the playground. In their spare time, they visited friends in other classrooms and observed ongoing activities. Older children of 4- and 5- year-old groups were acquainted with most children in the preschool (about 120-130 children in total).

The work of Chen and his colleagues (Chen, Rubin & Sun, 1992; Chen, Cen & He, 2005) pointed out that reticent children were popular in their earlier study and their later findings suggested a cultural change that reticent teenagers were not popular recently. The Taiwanese case points to the direction that adults were supportive to shy preschoolers and attributed their shyness to their young age. Shy children could be popular among peers in the preschool. But they were expected to become active students.

Reacting to peers' negative comments

Facing conflict is an everyday task for preschool children (e.g., Hartup &

Laursen, 1993). When disagreements occur, children may comment on each other by negative terms. Appropriate tactics and strategies to deal with such situations are important to maintain good will and social interaction. This section addresses how middle-class Taiwanese preschoolers reacted to negative comments from peers, focusing on the development of 3-year-old children who were new to preschool. The specific questions to be addressed were: (a) Who engaged in interactions involving negative comments? (b) What was the development of ways to deal with negative comments? And (c) What was the cultural meaning of the development?

Children's reaction to peers' negative comments is viewed as a culturally situated phenomenon. The example of the middle-class preschool classroom in this project is to reveal the cultural nature of peer socialization and how cultural practices in the preschool classroom as contexts for the children's development (Miller & Goodnow, 1995; Rogoff, 2003). Children's development and socialization is viewed as dynamic processes that can be observed and analyzed through studying children's engagement in daily activities with other people (Gaskins, 1999).

No negative comments to younger children

Usually only children of the same age would engage in interactions involving negative comments. The influence of culturally constructed roles based on age was salient. Kinship terms of siblings were used extensively. Older children were assumed to take care of and not to bully younger children. Children of this 3-year-old group usually did not say bad words to younger children. New children of a classroom were considered as younger sisters/brothers even though they might not be younger by age. It is worth to note that body size was not a determining factor in that a few younger brothers/sisters were bigger and taller in size than the older sisters/brothers.

The idea of "growing up" was discussed frequently among the 3-year-old children. Teachers and parents also utilized this idea when asking children to behave in a more mature way. When encountering children from the 2-year-old group, 3-year-olds sometimes commented that only baby sisters/brothers would engage in certain behaviors. They picked up the identity of older sisters/brothers and behaved in ways consistent with such identity most of the time. Most children identified themselves as older siblings by the end of the first semester. The arrival of new or younger children usually triggered the topic of "growing up" among the 3-year-olds. They often performed a more mature side when they were aware of the presence of younger children.

The development of ways to deal with negative comments

At the beginning of the school year, the most frequently occurred negative comments included being stupid, bad, quick-tempered, and stingy. Children reacted to negative comments by silence, saying bad words back, reporting to the teacher, and occasionally getting into fights. Especially at the very beginning of the school year, children often stood still quietly when a peer gave negative comments. They seemed unclear about how to react. Some children would report to the teacher. A few of them would say bad words back such as "You stupid too" and repeated such behavior for many rounds until the teacher intervened.

The teacher instructed children to react with negative comments with a magic sentence, "Saying (bad words) about others is saying about oneself" when children reported that someone had said bad words. Children soon employed the sentence in their daily interactions. This sentence could stop "bad" interactions almost every time. This sentence became the most often used way to deal with negative comments from

peers. When observing other children saying bad words to each other, they often said the magic sentence to stop a dispute or fight. Such practice was observed across all age groups in the preschool.

Memorizing slogans or classics has long been a tradition among Chinese intellectuals. In recent years, a group of people in Taiwan promote classic memorization, believing that children would benefit from classics both cognitively and morally. From the daily practices of the Taiwanese preschool, the moral socialization is consistent with that tradition.

The collective power of utilizing the magic sentence was salient. Children who were good at using it properly would not be easily hurt by peers' negative comments. Meanwhile, the dyads in conflict became a teacher-student like relationship. The child who used the sentence was exercising the power authorized by their teacher. As all children in the preschool shared the slogan, it became a powerful cultural tool.

By the end of the second semester, children rarely said bad words to each other. When a child said bad words, other children would use the magic sentence to react. An exception was about stinginess when children engaged in sharing. When a child refused to share, the other children could chant, "A niggard drinks cold water and becomes a monster." Children usually continued to negotiate about how to share after the chanting. Because the teacher very often encouraged children to share with each other, the one who refused to share would be called as a niggard and received little sympathy from their peers. The rule of the classroom was that if one was not willing to share, she should not show her belongings to her peers.

The cultural practice of using the magic sentence to react to negative comments revealed several layers of meanings. First of all, the children could become self-reliant when facing negative comments. They did not need to rely on adults' assistance and they would not face the situation helplessly. Secondly, by using this magic sentence, a child did not have to say bad words back to violate the classroom rules. Thirdly, one could be protected from personal negative comments by appropriate language use.

The sense of "growing up" was an important identity for the children. Children of different age groups rarely engaged in conflict because the older child would not want to bully the younger ones. The children frequently sensed that they were becoming better and growing up. As a 3-year-old said, "Now I can dress myself because I have grown up." The sense of growing up was celebrated and children were willing to take up responsibilities when the meaning of growing up was salient. Also, the presence of the younger children seemed to remind the 3-year-olds not to behave in a "childish" way.

The power of the magic sentence "Saying (bad words) about others is saying about oneself" was salient in the middle-class Taiwanese preschool. A tentative comparison is made to illustrate the cultural features of the Taiwanese case by using information provided by acquainted children from American middle-class backgrounds. Although this is a single-site study, a comparative framework is used in the following discussion. A similar language usage in the U.S. seemed to yield a different flavor: "I am rubber. You are glue. Whatever you say to me goes back to you." The way children said in the Taiwanese preschool seems to be similar to what an American child would say at the first glance. However, there are at least two layers of meaning indicating different values in which culture endorses. First of all, the sentence was authorized by the teacher in the Taiwanese preschool. Children were encouraged to use the sentence freely. The teacher used the sentence when hearing children saying bad words. It has a strong didactic flavor authorized by the teacher. The way that the American children used seems to be part of children's underlife in

that such language use may challenge the official norms of school (Corsaro, 1997). The teachers may not know about what the children say to each other. Secondly, the Taiwanese way expresses the opposition in an indirect way. The subject of the sentence is omitted which makes it an “all purpose” sentence that can be applied to anyone who says bad words. It does not point to a specific person. In contrast, the American children used a direct way to say that bad things would come back to the person who said bad words.

Age, self and socialization

Developing age appropriate behavior and concepts is an important task for young children in Taiwan. “To revere the aged and honor the wise” has been an important idea in the Confucian tradition. One’s status is often advanced with age. Chinese kinship terms clearly pointed out the relative age of family members. The relationship of age, status and power is an important issue in interpersonal relationship.

The section focuses on the role of age in young children’s life and how cultural meanings about age are produced and reproduced in children’s everyday communicative practice through which socialization proceeds (Miller & Hoogstra, 1992; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Vygotsky, 1987). By observing children’s daily activities in a middle-class Taiwanese preschool, this section describes children’s socialization process through age-related mundane practices in the preschool.

It is necessary to understand the background information because this information enables a process to disentangle the cultural meanings of the mundane socialization practice. This section is organized as follows. It begins with a brief description about morning activities, providing a description of the background information and illustrating the age-related mundane practice in the preschool. The second part provides descriptions about how kinship terms are used in the preschool. Socialization practices based on age are illustrated in the third part.

Morning activities: Defining a child’s self based on age

Children are assigned into different groups based on age. Groups of children lined up for morning activities when the music is on at around 9 AM. Each group has an assigned spot according to age, from 2 to 5. The youngest group is at the far left and the oldest at the far right. The 3 and 4 year olds are in the middle. 3 to 4 children of 5-year-old groups are chosen to lead part of the morning activities. One or two lead the morning exercise on a 1-meter high stage, another two take charge of the flag during the flag ceremony. The 3 or 4 children receive a small gift after their good performance. During my two-year observation period, all children performed well on stage and received their small gifts. Younger children know that when they become big brothers and sisters, they will have opportunities to lead the morning exercise and handle the flag.

A child’s self seems to be defined based on age in the morning routine and other activities. From 2 to 5 year olds, like children’s assigned physical space, their position and moving path is clear. Children are immersed in an environment silently telling the relationship of age and ability, responsibility, honor and status. Younger children look forward to becoming older, as they often say, “Wait until I grown up, I will...” It may not be an exaggeration to say that children are reminded every morning about who they are based on age.

Kinship terms in the preschool

In general, adults encourage children of different age groups to refer to each other by kinship terms. For example, “the Duck group’s elder brothers and sisters” refers to children of the Duck group. This naming practice defines children’s relative status in a “sibling hierarchy” in the “preschool family.” Children usually follow this naming practice especially when they talk to adults. Among children, they may at times use “the Duck group’ folks.”

Children of the same age group usually consider each other as equals and refer to each other by names. Exceptions occur when children have other interaction opportunities outside of school. An example was that two girls who used to share a babysitter. At their babysitter’s place, they referred to each other as younger sister and elder sister. In the preschool, they followed the same practice. Although they were in different groups in the past two years, they often visited each other’s classroom. The younger one sometimes asked the older one to intervene in a dispute.

Age-based socialization practice

Encouragement

The “sibling hierarchy” is usually encouraged and celebrated. The older children are encouraged to help the younger ones to illustrate their status as elder siblings who are capable to help and who are nice to nurture the younger ones. Younger children who help the older ones are praised as being capable and nice. Younger children are usually proud of being able to accomplish tasks to show that they are growing up.

Shaming

Children may be teased or shamed by applying to the framework of sibling hierarchy. Older children are expected to take care of themselves. When they do not meet expectations of their age, shaming practice may be implemented. For example, when a 4 year old does not eat the meal properly, the teacher may illustrate examples in the younger group to push the child to perform well. An extreme case occurred when two 2 year olds were brought to the 4-year-old group to “help” an “elder brother.” Because the 4 year old boy ate extremely slowly, the teacher “invited” a 2-year-old girl to feed the elder brother. This 2 -year-old girl had finished eating and she ate very well according to the teacher’s judgment. She had received praise from her own teacher and other adults in the preschool. The other 2 year old who ate pretty well accompanied his friend to the 4-year-old group. Children in the 4-year-old group engaged in energetic private discussion about the arrival of the two “little siblings” and warned each other to eat properly to prevent being fed by the “little siblings.” Occasionally a few children of the 4-year-old group were fed by their teacher and I have never heard so much discussion about being fed. While the teacher praised the “little siblings” who were capable of feeding the elder brother, a strong sense of shame was activated. During the process of feeding, the 4-year-old who was fed was quiet and cooperative. At the end of feeding, the teacher praised the two 2 1/2 year olds and announced that the two “little siblings” might be invited again to feed the elder brothers. Many children said, “I don’t want that!” In the following several weeks when I visited the preschool, children of this group seemed to finish eating timely. This practice of bringing in younger children seemed to be effective.

Peer feedback to “age-inappropriate” performance

Children usually give feedback to peers’ “age-inappropriate” performance very quickly. Acting like a younger child is easily to be teased as “like a baby.” Performing like people who are older may caused objections. For example, during play, a

4-year-old girl warned the other one not to take play objects to a spot caused objection:” Don’t talk to me like that. You are not an adult!” Younger children’s try to control older children may be ignored. One time a 2-year-old asked a group of 4 year olds to stop playing toys of the 2-year-old group, a 4-year-old girl said to me, “Don’t listen to her! She is in the little group!”

Age is an important status maker in Chinese tradition. From young age, preschoolers in the middle-class community are sensitive to their age and age-appropriate behaviors. The daily practice constantly reminds children who they are based on age and the standard that they need to meet. Using kinship terms in the preschool supports a sibling hierarchy which provides a framework about what behaviors are age-appropriate especially in mix-age encountering. Adult strategies of encouragement and shaming practices seem to be effective by adopting the framework of sibling hierarchy. It may need special attention that the shaming practice in the preschool is implemented in a loving and humorous atmosphere as Fung (1999) has pointed out in the socialization of shame in the family setting.

In the peer group, the fact that age brings status and power is obvious. Children considered older children to be more powerful and capable than the younger ones. They usually perform the positive side in front of the younger ones. They also know well that they have the authority to direct and help the younger ones. The sibling hierarchy or pseudo-kinship relationship defines what behaviors are appropriate as an elder or younger sibling. Children of different ages often engage in positive interactions under the framework of good siblings.

Conclusion

The transition of entering preschool for 3-year-olds takes time and efforts from the child and related adults. Crying is a common sign of distress at the beginning of preschool life. It is not unusual that children cry during their first semester of preschool life. Most children did not cry for a short period of time, usually protesting parents' leaving them at the school. Soon after the parents were out of sight, children usually recovered from crying and participated in school activities in positive emotional state. This information is important to parents who could have worried too much about their children's emotional well-being, especially working mothers who might feel guilty of not able to spending more time with their children.

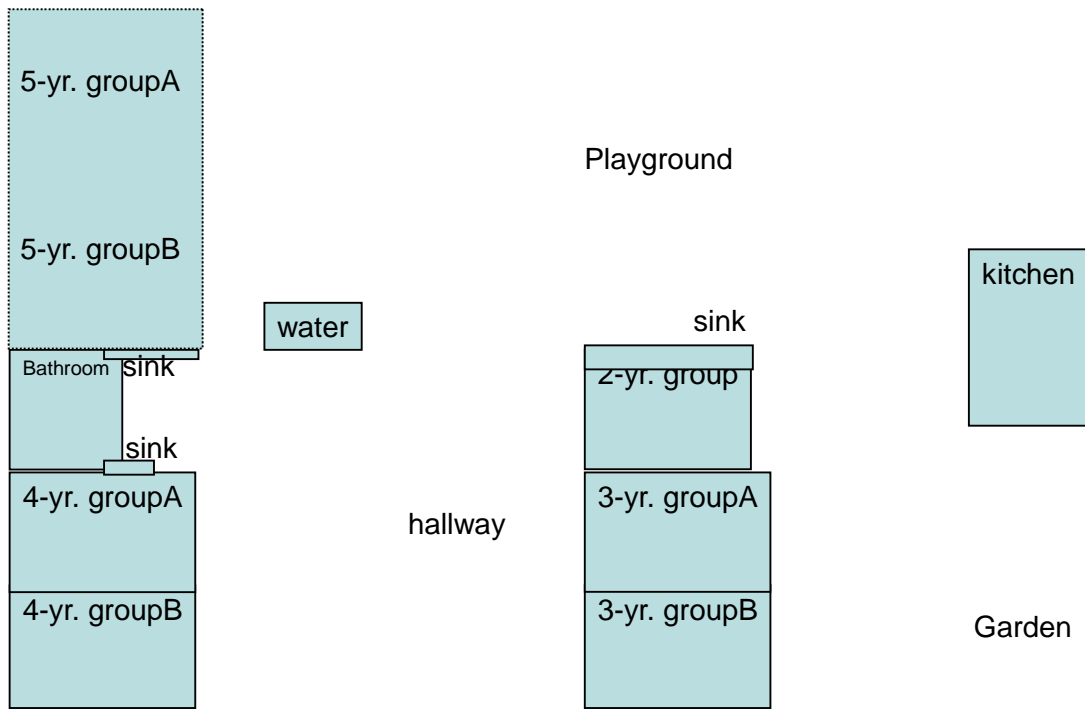
Children learn to share in a different way from their home environment during their first preschool year. The cultural influence on children's socialization of sharing is very significant. The Taiwanese middle-class case expands the idea of friends to members of a group. Because the cultural framework sets a separate identity of classmates in addition to friends, children may benefit from having many classmates which may be similar to having many friends in an American classroom. In addition, for parents and educators, it is important to understand young children's psychological needs such as a sense of participation or inclusion. In daily interactions and educational contexts, adults may utilize this understanding to design rewards for children's good performance and discipline plan.

Although shyness has long been considered problematic in the American culture, the Taiwanese case points to the importance of the cultural developmental nature of children's shyness. The children's transformation into active students can be linked to the cultural conceptualization of children's shyness and practices of interacting with shy children. In both the working-class and middle-class preschools, shy children were well accepted and considered malleable. Their timidity was attributed to their young age. Time was granted for the children's nature to unfold. Such expectation leaves room for children to change in the future.

This cultural case indicated several educational implications. For educators, it is beneficial to understand how values may be transmitted to children through cultural practices that fit the children's peer cultures. A kinship framework emphasizing age and development may provide children ways to understand the trajectories of appropriate behaviors. Interacting with children of different ages help children to have a sense of growing up and may be willing to take up more responsibilities. Chanting slogans, a feature of the young children's peer cultures, may be utilized to deliver values and provide children language tools in social interactions. A kinship framework emphasizing age and development may provide children ways to understand the trajectories of appropriate behaviors. Interacting with children of different ages may provide children opportunities to perform different aspects of the self and children may be willing to take up more responsibilities. A caveat is that educators need to be culturally sensitive to determine which practice would be compatible with the local cultures.

Appendix

Figure 1: Layout of the Taipei Preschool



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自評:

研究內容與原計畫大致相符，時間長度和規模較原計畫擴大。因為田野工作進行順利，將原計畫擴展為縱貫計畫，田野工作目前仍持續進行中，預計可完成三年的教室觀察。另外，因學校的編班方式，幼稚園孩童從第二年和第三年各重新編班一次，觀察對象從一班的小孩擴增為兩班小孩，從約 20 人增為 40 人。預期目標大致達成，研究成果已陸續於國際學術會議發表，陸續投稿期刊中，研究成果預期對於文化和發展的理論有所貢獻，並具教育和教養實用價值。