

行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫成果報告

大人看不見的幼稚園生活：台灣鄉下幼稚園兒童的同儕社會化歷程

The Invisible Life in Preschool: Peer Socialization Process in a Working-Class Taiwanese Preschool

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一、中文摘要

本計畫的目的在研究台灣鄉下幼稚園兒童的日常社會化歷程，尤其著重於小孩通常不為大人所知的部分。本研究計畫分析Liang(2000)以縱貫式研究設計、民族誌研究法深入幼稚園兒童的日常同儕活動所蒐集到的錄影帶，探究兒童對彼此社會化歷程的影響。研究結果指出兒童在同儕間經常進行不為大人所知的活動，這些活動有一大部分屬於地下生活，呈現兒童對影響其自主性的幼稚園組織規則的反應。此外，兒童在同儕間的表現可以和大人對兒童的理解有相當大的差距，特別是有些被老師認定是害羞的小孩，其實在同儕間是相當活躍的。

關鍵詞：社會化、同儕、兒童、幼稚園、臺灣

Abstract

The goal of this study is to investigate children's everyday socialization in a working-class Taiwanese preschool, focusing on the part of children's life which is not usually visible and accessible to adults. This study is an extension of the author's dissertation research (Liang, 2000), which

was ethnographic in approach, involving thorough observation and investigation of children's daily life at a regular intervals over a period of three years. The focus of this project is on understanding children's contribution to their own socialization process in their everyday preschool life. The findings indicate that children constantly engage in various activities in which they hide their voices and body movements from the adults. Children's underlife in preschool is the major part of these activities, demonstrating their reactions to the influence of organizational rules on their autonomy. In addition, children's performance in peer groups may be quite different from what the adults have seen. Seemly shy children could be very active in peer groups.

Keywords: socialization, peer, children, preschool, Taiwan

二、緣由與目的

The goal of this study is to investigate children's everyday socialization in a working-class Taiwanese preschool, focusing on the part of children's life which is not

usually visible and accessible to adults. 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). Therefore, how children themselves participate in their own socialization process 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. 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 and the literature on socialization in schools is fairly dated. The literature of socialization in Taiwan also reveals that socialization among children themselves -- rather than children in relation to parents or teachers -- are rare. The present study aims to fill this gap.

三、結果與討論

The findings indicate that children constantly engage in various activities in which they hide their voices and body movements from the adults. Children's underlife in preschool is the major part of these activities, demonstrating their reactions to the influence of organizational rules on their autonomy. In addition, children's performance in peer groups may be quite

different from what the adults have seen. Seemly shy children could be very active in peer groups.

Underlife refers to "a set of behaviors or activities that contradict, challenge, or violate the official norms or rules of a specific social organization or institution" (Corsaro, 1997, p. 133). Children in the preschool demonstrate a great deal of such activities. Children in these activities were engaging in what Goffman called "working the system" to get around in the preschool (Goffman, 1961). Play and rule-associated activities were the two major activities in children's underlife.

In this working-class preschool, children were granted little play time. However, children constantly engaged in play. They made good use of little moments for various fun activities. As they became older, they also were more skillful in earning play time from their teacher by behaving well in the classroom.

Children frequently engaged in discussions with respect to classroom rules in their peer group activities (Liang, 2003). In contrast to the impression that children are often requested to follow rules set up by adults, the children in this study often engaged in rule enforcement and construction. In other words, they did not only follow and refine aspects of classroom rules, but also negotiate and craft the rules. The contexts in which children engaged in rule-associated activities included various activities in the preschool (e.g., morning activities, worksheet sessions, play time, eating time, on the way to the bathroom). The rules being revoked covered a wide range of topics (e.g., working quietly, sitting well, no kissing and fighting). A child could be reminded or warned by

peers when she/he broke a rule or was about to break a rule. In situations involved possible fights, there were cases in which several children intervened to stop the fight by discussing rules and negotiated acceptable resolutions. The warning to a peer's transgression sometimes included "I'll report to the teacher." Yet actual reporting to the teacher was not frequent. In their L year (their last year in the preschool), reporting to the teacher became rare. Children often handled transgressions by themselves without teacher involvement. These repeated rule-associated activities are important peer routes of socialization from a cultural practice perspective (Miller & Goodnow, 1995).

To investigate the question of how children's performance in peer groups may be different from what the adults have seen, one line of focus in this project was analyzing a seemingly shy girl and her friends' daily activities. This girl was considered a quiet and shy girl by her teachers. Her voice was very soft in her interaction with adults in the preschool. This child, however, frequently engaged in activities with her peers. She was able to make a good use of time to discuss various issues with her peers. She also was good at playing. She was not only popular among girls but boys. The cultural case of this working-class Taiwanese preschool children's peer-only activities indicates a strong influence of culture, especially Confucian ideas, on children's preschool life. The children's strong interest in rules may be reactions to adults' daily emphasis on rules. Several traditional Chinese texts, which are re-introduced into preschools and elementary schools recently,

prescribe the importance of establishing good routines and habits for young children in order to become virtuous persons. Yet the children were not passively accept all the rules but worked the system to get around in their preschool life. This phenomenon displays the feature of gaining control to achieve autonomy in the peer culture. Similarly, a child may have different kinds of performance in the peer group and in front of adults in order to gain control in her life. Although shy children are often considered problematic in western views, in the working-class Taiwanese preschool, shyness could be a way reacting to the adult rules. Children's "real personality" may be better depicted in their peer life.

四、計畫成果自評

This study provides a basic understanding of the Taiwanese preschool children as active socialization agents, which will contribute to the theorization of socialization of Taiwanese children. The fact that being able to access to children's peer groups is the key way to the understanding of children's peer culture, especially the part of their life which is often invisible to adults. Their underlife in preschool is essential to our understanding of features of peer groups and children's development of autonomy. In addition, capturing children's soft voices in peer group activities provides a way to investigate children's performance in peer groups, which may be quite different from what the adults have seen. The information yielded from this study also is important to parents, teachers and other professionals who work with children and need a deep understanding of children's everyday life among their peers.

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