

# Significance of amae as a transitional mechanism: Function and role of the “zone of practicable adaptability”

Eritsu Omichi (eritsu@hotmail.com)  
[Mukogawa Women's University]

移行期における甘えの重要性——「可能領域」としての機能・役割——

大道 えりつ

武庫川女子大学 大学院臨床教育学研究科

## 要約

発達的な変化は、個体の（遺伝的）な要因か環境的要因によって生じるのか、現代に至るまで数多くの論争がなされてきた。しかし、発達的な変化をこのような個体か環境かという二者択一的に捉えられるほど単純なものではなく、Sameroff (2009) の transactional model が示すように、個体と環境との相互作用が発達的な変化を作り出すという考え方が主流になっているが、変化していくプロセスについての説明が行われていない。変化のプロセスを見ている Piaget (1952) のモデルは、個体がどのように変化を作り出すのを説明しているが、環境の役割について多く述べられていない。本稿は、発達における状態変化を環境の役割という視点から、人はどのように新しい対人環境や社会環境と適合するのか、その変化のプロセスやメカニズムについて検討した。ダイナミック・システムズアプローチや社会文化的理論などでみられる発達の移行メカニズムに関する発達心理学の主要理論を概観し、発達における移行状態、「できるようになる」ための中間的な段階が変化を作り出す重要な役割を果たしていることが示唆された。このような知見をもとに、社会適応の過程においてもこのような中間的な段階、本稿で言う「可能領域」という移行前と移行後の二つの状態や機能の共存を環境も個体も許している状態が存在し、それが移行を容易にしているとする理論を構築した。本稿ではまたこのような「可能領域」が日本文化において特異的に存在しているとされてきた、「甘え」の機能的側面であると考え、家から学校生活への移行などの移行場面において観察される行動について議論している。発達の場面におけるモデルの適合を検討するため、幼稚園や保育園での先生との関わりにおける、子どもの社会的ルールの獲得過程を公刊された論文のメタ分析によって行っている。その結果、新しい行動や他者との接し方が定着するまでの間には、種々の行動が教師の見守る姿勢（戦略的非介入）によって猶予されるなど、新しい行動の試し期間として行動の成否よりもそれらを使って良いという「可能期間・領域」としての事象が生じていることが明らかとなった。個体が環境との相互作用によって変化するというこれまでの発達理論に、環境の視点から移行過程に着目するモデルが加わることによって、AからBの状態への変化の間に、AもBも許される期間が存在し、それが個体の環境への適応度を高めている可能性が示唆された。今後このモデルに従って、状態変化の過程を詳細に検討することにより、人間の環境との相互作用過程についての議論が進むものと考えられる。

## Key words

zone of practicable adaptability, *amae*, zone of proximal development, zone of current development, transitional mechanism

## 1. Introduction

The study of human development seeks to understand how human beings change from the time of conception to death, describing the growth of humans throughout the lifespan. As defined by Valsiner (1998), development is the “constructive transformation of form in irreversible time through the progress of organism ↔ environment interaction,” implying that all biological, psychological, and social organisms exist and develop only because of their permanent exchange relations with their environments (p.192). As reflected in Valsiner's description of development, the interaction of nature and nurture is considered as the current mantra in developmental science for explaining

how and why people change throughout life. Developmental theorists past and present have grappled with the question concerning the relative contributions of individual and environmental factors in understanding the process through which developmental changes occur. For instance, Skinner's (1953) theory of operant conditioning perceive the child's behaviour change as a passive response to the environment's active control through reward and punishment. In contrast, Gesell's (1928) maturational model takes the opposing view of changes stemming from the passive features of the environment supporting the behavioural change as programmed in the child's genetics. Although these models are useful in explaining the roles genetic factors and environmental experiences play in shaping the course of development, the positions held by Gesell and Skinner are essentially extremist positions which are no longer supported in light of current research of developmental psychology (Keenan & Ev-

ans, 2009). Today, most developmental researchers recognize that both elements play an essential role in development, though debate continues as to how each factor contributes dynamically to the process of developmental changes.

Addressing the need to move away from perceiving developmental changes as dichotomous, either-or in nature, contemporary scholars have taken the stance of viewing developmental changes as co-constructed and facilitated by both the individual and the environment (Lewis & Mayes, 2012). Sameroff's (2009) transactional model of development is one such example that emphasizes the dynamic and adaptive nature of the environment and the organism as an active participant in its own growth. According to the transactional model, development in the individual is influenced by interplay with processes in the individual's context over time. As shown in Figure 1, the child's characteristic at Time 1 interact with the environment at Time 1 to produce a transformed child characteristic and environment at Time 2, where both the child and the environment at Time 1 were similarly transformed from some earlier Time, Time n-1 (Sameroff, 2009; Lewis & Mayes, 2012). The transactional model not only indicate that the individual and the environment is never independent of each other, it also illustrates how these features transform over time in response to changes stemming from either the individual or the environment that require new adaptations in one or the other. However, unlike developmental models in the past, the transactional model suggests that developmental changes are a product of the continuous dynamic interactions of the individual and the environment that both changes over time for adaptive purposes.

Although the transactional model provide important insights as to how adaptive changes stem from the dynamic interplay or "passes" between the individual and the environment, question remain as to the mechanism of change that underlie such interplay. Piaget (1952) addresses this issue by exploring the process of change underlying the organism↔environment interaction through the concept of equilibration, a movement from equilibrium to disequilibrium and back to equilibrium. Equilibration is a process that promotes the development of increasingly complex forms of thoughts and knowledge through assimilation and

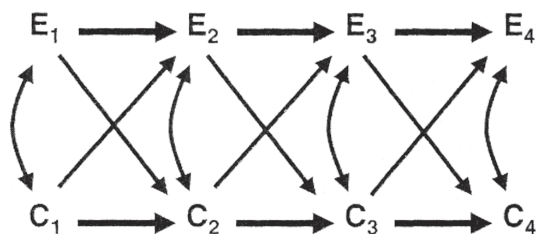


Figure 1: Transactional model with continuities in child and environment

Source: From "The transactional model" (p. 13), by A. Sameroff, in *The transactional model of development: How children and contexts shape each other*, A. Sameroff (Ed.), 2009, Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association Books.

accommodation of schemes, organized pattern of behaviour, as the individual engages with and comes to learn the environment.

According to Piaget (1952), an individual is in a state of equilibrium when one can address new situations using existing schemes (assimilation). When encountered with circumstances for which present knowledge and skills are ineffective, the individual experience a form of mental discomfort or disequilibrium that prompts one to deal with the situation through reorganizing or replacing existing schemes with entirely new ones in dealing with a new situation (accommodation). Equilibration helps explain how children are able to move from one cognitive stage of thought into the next by maintaining a balance between assimilation and accommodation, two complementary processes involved in the individual's adaptation to the environment (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2013).

Piaget's concept of equilibration contributes greatly to the understanding of the mechanism of change that underlies the process of how an individual engage with and come to know the environment during developmental transitions. However, more clarification in terms of "the transitional mechanisms both within a stage and from stage to stage" is needed in order to understand "how children's awareness of a contradiction would lead them to the solution that resolves the contradiction" (Miller, 2011). Additionally, by explaining changes as stemming from the individual actively assimilating and accommodating to the passive features of the environment, Piaget focus on the adaptive effort solely from the perspective of the individual and fail to take into account of the active role environment play in contributing to such changes, especially the role of social partners. As noted by Valsiner (1998), "the objective world of the child is purposefully subjectified by the actions of others ... who participate in the care and upbringing of the child...while organizing the environment within which the child is to experience relevant development events" (Valsiner, 1998). Hence, the role and function of the environment, especially the involvement of social others in helping children understand, adapt, and navigate through the social world is an important and necessary component involved in the process of adaptive change that is overlooked and needs closer examination in the understanding of human developmental processes.

As Lewis and Mayes (2012) stress, the features of the environment and their various effects and role in the developmental processes are poorly understood due to the fact that "environment is thought of as the 'other variable and variables' that either confound longitudinal predictions or contribute difficult to measure noise and or variance in models focusing on individual child outcome" (p. 1). Therefore, from the viewpoint that the structure of the social environment is particularly relevant in understanding the change process in human development, we seek to examine the role and function environment play in the process of individual's adaptation to new circumstances through socialization. In the first part of this paper, major developmental theories

of dynamic systems approach and sociocultural theory will be reviewed to understand the transitional mechanism that facilitates the change processes necessary for developmental growth. Working assumption as to the possible mechanism of change underlying individual environment interaction will be made from the review. Functional features of the preliminary model based on the working assumption will be extracted next from examining how Japanese mothers and preschool teachers assist children in acquiring the necessary skills to adapt to the world during the socialization process using *amae*, an indigenous concept of relatedness that reflect a form of adaptive mechanism where the assurance of another's goodwill permits a certain degree of self-indulgence (Doi, 1973). Lastly, a model reflecting the functional features of *amae* as a transitional mechanism for adaptability will be formulated to understand how environmental factors may contribute to the process of human developmental change and provide new insights on current developmental perspectives.

## 2. Theoretical basis for understanding developmental changes: Views on transitional mechanisms

Although many major developmental theories describe development as discontinuous, phasic-specific progression of stages, recent studies have shown that many of the important phenomena of developmental psychology can be more accurately defined in terms of continuous and gradual changes in developmental processes. The idea behind such argument is that comparison of static states of before and after an acquisition of skill at different ages, although portray global developmental trend, fail to capture how these changes occur.

### 2.1 Nature of developmental change: Stage vs. transition

Flavell (1971), in his presentation of how typical course of human cognitive development proceeds, argues that various forms of cognitive items (knowledge, abilities, strategies, etc) outlined in Piagetian type stages "may evolve toward their full functional maturity much more slowly and gradually than is commonly

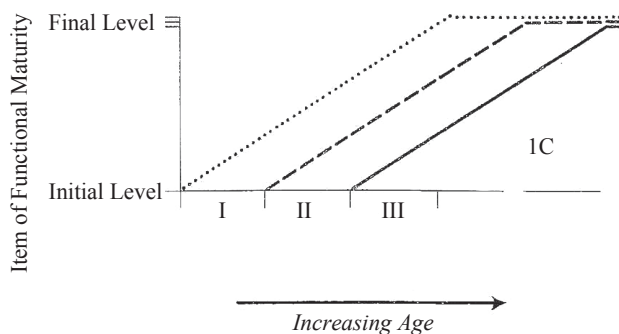


Figure 2: Flavell's interpretation of developmental change

Source: From *Stage-related properties of cognitive development* (p. 436) by J. Flavell, 1971, *Cognitive Psychology*, 2(4).

supposed, often achieving it only well after that stage's conventional closing date" (p. 421). This suggests that human cognitive growth does not occur in a discontinuous, abrupt manner as portrayed in a linear model of stages but more as sequence of transitions where items from two or more stages may exist at different age related "degrees" and "ways," developing continuously and gradually outside the confinement of a stage (see Figure 2).

Siegler (2002) also takes similar perspective to Flavell, arguing that changes in developmental functions are often examined at large intervals (e.g. yearly) and depicted as staircase-like, sudden upward shift in the level of performance, which is puzzling since such approach fail to examine the underlying processes that give rise to the changes. He stress that changes, when examined at smaller intervals, becomes intuitively understood when explained as orderly, gradual, and continual change, deriving from adjustment in distribution of different ways of thinking across time, where changes are inducted through the use of more varied ways of thinking (Siegler, 2002). Therefore, instead of the staircase model of development as favoured by previous theorists, an overlapping wave depiction of developmental change where "waves occur as the variability in strategy use gradually peaks and declines while the overlap between the waves reflects the fact that children use multiple strategies at the same time" (Gallahue, Ozmun, & Goodway, 2012).

The overlapping wave model suggests that the end point indicated by stage theories may be reached via different routes or developmental pathways. Understanding of such phenomenon

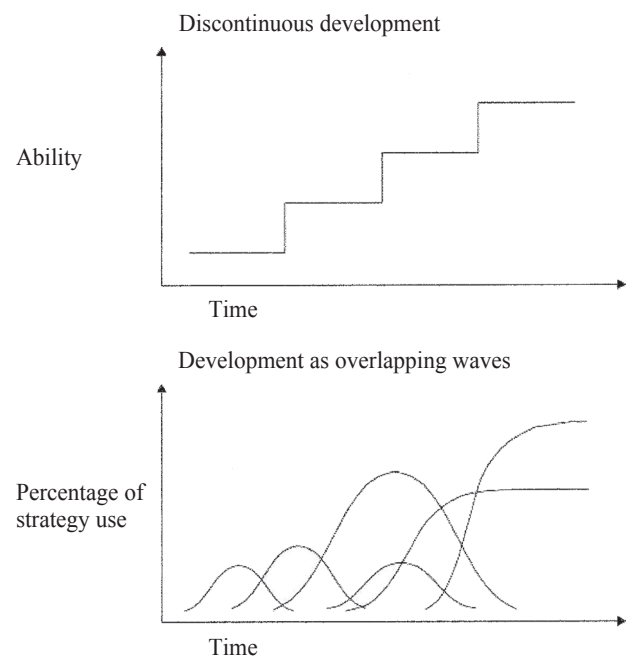


Figure 3: Stage vs. overlapping wave model of development

Source: From *Understanding motor development: Infants, children, adolescent, adults* (p. 7) by D. Gallahue, J. Ozmun, & J. Goodway, 2012, Boston, M.A.; McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

can only be achieved through examination of what and how changes occur during developmental transitions or intermediate steps as overlooked by previous studies and researches. In the next section, mechanism of change involved in the sequential, vertical structure of the developmental processes of steps or levels as featured in many process-oriented studies of developmental transitions from major developmental construct of dynamic systems approach and sociocultural theory will be reviewed in order to understand what occur during developmental transition and how these mechanism is involved in the adaptive processes of individual-environment interaction.

## 2.2 Mechanism of developmental transition in dynamic systems approach: Bridging and the zone of current development (ZCD)

In line with Flavell and Siegler's perspective on the change process of development, the dynamic systems approach provides new models for studying change process, which focuses on transitions and ways in which system changes over time. Dynamic systems theory addresses the issue of developmental changes through the concept of emergence, the creation of new forms or properties through on-going processes intrinsic to the systems itself (Lewis, 2000). It is a key principle underlying self-organization, defined by Thelen and Smith (2006) as the process where "pattern and order emerge from the interactions of the components of a complex system without explicit instructions, either in the organism itself or from the environment" (p. 259). Principle of self-organization indicates that new forms or patterns "does not have to be imported into the system from outside, as presumed by learning approaches, nor preordained from within, as assumed by nativist approaches" (Lewis, 2000, p.39). New form is constructed during developmental process where specific conditions within the biology of the individual and the environment causes behaviour to emerge from the patterns of all the variables operating at a particular moment independent of any one system (Miller, 2011; Gallahue et al., 2012). Such theoretical ideas differ from previous approach in that development is characterized not as growth, learning, or construction as deriving from either innate structures or environmental import, but an outcome of a function of their on-going dynamic interaction (Thelen & Smith, 2006). The dynamic systems approach offers powerful concepts that help in explaining the developmental process of change, such as bridging frame, bridging, and the zone of current development.

### 2.2.1 Bridging frame

Fogel, Garvey, Hsu, and West-Stroming (2006) examined the developmental changes processes in interpersonal relationships based on the dynamic systems approach, postulating that the development of interpersonal relationships contain hidden cycles, patterns, or laws that could be applied to the developmental transitions between any two stages of relationship growth. This

regularly recurring pattern of communication is called frames. Frames are stable patterns of social behaviour that have a consistent theme, taking place within a specific location that involve particular forms of mutual co-orientation between participants (e.g. bedtime story and lunch dates). Frames are used to examine the process of change over time in social systems. When changes in relationships occur, additional frames are spontaneously created to assist the existing frames to undergo transformation that are often difficult and chaotic. These additional frames are called bridging frames. Bridging frames contain elements of both the existing and emerging frame and appear before the emerging frame becomes the predominant pattern.

Engagement period is an example of a bridging frame seen in romantic relationships that combine elements of both courtship and marriage together to allow couples to try out what it feel like to be married before making further commitment. Engagement contains elements of both the courtship frame, interaction characterized by pure enjoyment of each other without responsibilities, and the marriage frame, where discussions about future family life and relationship between in-laws come into play (Fogel & Kawai, 2008). Bridging frames such as engagement period as described above appear spontaneously at a wide range of ages and occurs within individuals and between people in social interaction. It buffers and makes developmental transition go smoothly by creating an intermediate frame carrying elements of past and future. The existence of such frame provides communicative stability that enables the people in relationship to try out new ways of relating without having to suddenly let of old patterns before committing themselves into future actions.

### 2.2.2 Bridging and the zone of current development (ZCD)

Bridging frame is an example of bridging, a transitional mechanism that is used to explain development and learning processes. Bridging is a partial, transitional step that highlight spontaneous ways in which individuals self scaffold their own knowledge by operating simultaneously on both a lower level of existing knowledge and a higher target level of still undefined knowledge (Granott, Fischer & Parziale, 2002).

According to Granott (2002), development never occurs as a continual progress but as ordered fluctuations of backward transitions or regression to lower developmental levels followed by progress. Progress is facilitated through this repetitive, reiterative construction of higher and lower knowledge levels. When encountering a novel situation, an individual using bridging often start processing problem at a level lower than the developmental levels they exhibit. Such regression occurs so that previously constructed knowledge can be modified in support for further understanding and construction of novel, higher level ones. Backward transition also free capacity, enabling one to work at a higher level. Such mechanism enables the creation of a partially defined shell to guide the construction of new knowledge by outlining a perspective for processing new experiences (Gra-

nott et al., 2002). This pulls development from lower to higher knowledge levels, linking currently knowledge and future target structures.

People routinely create undefined bridging shells that use the structure of higher-level skills and knowledge to guide their learning and problem solving by gradually filling the missing components. As shells are transformed into explicit skills, people continue to use bridging to achieve still higher levels by creating a series of shifting shells to scaffold their own learning and development (Granott et al., 2002). The developmental range created through this shifting shells characterized by ordered fluctuations between the lowest to the highest levels is called the zone of current development (ZCD). The ZCD is defined as the distance between the actual (current) developmental level and potential development expected in the near future. The ZCD stimulates progress by indicating the focus on where the current developmental efforts lie. It bounds the ordered fluctuations that create variability within a developmental range, which function to reinforce and strengthen knowledge while simultaneously making knowledge more flexible and amenable to change (Granott, 2002). Such mechanism of change occurs spontaneously within and between individuals, enabling smooth transition to transpire through experimentation of new behavioural patterns or knowledge to take place before the most adaptive form become predominant.

### 2.2.3 Implication

The application of bridging in explaining developmental change processes point to the important functions partial transitional steps featured in the ordered fluctuation between existing and emerging knowledge levels of the zone of current development (ZCD) serves in generating progress and developmental breakthroughs. Spontaneous appearance of bridging frame in interpersonal relationships during transitional periods also indicates that developmental changes do not occur abruptly as understood previously. Instead, mechanism of change exist and occur in a gradual fashion, allowing individuals time to experiment and process new experience to discover the most effective and adaptive form without letting go of old ones.

The existence of bridging mechanisms provides new insight in the understanding of development not as a continual linear progress but as fluctuating between forward and backward transitions of “effort and rest, progress and stability, and wild guesses and testing” (Granott, 2002). Unlike past interpretations, regression and use of less advanced strategies is part of development that serves as a major mechanism for creating progress rather than a sign of immaturity or pathological symptoms. Such interpretation of development points to the necessity to consider transition and change process as the focus of study since existence of such mechanism indicates that changes are not necessarily induced through external factors but can be constructed through self-scaffolding, where new structures (ability,

behaviour, knowledge) are created out of existing structures. However, despite providing an adequate explanation as to how changes emerge through the dynamic, self-organizing interaction at many levels of analysis, it fail to consider social factors as a source of change in developmental processes, which is a major influencer in inducing changes from a sociocultural perspective.

### 2.3 Process of developmental change through interaction in sociocultural theory: Scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD)

While dynamic systems approach interpret the process involved in developmental changes as mainly stemming from the spontaneous, self-organizational properties of the individual, sociocultural theory place emphasis on the role social environment play in inducing changes. The sociocultural perspective recognizes mutuality in the individual-environment relationship where development occurs through social transactions between the child, the other person, and the social context mediated by the culture. Vygotsky (1978) indicates that development involves the internalization, transformation, and the use of cognitive routines, concepts, and skills by the child through participating in family and societal activities with other members of the culture. These cognitive items are learned through guidance provided by the adult and through observation and imitation of the work of more skilled and competent individual. This repetitive experiencing of guided participation is what enables the child “to develop sophisticated cognitive repertoires despite only having rudimentary skills” and to act competently in successful problem solving through adults’ provision of a structured context that reduces the complexities of problems to manageable form (Meadows, 1996, p.23). The process described above in which children actively organize their own development with the guidance and support of skilled partners is known as scaffolding (Bruner, 1983).

#### 2.3.1 Scaffolding

Scaffolding refers to any form of reduction in the demands of a cognitive or social problem for the purpose of the eventual solution to the full problem (Bickhard, 1992). Scaffolding occurs when the competency of the less able partner is enhanced through the guidance provided by the more able partner through means of prompt, clues, modelling, explanation, discussion, joint participation, and encouragement (Miller, 2011). When scaffolding takes place, the more skilled individual initially provides majority of the cognition required for the task by structuring and adjusting the extent of support according to how much assistance the child needs. As the child increasingly gains mastery over the task, the adult gradually lessens their support by allowing the child to take on more responsibility until he or she can undertake the entire task alone without guidance (Mascolo, 2005). Repetition of scaffolding along with the regular participation in related tasks is what extends the child’s competence

and mastery, where scaffolding is internalized so that the learner can provide it for themselves when taking on new tasks (Meadows, 1996). In order for this process of internalization to take place, the more expert individual must scaffold within the zone of proximal development of the novice learner.

### 2.3.2 The zone of proximal development (ZPD)

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the distance between the actual development level, as determined by the child's capacity to solve problems on his own, and the potential development expected in the near future, as determined by the child's capacity to solve them with assistance. Vygotsky (1978) coined this concept to differentiate between the two levels of development: the actual level of development achieved by independent problem solving and the potential level of development reached with the guidance or collaboration with a more capable other. The ZPD embrace the idea that a more skilled adult or peer builds on the competencies the child already has and present activities that links new knowledge to what the child already knows so to support a level of competence a little beyond the child's actual level (Miller, 2011). Therefore, when providing scaffolds, it is important not only to understand what the individual is capable of achieving alone but is equally important to determine the upper threshold of instruction. Scaffolding below the bottom of the ZPD, where a child can already function autonomously, or above the limit of the ZPD, beyond the reach of a child's present functioning, is pointless and ineffective (Meadows, 1996). Provision of scaffold must be done within the range of the ZPD since "[p]roductive instruction can occur only within the limits of these two thresholds of instruction" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 211). Not only does the ranges of the ZPD points to the area most effective in facilitating changes, it also exists for introducing prospective future actions without disruption of familiar ones (Fogel, et al, 2006).

### 2.3.3 Implications

The notions of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding have important implication for our understanding of development as a nonlinear process, where potential developmental level that a child can do with the assistance of other is a better reflection of one's true ability than the static assessment of one's actual level. The concept does not perceive development in dichotomous term of what one can or cannot do but in a more relative term of what one can achieve with external assistance and how such "tool" is being internalized for future learning. These sociocultural ideas also disregard the dichotomization of learning and development as prevailed in previous theories. They highlight the unity and interdependence of social, learning processes and individual's developmental processes in the dynamic co-construction of cultural knowledge.

The concept of the ZPD also has much in common with the notion of the zone of current development (ZCD), where

changes are most successfully facilitated when introduction of new form is done without disruption of old, familiar ones. Like the ZCD, where change process is mitigated by the utilization of one's existing knowledge, the ZPD emphasizes the way in which interpersonal relationships smooth and buffer the process of change that comes with development and learning. It also explains how more sophisticated cognitive competencies could arise from less sophisticated ones through social interaction, indicating the area or "zone" where effective intervention and support can induce adaptive changes. It points to the importance of looking at the process of change as reflected in how children advance their own thinking through problem solving and how such process can be effectively induced by providing the child a learning environment with appropriate level of support and guidance. These ideas reveals the important role social environment play in inducing developmental changes, although questions remain as to how changes can also be induced with the provision of an environment catered toward the child's potential level of competence without explicit guidance or input from social others.

### 2.4 The zone of practicable adaptability as a new form of transitional mechanism

The examination of change processes from the perspectives of dynamic systems approach and sociocultural theory point to the important functions transitional mechanism plays in facilitating development and learning. While the zone of current development (ZCD) looked at how individual learn to acquire new knowledge through bridging emerging knowledge and existing knowledge, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) looked at how collaboration between an individual with a more capable other help facilitate changes in levels of knowledge from less sophisticated competencies to more sophisticated ones. Both processes explain development in terms of a nonlinear progression where changes and progress occur gradually through transitional period characterized by the coexistence of two different levels before the emergence of a predominant form. Such coexisting state enables the smooth transition of existing form to newly emerging ones through either individual's bridging of current knowledge to new ones or the use of interpersonal relationship to scaffold a problem that is not solvable alone. The existence of transitional mechanisms that assist the acquisition of new function as depicted in the ZCD and the ZPD points to the pivotal role partial steps of transition play in buffering detrimental effect that accompany unstable period of change. Allowance of such period to exist serves the function to enable acquisition of new skills to go smoothly. However, presence of such transitional mechanism also points to the possible existence of a temporary "grace period" or a zone of practicable adaptability characterized by the coexistence of two different states or level similar to the ZCD and the ZPD after the acquisition of a new function or skill has taken place (see Figure 4).

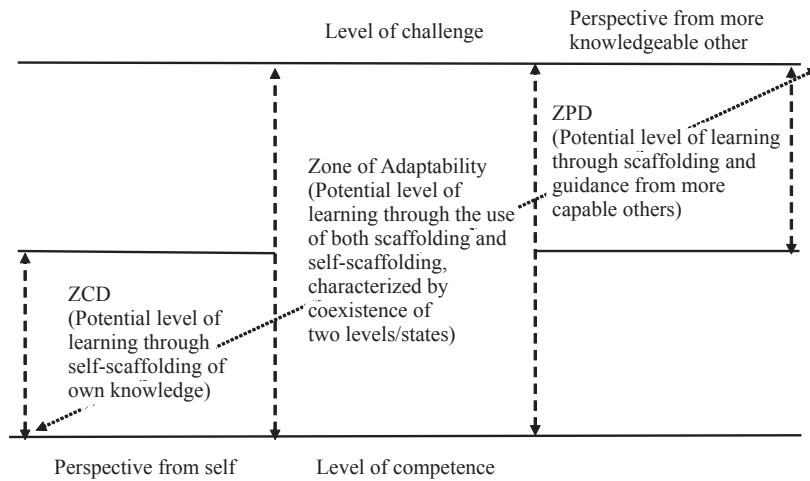


Figure 4: The zone of practicable adaptability in relation to the ZCD and the ZPD

Unlike the ZCD and the ZPD, the presence of a zone of practicable adaptability enable experimentation to take place even after one has acquired certain level of competency. The existence of such temporary period in allowing the prior and emerging levels to co-exist so individual can resort to the usage of prior forms, reconstruct prior form to make way for newly emerging form, or experiment with variations of prior and newly emerged skill/ability, is what induces changes. These changes can stem from either the individual's operation in the ZCD through the use of bridging, through operating in the ZPD in using scaffolds provided by social others, or a combination of both depending on the individual or the environmental circumstances. It is this blending together of old and new as well as the flexible, circumstantial usages of different change mechanism that enable the individual to recognize the link between prior and novel forms, reinforcing and strengthening already acquired knowledge so to facilitate the smooth advancement to a new level of mastery. In order for such change mechanism to work, both the individual as well as the social environment needs to acknowledge that changes do not occur abruptly but in gradual, small steps that require an extensive time to develop. The allowance of such "grace period" to take place that enables repeated experimentation, practice, and experiencing regardless of whether one has acquired full mastery or not is what facilitate progress and adaptive changes to take place

The utilization of such mechanism of providing leniency and allowance for experimentation to take place is prevalently practiced in the everyday life of Japanese people as depicted in the indigenous concept of *amae*, characterized by the allowance of the state of emotional merging (indulgence/dependency) and separateness (discipline/independency) to coexist in the environment in helping children internalize social norm and desirable social behaviours. Details of how *amae* is used in socialization process to help children become a functional member of a society will be analysed in the next section to further understand the

unique characteristic of such transitional mechanism.

### 3. *Amae* as a manifestation of the zone of practicable adaptability in Japanese process of socialization

Socialization is the process in which individuals become distinctive and active functioning member of the society by acquiring the beliefs, values, and behaviours considered appropriate by their culture. In most cultures, the home and preschool is the primary socializing agent in early childhood since the process of socializing young children reflects the values held by members of a society that is essential to the formation of adult personality. In Japan, mothers bear the utmost responsibility in socializing children to the values of society through interaction with their children. Such interaction bridges the home and the outer world where the prototypical relational pattern of *amae* is carried over to other social relationships.

According to Doi (1973), the ability to engage in appropriate dependency through *amae* is an essential skill for children to acquire in Japanese society. Child-rearing practices, parental involvement, and the educational system incorporate the usage of such appropriate dependency in supporting children's socialization process of *wakaraseru*, or getting the child to understand, over authoritarian methods of reward and punishment to foster a *sunao* child (Burke, 2008). A child with *sunao* nature does not yield his or her personal autonomy for the sake of cooperation, but possesses the ability to work with others while simultaneously act according to one's own will without losing one's own belief (Izumi-Taylor, 2008). "Such characteristics imply a high level of competence in balancing the tensions connected to the need to depend and the ability to forestall dependence, the need to dominate and the ability to defer to others, the need to be close and the ability to disarm tension in close interpersonal relations" (Johnson, 1993, p. 172-173).

Fostering of such high competency in social navigation valuable for one's own personal development and success

requires extensive time and training in order to be executed appropriately and this can only be done through the lenient disciplinary approach of *amae*. In the next two sections, analysis of child-rearing practices and disciplinary means of Japanese mother and how this disciplinary strategy is expanded to the world of preschool will be undertaken to understand how *amae* as a manifestation of zone of practicable adaptability is used and depicted in the process of socializing a *sunao* child in Japan.

### 3.1 What is *amae*?

The Japanese term *amae* refers to an emotion that also reflects the need for dependency or passive love. It is a feeling or a desire for emotional merging that embody warmth, security, and intimacy, experienced in close relationship where one's thoughts, desires, and intentions are unconditionally accepted by the other (Kato, 1995). Although used as a daily term, it is also academically defined by the Japanese psychoanalyst, Takeo Doi, as the ability "to depend and presume upon another's love or bask in another's indulgence" (1992, p. 8). He maintains that the psychology of *amae* is evident when one "attempt(s) psychologically to deny the fact of separation from the mother" (1973, p. 74), describing what a small child feels toward his mother or his behaviour indicating the presence of such a feeling. Although the desire to *amaeru* is most evident in mother-child relationship, such desire continues to influence the formation of other relationships including those between lovers, friends, husband and wife, teacher and student, and even employer and employee (Doi, 1992). Yearning for such relationship allows one to seek gratification of love and indulgence while the other provides it in a reciprocal manner.

*Amae* also relates closely to general theories of psychological development, playing a prominent role in psychological development of *jibun* or reflective self-awareness. Acquiring a sense of *jibun* is possible only when one learns to complementarily balance the ambivalence that arises between autonomy and dependence while undergoing the process of self-other differentiation (Doi, 1973). As one becomes aware of *jibun*, one also learns *kejime*, the ability to distinguish, where individual learn to recognize when, how and on whom to be dependent or not to be dependent (Hara & Minagawa, 1996).

Acquisition of *kejime* and a sense of *jibun* require the individual to indulge sufficiently in *amae* interactions with one's caregiver in the earlier years of life (Doi, 1973). Ample experience with positive *amae* interaction enables the developing person to form what Erikson (1963) called "basic trust." Formation of basic trust assists one to accept the reality that mother and others are separate from oneself and have mind of their own. Acceptance of such reality makes it possible to learn how to control and accept the frustration that arises from not having one's yearning for reunion and indulgence met. Experiencing of *amae* also allow Japanese children to start regulating socially disruptive expressions of negative affect and to instead actively

seeking wish fulfilment by using more culturally accepted form of nonverbal *amae* appealing behaviour.

As related to *kejime*, children will learn to regulate the usage of *amae* behaviour depending on situations and affiliations, acquiring the skill and judgment to form a mutually comfortable interdependent relationship with others. Thus, a mature individual who has a sense of *jibun* has the "elasticity and flexibility in managing and expressing *amae* needs" and "a capacity to negotiate a good *amae* interaction." The individual can "move back and forth between *amae*'s sense of oneness and unity at one moment and recognition of separateness at other moments" (Freeman, 2009, p. 76). This can only be achieved when both the denial of and the acceptance of separateness are held simultaneously in conscious awareness.

To summarize, *amae* is a transitory and transitional state, halfway between oneness and separateness, where temporary allowance of such state exist to protect against the negative effect of separation (Kitayama, 2009). This temporary denial of separation in the service of emotional replenishment assists the individual to control and endure the frustration that arises from the separation/individuation process of acquiring a sense of *jibun*. The successful integration of self can only occur with abundant use of such mechanism of adaptability, where one learn to use dependency in a socially appropriate manner through repeated experience of engaging in *amae*'s indulgent dependency. In the next section, how *amae* as the zone of practicable adaptability function to help Japanese children become an active member of a society will be examined to understand the significant role such transitional mechanism play in socialization process.

### 3.2 Home socialization: Maternal use of *amae* for skill acquisition

In Japan, the attainment of basic social and communication skills during early childhood occur in the context of a close, emotional bond between the mothers and their child. Although *amae* is used to describe this close, symbiotic relationship, the term also encompasses the use of such bond in child-rearing practices to produce a child committed to and positively engaged in disciplinary efforts. This is evident in the usage of words like *amaeru*, *amaenai*, *amaesaseru*, *amaesasenai* as criteria for maturity. Mothers' usage of *amae* related terms allow their children to experiment with acts of self-assertion while simultaneously labelling such act as something inappropriate that need to be outgrown (Kumagai, 1981).

Japanese parenting is characterized by mother's avoidance of confrontation and conflict with her child where teaching occur with "near absence of 'slapping the hand' to direct the Child towards positive behavior" (Kumagai, 1981, p. 259). Discipline is learned by the child spontaneously where the mother teaches only when the child is in a cooperative mood. Mothers are sensitive to children's reaction to their controlling attempt and often modify their strategies flexibly by going with rather than chal-



lenging the child's will.

In an interview on maternal strategies used in a hypothetical situation of a child refusing to eat vegetables at dinner, 22 % of the Japanese mothers who started with a firm demand for compliance ("Eat it") gradually moderated their demands ("Eat just a little bit"), often yield altogether ("Let's eat tomorrow then") if persuasive attempts failed. These mothers attributed child's noncompliance to the child's immaturity and lack of understanding rather than bad intention or contested wills (Conroy, Hess, Azuma, & Kashiwagi, 1980). Such interpretation allow mothers to avoid confrontation in order to maintain the emotionally close bonding that plays a crucial role in helping the child internalize socially appropriate rules. Hence, emphasis is placed not on what is right or wrong but to cultivate the adaptive dispositions of *sunao*, a desire to conform and be receptive to adult expectations.

Using empathy to steer children toward desirable behaviour is another way mothers cultivate child initiated compliance. In Ujiie's (1997) study concerning how Japanese mother treat children's negativism, majority of the mothers avoided direct confrontation of children's noncompliance by indirectly urging children to comply. Mothers focused on the use of gentile persuasion in helping the child understand consequence of the misdeed rather than demanding immediate compliance. Two third of the mothers expected that once the child come to understand her thoughts and wishes, they can then discipline the child to act in socially appropriate manners (Ujiie, 1997). Thus, the child's egocentric behaviour, although tolerated and indulged, can come under control through exchange of empathy with the mother, where mothers' use of empathetic understanding is modelled and simultaneously cultivated in their own children.

The descriptions above illustrate Japanese mother's efforts to direct the child's volitional and emotional development through *amae* to parallel the perspective of the parent and society. When *amae* relationship solidifies and the child and mother are "emotionally united," the child's goal and the mother's goal become one. This enable mothers to use the close bond to gently guide the child's in skill acquisition while simultaneously allowing children the space for self-assertion. Additionally, the creation of a warm, relaxed atmosphere emphasizing interdependence and close human ties fosters early awareness of the presence and needs of others. Cultivation of such awareness is crucial to the development of the child's relational attitude and the ability later in life to form ties with others in group-life situation (Kelly, 2001).

### 3.3 Implication

Japanese mother's effort in guiding skill acquisition through indulgent nurturance highlights the unique characteristic of *amae* as the zone of practicable adaptability, where maternal indulgence coexists with disciplinary efforts. Mother's creation of an emotionally relaxed atmosphere where a child is allowed

the temporary freedom to comply or not to comply is what facilitates the spontaneous internalization of societal values. Additionally, it is the mother's empathetic interpretation of a child's behaviour that paradoxically set the boundary of limit, which guide the child toward spontaneous acquisition of proper behaviour. Engaging in such empathic interaction not only train children to be receptive to adult expectations, but also facilitate children's use of such mechanism. Just like how mothers use *amae* to scaffold children's skill learning, children learn to use *amae* to scaffold their own learning. The use of dependency to buffer the negative effect of separation is one example of such learning, which serves as a basis for formation of other relationships.

## 4. Preschool as an institution linking home and the outer world: Transferring of *amae* from mother to social others

Japanese preschools play an important role as social structures that ease children's transition from the undemanding environment of the home to the complex, social environment of the outside world. Preschool curriculums are explicitly designed to serve it socializing purpose to bridge this gap by providing an environment that is simultaneously home and not home. Children are eased into the new environment where both freedom in self-expression and a need to follow social rules simultaneously exist. This offers children a sense of familiarity and security that allow them time to explore and learn the necessary skills to function in a group-life situation.

In this section, function of Japanese preschool as a site of transition from home to the broader society will be examined in relation to *amae* as the zone of practicable adaptability. The unique educational goals of the institution, teachers' handling of misbehaviour, and their management of students through formation of student groups will be discussed to understand how the zone of practicable adaptability is utilized to introduce and ease children to life outside home.

### 4.1 Goals of Japanese preschool and the *osmosis* model of socialization

Japanese preschool goals are based on nurturing the development of human relationship in the group (Research Center for Child and Adolescent Development and Education, 2004). Goals consist of social structures that allows for freedom and exploration of surrounding with the main objective of letting children find confidence through exploration. Curriculums are less academic and more focused on the socialization function of learning to become part of a group. Such goals are achieved not by severing the *amae* based communication learned at home but to facilitate "psychological change in students whereby the desire for nurturance from the mother is transformed into desire for nurturance from the group" (Peach, 1994, p. 13). These socialization focused objectives are implemented through what

Hess and Azuma (1991) called *osmosis*.

*Osmosis* put emphasis on spontaneous learning where nurturance and interdependence provide exposure to adult values, instilling a readiness on the part of the child to imitate, accept, and internalize societal values and norms (Hess & Azuma, 1991). Children's learning grows through free interaction with things and people within the preschool environment where activities are relatively unassisted with minimum rules and regulations (Research Center for Child and Adolescent Development and Education, 2004). This allows children to freely learn and explore their interests and skills at their own pace and will (Suzuki & Boomer, 1997). Proper rules and manners are internalized through repetitively going through patterns of daily routines and joint activities with peers and teachers. Behavioural patterns and values of the teacher are naturally and spontaneously imitated, followed, and internalized by the students. Through the *osmosis* model of socialization, children are given abundant opportunities to handle interpersonal relationship as this is where learning stems from. Additionally, the focus on spontaneous learning also influences teacher's role and their methods of instruction.

For *osmosis* to take place, preschool teachers must help children come to understand the fun of preschool life. Such objective is universally cited as the primary objective of instruction, especially during the first month of preschool. Without learning to enjoy preschool and feeling an emotional attachment to the teacher and peers, internalization of preschool standards and adjustment to social life through *osmosis* is rendered impossible (Peak, 2001). Studies have shown that preschool teachers often rely on the use of *amae*, allowing children to act in a way that is usually not socially permissible in order to build relationship with the child as well as accustom the child to the school (Suzuki & Boomer, 1997; Buchbinder, Longhofer, Barret, Lawson, & Floersch, 2006; Burke, 2008). Example of such *amae* usage is evident in how teachers help children with difficulty falling asleep by laying and patting the child under the cover during nap time. Such practices are undertaken to gradually wean them from familiar co-sleeping patterns of home in order to prepare them for the austerity of formal schooling (Buchbinder et al., 2006). Therefore, although at a glance, co-sleeping seems to replicate the *amae* setting of the home. However, in reality, this shared physical experience helps children internalize the distinctions between the family and the outside world, transferring strong relationship from the family dyad to the peer group (Burke, 2008). Such extensive use of *amae* shows that as a first step in adapting to school life, Japanese teachers adopt various practices originated at home for children to build new skills and routine on with non-authoritarian approach of disciplining being one of the most well practiced. Such approach fosters the child's enjoyment of participating in group activities, which encourage the child's spontaneous adoption of the behaviour standards demonstrated by teachers and peers.

#### 4.2 Teacher's handling of misbehaviour

As illustrated in the allowance of co-sleeping during nap-time, Japanese preschool teachers do not expect children to enter school with well-developed set of social and interpersonal skills or a good understanding of the limits of appropriate behaviour in social context. They understand mastery of skills listed above need time to develop. Therefore, teachers permit students great leeway in making mistakes and misbehaving, with their basic approach being non-intervention. Teachers possess various techniques for discouraging socially undesirable behaviour without resorting to authoritarian control. According to Lewis (1989), teacher's control strategies include 1) minimizing the impression of teacher's control; 2) delegating control to children; 3) provide opportunities for children to acquire a good girl or boy identity; and 4) avoiding the attribution that children intentionally misbehave. These noninterventionist strategies are utilized since aggression is considered natural part of a child's development where "allowing it is essential in order to cultivate its eventual control" (Johnson, 1993, p. 142).

Teachers permit physically rough behaviours to take place with the belief that containment of aggressive urges can be learned only through actual experience of "knowing how it feels like." Suppression of aggression is believed to result in more explosive behaviour at a later age, leading to graver problems such as bullying (Suzuki & Boomer, 1997). Therefore, acts of physical aggression are intervened only when necessary since such behaviours are perceived as "a strong building block for character" (Peach, 1994). As a Japanese school administrator explains:

Fighting is not a problem. If there were no fights, that would be a problem. ... Life is full of problems. Our job as early childhood educators isn't to protect children from problems but instead to put them in situations where they can experience problems and struggle to find solutions (Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009).

Thus, preschool teachers' conscious use of non-intervention to provide children chances for problem solving is a strategic one. Actual experience of getting involved in fights enables children to experiment with the accepted limits to self-expression. In fact, students with behavioural problems are regarded as those most in need of opportunities to socialize in order to take responsibility for them and to learn to implement self-control (Burke, 2008). Also through fighting, children learn the rules of society, acquiring the skill to communicate and accept their own needs and the needs of others (Peak, 2001). It also gives them the opportunity to express their understanding of culturally sanctioned pro- and anti-social behaviour (Kelly, 2001).

Although children are permitted ample opportunities to misbehave without stringent intervention, this does not mean children are left unattended without supervision. In fact, children's behaviour are subtly but constantly monitored through teacher's watch and wait (*mimamoru*) stance. The *mimamoru* stance, a

strategic deployment of non-action, allows teachers to hold back and make decision about whether to intervene or not. Teachers constantly “balance the risk that a situation might deteriorate without their intervention with their appreciation for the value of the social experiences that would be lost if they were to act before it becomes absolutely necessary” while they *mimamoru* (Tobin et al., 2009, p. 111). Their assessment of the situation is based not on their evaluation of risk but on whether their intervention will enable the development of deeper understanding. When they do decide to intervene, it is done so with the knowledge that some sort of direct input or support is needed for the child to learn to understand (*wakaseru*). They ask questions and seek explanations to elevate the child’s consciousness about the detrimental and dissocial effects of the behaviour. They also suggest actions that would be more helpful instead of exerting immediate compliance, since the objective is to help the child understand and to await the development of internal control.

Additionally, teachers are less interested in stopping misbehaviour than in fostering children’s ability to intervene. To preschool teachers, a misbehaving child who provokes fights serves the function of giving other children the opportunity to practice various strategies both for resolving their own disagreements and for mediating conflicts among others (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). Teachers also know that children best learn to control their behaviour when the motivation to change comes naturally through peer interaction. Therefore, instead of intervening directly, teachers prefer to exert minimal control in the classroom, allowing children to assume responsibility for classroom management and discipline where they are “given opportunities to experience life in the gray zone, where things aren’t just black and white” (Tobin et al., 2009, p. 134).

#### 4.3 Student groups

Organizing classroom into groups is a common and effective approach Japanese teachers take to manage the children, since a class is composed of twenty to thirty children under the management of a single teacher in Japanese preschools (Burke, 2008). Formation of such groupings functions to effectively designate responsibilities of classroom management and discipline to the children, which trains children to become self-directed. Additionally, teachers’ designation of responsibility to the children not only encourages them to construct their own values by exchanging their points of view with others, but also offers emotional and academic support. This helps children gain confidence in interacting with others through collaborative problem solving (Izumi-Taylor, 2008).

Student groups serve as the units for many classroom activities, including lunch, chores, and teacher-initiated projects (Lewis, 1989). The groups are composed of 4 to 8 members based on observed friendships with an equal distribution of ability and gender balance (Peach, 1994). In some preschools, teachers actively match personalities where the shy ones are

assigned to sit near sociable classmate and the more capable child are placed near those who are struggling (Burke, 2008). The memberships are fixed and maintained for at least one year. This gives children extensive experience of learning to work well together where talking, listening, negotiating, accommodating, and shaping the behaviours of others must take place to ensure success at school. These groups function as substitute family where desire for *amae* from mothers and teachers is transformed to a desire for *amae* from the group. Therefore, such classroom organizations also serve the paradoxical role of discouraging children from dependence on adults, which helps children learn to distinct between the *amae*-based world of the home and the group life of the school.

#### 4.4 Implication

Ethnographic details of pedagogical practices of teachers and the structural features of preschool highlight how preschools in Japan serves as a socializing institution bridging the contrasting cultures of home and society. This is done by providing children with an environment that hold elements of both home and society, allowing children the freedom to explore and learn from picking up cues of proper manners and rules through involvement in daily activities with peers and teachers. The presence of such feature is what help children add a group-oriented dimension to the already acquired dyadic, interdependent aspect of self that is trained at home. Therefore, presence of such socializing institution comprised of both home and society is what help ease the children into the unfamiliar world outside home.

Manifestation of such mixed elements in the learning environment is evident in the similar disciplinary approach employed by the mothers and teachers. Like Japanese mothers, preschool teachers deal with misbehaviour in a subtle, non-assertive manner of appealing to the child’s awareness of consequences in empathetic manner. The similarity in disciplinary style fosters a sense of familiarity and security, which make it easier for children to acclimatize to the new environment. Despite it being an effective approach to initially help children ease into the preschool environment, the objective behind teacher’s employment of these strategies differs from the mother in that their goal is to prepare children for life in the society.

While mothers avoid confrontation to maintain the emotional bond necessary for discipline, teachers’ strategic use of non-intervention is utilized mainly to provide children with chances to learn to behave appropriately in different context. Strategic deployment of *mimamoru* or “standing guard”, which allow teacher to intervene by not intervene, is a tactic that is used to give children time and space to work things out on their own. The objective behind *mimamoru* is for children to learn to make judgement and know what to do without directions and guidance from adult authority. However, such training takes time and needs teacher’s intervention at times. Therefore, temporary suspension of social rules as created through non-intervention

offers children opportunities to learn how to control aggression and impulses through exploring the ultimate limits of what is socially acceptable and unacceptable. Having student group take over the role of managing and disciplining also enable the indirect involvement of teachers in training peer management. Such approach forces those involved to take joint responsibility in helping and scaffolding the misbehaving child to learn to understand social boundaries and limits.

From the analysis above, it can be said that teachers' deployment of *mimamoru*, intervening without intervening, is a manifestation of *amae* and the zone of practicable adaptability. Such strategic non-intervention, as Tobin and colleagues describe *mimamoru*, is effective not only because it is familiar to the children, since they have already gotten the same kind of training at home. It also offers them the time and space to "learn through experiencing" both for the misbehaving child but also for the children involved in resolving the problem. Additionally, teacher's focus on strategies that elicit cooperation over the use of reward and punishment, where children are looked upon as capable, responsible individuals, is what facilitate the internalization of social norms (Buchbinder et al., 2006). With no reprimand or punishment involved, behaviours and other forms of self-expression are allowed to run its course. It is this allowance that has the paradoxical effect of avoiding behaviours to run havoc. Because the enjoyment of preschool life cannot be achieved when one push through with their egoistical tendencies, the misbehaving child, through exploring the limits of such self-expression, will naturally come to contain their behaviour and desire for the good of others. They learn to set the limits and boundaries to their behaviours through this free exploration and experiencing of positives and negatives through interaction with an *amae*-like social environment that resemble those of home. Such resemblance enable children to acquire new social script necessary for successful integration into group-life to occur without giving up old, familiar social patterns utilized at home.

Formation of student groups for classroom organization also consists of mixed elements of home and society. For preschool children, the small groups with fixed membership in which they belong serve as a surrogate family, where they participate in majorities of the classroom activities together. The extended and intense experience children have with their peers enable the fulfilment of a sense of belonging and close intimacy parallel to those at home. However, the close bond they form has a paradoxical effect of breaking down the *amae* mentality of wanting to be indulged and accepted unconditionally. Children must learn to control egoistic desire and accommodate to others feelings and ideas while they work as a group. As Peak (2001) puts succinctly, "the group is both the unsympathetic force to which the child's ego must submit and a primary source of companionship and fulfilment" (p. 168). Therefore, student group may be another possible manifestation of the zone of practicable adaptability. Its presence as pseudo family serves the dual purpose of

fulfilling belongingness and discouraging egoistic tendencies. This enables children to learn to accept group habits and internalize expectations that are required for success in group life through repeated practice and trial and error working with group members.

The hands-off *mimamoru* approach of teachers' delegation of responsibility to student groups is a feature of the Japanese preschool that reflect the various functions of the zone of practicable adaptability through the allowance of *amae*, permitting a behaviour that is usually not socially acceptable to go unnoticed in order for one to learning through experiencing. Teachers' focus on strategies that elicit cooperation and voluntary compliance rather than the use of disciplinary systems of reward and punishment point to their intuitive understanding of looking at the present misbehaviour as a learning process that the child is undergoing in acquiring the appropriate skills to self-express and relate to others. Additionally, providing children with a learning environment consisting of co-existing features of home and society is what enable children to link previous knowledge to new ones while children learn the appropriate societal rules through experiencing and exploring with the physical and social environment. Employment of such management strategies enables Japanese teachers to respect the development of each child's individual character while simultaneously socializing children towards life in the group. As Sato (1998) puts succinctly: "Individual development is both bound and enhanced by membership in mutual learning communities, and those communities, in turn, are strengthened by increased individual capacities; they complement one another towards reciprocal growth" (p. 121). This complementariness of seemingly opposing processes of individual development and socialization points to the zone of practicable adaptability as a change process that underlie the dynamic co-construction of knowledge as facilitated by the environment, which trains the individual to learn how to use such features for one's own development. The existence of such change process underlying Japanese socialization points to the possibility of its existence outside of Japanese culture, as depicted in Tobin and colleagues' (2009) classic ethnographic comparisons of preschools in China, Japan, and the United States.

## 5. Evidence of *amae*-like non-intervention in preschools of other cultures

With smooth transition from home to formal schooling being a prerequisite to the children's school success and achievement, helping children adjust to the new learning environment must be of utmost importance and priority for preschools of any culture. The examination of ethnographic details from Tobin and colleagues' (2009) "Preschool in Three Cultures," which illustrates how preschool teachers from China, Japan, and the United States deal with disputes and misbehaviours, shed lights on how preschool teachers from other culture may utilize similar strategies of non-intervention in assisting children to acclimatize to

the new environment, although interpretation and disciplinary approach towards misbehaviour may differ from culture to culture.

In the ethnographic descriptions provided by this study, preschool teachers in Japan were criticized by their Chinese and U.S. counterparts for their non-intervention with fights. The typical American and Chinese reaction to Japanese teachers' *mimamoru* type non-interventionist approach towards aggression and misbehaviour were labelled as being "spoiling," "irresponsible" and "a failure or a lack of concern for the child's well-being, and of attention to their social development" (Tobin et. al., 2009, p.110; Tobin et al., 1989). Teachers from both the Chinese and United States take distinct approach when faced with similar problems. When encountering disputes or aggressive behaviours, Chinese teachers take anticipatory measures of preventing dispute before they have a chance to develop (Tobin et. al., 2009). As for preschool teachers in the United States, they tend to take more directive measures, such as giving time out or missing recess time (Suzuki and Boomer, 1997).

Despite such contrasting view and approach toward children's misbehaviour, descriptions of interpersonal intervention strategy from both Chinese and U.S. preschools illustrating occasions of *amae*-like non-intervention of teachers that provide children opportunity to learn and experiment with interpersonal problem solving strategy by allow inappropriate behaviour to go unnoticed were found.

### 5.1 *Amae*-like non-intervention in Chinese preschools

Sociodramatic play in Chinese preschool is a time where teacher allow children more leeway than other classroom activities in exploring ways of interacting with other children. It is a time where teacher engage in the "artful and unobtrusive scaffolding of child-initiated activities" by becoming children's playmates, acting as children would during the play (Tobin et. al., 2009, p. 70). During one session of sociodramatic play, where the teacher pretended to be a customer at a fast food restaurant, a child informed her of a dispute that has occurred at the beauty parlour section. Instead of intervening, the teacher mindlessly asked the child reporting, "Why is she crying?" before returning to her eating and chatting. Two boys pretending to be police officers handled the dispute instead and the business in the beauty parlour returned to normal. It was not until after clean up time, when teachers gathered the whole class when the teachers started group discussions initiated by the children concerning their thoughts on the incidents that occurred during the dramatic play.

When being interviewed by Tobin and colleagues (2009) as to her thoughts behind the lack of intervention, the Chinese teacher replied, "Imagine if after the policemen had facilitated the dispute in the beauty salon, we teachers stepped in anyway, as teachers. The effect would be unhelpful and the social play less satisfactory" (Tobin et al., 2009, p.70). Such explanation parallels those of Japanese preschool teachers', who view non-

intervention as opportunities for children to work out their own solutions to problems. Such strategy as a result, "work to raise the level of complexity" in the play which "created the opportunity for the beauticians and the police to work things out and the whole class later to debrief" (Tobin et al., 2009, p. 70). From the description of how disputes were handled, it can be said that although critical of Japanese teacher's non-intervention approach, similar strategy was utilized to a lesser extent by Chinese educators in providing children with latitude to work out their own solutions to problems.

### 5.2 *Amae*-like non-intervention in the preschools of United States

With preschool in the United States as a place "where intervening in children's physical altercations is the rule," teacher's non-intervention is less visible than in Japanese and Chinese preschools (Tobin, et al., 2009, p.132). In fact, only one description of non-intervention was found.

Tobin and colleagues (2009) described an incident at the housekeeping area where five children were playing at the area when the classroom rule indicates only four are allowed. After being called by a child who complained of another child hogging all the play materials, the teacher approached the children, asking them what was bothering them before leaving the area saying, "Do you think that today maybe you all can play nicely? We'll try it with five" (Tobin et al., 2009, p.174). The teacher made an exception of allowing five children to play together even though she knew disputes have previously occurred in the play area. Although some may question whether the teacher was really "non-intervening" since she did go to the housekeeping area to see what was going on, she did not push through with the classroom rule or reason with the children as she usually would. This is evident in the response of another American teacher from a separate preschool after watching the video clip of the housekeeping corner incident. The teacher criticized Fran, the teacher in the video, for "being too willing to bend the rules" stressing the confusion the lack of firmness in rule setting may cause in the classroom (Tobin et al., 2009, p.220). Such interpretation of non-intervention proves that Fran was willing to give children a chance to try and work things out despite going against the rules, the essence of *amae* as evident the usage of "try" in her speech.

### 5.3 Implication

The ethnographic descriptions of episodes found in Chinese and American preschools where teachers allowed experimentation through non-intervention points to the possible existence of *amae*-like zone of practicable adaptability operating as a common mechanism in the socialization processes regardless of culture. Although different terms were referred to when describing the Japanese *mimamoru* type non-intervention, such as the "artful and unobtrusive scaffolding of child-initiated activities"

witnessed in the Chinese preschool, the “strategic non-intervention” type of pedagogical approach indicates that the duration, form, tolerance level, and what is allowed and not allowed to take place during the period of adaptability may differ between cultures. However, its function of giving children latitude to work out solutions to problems on their own may be universal.

From analysing the ethnographic details provided previously, at a glance, educators from the United States may seem to have less tolerance compared to the Japanese or the Chinese educators in allowing the period of practicable adaptability to take place. However, close examination indicates that difference lies in the distinctive socialization goals of each culture and the difference in the cultural value as to what is allowed and what isn't. For instance, in Japan, nonparticipation in group activities is less tolerated than misbehaviour, whereas in the United States, the opposite trend of more leniencies towards nonparticipation in group activity than misbehaviour is witnessed. Therefore, the question lay not as to whether such mechanism of practicable adaptation exists, but when and how such mechanism is used in different cultures. As evident from the meta-analysis of ethnographic descriptions, illustrating teachers' utilization of strategic non-intervention in educational setting, points to the intuitive understanding of educators regardless of culture as to the importance of giving children time and space to experience and learn from mistakes. Therefore, although learning can stem from the active guidance and support of adults through scaffolding, it can also be facilitated through the existence of a passive watchful others in providing a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere in encouragement of self-exploration and acquiring through experiencing, which spontaneously facilitates internalization of societal norms and adaptation to new learning environment of preschool by the children.

## 6. Discussion

Analysis of how *amae*-like mechanism of practicable adaptability, as utilized by Japanese mothers and teachers through strategic non-intervention, points to the fact that changes need not stem from the external pressure exerted from the environment, such as constant surveillance and punishment. As suggested in the moral teaching of *The North Wind and the Sun*, “gentleness and kind persuasion win where force and bluster fail,” changes do not stem only from explicit teaching or direct instruction from social others but can result merely from the provision of a *amae* type of environment that is made possible through the *mimamoru* type non-intervention, accepting the individual non-conditionally regardless of whether one perform or not perform to the expected level of competency. As evident in Japanese teachers' non-punitive attitude toward misbehaviour and conducts below the level of expected maturity, children are given plenty of time and space to acquire the appropriate mannerism through operating in both the *uchi* (home) and *soto* (outside) mode, thus able to gain full confidence and mastery in skills of

social navigation. Such permissive attitude may seem ineffective and inappropriate at a glance. However, as extensively explained by Tobin et al (2009), *mimamoru* type non-intervention is a pedagogical strategy that is intentionally deployed in providing children opportunities to deal with socially complex situations that can only be learned through experiencing. Thus, to allow *amae* does not mean “a passive absence of action but instead a strategic deployment of non-action” that is enforced according to the developmental goals of the child, which ends when, through constantly monitoring and assessment of the children's behaviour point to other pedagogical method (i.e. direct intervention) as more effective in helping children to come to understand (Tobin et al., 2009, p. 133). Therefore, there are time limits to the utilization of such mechanism and should the deployment of such strategy become inappropriate, extending beyond optimal period of intervention, such allowance of *amae* would be “negligent” or “spoiling” (*amayakasu*), which will bring about maladjustment or maladaptive changes in the individual.

From the analysis above, it can be said that when examining the zone of practicable adaptability, the focus should be on how the environment is structured to cater to the needs of the individual rather than how to train or alter the individual to fit in with the environment. This enables one to learn from experimenting and experiencing mistakes and success rather than performing out of extrinsic motivation. This also promotes adaptive disposition that enables individuals to more effectively utilize such environmental feature for one's growth and learning, indicating that such developmental mechanism should be a prerequisite condition before adaptive change or progress occurs.

Although the utilization of such strategic non-intervention, a feature of the zone of practicable adaptability, is most visible in the Japanese society, ethnographic details have shown that preschool teachers from China and the United States also operate in the zone of practicable adaptability in allowing children time to come to understand and internalize social norms and rules. As Marshall, Chuong, and Aikawa (2011) state, *amae* “might be best considered a fluid cultural representation that has different meanings and salience for different people” (p. 27). Therefore, although the patterns, characteristics, and conventions connected to the expression and usage of the zone may show cross-cultural variability (e.g. what is tolerated and not tolerated in the process of learning), the mechanism underlying developmental changes should be similar across culture. As indicated by Doi (1973), *amae* is a uniquely Japanese concept that characterizes Japanese mentality, which paradoxically describes a universal experience “that is basically common to mankind as a whole” (p.28). Although explanation as to how *amae* function as a common mechanism underlying the functioning of mankind is unclear in Doi's work, positioning *amae* as a manifestation of the zone of practicable adaptability help clarify its universal relevance.

As described in section 2.4, change processes of the zone of practicable adaptability can derive from an individual's operat-

ing either in the zone of current development (ZCD), the zone of proximal development (ZPD), or a combination of both. The cultural difference in the use of the zone reflects different degree of usage and operation in the ZCD and the ZPD. From the Japanese example where strategic non-intervention is utilized majority of the time, children are placed in an environment where they are given greater leeway in experimenting with ways of self-expression. In such environment, children learn to operate more in the ZCD than in the ZPD where bridging is utilized both when one is engaged in self-exploration or when one work in student groups, where children come to understand appropriate ways of social interaction through bridging each other’s knowledge during collaborative problem solving. As for the Chinese case, with teachers adopting a mid-ground between directive and non-directive intervention, the operation in both the ZCD and the ZPD should be witnessed depending on the mode of discipline undertaken by the teacher. In the American preschools, with children given explicit direction as to what is allowed and what isn’t, children are more likely to operate in the ZPD, where external feedbacks are provided by the teachers through the disciplinary approach of reward and punishment that give children less space for self-exploration of limits.

Regardless of which mechanism is undertaken to facilitate changes, temporary period of adaptability should exist as an important transitional mechanism in all cultures. The zone of practicable adaptability explains how individual come to internalize social norm through the utilization of environmental features that allow both element of home and society to co-exist in order for children to acquire novel behaviour without completely discarding old, familiar ones. Such insight on the adaptation process, as most evident in the use of *amae*, may have broader implication beyond the mere description of the regional characteristics of Japanese people. It provides insight to the understanding of developmental theories from a new perspective.

### 7. Conclusion

This paper presented the zone of practicable adaptability as a

new way of looking at the role environment play in facilitating adaptive change during developmental processes underlying the individual-environmental interaction. Such mechanism of change, as facilitated by the *mimamoru* type environment that permits exploration and experimentation of existing and emerging skills/functions to take place through the allowance of *amae* or ”intervene without intervening”, provide new insights to current developmental models and ideas (see Table 1).

Unlike Piaget and Vygotsky’s models that explains the mechanism of change as existing during the process of mastering a new skill or function, the zone of practicable adaptability suggests the possibility of an adaptive process as existing even after one has acquired a certain level of mastery. Although acknowledging the importance of environmental factors, especially the role of social interaction as important facilitator of adaptive change, the zone of practicable adaptability take a different stance in examining how the environment induces such change. Contrasting to Vygotsky’s notion of scaffolding, where adaptive changes and learning are induced through the provision of a learning environment with active, explicit instruction and guided participation in helping children reach certain level of competency (educational goals), the zone of practicable adaptability takes the stance that changes and progress do not necessary need to be induced through active guidance and instruction from the environment. The new model suggests that adaptive change can be prompted through provision of a temporary grace period of non-intervention that allow the individual the freedom to practice and learn through repetitive experimenting and experiencing without being constrained and pressured to reach a certain educational goal or level of achievement. Such temporary period, allowance for experimentation of both the existing and emerging function, is what enables the adaptive processes of assimilation and accommodation as conceptualized by Piaget to take place. Therefore, contrary to Piaget’s belief that learning and growth stem from the child’s independent, self-motivated explorations of the physical world, the zone of practicable adaptability take the opposite perspective suggesting the provision of

Table 1: A taxonomy of developmental theories

Theory	Piaget (Cognitive stage theory)	Vygotsky (Sociocultural theory)	Thelen & Smith/ Granott/Fogel (Dynamic systems approach)	Omichi (Zone of Practicable Adaptability)
Stage or transition	Stage > transition	transition	transition	transition
Individual or environment	Individual > Environment	Environment > Individual	Individual & Environment	Environment > Individual
Experience (Role of environment)	No	Yes (Scaffolding)	Yes (Bridging)	Yes (Allowance of <i>amae</i> )
Biological constraints (Role of individual)	Yes (Assimilation & accommodation)	No	Yes (Bridging)	Yes (exploration & experimentation)
Mechanism of change	Equilibration (Construction)	Internalization	Self-organization	Strategic non-intervention
Social	No	Yes	No	Yes

a non-intrusive, non-intervening environment as what prompt and encourage individual to engage in self-explorative behaviour that enable change and progress to take place. The zone of practicable adaptability is unique in that it explains the phenomenon of self-exploration and adaptation from the viewpoint of the environment, elucidating the social others' role in constantly monitoring the child's non-discriminated self-exploration of the environment, and judging when and how to steer children toward the right direction without spoiling learning opportunities for the child by intervening too quickly.

Such shift in perspective is an important one, since looking at changes solely from the perspective of individual adaptation not only identify and direct intervention towards altering the individual alone, but also overlook how the environment can be altered to foster healthy, adaptive changes. As Lewis & Mayes (2012) states, current studies of psychopathology, although recognizing the role environment play in causing disturbances and abnormal behaviours in an individual, prefer intervening by increasing one's coping skills or altering specific behaviours, rather than making changes to the environment. Researchers also tend to "look at weaknesses in self-control or poor understanding in the individual as singular or primary explanatory variables rather than more complex interactions of individual, society, and culture" (Lewis & Mayes, 2012, p 2). Therefore, adopting the perspective of the zone of practicable adaptability will enable both practitioners and researchers to perceive, approach, and intervene through altering the environment to enable client to come to self-realization through reflecting upon one's problem at hand under a non-judgmental environment, which in turn may foster an intrinsic motivation to want to change for the better.

The existence of the zone of practicable adaptability as a mechanism of change that operates during developmental transitions points to the need to shift current research trend and method from state-oriented to process oriented. Although comparison of static states as yielded through past research approaches provide an understanding of person's abilities at specific ages, such comparisons leaves significant gap in understanding how change occur. Rather than adopting research designs focusing on the products of change like cross-sectional and longitudinal research designs, comparing knowledge and abilities at different ages, new research methods involving direct observation of change as it occurs, such as the microgenetic research design, with the goal of uncovering the source of developmental processes, should be the new research trend in understanding developmental processes of change (Granott & Parziale, 2002; Lavelli, Pantoja, Hsu, Messinger, & Fogel, 2005; Fogel et al., 2006). Adoption of research method that examines change process is a necessary one since the goal of developmental research is to widen application of conceptual and theoretical ideas in educational or therapeutic interventions. Therefore, instead of simply comparing pre- and post-change behavioural patterns, microgenetic research designs

enable the observation of the change process unfolding through selection of a case for observation to be conducted before, during, and after a period during which rapid change in a particular domain is occurring at real time.

In the case of the zone of practicable adaptability, cases relating to period of developmental change arising from adaptation to new circumstances, such as the first semester of a school year, probation period at a new workplace, medical intern undergoing residency, or period of parole, can be selected for microgenetic studies to understand how provision or non-provision of the environment's temporary allowance of a period of adjustment affect the subject's acquisition of new skills and rate of adaptation process. As suggested by microgenetic researchers, observation should be conducted at time intervals that are considered shorter than the time intervals required for the developmental change to occur in order to identify the processes that give rise to change and the mechanism that underlie developmental transitions (Granott & Parziale, 2002; Fogel et al., 2006).

Undergoing such analysis will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role environment play in facilitating adaptive changes in individual development, identifying and uncovering the basic principles of change promoting desirable change over undesirable one useful in the application and enforcement of effective educational and therapeutic intervention and program. Therefore, further examination of the change mechanism underlying *amae* or the zone of practicable adaptability through the use of microgenetic research design is a necessary next step in future research, which will enhance our understanding of how such important mechanism bringing about the successful functioning of Japanese people can exist as a universal phenomenon that play an indispensable role in the functioning of all human beings. As Sameroff (2009) and many other theorists suggests, there is a need to focus on the role environment play in facilitating changes in individual and how such facilitation in turn enable individuals to use environmental features afforded to them in promoting adaptive progress and changes. Understanding the mechanism underlying the zone of practicable adaptability will no doubt provide further discussion and facilitate new ideas that will shed light on the missing pieces concerning the dynamic interplay between the individual and environment in influencing the course of human development.

## References

- Bickhard, M. H. (1992). Scaffolding and self-scaffolding: Central aspects of development. In L. Winegar & J. Valsiner (Eds.), *Children's development within social context: Volume 2 Research and Methodology* (pp.33-52). Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Buchbinder, M., Longhofer, J., Barret, T., Lawson, P., & Floersch, J. (2006). Ethnographic approaches to child care research. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 4(1), 45-63.
- Burke, R. (2008). Becoming individuals together: Socialisation



- in the Japanese preschool. *SITES*, 5(2), 135-160.
- Bruner, J. (1983) *Child's talk: Learning to use language*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Conroy, M., Hess, R., Azuma, H., & Kashiwagi, K. (1980). Maternal strategies for regulating children's behavior: Japanese and American families. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 11(2), 153-172.
- Doi, T. (1973). *The anatomy of dependence*. Tokyo: Kodansha International Limited.
- Doi, T. (1992). On the concept of amae. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 13(1), 7-11.
- Erikson, E.H. (1963). *Childhood and society*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Flavell, J. (1971). Stage-related properties of cognitive development. *Cognitive Psychology*, 2(4), 421-453.
- Freeman, D. (2009). Amae: East and West. In S. Akhtar (Ed.), *Freud and the far east: Psychoanalytic perspectives on the people and culture of China, Japan, and Korea* (pp. 71-78). Maryland, U.S.A.: Rowland & Littlefield Publishers.
- Fogel, A., Garvey, A., Hsu, H., & West-Stroming, D. (2006). *Change processes in relationships: A relational-historical research approach*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Fogel, A., & Kawai, M. (2008). Current problems of Japanese youth: Some possible pathways for alleviating these problems from the perspective of dynamic systems theory. In A. Fogel, B.J. King, & S. Shanker (Eds.), *Human development in the 21st century: Visionary policy ideas from system scientists* (pp. 188-199). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Gallahue, D., Ozmun, J., & Goodway, J. (2012). *Understanding motor development: Infants, children, adolescent, adults*. Boston, M.A.; McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Gesell, A. (1928). *Infancy and human growth*. New York, Macmillan.
- Granott, N. (2002). How microdevelopment creates macrodevelopment: reiterated sequences, backward transitions and the Zone of Current Development. In N. Granott & J. Parziale, (Eds.), *Microdevelopment: Transition processes in development and learning* (pp. 213-242). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Granott, N., Fischer, K., & Parziale, J. (2002). Bridging to the unknown: A transition mechanism in learning and development. In N. Granott & J. Parziale, (Eds.), *Microdevelopment: Transition processes in development and learning* (pp. 213-242). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Granott, N., & Parziale, J. (2002). Microdevelopment: A process-oriented perspective for studying development and learning. In N. Granott & J. Parziale (Eds.), *Microdevelopment: Transition processes in development and learning* (pp. 213-242). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Hara, H. & Minagawa, M. (1996). From the productive dependents to precious guests: Historical change in Japanese children. In D. Shwalb & B. Shwalb (Eds.), *Japanese childrearing; Two generations of scholarship* (pp. 9-30). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Hess, R., & Azuma, H. (1991). Cultural support for school: Contrasts between Japan and the United States. *Educational Researcher*, 20(9), 2-8.
- Izumi-Taylor, S. (2008). Sunao (Cooperative) children: How Japanese teacher nurture autonomy. *Young Children*, 63 (3), 76-79.
- Johnson, F.A. (1993). *Dependency and Japanese socialization*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kato, K. (1995). *Functions and structure of amae: Personality-social, cognitive, and cultural psychological approaches*. Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press.
- Keenan, T., & Evans, S. (2009). *An introduction to child development*. Washington, D.C.: SAGE Publications.
- Kelly, V. (2001). Peer culture and interaction: How Japanese children express their internalization of the cultural norms of group life (Shudan Seikatsu). In H. Shimizu & R. Levine (Eds), *Japanese frames of mind: Cultural perspective on human development* (pp. 170-201). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Kitayama, O. (2009). Amae and its hierarchy of love. *Kyushu University Psychological Research*, 10, 225-230.
- Kumagai, H. (1981). A dissection of intimacy: A study of "bipolar posturing" in Japanese social interaction – Amaeru and amayakasu, indulgence and deference. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 5, 249-272.
- Lavelli, M., Pantoja, A., Hsu, H., Messinger, D., & Fogel, A. (2005). Using microgenetic designs to study change processes. In D.M. Teti (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in developmental science* (pp. 40-65). Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lewis, C. (1989). From indulgence to internalization: Social control in the early school years. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 15(1), 139-157.
- Lewis, M. D. (2000). The promise of dynamic systems approaches for an integrated account of human development. *Child Development*, 71(1), 36-43.
- Lewis, M. D. & Mayes, L. (2012). The role of environments in development: An introduction. In L. Mayes & M. Lewis, (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of environment in human development* (pp. 1-14). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Marshall, T., Chuong, K., & Aikawa, A. (2011). Day-to-day experience of amae in Japanese romantic relationships. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 12, 26-35.
- Mascolo, M. F. (2005). Change processes in development: The concept of coactive scaffolding. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 23, 185-196.
- McDevitt, T., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). *Child development and*

- education*. New Jersey: Pearson.
- Meadows, S. (1996). *Parenting behaviour and children's cognitive development*. East Sussex, U.K.: Psychology Press.
- Miller, P. (2011). *Theories of developmental psychology: Fifth edition*. New York: Worth Publishers.
- Piaget, J. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York: International University Press
- Peach, M. (1994). The nonacademic curriculum of the Japanese preschool. *Child Education*, 71 (1), 9-13.
- Peak, L. (2001). Learning to become part of the group: The Japanese child's transition to preschool life. In H. Shimizu & R. LeVine (Eds.), *Japanese frames of mind: Cultural perspective on human development* (pp. 143-169). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Research Center for Child and Adolescent Development and Education (2004). *Early childhood education handbook*. Tokyo: Ochanomizu University.
- Sameroff, A. (2009). The transactional model. In A. Sameroff (Ed.), *The transactional model of development: How children and contexts shape each other* (pp. 3-21). Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association Books.
- Sato, N. (1998). Honoring the individual. In T. Rohlen & G. LeTendre (Eds.), *Teaching and learning in Japan* (pp. 119-153). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Siegler, R. (2002). Microgenetic studies of self-explanation. In N. Granott & J. Parziale (Eds.), *Microdevelopment: transition processes in development and learning* (pp. 31-58). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Skinner, B.F. (1953). *Science and human behavior*. New York: Macmillan.
- Suzuki, M.J. & Boomer, E. (1997). Relationship between teachers and students in American and Japanese kindergartens. *Journal of School Education*, 9, 11-21.
- Thelen, E., & Smith, L. (2006). Dynamic systems theories. In W. Damon, R. Lerner, and N. Eisenberg (Eds.) *Handbook of child psychology Volume 3: Social, emotional, and personality* (pp. 258-312). Oxford, U.K.: Wiley.
- Tobin, J., Wu, D., & Davidson, D. (1989). *Preschools in three cultures: Japan, China, and the United States*. New Havens, U.S.A: Yale University Press.
- Tobin, J., Hsueh, Y., & Karasawa, M. (2009). *Preschool in three cultures revisited: China, Japan, and the United States*. Chicago, U.S.A: The University of Chicago Press.
- Ujiie, T. (1997). How do Japanese mothers treat children's negativity? *Journal of Applied Development and Psychology*, 18, 467-483.
- Valsiner, J. (1998). The development of the concept of development: Historical and epistemological perspectives. In W. Damon & R.M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology Volume 1: Theoretical models of human development* (pp. 189-232). New Jersey, U.S.A: John Wiley & Sons.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press.

(Received August 8, 2013; accepted November 19, 2013)