

# **Between Local and Global: The Implementation of International Education in a Taiwanese Preschool**

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## **Abstract**

This research aims to explore how international education can be better practiced in the Taiwanese preschool context where there appears a myth for the push of "being global." Collaborative action research was conducted and data was collected from one preschool in Taiwan, which included teaching observations and semi-structured interviews with teachers. Three findings are as follows. First, strategies in the implementation of international education were creating new and genuine foreign contact with flexible design. Second, with the foreign contact experience, children have newfound and brighter cultural vision which trigger children's cultural thinking. Third, children gradually change their cultural bias by simply labelling culture as either Taiwan or foreign without discrimination.

**Keywords:** international education, early childhood education, multicultural education, Taiwan

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## Introduction

International education can play a significant role in addressing the issue of expanding global perspectives in the flattened world, which continues to be highly emphasized in all educational levels. How to implement international education in different contexts has long been a question of keen interest in a wide range of fields. There are curriculum guidelines in international education from Western countries.

In 2004, 'Putting the World into World-Class Education' was published by Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It was mentioned that 'people of the UK should have the knowledge, skills, and understanding they need to fulfil themselves, to live in and contribute effectively to a global society and to work in a competitive, global economy' (DfES, 2004, p.1). Later in 2008, Australian Government pointed out that young people should start from inter-cultural understanding, to understand developing Asia and cultivate the competencies of language technology and innovation in 'Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians' (MCEETYA, 2008). In 2011, one publication, *Global Competence: Prepare Youth to Engage with the World*, from Asia Society in the USA, showed clear framework and subject foundation of international education. Furthermore, teaching instructions by investigation, recognition, communication, and action to connect the world were also more elaborated (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011).

The main idea of the teaching methods from the guidelines above is to integrate international education into daily learning and implement this in a cross-disciplinary manner for child learning. However, a major issue with the curriculum guidelines from the above is they may not be fully applicable within the Asian context due to differing expectations and educational perspectives. Moreover, most of the guidelines present teaching and curriculum design only from primary school to high school and lack early childhood.

In Taiwan, a White Paper on international education for primary to secondary schools was announced in 2011 (Ministry of Education Republic of China, 2011) which provides a solid foundation for implementing international education in Taiwan. Considering education and society in Asia, it could also be a reference for the organization of learning and teaching of international education in Eastern context and a basis for early years.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore how international education can be better practiced in the Taiwanese preschool context. Research questions are:

1. What are the strategies in implementing international education in a Taiwanese pre-school?
2. What is children's cultural understanding in the implementation process of international education activities?
3. How did the cultural bias change in the process of international education activities?

## **Literature review**

### **Teaching Plans for International Education in Early Years**

According to official documents from Taiwan and Western countries, the fundamental idea of international education is for children to see themselves, equip themselves and interact with others (MCEETYA, 2008; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). As to the implementation of international education, there are also online teaching resources or platforms of international education. In many countries, teaching plans or resources of international education are usually written in curriculum guidelines. In the US and UK, international education developed into a sound topic with individual curriculum guidelines and teaching resource websites.

Two websites from the UK: British Council organizes schools online (<https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/>), and Global Dimension (<https://globaldimension.org.uk/>) are structured by Think Global: The Development Education Association. Two additional related resources from USA include: Asia Society (<http://asiasociety.org/education/resources>) and International Education Week from Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (<https://eca.state.gov/programs-initiatives/international-education-week>). There is also an NGO, iEARN, who empowers teachers and young people to work together online using the internet and other new communications technologies. Students and educators all over the world are welcome to join numerous international projects (<https://iearn.org/>).

Among the teaching resources for international education listed above, there are three primary instruction methods. First, a crucial practice in teaching plans is action and contact. Cross-cultural or foreign contact using art, music or communication can create opportunities for students to have a different experience by contacting others. Schools online is a

platform for schools to connect and cooperate (British Council, n.d.). There are also activities such as holiday card exchange, and teddy bear travel journal for students to see and experience other thinking by direct or indirect contact (Barr, 2015; Puppala, n.d.).

Second, one of the main ideas is to improve students' cross-cultural understanding by comparing and inter-subjectivity. One learning project 'Talking kites around the world' by Hotzen (2015) is taking kite making as a media to understand children's dreams from different countries then build the appreciation of co-existence, tolerance, acceptance of the 'other'. Third, a theme or an issue such as cooking, painting, or topic exploration, is usually taken as a subject, which leads students cross-subjects learning during the exploring process (QCA, 2007). As an example, the 'pumpkin soup' activity between UK and African students, which compares weather, agriculture, and ingredients from recipes between two areas. Cross-subject knowledge is needed during the whole exploration process (Lessons from Africa, 2012).

Despite the rich teaching resources above, there are two critical limitations. The first, the age focus of the teaching plans are mainly from primary school to higher education. Currently, there are only a few references which focus on international education in early childhood education such as international education curriculum for African-American children (Newman, 2012). According to another learning guidelines of international education in early years in UK, one of the learning areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is 'understanding the world' which includes cross-cultural awareness, sensitivity, and understanding (Department of Education, 2014). In EYFS, young children learn about the world by listening, watching, reading, and exploring books, news, and other items from all over the world. Activities often combine multi-learning areas (DfES, 2005), even though there are only vague instructions and limited research about international education in pre-school.

Furthermore, documents and teaching plans are mostly from western countries. The historical backgrounds, developing process, and context between east and west are different, which may influence students' thinking. There are already researchers who have pointed out background differences and students' thinking between the Asian and western world and are critical regarding learning (Chen-Hafteck & Xu, 2008; Cribbin, 2009; Selvarajah, 2006). Localized and context-minded course design has to be considered in the implemen-

tation of international education (Pearson & Degotardi, 2009). Given all that has been mentioned so far, it is important to elaborate more about the application of international education in early years and from a non-western cultural perspective.

### **Intercultural Understanding, Cultural Competence and Cultural Bias**

Intercultural understanding continues to be discussed within multicultural education which is to see, to interact, to think, and to understand among cultures in the living context. The US, as a cultural melting pot, emphasized this issue in ECEC educational system from professional training by communication and interaction (Sareen, Visencio, & Russ, 2005). The way to cultivate intercultural understanding is from understanding self and other cultures, trying to look at things from an opposing point of view and respecting the difference between them. However, it's hard to learn without meeting people from different cultural backgrounds (Taylor & Henao, 2006). Parents and community also play important roles in the design of intercultural understanding in multicultural activities, with local experience sharing and offer ideas for constructivist, empowering, and localized teaching strategies (Abington-Pitre, 2015). The focus of intercultural understanding is about knowing, understanding and respecting cultures around by using tailor-made learning plans.

Cultural experience, on the other hand, is often emphasized in international education for expanding further and deeper cultural understanding. Issues in cultural experience have been widely discussed in business management. Bennett (2004, 2013) creates the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) through grounded theory. The six characteristics of DMIS are denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. In his opinion, Bennett describes that changes occur when the person becomes aware, thinks, and explores differently to other cultures. Cultural Quotient, CQ, is also mentioned as a crucial competence in the flattened world. Three sources of cultural intelligence are from head (by knowing and exploring), heart (by thinking and reflecting) and body (by acting and interacting) (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). The idea of cultural competence has been used in the educational field with international students in higher education as well (Greenholtz, 2000).

Cultural bias, is another issue, has been constantly discussed while encountering with other culture (Dervin, Paatela-Nieminen, Kuoppala, & Riitaoja, 2012). The boundary be-

tween immigrants and native people was misused as “your culture” and “my culture”. Stereotypes also presented in multicultural classroom. For example, “Finnish people should be white” (Layne & Alemanji, 2015, p.182). Labels such as “better V.S. worse” and “advanced V.S. backward” were also shown in Phillips’ (2010, p.20) study which presented the cultural hierarchy. How do the boundaries, stereotypes and labels influence children’s cultural understanding and how do these cultural bias change in the implementation of international education? These questions are worth more study.

Hence, there are two aspects we can learn and rethink from current theories. First, though there are different developing backgrounds and goals between multicultural and intercultural competence, the common ideas and strategies are similar which are to respect, contact, and reflect. Stepping in to an unfamiliar culture from the onset for deeper understanding is necessary. When there is an issue relating to cross-culture in the classroom, it is important to utilize the theories above in activity design.

Second, still, how to adopt the western approach and adapt it to the eastern context regarding the education is worth more consideration, elaboration, and addressed throughout this empirical research. Especially in this internationalized era, multiculturalism is an existing issue throughout most of the world. How to promote children’s cultural competence through international activity in a multicultural context has to be further explored.

### **Curriculum and Global View of Taiwanese Preschools**

The early childhood curriculum guidelines in Taiwan adopted the perspectives of social-cultural theory whose philosophy elaborates that children grow up in a social context. Teaching and learning in preschool is considered as integrated, and as cross-disciplinary activities related to children’s daily experience (Ministry of Education, 2012). However, recently in Taiwan, there has been a severe critique regarding English learning in early childhood education. Preschools have provided ‘English only’ curriculum but with inappropriate course design and unqualified teachers. The biggest problem of English teaching in Taiwanese preschool is the curriculum emphasizes too much on English and neglects the fundamental developmental tasks for children such as expressing their emotions through their mother tongue. This situation is mainly due to the parental held myth that ‘learning

English equals being international' (Hsieh, 2011; Liu, 2006). This is understandable of parents' expectation of international education in early years, but it so lacks clear focus and proper purposes in curriculum design.

Another issue has risen in Taiwanese early childhood education, which relates to multicultural education. This is the influx of foreign brides and migrant workers from Southeast Asia. Southeast Asian foreign brides are usually commercialized as goods and are chosen by Taiwanese husbands. Migrant workers in Taiwan usually work as caregivers for the elderly or in heavy manual labor. Thus, in Taiwan, the cultural bias happened with Southeast Asian foreign brides and workers due to their conceived low social status.

There are multicultural curriculums, supporting resources, and course supervision in preschools that help children understand, care, and respect the different cultural backgrounds within a child's community (Chen, 2012). International and multicultural education now exists in most of the world at the same time. In Australia, there is a training program which combines these two issues for better global and multicultural views for preschool teachers (Horsley & Bauer, 2010). Therefore, the multicultural issue could be implemented via more international education as an attempt to help children have a more well-rounded global view.

According to curriculum guidelines and cultural competence literature above, three strategies could be considered for curriculum design in Taiwanese preschools. First, international education should be integrated into the curriculum and encourage more direct interaction contact with different cultures. For instance, cooking or character events, email pen pals, video or even face-to-face contact can all be viewed as a supportive international communication. Second, reflection of local and global might be the thread to link cultural thinking between local and global. As an example, who are the people around us yet share different cultures, and how do people around and all over the world might think about various international events, products, or characters? Last, we should examine carefully the local culture and be aware of the interpretation of cultural feeling from parents and community. This can be accomplished by adjusting teaching plans to fit and meet district context then set proper goals for children's cultural understanding.

## **Research method**

### **Action Research**

A qualitative approach was adopted for this research. There are usually a plan, action, observation and reflection in the action research cycle (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 2016). Elements of the action research cycle were adopted but modified into the three steps 'K-D-R' pattern. The researcher explored strategies from literature and field observation (Know), planned learning activities with teachers and put into practice (Do), and met with teachers and discussed how the activity could be improved (Reflect). This pattern was used throughout this research.

This K-D-R cycle worked in the research process as an improving mechanism to uncover better methods of practicing international education in preschool. During the research process, international education activities were designed from the foundation of literature and discussion. In the implementation part (of international activities), the researcher observed, took notes then invited teachers to self-reflect. The results of reflection are the new goal for the next activity implementation.

### **Participants and Context**

Participants for this research are 30 children and two teachers from one small public preschool, affiliated with an elementary school, located in a small township in northern Taiwan. There are virtually no western faces in town, and many parents take their children to an English cram school for additional language support.

In the class, children are mixed-age grouped. There are 17 children age 6, eight children age 5 and five children age 4. Approximately 1/3 of the 30 children come from low social, economic status or whose mother is a foreign national from Southeast Asia or mainland China.

There are two teachers in this group. Both are well experienced; they have 23 and 15 years teaching experience in private preschools and public preschools located in remote areas. The teachers have a strong motivation on expanding children's international vision in current preschool because they think it is important to bring the world to children especially

when children in this small township might have limited opportunities to contact the outer world.

The theme used during this research period was ‘local beauty<sup>1)</sup>.’ All 30 children visited the local community to experience natural and historical environments. Upon returning to the classroom, students attempted to organize a community tour for parents or elderly individuals who are interested in this community.

Collaborative action research between researchers and preschool teachers was chosen in order to gain an understanding of how international education could be better implemented in the Taiwanese preschool curriculum in 2015. Curriculum development and teaching plans were based on discussion between the researcher and interviewed preschool teachers.

### **Activity Design**

Direct contact in integrated curriculum along with intercultural understanding was the two methods from the review of the literature. After initial observations and teacher interviews, a third method was discovered by researcher's reflection. Considering the cultural bias evidenced in this neighborhood (such as foreign brides and foreign workers—who are often looked-down upon), one additional strategy was adopted due to the lack of multiculturalism within the community. Often, there is gossip about multicultural issues within the community as opposed to the outer community. More needs to be explored globally and needs to be re-explored back in the local. The non-Taiwanese parents do not appreciate being labelled ‘immigrant’ because this shows cultural bias within the community. When there are activities or lectures relating to multi-culture, teachers usually encourage parents from other countries to join. In fact, no one appreciates the identity of ‘immigrant parent’ and would rather be viewed just like others.

‘I’ve been married for more than 10 years. I am a citizen just like you, but why do you always call me ‘immigrant bride’? It makes me and my children feel that we are lower than you.’ (P-01-0803)

This comment came from one mother from mainland China. Teachers also mentioned

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<sup>1)</sup> Local beauty means children explore the natural and historical things in their community. In this study, children explored the small township in their neighborhood

that it is a common bias within this community. Parents (usually mothers) from mainland China or Southeast Asia, are usually tagged as the foreign bride with discrimination (T-01-0830). The original idea of teaching and learning about multi-culture from curriculum guidelines was to introduce children to multi-ethnic groups in the community. To avoid the bias influence on children's culture exploration, in this research; instead, culture contact was firstly from global then back to local. The curriculum of international education development could better be divided into three phases forming a whole new international experience including the face-to-face contact for more meaningful and open interaction. The three methods were considered in the process of curriculum design and were discussed during each phase.

### **Data Collection and Analyzing**

Data collection is from two methods. Observations were conducted during course teaching and three international contact activities. Additionally, there were interviews and discussions between the researcher and teachers with notes being taken during the entire 2015 academic year. Pictures drawn by children and reflections from teachers and parents were used as supportive data.

There were 10 observations and 10 formal interviews in this research plus many informal online discussions. One observation every month was conducted in this research. International education, which was not the main body in the curriculum, had been integrated in the curriculum, so the learning activities regarding it did not happen every day. The researcher went to preschool once a month when there was a learning activity related to international education, such as the discussion of the preparing for Japanese students' visiting or the exploration of national flags. In the observations, the researcher took the notes and discussed with teachers in the following interviews.

In the formal interviews, the researcher asks about recent learning activities, children's reactions and teachers' reflections about international education. Before three international activities, there were more discussions about the preparation. Additionally, many informal discussions were conducted via communication software such as LINE and FACEBOOK. There is also a reading group about international education with teachers and parents in the preschool. Issues related to international education in that preschool and teachers' reflection

would also be discussed. Discussions in the reading group were also taken as parts of informal interviews.

All data was gathered then organized in chronological order to present the process of implementation of international education in preschool. During the analyzing process, data from teaching observations, interviews and discussions were examined to form the findings. Issues related to strategies of implementation, children's cultural understanding and cultural bias were emerged to from the initial findings. The initial findings were examined through triangulation.

## **Findings & Discussion**

### **Strategies in Implementing International Education**

The research was conducted using three international contact activities with the continuing developing strategies. These three, in order of occurrence, were a video call, a community field trip and a flexible activity to share local beauty. In three activities, children acted as little hosts and presenters in all three activities for adult to understand what they had found during the theme exploration. Strategies in these activities are create foreign experience, face to face contact and flexible activity design.

**Foreign experience creating: Video call.** First strategy is to create new foreign experience. This activity is a video Skype call to a Finnish day care teacher where children attempt to introduce the local beauty. Before this activity, children already explored the community and practiced how they could introduce aspects of their community. To provide some contact experience, an overseas video call to a Finnish day care teacher was conducted. Three representative children were selected to introduce some famous natural and historical local scenery. Most of the children never had the experience of international contact with Westerns. As such, all children were enthusiastic, and the activity was highly supported by parents. This initial contact was successful, but children still lack genuine contact with non-Taiwanese individuals.



*Figure 1. Video Call with Finnish Day Care Teacher*

While this activity proved an active learning influence on children, deeper interaction between the children and international individuals is needed. Direct contact is mentioned in reflection discussion between preschool teachers and researcher.

It is good for children to experience 'foreigner', but the contact quality is low in virtual method. Children could not have spontaneous communication because almost everything is set in video call. (T&R-0520)

Therefore, the genuine contact should be considered in future activities.

**Face to face contact: Community field trip.** Face to face contact is implemented as a new strategy after the video call with Finnish teacher. Preschool teachers organized a field trip for children to explore unique landscapes within their neighborhood. In this activity, three Japanese college students were invited to join the field trip with the preschool children. All the children divided into small groups. Each group was in charge of certain locations and then verbalized the particular landscapes to the Japanese students. Some translation support (Chinese to English) was assisted by Taiwanese college students. In this activity, children actually 'see' and have 'contact with' foreign nationals. Still, this activity lacked deeper and open interaction due to the highly structured design of tour activity.



Figure 2. Children introduce Local Temple to Japanese Students through College Students' Translation

They (children) actually see the Japanese by listening to their discussion and observing their politeness. How could we make the contact easier for children without any language barrier? How could we design the activity with free interaction space? Then I think children could actually BE with foreigner in their own way. (T&R-0518)

**Flexible activity design: Spontaneous cultural interaction.** In the third activity, the strategy of flexible activity design was adopted to create a relaxed atmosphere for children to engage more active and creative interaction. Six US college students were invited to join a group activity with children, where the children attempted to combine all their previous knowledge and activities into one larger event. Contents of this activity were first to introduce the beauty of the local community, followed by a poster drawn about what they've heard in the brief introduction, and concluded with group artwork. Giving the flexible schedule and class structure, children had more freedom to interact with the US students.

There were spontaneous interactions from children despite their limited English communication skills. This activity was enjoyable for children because they had a chance to explore Westerners in children's way including touching their hair and singing songs with them (Ob-0526). Still, from the reflections of teachers and the researcher, it could be even more meaningful for children if they could have this continued contact with the same foreign individual or group.



*Figure 3. Children had Spontaneous Interactions with US College Students in Flexible Activity*

The main purpose of three strategies above is to provide more and appropriate contact for children within their learning activities. Direct contact is a crucial method in international education and cultural understanding, which is mentioned in current curriculum guidelines of international education. The goal of direct contact is connection, multimethod, media and activity design to encourage children's interaction as a means for development (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Ministry of Education R.O.C., 2011). As such, the teachers and this researcher continue reflecting on closer and deeper contact. From the virtual video call by represented children, face to face contact in structured activity to flexible contact in the loose scheduled activity, children had more freedom to think and try their own way of direct contact.

Apart from the strategies, there are new thinking about language proficiency and learning topic for young children in Taiwan. In this research, direct contact means the meeting of cultures but not English conversation. According to Hsieh (2011) and Liu (2006), many private preschools in Taiwan view English proficiency as an important part in foreign contact. In this study, with the assistance of translators to overcome the language obstacle, children could focus more on non-language contact such as listening, observing, and playing with people from other cultures. In Taiwan, and most Asia countries, English is a foreign language. Children can't naturally acquire English in an EFL environment in their dai-

ly lives. English plays more of an obstacle than a connector in communication. Therefore, for young children in EFL context, perhaps it is more important to think about how children can contact foreign culture by non-language media but not by English proficiency.

The exploration topic of international education for children in preschool may differ from other educational stage. Integrated but not separated-subject learning in preschool were conducted in this research, which follows the curriculum guidelines in Taiwan and international education. It is important for young children to explore for the themes in their daily lives, which is the basic concept in ECEC curriculum. Thus, unlike the themes in most of the international education guidelines focusing on outer cultures, the exploration theme focuses on local in this study. For young children who may lack international experience and communication skills, local beauty is the main body of learning along with three international contact activities which are the ‘international’ part.

Therefore, for children who live in EFL context with limited English learning and foreign cultural experiences, it might be better to think about international contact by translation or non-language interaction. Moreover, taking international education as the supplemental activity, which expands children's learning and global experience, could be a more proper method in early years.

### **Children's Cultural Experience & Understanding**

Children's cultural understanding changes along with three international experiences. In the first video call, introducing local community but in a different language (English) was launched to aid children to contact a different language with their previous local learning experience. In this activity, children's awareness and ideas of the various countries were plentiful. The children started to think about things from a different perspective.

They have dogs in Finland...what's the sound of a dog's barking? Is it the same as in Taiwan?  
(C08-0417)

Another boy who often complains about the hot weather in Taiwan asked,

‘If she (the Finnish teacher) comes to Taiwan, will she feel too hot? Or maybe people from a cold

place really like the warm weather. (C13-0422)

However, this activity brought culture from only one country, Finland, and the concept needs further expansion.

In the second activity, children experienced Japanese culture with direct physical contact and spoken language. Children viewed this 'foreign experience' no different than the activities with their parents or elders. However, a culture comparison among Taiwan and Japan, and other countries, was triggered.

When we talk to Japanese, we should be very, very polite because that's the way they like. As to the USA, I think it is fine because they are usually loud and enjoy having fun. (C23-0530)

Children already tried to understand what appropriate behavior is according to different cultural backgrounds.

In the last activity, children experienced different cultural values from US students that brought different culture compared to the previous event with the Japanese students. Children tried to challenge Chinese culture by imitating US students' behavior and compare different cultural values among Taiwan, Japan, and the US.

The happening process of cultural competence in this research from children is different from Bennett's DMIS theory (2013). There were no clear clues of denial, defense and minimization but more about acceptance, adaptation and integration. Children think about cultures by experiencing, communicating then reflecting, which follow Earley & Makowski's (2004) three sources of CQ but only in children's way. Children experienced foreign culture by exploring, compared cultural differences by thinking, and contacted foreigners through non-language interaction. They tried to think about daily life of other cultures, and compare manners among cultures. After international contacts with different culture experiences in this study, children started to present proactive thinking among cultures.

### **Cultural Bias in the Implementation Process**

Originally, cultural bias was presented and categorized by the context in this research: western is advanced, Taiwan is in the middle and southeast Asia is backward. Children's

cultural impression was originally influenced by parents and locals, which match Abington-Pitre's (2015) findings.

This explains why the starting point of new cultural experience of Finland was viewed as a huge success in parents, teachers, and community's eyes. The local press was invited to report this video call because educational performance in Finland is well-known in the world. This activity is an international contact with a "superior" country that.

In the process of implementation of international education activities, children started to appreciate diverse cultures. In 2015, a massive earthquake destroyed Nepal. Nepal is labelled as a developing country and may not have caught children's attention due to the local cultural bias. As the preschool teacher told the children about this news, the children started not only thinking about how to help Nepal but also showing respect for the country.

It is a very beautiful country but sadly, people there suffered from an earthquake. (C26-0527)

Children care about this news and appreciate the positive side of this country, which was not the same as the local cultural bias. In children's eyes, Nepal is not just a developing country worthless to know and care. It is one of the places in the world village worth to value. They began to care about the world without thinking the cultural label. Their cultural bias is gradually changing.

Additionally, the labels of culture and country were gradually changed. Children viewed people within the local community differently. Usually, children with darker skin color in Taiwan are perceived as 'indigenous people', which represents little discrimination. After the second activity, children told the teacher that one of the boys in class with dark skin might be a 'foreigner', which was NOT used in a discriminatory manner. Children see local multi-ethnic people slightly different after they have experiences of international contacts.

Another child, who has a relative from Vietnam, was also mentioned by some children. They said,

'Your auntie is not a Taiwanese; she is a foreigner.' (C07-0605)

Children think that people divided only between Taiwanese and non-Taiwanese, which is not like the adult-ordered 'higher Westerner, middle Taiwanese, and lower Southeast Asian.

“Children learned the bias from their daily lives but in these international contacts, they have a new chance to re-learn the culture without bias. For them, there are no longer “higher or lower” culture, just sameness and differences”. (T02- 0624)

In the end, the labels of high and low cultures in Piller’s (2011) study were not found but transformed into local and foreign. Cultures are just cultures without judgment.

This is a new understanding between multicultural and international education. Although there is a different goal for each, it is clear in this research that they could be combined and we could talk about culture as a whole. In this study, we see children in the context with cultural bias might ‘re-see’ the minor culture through international exploration.

In the context with superior global trends and local multicultural as in this research, it is very important to notice the hidden curriculum on children in their learning experience. Teachers should be conscious of the interpretation of cultures in community which is the original image in children’s minds. Existing learning and teaching material in international education have to be rethought to guide children to have a proper cultural concept in certain contexts.

### **Between Local and Global**

Among all the findings above, issues between local and global appears in the process of international learning. There is no doubt that in this internationalized era, children should have more understanding about what is global. While facing the world, how children think about themselves is also important. In Taiwan, there is a myth of xenophilia that welcomes western culture. The evidence showed in English learning and other cultural thinking (Ho, 2014). In this research, there are counter developing directions between local and global.

The development path of international education in this study is from local to global. Children explored local from the onset and tried to introduce it to foreigners then expanded their cultural thinking through contact. In this path, children's experience is from known to unknown. They share local beauty they experienced, with ways they are familiar and the language they use. They are confident about the context with uncertainty about the listener.

The influence of children’s cultural understanding, on the other hand, is from global to local. Multicultural was skipped from the beginning due to bias. In the process of interna-

tional contact, children experience outer culture away from their community. In this way, the outer culture was viewed as an ordinary one without labels and bias. Children's cultural thinking started to be separated from the existing bias and developed by their experience. At the end of this research, children applied this non-prejudicial thinking in the local community while some of the local culture still has seen it as inferior. The culture viewpoint was changed from global to local.

## Conclusion

This research was a new implementation for international education within a preschool setting. From the descriptions above, strategies of international education created new and genuine foreign contact in flexible design. Once the foreign contact was established, it triggered children's cultural thinking. Children gradually change their cultural bias by dividing culture only between Taiwan and foreign without discrimination. This may be another direction to be considered regarding the implementation of international and multicultural education in certain areas.

There remain a few considerations for the future. First, it is relevant and meaningful for children to keep in contact with the same individual or group of foreigners so they can form longitudinal interaction. This discussion and interaction may become even deeper while continuing to shape children's minds. Second, it was lucky that in this study circumstance, there were foreigners from three different countries, which may not be possible in other preschools. How to bring or introduce foreign culture and the global perspective into children's life without particular resources must also be considered.

For teachers who want to implement international education in EFL context for young children, it is important to create direct foreign contact to enrich children's experience. Curriculum design does not have to focus international topics. Context, however, has to be seriously considered in planning activities. In Taiwan, and similar contexts where cultural bias shows in the community, teachers must remain aware and transfer this into the proper strategies in curriculum design. For future research, it is meaningful to keep tracking curriculum development. What could be the next step after this initial curriculum trial? Per-

haps it would be most appropriate to explore more about children's interpretation of international education and their view of the world.

Overall, global elements can be taken as side dishes while the main course is more related to children's local experience. Teachers should always keep in minds that curriculum design for international education and cultural bias from communities are critical for children's better cultural understanding between local and global.

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