

**AGENCY IN THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE:  
LEV VYGOTSKY'S FRAMEWORK AND ITS IMPLICATIONS  
FOR PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATIONS**

Toshinobu Nagamine  
Ryukoku University, Japan  
Corresponding email: nagamine@world.ryukoku.ac.jp

**ABSTRACT**

*Recent educational reforms in Japan include the introduction of English as a foreign language (EFL) at an earlier stage, starting from grade 3 of elementary school, along with the implementation, at least in principle, of a policy to teach English language subjects in English at both junior and senior high schools. These changes reflect the increasing importance placed on English language proficiency in a globalized world and the necessity for students to acquire the requisite language skills to succeed in higher education and the workplace. Therefore, there is a growing focus on the innovativeness demanded of EFL teachers, such as non-traditional communicative approaches to teaching grammar, diversifying methods of evaluation and assessment, and enhancing opportunities for students to use English in novel, creative ways. Despite the efforts to implement these reforms, it has frequently been reported that Japanese teachers lack agency in their teaching, and their low self-esteem and low self-efficacy are causing them difficulties in demonstrating initiative and creativity in curriculum management. This paper examines the construct of agency in the development of concepts of language using Lev Vygotsky's framework and then discusses pedagogical factors that are important to restore agency in language education, particularly in the context of EFL education.*

**Keywords:** *Lev Vygotsky, agency, meaning, sense, EFL, Japan*

**English Education Reforms in Japan**

Considering the importance placed on English language proficiency with respect to globalization, and the need for students to possess the necessary language skills to succeed in higher education and the workplace, the Japanese government has been implementing a series of drastic educational reforms, including the introduction of

English as a foreign language (EFL) education at an earlier stage, beginning from grade 3 of elementary school. Proponents of the reform have said that the introduction of early EFL education will improve students' English proficiency and help them develop a stronger foundation in the language (Floris, 2013; Nemoto, 2018). The government has also enacted a policy to teach English language classes in English, at least in principle, at both junior and senior high schools, though this is not always the case, and outcomes of this policy have varied. Japanese EFL teachers are now expected to use English as their primary instructional language, in line with the principles of communicative language teaching (Glasgow, 2014; Nagamine, 2014). In addition, senior high schools have taken steps to enhance students' academic writing and speaking skills in English by introducing a new English language subject called "Expression and Logical Thinking." This subject includes the study of academic essays, debates, speeches, and presentations in English, thereby providing students with opportunities to read in English and also to develop and express their opinions and ideas about the texts in English (Matsumura et al., 2022). Furthermore, the use of standardized English tests (e.g., TOEFL, TOEIC) as part of the university admission process is now under discussion by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) ("Japan College Admission", 2021).

Consequently, there is a need to evaluate students' language skills effectively in class, beyond merely assessing their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, in order to prepare students for the challenges of a rapidly changing world. As such, there is currently a focus on the innovativeness demanded of teachers, for example, using non-traditional communicative approaches to teaching grammar, enhancing opportunities for students to use English through creative ideas, and diversifying methods of evaluation and assessment (Matsumura et al., 2022). However, it has been frequently reported that Japanese teachers have low self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy (OECD, 2014, 2019, 2020), which possibly relates to the difficulties they encounter in demonstrating initiative and creativity in their teaching practice and curriculum management (Lewis, 2002).

This paper discusses the significance of intrapersonal concepts and their development into interpersonal concepts through an examination of Lev Vygotsky's theoretical framework and relevant constructs. Psychological phenomena such as learning and growth are considered to be the results of the internalization of an individual's interpretations of subjective experiences that are shared and refined as a social entity

through intersubjective experiences with others (Oates & Grayson, 2004). Concept formation of language involves bodily, emotional, and social aspects. Vygotsky (1962, 1991) classified verbal meaning into “sense” and “meaning,” outlining a process in which the sense formed by an individual through bodily and emotional experiences becomes meaning that can be shared with others in a social group. This paper focuses on the agency of an individual in Vygotsky’s concept formation process and argues that the bodily and emotional aspects of sense and the social nature of meaning are being neglected in the current situation of EFL education in Japan. Possible underlying factors include the potential inhibition of agency not only for students, but also for teachers, as well as the possibility of the neglect of its close relationship with contextual factors.

### **Conceptual Development of Language**

In what follows, the concept formation of language is examined by analyzing two relevant episodes: the first one is from my son, who was four years old at the time, and the second is from my daughter, who was also four years old. Note that all quoted dialogues with my children in the episodes were originally spoken in Japanese (our mother tongue); I translated them into English, maintaining the nuances of the Japanese expressions.

#### ***Episode 1: “Naisho”***

My son smiled and said to me, “Daddy, something good is going to happen soon!” We were having dinner together. “Really? Something good?” I asked with a curious look. He responded with an even more cheerful voice, “I’ve been making something really nice. I’m going to give it to you sometime soon, Daddy!” “That sounds exciting. Is it a present? It’s not for my birthday, is it? What could it be?” I wondered aloud. Apparently, my interest in my son’s topic of conversation made him very happy because he began to tell me more about “something good” happening to me. His eyes shining with excitement, he said, “I got a cool strap from my teacher. I put beautiful stuff on it to make pretty. I used clay and put glitter on it.” Overjoyed, I said, “Wow! That sounds amazing! I can’t wait! Thank you!” Hearing my words of gratitude, my son’s face lit up and he continued with a big smile, “The teacher said it’s ‘*naisho*’!”

Surprised to hear this word, I said, “What!?! Naisho!?! But you’re telling me about it. It’s not really naisho then.” My son’s face began to change. He turned to my wife and in a more subdued tone asked “Mom, what does naisho mean?” Despite the anxious look on

my son's face, my wife burst out laughing. It seems that when my son first heard the word "naisho" in kindergarten, he interpreted it differently than adults typically do. I put down the spoon I was holding and tried to calm my shocked son, explaining to him that naisho means to keep something to yourself because you want to make someone happy. What my son had blurted out was a Father's Day gift he had been preparing for me.

### ***Episode 2: "Family"***

My daughter, who has always shown a passion for English, took advantage of the opportunity to take English lessons when they were offered at her kindergarten. The lessons were taught entirely in English by a native English teacher from the United States. One evening, while we were talking after dinner, she asked, "Daddy, do you know what 'family' is?" I responded, "Hmm, I don't know. What does it mean?" My daughter paused for about five seconds and then spoke slowly, "It means '*nakayoshi*' (being close)." As she said this, she gently grabbed my hand. Feeling her hand, I replied, "Oh, I see. 'Nakayoshi' is a good thing. How wonderful." When I asked her if she enjoyed learning English, she replied proudly with a smile, "Yes, I love it!"

Later, I had the opportunity to observe her English class, and I was able to follow the lesson with the same textbook that my daughter was using. The class was early in the morning when the children were still rubbing their sleepy eyes and taking their seats. Some children waited eagerly for the teacher to speak, while others were still half asleep. The lesson began with a focus on bodily movements, as seen in the Total Physical Response (TPR) method. The children, together with the teacher, began singing an English song that included the English word "family" in the lyrics. The children were smiling and holding hands to form a circle while pointing to an illustration of an animal family showing a father bear, mother bear, sister bear, and brother bear. I then remembered the moment when my daughter grabbed my hand when she was talking about the English word "family."

### ***Analysis of the Episodes***

There are two important points to note regarding the episode of my son. First, he did not articulate the meaning of "naisho." The English word "secret" is often translated into Japanese as *himitsu*, but it can also be translated as "naisho." "Naisho" is a more colloquial and informal expression compared to "himitsu." As "naisho" is an abstract word, it can be assumed that he was unable to verbalize its meaning. We should not, however, interpret his failure to articulate the word as evidence of a complete absence of

mental images or concepts related to this word. While speaking, my son used gestures and body language. Furthermore, it can be inferred that he believed “naisho” had some positive nuance that would please the listener, considering his tone of voice and the broad smile he showed when he said, “The teacher said it’s naisho!” He probably used “naisho” because he associated this word with some positive images or feelings. A second important point to note is that the simple definition of “naisho” that I explained to my son, which is “to keep something to yourself because you want to make someone happy” is not a dictionary definition of the word. Due to the fact that I verbalized it as such, he might have understood that the purpose of “keeping something to yourself” (naisho) is “to make someone happy,” but there are, of course, other meanings of the word. When he faces other usages of the word, for example when someone uses it to mean “keeping quiet because it makes someone sad” or “keeping quiet because someone did something wrong,” he may become confused. The formation of concepts of words is fundamentally an act of continuously modifying and re-modifying meaning and understanding through language usage in different situations and scenes (Vygotsky, 1962, 1991). Dictionary definitions or the meanings shared by adults in society are heterogeneous to children, and the cognitive process involved in reaching them should be taken into account (Wertsch, 1985). I will discuss this later through the consideration of “meaning” and “sense.”

There are two noteworthy points in the episode involving my daughter. First, she asked, “Do you know what ‘family’ is?” instead of asking, “Do you know how to say ‘nakayoshi’ (being close) in English?” This indicates that, having received English lessons entirely in an environment without the use of the Japanese language, she was able to grasp the essence of the English word “family,” not in terms of its meaning but rather its sound as a foreign word. Her inquiry regarding whether or not I knew the English word “family” was rooted in her desire to use a word that she had learned to some extent, albeit not yet fully, to deepen her (social) relationship with her father. When asked if I knew the meaning of the word “family,” I turned to my daughter and asked for clarification. Without immediate verbalization, she took a moment to gather her thoughts and perhaps carefully select her words. She then stated, “It means ‘nakayoshi.’” As if to reinforce her words, she reached out and took my hand. The second point to consider is the concept that she articulated: the idea that “family” equates to “nakayoshi” (being close). This interpretation is not exactly the same as the dictionary definition. I could have pointed out this misunderstanding by saying, “No, that’s wrong. It’s a mistake. ‘Family’ means *kazoku* in Japanese! Remember that.”

However, what we want to consider here is the psychology of my daughter. If she were immediately and directly corrected and urged to remember the accurate meaning, what psychological sensations and emotions would she experience? Would she not feel as if her mental image of “family” that had been formed over a long period of time through her bodily senses was being negated, and that all the sensory and emotional associations tied to that image were also being denied? Could this not potentially have a negative impact on her motivation, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and passion for learning the English language?

In the process of language acquisition, the formation of concepts about language progresses gradually and continuously from intrapersonal concepts to interpersonal concepts (Vygotsky, 1962, 1991). Children cannot form concepts about interpersonal communication shared among adults within a social group without first going through the formation of intrapersonal concepts and their subsequent modification and refinement. The formation of intrapersonal concepts is, by nature, a gradual process (Ruthrof, 2012). According to Vygotsky (1962, 1991), unorganized heaps of various ideas arise first, which then develop into complexes where emotions, memories, and perceptions combine to form concepts.

Because of the nature of this process, depending on the developmental stage of children, there may be concepts that are premature for them to use in communication with others in society (Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). The concept shared by my daughter, “family” meaning “nakayoshi” (being close), can be considered a pseudoconcept that will be refined gradually through repeated modifications and re-modifications while she uses and learns English, as she is still in the process of development.

The paths through which word meanings are extended or transferred are determined by the people around the child in their verbal interaction with him. However, the child cannot immediately learn adult modes of thinking. The product he receives is similar to that of the adult. However, it is obtained through entirely different intellectual operations. This is what we call a pseudoconcept. In its external form, it appears to correspond for all practical purposes with adult word meanings. However, it is profoundly different from these word meanings in its internal nature. (Vygotsky, 1962, p.138)

### ***Agency in the Developmental Process from Sense to Meaning***

Vygotsky (1962, 1991) classified the meaning of language that we perceive into two categories: “meaning” and “sense.” Meaning is a generalization and theorization of language that humans detach from context. It refers to the meaning that is recognized as normative within a social group. Because it is separated from context, meaning is a static and generally unchanging entity. To understand what meaning is, it may be helpful to think of a definition in a dictionary. Sense captures the aggregate of psychological sensations that are related to the meaning of language (Vygotsky, 1962, 1991). Sense is perceived from the situations and contexts in which language is used through subjective experiences within a society (Vygotsky, 1991, p. 245). It is a dynamic entity that changes depending on the context. Sense has the potential to be modified and re-modified through intersubjective experiences with others. When my daughter first heard the word “family,” she likely sharpened her senses to perceive and infer the meaning of the word using various contextual cues. While singing the English song repeatedly with her classmates, she possibly perceived numerous psychological and bodily sensations, such as her teacher’s and classmates’ facial expressions, gestures, tones of voice, the sensation of holding hands together repeatedly, and the illustration of the animal family at which she gazed. All of these psychological and bodily sensations can be considered “sense.”

Language is nothing more than a system of symbols used by humans. Vygotsky applied a similar classification to the meaning of nonverbal symbols, such as gestures. The formation of sense involves the processing of nonverbal symbols (Mahn, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). Sense is accumulated based on subjective experiences, and subjective concepts are formed to understand the things and events around an individual (from unorganized heaps to complexes). Intrapersonal concepts form the foundation of coherent thinking for the individual. Sometimes, intrapersonal concepts may be expressed without being in a form that can be fully understood and shared in society (e.g., pseudoconcept). The accumulation of intersubjective experiences with others (Oates & Grayson, 2004) enhances the sociality of sense and promotes its development into meaning. At the same time, intrapersonal concepts gradually develop into interpersonal concepts. Interpersonal concepts of communication incorporate contextual information in language use (when and how to say what to whom) and become refined with the improvement of communicative competence (Mahn, 2013; Ruthrof, 2012).

The development of sense into meaning does not imply the disappearance of sense.

Vygotsky (1962) suggests the coexistence of sense and meaning in an individual's thought system, stating that "[m]eaning is only one of [the] zones of the sense that a word acquires in the context of speaking" (p. 275). Sense includes meaning as one of its domains. In fact, Vygotsky (1962) highlights the superiority of sense over meaning, cautioning against the risk of blindly enforcing norms on children.

We know that the concept is not an automatic mental habit, but a *complex and true act of thinking* that cannot be mastered through simple memorization. The child's thought must be raised to a higher level for the concept to arise in consciousness. (p. 166; italics original)

It should be noted here that Vygotsky's perspective captures the importance of the agency of language users in the process of forming sense. The crucial aspect of language acquisition is that children spontaneously acquire ways of thinking and interpreting language that correspond to their developmental stage (Wertsch, 1985). If adults impose preconceived concepts or force memorization tasks on children without regard to context, it could potentially deprive children of opportunities for the development of crucial cognitive skills, as well as various associated psychological developments (e.g., social-emotional skills).

### **Teacher Agency and Pedagogical Innovations**

Is it possible to have EFL education that takes student agency into account? If so, how would this come about? Kravtsova (2017) states that it is crucial to provide students opportunities to interpret and reinterpret language during their communication with others (i.e., sense modification and re-modification) as a means to develop their imagination.

[C]onditions for purposeful development of imagination, which provides interpretation and reinterpretation, which in turn leads to mastery of themselves, their behavior, activity, psyche. (p.39)

According to Vygotsky (1987), imagination is a process "directly connected with meaning-making, a higher psychological function that has connections not only with emotions but also with intellectual functions" (Gajdamaschko, 2005, p. 16). The development of imagination leads not only to cognitive development, but also to a



multifaceted mastery. Unlike meaning, the formation of sense involves not only cognitive aspects, but also bodily and emotional aspects. Considering the multifaceted nature of sense, for students who cannot easily verbalize their sense due to their premature developmental stage or language abilities, it is possible to let them use mediational means or cultural tools, such as metaphors, short poems, or artistic expressions (such as drawing) that involve the exploration of bodily and emotional aspects (Gajdamaschko, 2005; Iwasaka, 2018; Smagorinsky, 2013). Students can also engage in performance art to explore and express their mental images, sensations, and emotions related to sense (e.g., Holzman, 2017). It is not always necessary to place emphasis on verbalization tasks that require a certain level of cognitive and linguistic development. Teachers can help students develop and utilize nonverbal skills as well (Butler, 2005, p. 247; Rosborough, 2010). As such, teachers need to have a rich imagination and the courage to implement innovative ideas in order to freely explore effective teaching methods that promote the formation of sense, while maintaining and enhancing students' motivation, self-confidence, and self-efficacy. Student agency is closely linked to teacher agency. In other words, agentic students need agentic teachers who can stimulate and challenge them.

Teacher agency in the classroom requires a sensitivity to classroom discourse (Smagorinsky, 2013) and an attitude that strives to create impromptu and meaningful interactions (Gallas, 2001). The teacher must be aware of not only the visible, but also the invisible aspects of classroom interactions, and should recognize that it is important to prioritize not only meaning but also sense. Furthermore, the agentic teacher will be mindful of the quality of learning and teaching, not just the speed and efficiency. It should be pointed out that teacher agency is not only an individual capacity, but also “the *interaction* of individual ‘capacity’ with environing ‘conditions’” (Priestley et al., 2016, p. 22; italics original). To facilitate effective teaching practices, therefore, it is crucial for local school environments and organizations to provide comprehensive support for teachers. This support should enable teachers to innovate their teaching methodologies, reflect on and learn from past experiences, and make efforts toward professional development (cf. Kitada, 2022). Without changing the culture of teacher learning and professional development, it is difficult, if not impossible, to effectively enhance the quality of teaching (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999).

Lewis (2002) presents an intriguing analysis of the skills of Japanese mathematics teachers based on her research of lesson study. Although the content area of the teachers

in the study is not the same, her observations are applicable to Japanese EFL teachers as well. She points out that Japanese teachers have a weakness in curriculum management skills in comparison to American teachers. While American teachers excel in skills such as choosing and writing curriculum, aligning curriculum with standards, and planning lessons individually, Japanese teachers are lacking in these skill areas. On the other hand, Japanese teachers excel in skills performed in a group setting, such as planning lessons collaboratively and watching and discussing each other's classroom lessons. She also points out that Japanese teachers lack a proactive and creative approach in making decisions about "what to teach" (i.e., course content) and in adopting innovative perspectives and creating lesson plans in a unique fashion. Additionally, they lack the attitude of proactively verifying the alignment between evaluation methods and course content (Nagamine, 2017). These observations provide valuable insights to the differences in teacher cultures. In this case, Japanese teachers seemed to favor a more collective approach, while the American teachers preferred a more individualistic approach.

In addition to the observations regarding teacher culture, there is yet another factor to consider when contemplating how to promote agency in EFL education. This factor concerns the negative effects of student habituation to classroom instructional techniques. I have observed different types of EFL classes conducted in Japanese elementary, junior high, and senior high schools over the past 18 years. From my experience, there have been quite a few cases in which instruction and interaction have become patterned, ritualized, and mechanized within the classroom. For example, teachers often repeated words and phrases to praise the students, such as "Excellent!" "Great!" and "Well done!" without stating specific reasons for the praise and without prompting students' awareness of the differences in the meaning of the different words used. As students progress from elementary to senior high school, they appear to lose the sensation of being praised, and their reactions become less apparent. I have also observed students who stopped paying attention to the teacher's instruction in English after hearing the Japanese translation that followed immediately after the teacher's words in English: "Now, take out your handout, and flip it over. *Hai handoauto dashite, hikkuri kaeshite!*" Furthermore, I observed instances when students were asked to write down what they wanted to say in English and participate in speaking activities only because the teacher believed the students were unable to speak English spontaneously. Before speaking, the teacher provided grammar instruction, and the students were forced to pay attention to "accuracy." During what was referred to as "a speaking

activity,” I found that one student who had transcribed unfamiliar English words from a Japanese-English dictionary was unable to read them aloud, causing him to blush with embarrassment. Despite this speaking activity being essentially an accuracy-focused writing lesson and a scripted reading task with no improvisation, it appeared frequently in the classroom. In activities such as this one, it seems that the language instruction neglects qualitative aspects of language learning, especially sense. The perspective of Vygotsky, particularly the unit of analysis he proposed called *perezhivanie* (i.e., the unity of affect and intellect) (e.g., Vygotsky, 1994), reminds us of the importance of not only the mind, but also the body and heart in learning, and it gives us a significant hint about what is needed to promote innovative and effective teaching practices in local school settings.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has examined the developmental process of language, from intrapersonal concepts to interpersonal concepts, based on the seminal framework of Vygotsky. It has also explored the multifaceted nature of “sense,” which is not only cognitive, but also emotional and physical. Further discussion was given to the process of “sense” formation by individuals, along with the importance of agency in the developmental process.

It is necessary to further examine whether student opportunities for the formation of “sense” are missing in language education as a whole in Japan, particularly in the field of EFL education. It holds true for the recently introduced early English education initiative, in which English education begins in 3rd grade. Considering the fact that a number of elementary schools have even started teaching English in the 1st grade, it is important to examine the teaching methodologies employed in these elementary schools. The success and failure of early English education in Japan might be partially determined by the level of the students’ agency as they work toward achieving a complete understanding of the language, which entails an understanding of “sense.” If students’ gradual development related to the concept formation of language is inhibited at an early stage of learning, it will become difficult to maintain and/or improve motivation and self-efficacy in the subsequent stages. We therefore need inspiring teachers who can motivate students to learn and who have a high degree of empathy to enhance students’ interest in and awareness of language (Lamb & Wedell, 2013).

Japanese teachers have lower levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy compared to teachers in other countries (OECD, 2014, 2019, 2020). The longstanding issue of hectic work environments may be affecting the psychology of teachers, combined with the pressure of top-down education reforms (Nagamine, 2018). In any case, teacher self-efficacy plays a crucial role in the formation of a professional identity (Canrinus et al., 2012). It also affects decision-making when teachers choose instructional strategies to create meaningful in-class interactions (Matsumura & Nagamine, 2019). In order for individual teachers to construct and implement innovative and unique lessons, as previously argued, there needs to be an improvement in their work environments, as well as a shift in their own mindsets. Hopefully, schools will have the opportunity to create cultures that allow individual teachers to engage in trial and error and to experiment with innovative approaches under a sufficient support system. Finally, collaboration among different levels and types of schools, regional education centers, and academic experts from universities should be further strengthened and encouraged.

### Acknowledgement

This work was supported in part by the Sociocultural Research Institute at Ryukoku University and the JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) (Project No. 21H00871). The views expressed in this article are solely the responsibility of the author.

### References

- Butler, Y. G. (2005). *Nihon-no shogakko eigo-o kangaeru: Ajia-no shiten-karano kensho-to teigenn* [English language education in Japanese elementary schools: Analyses and suggestions based on East Asian perspectives]. Sansedo.
- Canrinus, E. T., Helms-Lorenz, M., Beijaard, D., Buitink, J., & Hofman, A. (2012). Self-efficacy, job satisfaction, motivation and commitment: Exploring the relationships between indicators of teachers' professional identity. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 27*, 115–132.
- Floris, F. D. (2013). English language teaching in Japan: Issues and challenges: An interview with Toshinobu Nagamine and Masaki Oda. *English Language Teaching World Online: Voices from the Classroom (ELTWO), 5*, 1–7.

- Gajdamaschko, N. (2005). Vygotsky on imagination: Why an understanding of the imagination is an important issue for schoolteachers. *Teaching Education*, 16(1), 13–22.
- Gallas, K. (2001). “Look, Karen, I’m running like Jell-O”: Imagination as a question, a topic, a tool for literacy research and learning. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 35, 457–492.
- Glasgow, G. P. (2014). Teaching English in English, ‘in principle’: The national foreign language curriculum for Japanese senior high schools. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 9(2), 152–161.
- Holzman, L. (2017). *Vygotsky at work and play* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Iwasaka, Y. (2018). Shakaibun-ron ni motozuku jido-no goigakushu-no bunseki: “share”-no ‘imi’-to ‘kankaku.’ [A sociocultural analysis of pupils’ vocabulary learning: meaning and sense of “share” in a picture book]. *JES Journal*, 18(1), 132–147.
- Japan college admission English exam reforms stunted by economic, regional disparities. (2021, September 4). *The Mainichi*. <https://mainichi.jp/english/>
- Kitada, Y. (2022). Teacher agency in the modification of Japanese lesson study in the United States. *Educational Studies in Japan: International Yearbook*, 16, 45–57.
- Kravtsova, E. (2017). The sense and the meaning of cultural-historical theory of L. S. Vygotsky. *Revue internationale du CRIRES: innover dans la tradition de Vygotsky*, 4(1), 35–47.
- Lamb, M., & Wedell, M. (2013). *Inspiring English teachers: A comparative study of learner perceptions of inspirational teaching*. British Council.
- Lewis, C. (2002). *Lesson study: A handbook of teacher-led instructional improvement*. Research for Better Schools.
- Mahn, H. (2012). Vygotsky’s analysis of children’s meaning making processes. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1(2), 100–126.
- Mahn, H. (2013). Vygotsky and second language acquisition. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopaedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1–7). Blackwell.
- Matsumura, S., Chapple, J., & Nagamine, T. (2022, November 19). *Student perceptions of native vs. non-native English teachers in Japanese classrooms* [Paper presentation]. The 13th International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca (Webinar), Foreign Language Center, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan, R.O.C.
- Matsumura, S., & Nagamine, T. (2019, June 28). *Teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of instructional strategy choice: A study of non-specialist EFL*

- teachers in Japan* [Paper presentation]. The 17th Asia TEFL International Conference, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Nagamine, T. (2014). Preservice and inservice English as a foreign language teachers' perceptions of the new language education policy regarding the teaching of classes in English at Japanese senior high schools. In K. Shimizu & W. Bradley (Eds.), *Multiculturalism and conflict reconciliation in the Asia-Pacific: Migration, language, and politics* (pp. 99–117). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nagamine, T. (2017). The potential for non-native teachers to effectively teach speaking in a Japanese EFL context. In J. de D. Martínez Agudo (Ed.), *Native and non-native teachers in English language classrooms: Professional challenges and teacher education* (pp. 161–180). De Gruyter Mouton.
- Nagamine, T. (2018). L2 teachers' professional burnout and emotional stress: Facing frustration and demotivation toward one's profession in a Japanese EFL context. In J. de D. Martínez Agudo (Ed.), *Emotions in second language teaching: Theory, research and teacher education* (pp. 259–275). Springer.
- Nemoto, A. K. (2018). Getting ready for 2020: Changes and challenges for English education in public primary schools in Japan. *The Language Teacher*, 42(4), 33–35.
- Oates, J., & Grayson, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Cognitive and language development in children*. Blackwell.
- OECD. (2014). *TALIS 2013 results: An international perspective on teaching and learning*. [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis\\_23129638](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis_23129638)
- OECD. (2019). *TALIS 2018 results (Vol. I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners*. [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis\\_23129638](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis_23129638)
- OECD. (2020). *TALIS 2018 results (Vol. II): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners*. [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis\\_23129638](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis_23129638)
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2016). *Teacher agency: An ecological approach*. Blooms-Bury USA Academic.
- Rosborough, A. A. (2010). *Gesture as an act of meaning-making: An eco-social perspective of a sheltered-English second grade classroom* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Nevada, Las Vegas]. UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones, 748.
- Ruthrof, H. (2012). Vygotsky's "thought" in linguistic meaning. *RIFL*, 6(2), 161–173.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2013). What does Vygotsky provide for the 21st-century language arts teacher? *Language Arts*, 90(3), 192–204.

- Stigler, J. W., & Hiebert, J. (1999). *The teaching gap: Best ideas from the world's teachers for improving in the classroom*. The Free Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thinking and speech*. MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). Imagination and its development in childhood. In R. W. Rieber & A. S. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky: Problems of general psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 339–350). Plenum.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1991). *Thought and language*. MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1994). The problem of the environment. In J. Valsiner & R. Van der Veer (Eds.), *The Vygotsky reader* (pp. 347–348). Blackwell.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind*. Harvard University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V., & Tulviste, P. (1992). L. S. Vygotsky and contemporary developmental psychology. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(4), 548–557.