

Amae and Freedom in Everyday Language: Toward Transcultural Educational Theory

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1. Introduction

Amae is a concept introduced in the book *The Anatomy of Dependence* (1973) (*Amae no Kôzô*, 1971), written by Japanese psychiatrist Doi Takeo (1920–2009). According to Doi, *amae* is “peculiar to the Japanese language” as a word, yet it also is “basically common to mankind” as a psychological phenomenon (Doi, 1971/1981, p. 28). Its uniqueness to Japanese culture¹ and its applicability to other cultures² have interested researchers across various fields.

In educational studies, the ethnographical studies by Tobin et al. (1989; 2009) applied the concept of *amae* as a lens to interpret educational practices at preschools in Japan. In showing how distinct these practices appear to preschool teachers in China and the U.S., they suggest that *amae*-based practices are both particular to and alive within the Japanese context. In contrast, Geshi (2015), at the outset of the first book to thematize *amae* in educational studies in Japan, argues that *amae* can generally be found in the assumption of modern educational theory that the end of education is “to grow out of dependence [*amae*] into autonomy” (p. 3, my translation). He argues that this assumption is being increasingly challenged by postmodern critiques. Yet, as this book has been published only in Japanese, these arguments have not yet been elaborated in relation to the questions of cultural context or practice beyond Japan.

Can the particularity of *amae* to Japanese culture be dismissed on the theoretical level? One thing to be noted is that *amae* is different in origin from modern educational theory. The concept of *amae* was formed in everyday dialogues between Doi and his Japanese patients, while modern educational theory was mainly developed in the West and has been grafted onto the modernization of Japan. This difference in origin is reflected in the fact that “dependence,” the usual translation of *amae* into English, is usually translated as *izon* in Japanese, a more formal and abstract term than *amae*. In this way, the particularity of *amae* is lost in translation in a double sense: not only in the movement from Japanese to English but also when moving from everyday language to theoretical language.

This paper aims to situate *amae* within the constellation of common terms utilized in educational theory without losing its particularity in everyday Japanese. To accomplish this, it proposes drawing a comparison with freedom. Freedom has arguably been the leitmotif of both modern educational theory and practice since the Enlightenment. For example, Rousseau (1762/1889) intended “to allow children more personal freedom and less authority” so that they would “feel less keenly the want of whatever is not within their own power.” Similarly, Kant (1803/2007) asked how to place restraint on the student so

that “it may one day be free, that is, so that it need not depend on the care of others” (p. 448). Yet, one of the contradictions in this “modern logic of emancipation” (Biesta, 2016, p. 83) is that “it actually installs dependency at the very heart of the ‘act’ of emancipation” (p. 82). This contradiction is also well known in educational studies in Japan.³ Freedom in modern educational theory and practice is inevitably in tension with dependence.

In Japan, however, there is another factor at work: The word freedom has not yet become a part of everyday language.⁴ When the concept of “freedom” was imported from the West in the Meiji period, it was translated as “*jiyū*” in Japanese. This Japanese word of Chinese origin traditionally had negative connotations such as willfulness, so its use as the translated word is often confused with the traditional use (Yanabu, 1982, p. 177). As in the case of *amae*, the particularity of freedom in the Western origin is arguably lost in translation in two senses: from English to Japanese and from everyday language to theoretical language.

Doi is conscious of this confusion in the use of *jiyū* (freedom) in Japan and argues that its traditional meaning was “freedom to *amaeru*” (Doi, 1971/1981, p. 84), that is, freedom to depend. This creates a contrast with the personal freedom conveyed as independence in modern educational theory. Doi even argues that the Western world should adopt this idea of freedom in place of its destroyed “faith” in individual freedom. However, the way in which he constructs this argument is based on the asymmetrical understanding of *amae* in everyday language in Japan and freedom in theory (philosophy) in German language.

How can this concept of “freedom to *amaeru*” be creatively translated into the theoretical language of education in ways that open onto cross-cultural dialogue? This paper provides an attempt to modify and develop Doi’s suggestion by comparing *amae* with freedom in everyday language. It examines the concept of *amae* by following Doi’s texts and the concept of freedom through a research interview with a German graduate student. By identifying a connection between *amae* and freedom in everyday language, this paper makes suggestions to form transcultural educational theory. Transculturality means that “in processes of cultural contact and cultural exchange innovative cultural ideas, products, and practices eventually emerge” (Mattig, 2017, p. 2). This paper will demonstrate how *amae* can be conceived as an innovative cultural idea for modern educational theory and a crossing point where further creative cultural contact and exchange will happen.⁵

2. *Amae* in everyday language

(1) The definition of *amae* by Doi

The definition of *amae* has been controversial⁶ because Doi does not provide a clear account in the book *The Anatomy of Dependence*. One reason for this is that the book was first written in Japanese when Doi assumed that “the meaning of the word *amae* should be self-evident” and thus “felt no need to explain what *amae* itself is” to its Japanese readers (Doi, 2001, p. 64, my translation). Doi provides a definition that is clearer in his English papers in the 1950s. Following is Doi’s first introduction, written for English readers, to *amaeru*, a verb from which the noun *amae* derived:

The first, *amaeru*, can be translated as ‘to depend and presume upon another’s love.’ This word has the same root as *amai*, an adjective which corresponds to ‘sweet.’ Thus *amaeru* has a distinct feeling of sweetness, and is generally used to express a child’s attitude toward an adult, especially his parents. I can think of no English word equivalent to *amaeru* except for ‘spoil,’ which, however, is a transitive verb and definitely has a bad connotation; whereas the Japanese *amaeru* does not necessarily have a bad connotation, although we say we should not let a youngster *amaeru* too much. (Doi, 1956/2005, p. 9)

We can take this definition of *amaeru*— “to depend and presume upon another’s love”—as Doi’s consistent vision, because he uses this definition later as well with another phrase, “to bask in another’s indulgence” (Doi, 1989/2005, p. 140). From this definition, the following three points can be derived.

1. *Amae* can be observed in the close relationship between an *amae* seeker and a granter. For example, a child can be an *amae* seeker and his/her parent can be a granter. This creates a contrast with “spoiling” because it is usually the parent who spoils the child. In the case of *amae*, the child takes the initiative on the condition that the child has already had a close relationship with the parent and that the child can “presume” upon the parent’s love. In other words, *amae* is observed in a close relationship, and brings the seeker and the granter even closer to each other.

2. *Amae* includes both behavior and emotion in all the processes of desiring, seeking for, and enjoying a sweet feeling. When a child seeks *amae* (desire and emotion) from the parent and the parent grants the child *amae* (behavior), they can enjoy *amae* (satisfaction) together. This point distinguishes *amae* from attachment, which places more emphasis on the behavioral dimension (Doi, 1989/2005; Kobayashi & Endo, 2012).

3. *Amae* can have both positive and negative connotations, depending on the situation and the relationship. This point has often been missed, somewhat to Doi’s disappointment. Doi later regrets that his book title, “the structure of *amae*,” came to be used in postwar Japan as a phrase to criticize dependence, and explains again that the gist of the book is “both to present the insight that *amae* is indispensable for human development and to point out that it is a problem that one remains unaware (*kizukazu ni iru*) of one’s own *amae* when one has grown up” (Doi, 2001, p. 212, my translation). According to Doi, *amae* is necessary to establish the mother-child relationship, which is necessary for “the proper growth of the child” (Doi, 1971/1981, p. 75). On the other hand, unawareness of *amae* in oneself may cause a miscommunication in another culture where less *amae* is granted.

For Doi, it was his first stay in the U.S. that helped him to realize the *amae* in himself. *The Anatomy of Dependence* begins with an anecdote about Doi’s failed *amae* toward the American host who invited him to his house for the first time.

For example, not long after my arrival in America I visited the house of someone to whom I had been introduced by a Japanese acquaintance, and was talking to him when he asked me, ‘Are you

hungry? We have some ice cream if you'd like it.' As I remember, I was rather hungry, but finding myself asked point-blank if I was hungry by someone whom I was visiting for the first time, I could not bring myself to admit it, and ended by denying the suggestion. I probably cherished a mild hope that he would press me again; but my host, disappointingly, said 'I see' with no further ado, leaving me regretting that I had not replied more honestly. (Doi, 1971/1981, p. 11)

Though Doi does not provide an analysis of this case regarding how it involves the concept of *amae*, it is clear that *amae* matters here. Doi was not sure if his relationship with the host was close enough to *amaeru* ("to depend and presume upon his love") because he was visiting him for the first time and still felt shy around him. He hadn't yet made a judgment about this point when he denied the suggestion, because he still cherished "a mild hope" that the host would press him again to *amaeru*. In short, he held *amae* as a desire in himself.

However, the host did not detect Doi's internal desire and withdrew. This does not mean that the host was not kind enough to let Doi *amaeru*. He just did not believe Doi was hungry and did not want to force him to eat. Doi realized this when he heard the reply, after which he regretted (*kuyashii*) that he missed a chance not only of eating ice cream, but also of enjoying *amae* as satisfaction.

As he adds the word "probably" when he reflects on his "mild hope" of *amae*, we can deduce that he was not aware of his own *amae* at that time. Nevertheless, Doi would not have had any problem in such a situation as long as he had remained in Japan, because in Japan "[t]he custom, rather, in serving a guest who is not such a close friend is to produce something with a deprecatory 'it may not suit your taste but...'" (p. 13). Only in a different culture, which values a more straightforward answer by the guest, did Doi have a "problem" and come to realize *amae* in himself.

Doi remains as ambiguous about the value of *amae* as he does about the value of Japanese-ness. On the one hand, he says that the Japanese people must "transcend *amae*" (p. 84) to communicate with people in other cultures. On the other hand, he states that *amae* "plays an indispensable role in a healthy spiritual life" even for adults, because it is always "at work" whenever they form new human relationships (p. 75). His job as a psychiatrist is to help the patient "who seems to have outgrown *amae*, has in fact not done so, so that he harbors a suppressed sense of resentment and mortification (*kuyashisa*)" (p. 110). To "transcend" *amae* does not mean to suppress it, but to bring it into awareness and to direct it in the forming of healthy human relationships.

(2) *Amae* and freedom in Doi

Doi argues that *amae* psychology is so pervasive in Japanese society that it has no concept that is equivalent with that of freedom in the Western sense. This is why he was perplexed when he came to conclude that the goal of psychotherapy originating in the West was "for the patient to realize the two values of trust and becoming a free person" (Doi, 1961, p. 257, my translation). If this was the case, how could Doi approach psychiatry in Japan, where one of these core values did not exist? In *The Anatomy of Dependence*, Doi argues that the only freedom that traditionally exists in Japan is the "freedom to *amaeru*"

(Doi, 1971/1981, p. 84), that is, freedom “to depend and presume upon another’s love.” This may sound odd because freedom is associated with independence in the Western world. What does Doi mean by saying “freedom to *amaeru*”?

Doi says that freedom of the individual is impossible in Japanese society because the feeling of obligation (*sumanai*) lingers in the mind when Japanese people receive kindness from others. *Sumanai* is “the regular negative form of the verb *sumu*, meaning to end or to be completed” (p. 31). Literally meaning “not ended” or “not completed,” it implies the feeling that “one has not done everything one should have done” (ibid.). It can be used to express gratitude as well as an apology because, when one receives kindness, one can imagine that “the kind deed has been a burden to the doer” (ibid.) and feels that one should have done something to lessen or remove it before the doer carried it out.

The second anecdote in *The Anatomy of Dependence* illustrates an example of the feeling of *sumanai* when Doi received kindness from his supervisor in the U.S.

Another case happened—also, as I remember, during my early days in America—when a psychiatrist who was my supervisor did me some kindness or other—I have forgotten exactly what, but it was something quite trivial. Either way, feeling the need to say something, I produced not ‘thank you,’ as one might expect, but ‘I’m sorry.’ ‘What are you sorry for?’ he replied promptly, giving me an odd look. I was highly embarrassed. My difficulty in saying ‘thank you’ arose, I imagine, from a feeling that it implied too great an equality with someone who was in fact my superior. In Japanese, I suppose, I should have said *dōmo arigatō gozaimasu* or *dōmo sumimasen*, but, unable to express the same feeling of obligation in English, I had come up with ‘I am sorry’ as the nearest equivalent. (pp. 11–12)

Doi wanted to express a greater feeling of *sumanai* than what would have been implied by responding with “thank you.” The point is that Doi did not assume “an equality” with his supervisor. As a subordinate who was supervised, Doi usually received kindness (that is, supervision) from his supervisor, and had a feeling of obligation (*sumanai*). In this anecdote Doi personally felt that he should have done more for his supervisor, even if (or rather, all the more because) the matter was “quite trivial.” The Japanese phrases *dōmo arigatō gozaimasu* and *dōmo sumimasen* would be translated as “thank you very much” and “I’m very sorry,”⁷ but express more of a “feeling of obligation”⁸ than the English translations convey. As it were, they would express “an inequality” between Doi and his supervisor that became even greater following the kindness of the latter.

How can Doi become free from this feeling of obligation? One way is to *amaeru*. Doi says that *sumanai* can also express “the desire not to lose the other’s good will, to be permitted the same degree of self-indulgence (*amae*) indefinitely” (p. 32). In other words, *sumanai* means not only the feeling that “one has not done everything one should have done,” but also the feeling that, as it were, “one has not received everything one would like to receive” and thus one does not want the relationship to “end.” In short, “freedom to *amaeru*” represents this wish for infinite *amae*.

However, “freedom to *amaeru*” is not always available because it lasts only as long as both the *amae* seeker and granter agree to keep their relationship close enough to *amaeru*. In the case of Doi and his supervisor, Doi was too conscious of his distance from the supervisor to *amaeru* (“depend and presume”) upon the supervisor’s generosity. In addition, a relationship formed with *amae* at the beginning may no longer be close enough to *amaeru* and the sweet feeling of *amae* may turn into the bitter feeling of *sumanai*. This is why Doi says that the sense of freedom in Japan needs “fragile, with care” (p. 90) treatment.

(3) Doi’s transcultural suggestion about freedom and its problems

As this paper is directed toward forming transcultural educational theory, it should be noted that Doi himself makes a transcultural suggestion to the Western world from the perspectives of *amae* and “freedom to *amaeru*.” That is, the Western world should learn from the Japanese experience of the “psychological impossibility of freedom” for the individual (Doi, 1971/1981, p. 95). This is because he observes that “Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud destroyed the faith in freedom of the modern Western man” and that the West “is caught in a morass of despair and nihilism” (ibid.).

However, the way in which Doi constructs his argument has problems. First, his understanding of “the faith in freedom of the modern Western man” is based on written sources and not on everyday use of the word. This is different from his method regarding *amae*, as it is found in the everyday language of Japanese. Second, his explanation of “freedom in the Western sense” is only in the historical context and not in the developmental context of an individual person, while the importance of *amae* is observed particularly in the mother-child relationship. Third, he does not suggest any solution to the problem of fragility of “freedom to *amaeru*” as was discussed in the last section.

This paper attempts to overcome these problems with a research interview in the following section. That is, the research interview is focused on freedom in everyday language in the context of the particular narrative of the individual. After comparing *amae* and freedom in everyday language, we will offer various suggestions on how to develop a transcultural educational theory.

3. Freedom in everyday language

(1) The background of the research interview

This section presents a research interview conducted to clarify the meaning of freedom in everyday language. The interviewee was a female graduate student (S) in her early 20s from western Germany who was studying education (*Erziehungswissenschaft*) at a university in the same region.

The reasons for selecting Germany as a field site were: 1) Doi refers to writings by such German speakers as Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud when he thinks about the destructed “faith” in freedom in the West. 2) Doi’s book titled *The Anatomy of Dependence* was translated into German as *Freiheit in Geborgenheit* (Doi, 1971/1982), which can be translated into English as “Freedom in Security.” This suggests the possibility that *amae* and *Freiheit* (freedom) may be connected. 3) The language used during the interview was English as a second language for both the interviewer and the interviewee. That is, the

interviewee was asked to explain what *Freiheit* was in English, just as Doi expressed the concept of *amae* in English.

S was chosen as the interviewee because: 1) S was fluent in English and eager to participate in the interview. 2) S understood the research topic in education. 3) S was eager to talk about *Freiheit* in education. Of course, we cannot generalize based upon the results of this single interview for the culture of the entire country. However, an in-depth interview with a single participant can yield a range of insights which can contribute to forming a larger scale project.

The interview, conducted in January of 2020, was semi-structured and conducted face-to-face for a duration of approximately 30 minutes. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewee was informed that the interview was to be recorded, to be kept anonymous, there was no “right/wrong” answer, and there was no need to answer all the questions. After being informed, the interviewee agreed to all terms of the interview. The interview was transcribed based on the recording and analyzed.

(2) Interview with S—freedom and work

S relays that the word *Freiheit* has two meanings—one is “freedom on the political side” and the other is “freedom as a feeling”—and the latter can be traced back to “German history in the 17th and 18th century, with persons like Humboldt, Schiller, Goethe.” S says that, while “freedom on the political side” is “always there for me,” “freedom as a feeling” sometimes disappears for her “because of work,” stating:

S: I am a free person, but sometimes I’ve got the feeling not to be really free, not to live in freedom, and that’s sometimes because of work, because of things I have to do. [For] example, [on] some days I don’t have to work, and I’ve got free time, and I’ve got another feeling on these days. I’ve got the feeling to be free to do what I want to do and not I have to do.

When I ask about her first experience of freedom in life, S recalls when she played in the garden.

S: Um, my parents had a house, and next to us lived young families, too, with children, and I’ve got a sister, and we played in two gardens. So, they were next to each other, and it was summer, and the sun shined, and I don’t know there was a pool or not, but that doesn’t really matter, it was just our parents, my parents and the neighbor parents sat on one *Terrase* (terrace)—it’s a...—they sat down in the garden, and we children were allowed to play as long as we would like to do. And I think that could be the first time, that the first time I think right now about. Maybe it was a little bit earlier, that I was six then, I think. [...] but I really remember to the point where I played on the garden and I didn’t have to go to bed at, I don’t know, at eight o’clock. I could play as long as I would like to do, yeah. Yeah, that’s the thing I can remember.

I: *So, you liked [to] go outside, and played with the neighboring family. Why did you feel freedom then?*

S: Nn, aa, some-, aa, it’s a hard question, because it’s so long away [because it was so long ago]!

Maybe because nobody was there—my parents were there, but um, they had a nice evening and didn't look at their children as much as usual, and it was like 'whatever I do right now,' it's my, um—it's what? —it's my choice to do it. And nobody tells me what to do right now. Maybe because of this, but that's only a description, not the really feeling [not how I really felt].

I: *I see. How did you feel then? Without the word of freedom, how do you express that feeling?*

S: I think it was very loud, not silent, not quiet. Very very happy and I, I ran through the garden and climbed on the tree in the garden, so, yes, I played with water, yeah, things like that. So, I shouted out to the words. I try to, yeah.

(3) Interrelation between the feelings of freedom today and during childhood

S explained what *Freiheit* (freedom) meant to her in the tension between when to do “what I have to do” (“work”) versus when to do “what I want to do” (“free time”). In the former, S had “the feeling not to be really free,” while in the latter, she experienced “the feeling to be free to do what I want to do.” What matters here is what S does and when she does it.

When asked about the first experience of freedom in childhood, S recalled a day when the parents and children formed different groups and were doing different things (“they sat down in the garden, and we children were allowed to play as long as we would like to do”). The parents were having “a nice evening” themselves and “didn't look at their children as much as usual” so that S could almost conceive that “nobody was there.” The children were “very loud” and “very very happy” to play in the garden without anyone who told them “what to do right now.”

We can see the interrelation between S's two descriptions about the feeling of freedom. Just as S contrasts “what I want to do” with “what I have to do” today, playing as long as they “would like to do” is contrasted with being told “what to do right now.” The difference is that the childhood memory refers to somebody *else* who would tell children to do something, while today S *herself* knows when to do “what I have to do” and “what I want to do.” This represents a shift from being “allowed” to be free to “getting” time to feel free by oneself.

However, one interesting point is that S seems to have difficulty explaining why she felt freedom in her childhood memory. This is partly because “it's so long away” in the past, but she can recall in a lively way the feeling itself (“it was very loud...”). S says that the explanation that she has just given is “only a description, and not the really feeling.” We will take a closer look at this point.

(4) Interpretation through modern educational theory and *amae*

Though S well remembered her feelings of happiness and excitement in childhood, she had difficulty explaining how it was freedom. The hypothesis is that modern educational theory and *amae* can provide different accounts of this feeling.

Modern educational theory has presupposed that the child must be put under restraint so that it will be free and independent in the future.⁹ Freedom in childhood would mean an evasion of restraint and thus a failure to become independent in the future. Moreover, Rousseau's ideal condition of freedom in

childhood is such a perfect subjection that it appears to be freedom.¹⁰ According to this logic, the feeling in S's childhood was not of the true freedom but of subjection to the parents in the appearance of freedom. This interpretation can correspond to S's statement that "we children *were allowed* to play" by their parents. Therefore, modern educational theory can account for S's difficulty in explaining her feeling in childhood; it denies that it was freedom.

However, this interpretation through modern educational theory cannot account for the happiness that S felt in her childhood and when recalling it in the interview, which she recalled not as subjection but as freedom, even though she no longer needed to "be allowed" to feel freedom.

Amae can provide a different account of this point. One word related to *amae* is *mimamoru* (watching and waiting). Doi agrees that the Japanese word *mimamoru* is the "ideal" word to describe the attitude of the *amae* granter (Doi, 1999, p. 132, my translation). On the one hand, *mimamoru* means keeping away from the children and not interfering with them. This corresponds with S's explanation that the parents "didn't look at their children as much as usual." On the other hand, *mimamoru* means paying some attention in a way that is "warmer" than "watching" (p. 131, my translation). This provides another interpretation of S's phrase that "we children were allowed to play." That is, the parents let the children know that they would neither tell them what to do nor completely desert them but were happy to allow them to play. This distant presence of the parents—their *mimamoru-ing*—made them *amae* granters for the children.¹¹

If we tell the story from S's perspective, we can say that she was enjoying *amae* at that time. S was sure that the parents were happy to allow them to play, so she could "depend and presume upon their love" and could play "as long as we would like to do." S did not have to care about feeling that "I have to do something" ("work") or "I should have done something" (*sumanai*) but was exempted of the obligation of "going to bed at eight o'clock."

However, this interpretation through *amae* is hardly applicable to S's explanation of the feeling of freedom today. While *amae* and freedom from *sumanai* (the feeling that "I have not done what I should have done") requires the agreement of both an *amae* seeker and granter, S can feel freedom by herself by doing "what I want to do" when she does not have the requirement of "what I have to do." In contrast to Doi's pessimistic view on individual freedom in the Western world, S does feel freedom as a "free person."

(5) Suggestions for transcultural educational theory

Through the analysis of the research interview, we make the following suggestions toward forming a transcultural educational theory. First, Doi's transcultural suggestion about "freedom to *amaeru*" needs to be modified, because the feeling of individual freedom was certainly observed in everyday language in Germany. S was able to talk in such a lively manner about her feelings of *Freiheit* that she never referred to "despair and nihilism," as Doi expected. One interesting point is that S implied that there was a connection of her feeling of *Freiheit* with German history in the 17th and 18th centuries. This perhaps was because S was a graduate student majoring in education who had a good understanding of the thinkers during this period. Further research is needed regarding the extent to which the sense of historical

continuity of *Freiheit* is shared among German people in everyday language.¹²

Second, *amae* can be situated in educational theory as a third possibility in addition to “constraint” versus “freedom” because it can provide a positive expression for the feeling of freedom in childhood. Modern educational theory provides only a negative expression for S’s feeling of freedom and happiness in her childhood memories as subjection with the appearance of freedom. In contrast, *amae* can account for the happiness of both the parents and the children by describing them as *amae* granters and seekers, providing a positive expression for their happiness as the “sweet feeling” of *amae* and “freedom to *amaeru*.” As S was happy to remember her memories, these more positive expressions from the vocabulary of *amae* could increase S’s happiness. One interesting topic that might be pursued further is a comparison of the German word *Geborgenheit* (security) in the German translation of Doi’s book title, *Freiheit in Geborgenheit (The Anatomy of Dependence)* with *mimamoru*-ing, a description of the attitude of an *amae* granter.

Third, Doi certainly left unsolved the fragile tendency of “freedom to *amaeru*” to transition into a feeling of obligation (*sumanai*) and regret (*kuyashii*). However, this problem can serve to facilitate the understanding of educational theories in Japan. For example, the concept of “the sense of indebtedness to the dead” presented by Japanese pedagogical anthropologist Yano Satoji can better be grasped with the understanding of *sumanai*. Yano (2012) presents two ideas of the origin of education. One is that education is driven by “the sense of indebtedness to the dead” who were sacrificed at the foundation of the community. This “sense of indebtedness” constraints the lives of later generations of the community and “will close out the way towards outside the community” (p. 227). The other model is that of “education as pure gift giving” by “the original teacher,” represented by Socrates, Buddha, Jesus, and Nietzsche’s Zarathustra (p. 228). They come from outside the community and bequeath their teaching and death as “pure gift giving” without expecting any return. Though this “pure gift giving” can be turned into “the sense of indebtedness to the dead” in the narratives of the disciples, there remains the possibility that the disciples “turn themselves into pure gift givers, and participate in pure gift giving” (ibid.). This possibility is crucial for an ethics that is opened toward those outside the community.

If we may understand “the sense of indebtedness to the dead” in Yano as *sumanai* to the dead, the comparison of “pure gift giving” and *amae* will be an interesting research topic. While *amae* is observed within the close relationship between an *amae* seeker and a granter, Yano argues that “pure gift giving” has a potential for ethics beyond the borders of community.¹³ This is just one example, but we can surmise that even the problems associated with *amae* can help to demonstrate what matters and why it matters in educational theories in Japan. In other words, *amae* can serve as a crossing point between Japanese educational theories and those of other cultures to create a transcultural educational theory.

4. Conclusion

This paper aims to clarify the connection between *amae* and freedom in everyday language and to make suggestions to form transcultural educational theory with them. Through an examination of Doi’s writings, it was determined that Doi’s suggestion of transcultural adoption of “freedom to *amaeru*” to the

Western world was not based on a sufficient understanding of “freedom” in everyday language in the Western world. Analysis of a research interview with a German graduate student about freedom in everyday language clarified that *amae* can provide vocabulary to express the feeling of freedom in childhood in a positive voice.

From this perspective, this paper makes the following suggestions to form a transcultural educational theory.

1. *Amae* can be situated as a third possibility, following the possibilities of the binary logic of constraint and freedom, in modern educational theory. It can provide a positive means of expression to the feeling of freedom in childhood and increase the happiness that accompanies the feeling. It can also provide a third possibility of educational practices such as *mimamoru*-ing. Though existing ethnographic studies focus mainly on preschool education, the connection between *amae* and freedom suggests that further inquiry can be made, for example, in moral education at the older ages.

2. *Amae* can provide a point of contact in everyday language for transcultural exchange on educational theories. The problems associated with *amae* may be attributed to issues in educational theories in Japan. The vocabulary of *amae* can facilitate the understanding of these issues in English by offering a point of contact with everyday language. This can facilitate communication and understanding between cross-cultural contacts—even on a highly theoretical level, such as global citizenship education—by fostering awareness of cultural differences on the empirical level to create deeper transcultural exchanges.

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Notes

¹ See studies in psychotherapy (Kobayashi & Endo, 2012), anthropology (Johnson, 1993), and pedagogy (Tobin et al., 1989; Hayashi et al., 2009; Tobin et al., 2009; Hayashi, 2015).

² See studies in psychology (Kato, 2005; Niiya et al., 2006; Rothbaum et al., 2007) and literature (Hirakawa & Tsuruta, 1996).

³ For example, Morita (1986) indicates that there is a paradox in *Emile* by Rousseau that “the more completely the teacher controls the child, the more freedom the child would have” (p. 177, my translation). Yamana (1989, p. 97) argues that the inconsistency in Kant’s statements on education might have been caused by the anxiety that the very acts of education and of talking about education can hinder the educated from achieving *Mündigkeit* (maturity).

⁴ For example, Tobin et al. (2009, p. 128) records the response from a preschool teacher in Japan to the question whether their approach could be described as *jiyū asobi* (“free play”): “We don’t use the term *jiyū asobi*. We prefer everyday terms such as *suki na asobi* (‘play that is liked’), *shitai asobi* (‘play that one wants to do’), and *kodomo shutai* (‘child-oriented’).”

⁵ Debates on the particularity (Rothbaum et al., 2007) and the universality (Sugio, 2019) of *amae* compared to attachment theory can also be counted as transcultural efforts. However, these studies do not refer to Doi's transcultural suggestion regarding "freedom to *amaeru*." This paper focuses on Doi's suggestion from the perspective of educational studies.

⁶ See Sukawa (2015) for debates in Japan and Kato (2005, pp.5-20) for early debates in the English-speaking world.

⁷ *Sumimasen* is a polite form of *sumanai*.

⁸ The word "obligation" was added by the translator.

⁹ "One must prove to it [the child] that restraint is put on it in order that it be led to the use of its own freedom, that it is cultivated so that it may be one day be free, that is, so that it need not depend on the care of others" (Kant, 1803/2007, p. 448).

¹⁰ "Let him [your pupil] always suppose himself master, while you really are master. No subjection is so perfect as that which retains the appearance of liberty; for thus the will itself is made captive" (Rousseau, 1762/1889).

¹¹ Hayashi (2015) offers additional insights about *mimamoru*-ing as "an implicit cultural practice" in Japan through ethnographical research of the practice of preschool teachers in Japan.

¹² On Doi's part, it should be noted that he maintained his "faith" as a Catholic. He said in his 50s: "I am a Japanese, a Christian, and a psychiatrist. [...] I have thought that I have to talk about Christianity from the standpoint where I can comprehend these three" (Doi, 1992, pp. 25–26, my translation). His transcultural suggestion of "freedom to *amaeru*" needs to be examined further in relation to his inner struggles with these three identities.

¹³ He has recently developed these ideas to consider the tension between national education and world citizenship (Yano, 2019).

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日常語における「甘え」と「自由」

—文化越境的な教育理論の構築に向けて—

高谷 掌子

本稿は、日常語における意味での日本での「甘え」とドイツでの「自由」の関係を明らかにし、これらから文化越境的な教育理論を構築するための提言をなすことを目的とする。「甘え」の概念は、精神科医・土居健郎（1920-2009）の著作である『「甘え」の構造』において紹介された。土居は、「甘える自由」という概念を西洋世界においても認めることを提案したが、この文化越境的な提案は、西洋の日常語における「自由」の意味理解に基づくものではなかった。これに対し、本稿は、日常語としての「自由」の意味をドイツ人大学院生へのインタビュー調査によって探求し、「甘え」という概念が子ども期における「自由」の新たな解釈を可能にすることを示す。これによって、「甘え」が近代教育理論における「自由」と「強制」の二項に加えて第三の可能性となりうるとともに、教育理論における文化越境的な対話のための日常語における接点を与えうることを明らかにする。

***Amae* and Freedom in Everyday Language: Toward Transcultural Educational Theory**

TAKAYA Shoko

This paper aims to clarify the connection between *amae* in Japan and freedom in Germany in everyday language and to make suggestions to form a transcultural educational theory with them. The concept of *amae* was introduced in the book *The Anatomy of Dependence*, written by Japanese psychiatrist Doi Takeo (1920–2009). According to Doi, *amae* is peculiar to the everyday language of Japanese, yet common to mankind as a psychological phenomenon that is always at work in the formation of human relationships. However, his suggestion of transcultural adoption of “freedom to *amaeru*” by the Western world was not based on a sufficient understanding of “freedom” in everyday language in the Western world. This paper attempts to modify and develop this point by a research interview about freedom in everyday language with a German graduate student. By suggesting an alternative interpretation of freedom in childhood through the concept of *amae*, this paper concludes that *amae* can provide a third possibility in addition to the possibilities of freedom and constraint in modern educational theory and a point of contact in everyday language for transcultural dialogue on educational theories.

キーワード： 甘え、自由、土居健郎、インタビュー調査、教育理論

Keywords: *Amae*, freedom, Doi Takeo, research interview, educational theories