Aizuchi by Japanese Native Speaker Case Study in *Inaka Ni Tomarou!* TV Serial

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Abstract

This study is intended to describe the form of aizuchi in the TV series Inaka Ni Tomarou! *and find out the function of Aizuchi's speech based on the conversation context. The research data are the forms of aizuchi, which are used in a conversational context. This type of research is a qualitative descriptive study. The researchers found six forms of aizuchi: short speech, interjection speech, interjection, and short utterances, repeated short utterances, repeated speech partner utterance, short utterances, and repetition of speech partners. In the function, Aizuchi has seven functions: a continuer signal, an understanding signal, an approval signal, a signal indicating emotion, a signal to confirm, a rejection signal, and a filling signal.*

Keywords: Azuchi; Context; Aizuchi form; Aizuchi function; Inaka Ni Tomarou!

1. Introduction

One of the uniqueness in verbal communication among Japanese society is the existence of *aizuchi* culture. *Aizuchi* occurs when a speech partner who acts as a listener takes a turn to convey short messages while the speaker is speaking. Speech partners send verbal and nonverbal signals to speakers to indicate their level of understanding, concern, or interest (Mizutani in Hanzawa, 2012; Maynard, 1986; Horiguchi in Otsuka, 2005).

According to Yngve *aizuchi* in English conversation, it is called backchannel (Cutrone, 2014). In his research (Maynard, 1990) investigated the frequency of backchannel in Japanese and English conversations and stated that backchannel in English occurs not as often as *aizuchi*; even *aizuchi* appears three times backchannel. Conversely, Indonesian conversation has a listening culture and does not interrupt when a speaker delivers his speech because it can lead to disrespectful views towards speech partners (Chaer, 2010).

According to Horiguchi and Matsuda, *aizuchi* refers to a group of short expressions called *aizuchi-shi* (Mukai, 1999). (Otsuka, 2005) states that *un*, *hai*, *ee*, *sou desuka* are called *aizuchi-shi,* and the repetition of speech partners is also included in *aizuchi* called *kurikaeshi*.

According to Maynard, the function of *aizuchi* is divided into six, namely: 1) as a successor, 2) understanding, 3) support, 4) approval, 5) emotional response, 6) minor additions (Cutrone, 2014). Meanwhile, Horiguchi stated that the *aizuchi* function is divided into five, namely: 1) listening, 2) understanding, 3) agreement, 4) rejection, 5) displaying emotions (Otsuka, 2005). Ohama added one function besides those five functions: the *aizuchi* function to fill in conversation gaps (Hanzawa, 2012). Researchers divide the *aizuchi* function into seven functions based on those three opinions, namely: 1) signal of successor (listening and supporting), 2) understanding signal, 3) approval signal, 4) emotional signal, 5) confirmation signal or requesting more information, 6) rejection signal, 7) signal to fill in the blanks.

A scientific article was written by (Miyata & Nisisawa, 2007; Mori, 2013; Noguchi et al., 2014; Saft, 2007; White, 1989; Yuniastuti & Nila Sepni, 2019). Miyata & Nisisawa (2007) focuses on the occurrence of *aizuchi* used by Japanese

boys based on the delay problem of development final-speech *aizuchi* and internal-speech *aizuchi*, which appeared about six months later from final-speech *aizuchi.* This study also observed the frequency of *aizuchi* invitations used, while the low number of *aizuchi* invitations were sent. In line with these problems, Miyata concluded that children rarely used Aizuchi's behavior in the early sessions. However, the conversation developed into a more structured one in the next 20 months. Researchers can also further confirm two types of *aizuchi*, namely internal-speech and final-speech, which are limited in the form and function of continuation and function of understanding.

Next, the research conducted by Saft (2007) emphasizes the importance of short speech partner *(aizuchi)* responses for native Japanese speakers. The analysis presented in the study is based on a Japanese political discussion on a TV program entitled *Gekiron: Asa made nama terebi* in the form of a video recording transcription about interaction that shows the function of *aizuchi* in several contexts. It is a more flexible resource for interaction. Saft concluded based on sequential analysis that program participants can use aizuchi to choose themselves as recipients of other people's speech. The main focus was on program moderator, pointing out that giving moderators access to the turn-taking is essential for distributing speech changes. *Aizuchi*, in this study, discussed the interface between Japanese social and cultural interactions.

Based on the above description, the difference between this research and previous research is the study's focus and the context of the studied conversation. The first study focused on *aizuchi* in the form of final-speech and internal-speech used by Japanese boys. The researchers put the difference from the second study in the context of the research conversation. The previous research context is the context of formal conversations used in political discussion programs. Meanwhile, from some of these studies, no one has explored deeper about the use of *aizuchi* that native speakers apply in everyday speech based on the form and function of *aizuchi*. Thus, this research is expected to provide a more in-depth explanation, especially using *aizuchi* in a conversation, by describing the speaker's form and function from each data in a natural context.

2. Methods

This research is structured using a descriptive qualitative paradigm approach. Producing descriptive data in speech or writing and the people's behavior is a qualitative research procedure (Taylor et al., 2016). The descriptive approach aims to describe a phenomenon coherently, actual, and accurately based on existing facts. This research was conducted in three stages, namely data collection, data analysis, and presentation of data analysis results.

This research's data are in the form of *Aizuchi's* utterances, which are spoken in two video series *Inaka Ni Tomarou!*. Using Inaka Ni Tomarou! as the data source is that the TV series is a reality show, and the speakers did not speak based on the script. The utterances were spoken spontaneously, which can be categorized as natural data. The data collection technique used was the observation and note technique with the following steps: watching all two videos of the *Inaka Ni Tomarou!* TV series; listening to and transcribing all the utterances assumed to be *aizuchi*; transcribing the *aizuchi* speech based on context; listening, checking, and sorting *aizuchi's* speech again, assigning a number to each speech. Then, *aizuchi* findings are classified based on *aizuchi* form and function. The stages of data analysis in this study were: checking and ensuring that the data that had been numbered was *aizuchi* with the triangulation method; analyzing data based on the underlying context; put the data into tables based on their classification

according to the theory; describes the context and kinds of existing data descriptively.

Clark and Bangerter (Aryanto et al., 2020) introduced three terminologies of approach in pragmatic research. Those are *armchair*, *field, dan laboratory*, and explained as follows:

> *It has been mainly investigated by three methods – intuition, experiment, and observation. With intuitions, imagine examples of language used in this or that situation and ask whether they are grammatical or ungrammatical, natural or unnatural, appropriate or inappropriate. This intuition method was Searle's method. Experiments invite people into the laboratory, induce them to produce, comprehend, or judge language samples, and measure their reactions. With observations, note what people say or write as they go about their daily business. We will name these methods by their distinct locations: armchair, laboratory, and field.*

According to Jucker (Aryanto et al., 2020), the armchair method has two approaches: a philosophical approach and an interview approach. In a philosophical approach, the researcher uses intuition and introspection in his analysis. The interview approach aims to obtain opinions and language variations from language speakers.

In the laboratory method, researchers use stimulation instruments in the form of a particular context of conversation or speech, both written and oral, so that informants' cooperation is needed. According to the researcher's context and speech, informants are asked to produce verbal and nonverbal speech (Jucker in Aryanto et al., 2020).

The field method has the characteristic of obtaining data from the communication process of research subjects that are "not controlled" by the researcher. Research subjects produce data without data anglers, or researchers do not create situations so that research subjects produce data in the form of oral or written (Jucker in Aryanto et al., 2020).

The researchers in this study use the field method as an approach. Researchers observe data that occurs naturally that the researchers were not involved in data production by the research subject.

According to the online KBBI/Indonesian Dictionary, a response is a reply, reaction, response from an action or speech. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a backchannel is a sound or sign made to show that the speech partner is listening to the speaker. The term backchannel itself was first introduced by Yngve in (Cutrone, 2014) defining backchannel as follows:

> *...When the person who has the turn receives short messages such as "yes" and "uh-huh" without relinquishing the turn.*

As mentioned, a *backchannel* is when the speaker receives a short message from a speech partner such as "yes" and "uh-yes" without taking his turn to speak. In the discussion, he explained a *backchannel* could also be a short message such as, "Oh really?"; or a longer message and the nod included in the *backchannel*. It can be concluded that *backchannel* has a broad concept, including all the simultaneously occurring behaviors while the speaker is speaking.

In Japanese, a *backchannel* is called あいづち (*aizuchi*). According to the kokujiten dictionary, *aizuchi* is as follows:

> 「会話などにおいて、相手の話などに調子を合わせて言うちょっとした言葉のこと。」
> *"Kaiwa nado ni oite, aite no hanashi nado ni choushi wo awasete iu chottoshita kotoba no koto."*
> "In conversation, aizuchi is a small word that is pronounced to someone else's story."

Furthermore, Mizutani (Ishida, 2006) states that "*ai*" means together and "*tsuchi*" is a hammer; *aizuchi* "is the alternate hammering by two swordsmiths of a sword's blade.

Aizuchi expresses more than just a continuous function, and *aizuchi's* function can be interpreted as emotional support for turn-takers (Kita & Ide, 2007). The explanation of *aizuchi* through etymological perspective adds historical insights to the unique features of *aizuchi,* according to (Kita & Ide, 2007) as follows:

> *Its etymology goes back to a technical term in Japanese traditional sword making. To make a sword, the master and the assistant hammer the iron alternately with a regular rhythm. The master, with a small hammer, sets the pace and instructs the assistant with a big hammer where to hit next. The assistant's blow physically shapes the sword out of a lump of hot iron. Aizuchi originally referred to this assistant's blow, which must carefully follow every master's blow and play a significant role in shaping the sword.*

From some of the definitions of *aizuchi*, it can be concluded that *aizuchi* is the response expressed by speech partners to the speaker's utterances to support the flow of a conversation.

Aizuchi often appears in conversations: *hai, aa, ee, haa, hoo, hunn*, and *hee*. Short responses are often categorized into several types based on their original meaning or based on semantic information. Horiguchi and Matsuda (Mukai, 1999) revealed that *aizuchi*, which refers to a group of short expressions, is called *aizuchi-shi*. According to (Otsuka, 2005) *un, hai, ee, sou desuka* are called *aizuchi-shi,* and the repetition of speech partner's utterance is also included in *aizuchi* called *kurikaeshi*. Researchers also have different opinions about the other verbal forms of *aizuchi*.

In addition to verbal forms, according to (Duncan, 1974; Duncan and Fisk, 1977; Maynard, 1986, 1987, 1989,1990, 1997; Brunner, 1979; Hattori, 1987; Schenkein, 1972 in Cutrone, 2014), the forms of a head nod, head shaking, smiles, laughter and raised eyebrows belong to the nonverbal backchannel. The nonverbal form of aizuchi is often recognized but is often excluded from research studies due to a lack of definition. In this study, researchers did not discuss aspects of nonverbal communication.

According to Maynard (Mukai, 1999), *aizuchi* is divided into six functions, as follows: a) continuer, b) display of understanding of content, c) support toward the speaker's judgment, d) agreement, e) strong emotional response, and e) minor addition. Horiguchi (Otsuka, 2005) states that *aizuchi* is divided into five functions, namely: a) signal of listening, b) signal of understanding, c) signal of agreement, d) signal of negation and e) exhibition of emotions. Next, Ohama (Hanzawa, 2012) adds one function besides those five functions: the *aizuchi* function to fill in the blanks in conversation.

Based on those three opinions, it can be concluded that the seven *aizuchi* functions are as follows: 1) Function as a continuer; a signal that the speech partner is listening and shows support for the speaker to continue his speech; 2) Function as a signal that the speech partner understands and comprehends the speaker's speech; 3) Function as a signal of approval to the speaker's speech; 4) Function as a signal when a speech partner is surprised or shows emotion; 5) Function as a signal to confirm the speaker's speech and ask for more information; 6) Function as a signal of rejection of the speaker's speech; 7) Function as a signal to fill in the gaps in the conversation.

3. Result and Discussion

In this study, 428 *aizuchi* speech data were obtained from two data sources. The study results were categorization based on the forms and functions of *aizuchi* found in the data source.

3.1 Forms of *Aizuchi*

On two episodes of the TV series *Inaka Ni Tomarou!*, the researchers found 54 speech contexts. From this context, 428 *aizuchi* utterances were found. In the 428 utterances, six forms of *aizuchi* were found: short utterances, interjection utterances, short utterances followed by interjection,

repeated short utterances, repeated speech partners, and short utterances followed by repeated speech partners.

Forms of *Aizuchi* on the two episodes of the TV series *Inaka Ni Tomarou!* were analyzed based on the context of the speech underlying it. Here is the classification of the *aizuchi* forms on two episodes of the TV series *Inaka Ni Tomarou!*

Table 1 Classification of *aizuchi* forms

No	Form of *Aizuchi*	Number of Speeches
1	Short speech	308
2	Speech of Interjection	37
3	Short speech and interjection	12
4	Repeated Short speech	35
5	Repeating the utterances of speech partners	33
6	Short utterances and repetition of speech partner's utterances	3

3.1.1 Short Examination

Aizuchi in the short speech category has functioned as a continuer (data 1), understanding signal (data 2), approval signal (data 3), signal to indicate emotion (data 4), signal to ascertain (data 5), rejection signal (data 6) and *aizuchi* which functions as a signal to fill in the gap (data 7). The following is an example of a short speech.

Data 1 (Video 1)
X : 「めんぱ という (Y: ええ、「めんぱ」はね) **うん** (1) (Y: あそこの花野屋さんで売ってますけど。) 」
"Menpa to iu (Y: Ee, [menpa] ha ne) **un** *(1) (Y: asoko no Hananoyasan de uttemasukedo.)"*
'called as menpa (Y: Yes, [menpa]) yes (1) (Y: sold in that Hananoya store.)'

The context of data 1 occurs during the day in *Narakawa* village. X is the guest star of *Inaka Ni Tomarou!* (video one) named Sasano Takashi, and Y is the shop owner's grandmother. X asked Y about menpa. When Y explained, X replied with the word *un, ya,* the informal form of *hai*. X has a higher social status because X is a

shop guest. The "*un*" is categorized into *aizuchi* short speech that functions as a continuer. X gave the signal that he was listening to the information given by Y.

Data 2 (Video 1)
X : 「ちょっと伺いしますけども(Y: はい) あの、めんぱと言うものね (Y: ええ)お宅様で実用で使ったらしちゃったらしませんかね。」
"Chotto ukagai shimasu kedomo (Y: hai) ano, menpa to iu mono ne (Y: ee) otakusama de jitsuyou de tsukattara shichattara shimasenkane."
'I want to ask few questions, (Y: yes) um, that is called menpa (Y: yes) Do you use it at home?'
Y : 「うん、前は使ってたけど (X: 使ってました) 今は使ってないです (X: **そうですか** (2)) ええ。」
*"Un, mae ha tsukatteta kedo (X: tsukattemashita) ima ha tsukattenai desu (X : **soudesuka** (2)) ee."*
'yes, I used it in the past (X: use it) but not anymore now (X: oooo, I see (2)).'

Data two occurred in the afternoon in front of villagers' houses. Sasano Takashi, as X and Y are the housewives who were revisited by X. X asked about menpa, whether at Y's house using menpa or not. Then Y explained that previously she used menpa, but now she does not use it. When Y has not finished his speech, X gives a short response of *soudesuka* (oh, I see), where the *aizuchi* functions as a sign that X understands Y's previous words. In the two data, X's social status is higher because X is an unknown person who comes to visit Y's house.

Data 3 (Video 2)
X : 「ここの店は何年ぐらい (Y: もう 30 年になります) あ！30 年前から唐揚げ屋さんがあるって事はやっぱり皆さん良く買いに(Y: **そうですね** (3)) 来る言うことですよね...」
"Koko no mise ha nan nen gurai (Y: mou 30 nen ni narimasu) a! 30 nen mae kara

karageya san ga arutte koto ha yappari minnasan yoku kai ni (Y: **soudesune** (3)) *kuru iu koto desuyone...*
'how long has this store run? (Y: for 30 years) oh! This karage store has run for 30 years. So, during the 30 years, many customers have come. (Y: yes, that is right. (3)) to buy...

Data 3 occurred during the day at a shop selling karage. In this data, X is Matsuki Rina, a guest star in the second video, and Y is the mother selling karage. On the data, X asked how long the karage shop had been run. Then Y quickly answered if the karage shop had been run for 30 years. X then replied that if it had been that long, many people would come to buy karage at the shop. When X has not finished his speech, Y chimed in with *aizuchi* "*soudesune*" (that is right) which means if Y corrects or agrees with X's previous speech, many people come to his shop to buy karage. Social status in this data social status X is higher than Y because X is a shop Y guest.

Data 4 (Video 2)
X : 「すみません。あの、美味しい鶏のから揚げを探しているんですけど、ダムのほまで行きたいんですが(Y: はい) 乗せって行って頂けたりしませんか。」
"*sumimasen. Ano, oishii tori no karage wo sagashiteirun desukedo, Damu no ho made ikitain desuga* (Y: *hai*) *nosette itte itadaketari shimasenka.*"
'excuse me.. um, I am looking for delicious karage; I want to go near the dam. (Y: yes) can you give me a lift?
Y : 「あ、別にいいですけど(X: **本当ですか？**(4)) 」
"*a, betsuni ii desukedo* (X: **hontou desuka?** (4))
'yes, no problem (X: really? (4)).

Data 4 occurred on the street during the day. X is Matsuki Rina, and Y, the owner of the car, is a boy. In this data, X greets Y, who is cleaning his car. After saying the words, X then told him if he was looking for good karage and wanted to visit the dam area. Then X asked Y if Y could drive him to the area. Y answered if he was willing and did not mind. X, who heard this, was surprised and happy because Y was willing to take him. X uses the *aizuchi* "hontou desuka" (really?). To show emotion, he feels happy. Y's social status in this data is higher because X needs help from Y.

Data 5 (Video 1)
X : 「あ！あの、こっちずっと行って、大橋渡って(Y: 大橋渡る) はい、それで右回ると左側に看板がでてくる (Y: うん、**ああ、そうですか**(5)) はい。」
"*a! ano, kottchi zutto itte, ohasi watatte* (Y: *ohashi wataru*) *hai, sorede migi mawaru to kanban ga detekuru* (Y: *Un,* **aa, soudesuka** (5)) *hai.*"
'go straight from here, cross the bridge. (Y: cross the bridge) yes, then, turn right, and you will see the sign on your left. (Y: yes, oh, is that? (5)) yes.'

The context of data five occurred during the day in a shop selling menpa. In this data, the shop owner is X and Sasano Takashi is Y. X is explaining the direction to the Hananoya shop to Y. When X explains Y responds in the middle of X's words with *aizuchi* "aa, soudesuka" (ah, is that so?). Y uses the *aizuchi* to confirm the correctness of the information given by X. Y's social status in this data is higher than X because Y is a shop guest.

Data 6 (Video 1)
X : 「はい、息子さんはいいって言いますけども。」
"*hai, musuko san ha iitte iimasu kedomo.*
'yes, my son allowed me.'
Y : 「いいですか (X:うん・うん) いい息子さんですね (X:**いや**(6)) 良くできたんいい息子さんだ。」
"*ii desuka* (X: *un.un*) *ii musuko san desune* (X: **iya** (6)) *yoku dekitan ii musuko san da.*"

'is it really okay? (X: yes, yes) your son is very kind ya (X: no (6)) he has been good.'

The context of data six occurred at night in a grandmother's house. X is the grandmother of the owner of the house, and Y is Sasano Takashi. Y was looking for a place to stay that night, then he visited X's house and asked if he could stay that night. Y asked that X ask his son's permission first. After X called his son and asked for permission, he told Y if his son allowed him. Hearing this, Y felt happy and gave praise to X for having such a kind child. Then X responds with *aizuchi* "yes" "no" to reject the praise given Y. Y's social status, who is a higher guest in this data than X.

Data 7 (Video 2)

X ：「何？何？(Y: うん(7)) あの、だけ。唐揚げをね、食べられればと言う事で。」
*"Nani ? nani ? (Y: **Un** (7)) Ano, dake. Karage wo ne, taberarereba to iu koto de."*
'What happens? (Y: Yes (7)) He only wants to eat Karage.'

Data 7 occurred in the afternoon at Kazuko's house. Y was the man who dropped Matsuki Rina at X's house, and X was Y's brother named Kazuko. Arriving at X's house, Y explained that Matsuki Rina wanted to eat karage. Y used *aizuchi "un"* which means "yes". X and Y have the same social status because they both were siblings. *Aizuchi* is not used to affirm or approve the previous utterance, but it fills in the conversation gap. *Aizuchi* is used in short utterances that function as a filler in the gap of a conversation.

3.1.2 Speech of Interjection

The *aizuchi* speech of interjection category has a function as an understanding signal (data 8), a signal to indicate emotion (data 9), and a signal to ascertain (data 10). The following is an example of an interjection speech.

Data 8 (Video 2)

X ：「この人は住めない (Y:いや) 私は飲めない (Y: いいえ)。」
"Kono hito ha sumenai (Y: iya) watashi ha nomenai (Y: iie)."
'This man can not drink. (Y: no) I don't drink. (Y: no).'

Y ：「あ！あの、じゃあすみませんお入れしましょうか。お入れしましょうか。(X:いや、もう本当)。」
"a! ano, jaa sumimasen oiermashouka. Oiremashouka. (X: iya, mou hontou)."
'Ah! I am sorry, let me fill it. Let me fill it. (X: no, no need.)'

X ：「いや、あたし焼酎は (Y: あ！(8)) 行かないかな。」
*"iya, atashi shouchuu ha (Y: **a!** (8)) ikanai kana."*
"no, I do not want   (Y: ah! (8)) drink Shouchuu.'

In data 8, Kazuko is X, and Matsuki Rina is Y. The context of this data occurred at night in X's house. X and Y are drinking with other members of X's family. X jokes and teases Y, who has drunk a lot and looks unconscious, and X does not want to drink anymore, but Y nods if it is not valid. Y apologized and wanted to fill X's glass. X refused by joking, but Y still wanted to pour sake into X's glass. X refused gently if he did not drink the sake.

Nevertheless, before X finishes his sentence, Y gives an "a!" 'Ah!' Which is *aizuchi* in the interjection speech category. Y gave this response because he understood or understood what X wanted to convey. *Aizuchi* was classified as an interjection speech that functioned as a signal of understanding. X and Y's social status in this data is the same because X and Y consider each family a family.

Data 9 (Video 1)

X: 「息子さんお幾つ。お幾つ何ですか。」
"Musuko san oikutsu. Oikutsu nan desuka?"
'How old is your son?'

Y ：「もう年よりです。お嫁さんいないのよ。(X:あら！(9))も五十近い。」 *"Mou toshi yori desu. Oyomesan inai no yo. (X : **ara! (9))** go juu chikai."*

'He is old. He does not have a wife. (X: ah! (9)) He is almost 50 years old.'

The context of data nine occurred at night in Sueko's grandmother's house. X was Sasano Takashi, and Y was Sueko's grandmother. X asked the age of Y's child. When Y explained that his son was old and had no wife, X used the *aizuchi* "*ara!*" '*ah*!' to express his surprise. Y has a higher social status because Y is the owner of the house. *Aizuchi* used by X is classified as an inter-jection utterance that serves to show emo-tions.

Data 10 (Video 1)

X ：「実はですね、(Y: あの番組？) あの、田舎に泊まろうと(Y: ね！(10)) 言う (Y: それなの？) してます？」

"Jitsu ha desune, (Y: *ano bangumi?*) *ano, inaka ni tomarou to* (Y: *ne!* (10)) *iu* (Y: *sore nano?*) *shitemasu?"*

'frankly speaking, (Y: what is that program?) um, Inaka Ni Tomaou (Y: is it right? (10)) (Y: is that?) do you know it?'

In this data, the context occurred at night in the grandmother's house. X is Sas-ano Takashi, and Y is the owner's grand-mother. Y, who was curious about the cam-eraman, then asked how long the camera-man would stay at his house. Then X ex-plained that the actual name of the ongoing event was *Inaka Ni Tomarou !.* However, when X has not finished his speech, Y gives the response "ne!" (right?). To confirm the name of the ongoing program, is it *Inaka Ni Tomarou !.* The response is in the form of *aizuchi* in the interjection category, ensur-ing or requests more information on previ-ous speeches.

3.1.3 Interjection and Short Speech

Aizuchi is classified as interjection speech, and short speech has functioned as an understanding signal (data 11), agree-ment signal (data 12), and a signal indicat-ing emotion (data 13). The following is an example of interjection speech and short speech.

Data 11 (Video 2)

X ：「ここ辺はないんですよ。あの、ダムのした。」

"Koko hen ha nain desuyo. Ano, damu no shita."

'No one sells it here. There are in the lower dam area.'

Y ：「ダムのした？(X: はい)」

"Damu no shita? (X: hai)"

'The lower dam area? (X: yes)'

X ：「地図があり(Y: あ！はい (11)) ますからね。」

"Chizu ga ari (Y: ***a! Hai*** (11)) *masu karane."*

'I have (Y: a! yes (11)) a map.'

The context of data 11 occurred in the tourist information center during the day. X is the mother in charge of the tourist information center, while Y is Matsuki Rina. X explained that no one sells *karage* in that area, but there are in the lower dam area. Y did not know the area mentioned, so X told him that he had a map. Y used *aizu-chi* "*a! hai*'" to show that he understood and comprehended the previous speech and lis-tened to X. Y's social status was higher be-cause Y was a guest. This *aizuchi* is an in-terjection speech and a short speech that functions as a signal of understanding.

Data 12 (Video 2)

X ：「あと、お父さん (Y: はい) あの、お守り的な感じで。あの、付けて頂けたらなと思って (Y:ああ)。」

"ato, otousan (Y: *hai*) *ano, omamori tekina kanjide. Ano, tsukete itadaketarana to omotte* (Y: *aa*)."

'then, daddy (Y: yes) um, with the feeling to protect. Um, I hope that I can give it. (Y: ooh).'

Y ：「 あ！ストラップでも (X: あ！そうですね (12)) いいし、ね！(X: なんかも置いて頂いてもいいです)。」

"a! sutorappu demo (X: ***a! soudesu*** (12)) *iishi, ne!* (X: *nanka mo oite itadaite mo ii desu*.)."

'a! Can be used as the key holder (X: **oh! That is right.** (12)) that's too, right! (X: can be put there too).'

In this data, the context occurs during the day in Kazuko's house. Matsuki Rina as X and Y is Kazuko's husband Shoudai. X gave a gift he made himself to family Y. After X gave a gift to family Y, X then explained that the gift he gave to Y was made with a protective feeling. Then Y replied if the gift he gave could be used as a key chain. X, who agreed with Y's previous words, chimed in with *aizuchi* "a! soudesu " (oh! It is true). *Aizuchi* is included in the category of interjection speech followed by short utterances and has a function as a sign of approval or approval of previous utterances.

Data 13 (Video 1)
X:「 こんにちは、あ！おじゃまします。」
"konnichiwa, a! ojamashimasu."
'Good afternoon, oh! I am sorry to disturb.'
Y ：「テレビで良く見かける方 (X: あ！そ うですか (13)) ですね。」
"terebi de yoku mikakeru kata (X: *a! soudesuka* (13)) *desune."*
'I often see you (X: **oh! Really?** (13)) on television.'

These data occur during the daytime in a shop. X is Sasano Takashi, and Y is the shop owner's grandmother. X is looking for a shop that sells menpa, then tries to enter a shop. X greeted, a moment later Y appeared from inside and met X. Y felt that he recognized X and told him that he often saw X on television. X, who heard this, replied with *aizuchi* "a! soudesuka" (oh really) to show his surprise. These utterances are classified as interjection utterances and short utterances that serve as signals to show emotion. X's social status is higher than Y because X is Y's shop guest.

3.1.4 Repetitive Short Speech

Aizuchi is categorized as repeated short speech that has functioned as continuer (data 14), understanding signal (data 15), approval signal (data 16), and rejection signal (data 17).

Data 14 (Video 1)
X ：「息子、息子がね (Y: うん) 夜勤で行っ てもんです(Y: うん・うん (14)) からね。 息子が 3 時頃帰ってくる。」
"Musuko, musuko ga ne (Y: *un*) *yakinde itte mon desu* (Y: *un.un* (14)) *kara ne. Musuko ga san ji goro kaette kuru."*
'my son, my son, (Y: yes) he works at night. (Y: **yes. yes** (14)). My son will come home at about 3 in the morning.'

In this data, the context occurs at night in Sueko's grandmother's house. X is Sueko's grandmother, and Y is Sasano Takashi. Y went to X's house, then after meeting X, he introduced himself and asked permission to stay that night at X's house. Then X explained that X lived alone because his son worked at night. X explained, Y chimed in with the words "un. un" (yes. ya) to give a signal if he listened and gave support to X to continue his speech. *Aizuchi* used is classified as a short utterance that is repeated as a continuer. In this data, Y's social status is higher because Y is X's guest.

Data 15 (Video 2)
X ：「お時間はどれぐらい待って頂けるん ですか。」
"ojikan ha dore gurai matte itadakerun desuka?"
'approximately, how long can you wait?'
Y ：「お料理が出来上がるまで (X: ええ・ ええ (15)) お待ちします。
"oryouri ga deki agaru made (X: *ee.ee* (15)) *omachishimasu."*
'I will wait. (X: **yes.yes** (15)) until the food is done.'
X:「遅くなってもいいですか。(Y: はい)」
"osokunatte mo ii desuka? (Y: *hai*)'
'is it okay to take longer time? (Y: yes)'

This data happened in the afternoon in Kazuko's yard. X is Kazuko, and Y is Matsui Rina. Y was waiting in the yard with brother X, then X came out of his house and asked Y. X asked about how long Y could wait, then Y answered if he would wait until the food was cooked. When Y delivered his

speech, X chimed in with *aizuchi* "ee.ee" (yes.yes). X uses the utterance to give a sign if he understands or understands Y. This speech is included in the category of short utterances that are repeated as signals of understanding. Y's social status in this data is higher because Y is a guest of X.

Data 16 (Video 1)
X : 「天気良くって風がないかな (Y: そう・そう (16)) 天気がいい良かったですね。」
"*tenki ga yokutte kaze ga nai kana* (Y: **sou.sou** (16)) *tenki ga ii yokatta desune.*"
'it is likely that the weather today is good and no wind. (Y: **yes, right.** (16)) the weather is good.'

In this data, the context occurs on the street near Sueko's grandmother's house at noon. X is Sueko's grandmother, and Y is Sasano Takashi. X felt that the weather that day was good, and he was grateful for that. Y replies in the middle of X's utterance with *aizuchi* "sou. sou" (true). This aizuchi indicates that Y agrees with X's utterance. *Aizuchi* is classified as a short, repeated utterance as a sign of approval of the previous utterance.

Data 17 (Video 1)
X : 「一葉もう晴れたんですけどね。」
"*Ichiyou mo haretan desu kedo ne.*"
'one-piece has dried.'
Y : 「あ！ありがとうございまし(X: いいえ・いいえ(17)) た。」
"*A! arigatou gozaimashi* (X: **iie.iie** (17)) *ta.*"
'Ah! Thank you. (X: **no.no** (17))'
X : 「もうしごとですからね。」
"*Mou shigoto desu kara ne.*"
'This is my duty.'

The context of data 19 occurred in the morning at Sueko's grandmother's house. X is Sasano Takashi, and Y is Sueko's grandmother. X called Y to show the result of its work. Y thanked X for fixing the door. X uses *aizuchi "iie, iie"* (no, no). This *aizuchi* is a short and repeated

utterance as a rejection signal because X did not feel bothered. Y's social status is higher because Y is the owner of the house.

3.1.5 Repeating Speech Partner

Aizuchi, which is classified as a repeating speech partner's utterance, has functioned as a continuer (data 18), an understanding sign (data 19), an agreement sign (data 20), and a confirmation sign (data 21). The following is an example of *aizuchi* repeating a speech partner's utterance, which serves as a signal of approval.

Data 18 (Video 1)
X : 「お風呂入りたいよね。」
"*Ofuro haritai yone.*"
'you want to take a bath, right?'
Y : 「私？(X: うん) いいえ・いいえそんな。」
"*Watashi?* (X: *un*) *iie.iie sonna.*"
'I? (X: yes) no. no.'
Z : 「入りたい？(Y: いいえ・いいえ)」
"*Hairitai?* (Y: *iie.iie*)"
'Do you want it? (Y: no. no)'
Y : 「もうここぶん終わった、もうこれで十分終わっても…」
"*Mou koko bun owatta, mou korede juubun owattemo...*"
'I have already been here. It is enough.'
Z : 「ううん、あれするならすぐだ (X: すぐだ (18)) けどね。」
"*Unn, are suru nara suguda* (X: **suguda** (18)) *kedone.*"
'*If you want to take a bath, it can be prepared soon. (X: **soon** (18)).*'

In this data, the context occurs in Sueko's grandmother's house at night. X is Sueko's grandmother's male neighbor. Y is Sasano Takashi, while Z is Sueko's grandmother. X asked Y if he wanted to shower, but Y firmly said he did not want to take a bath. Y felt that he had had enough of what Z had given him. Then Z said that if Y wanted to take a shower, he would immediately prepare it. When Z delivered his speech, X chimed in with *Aizuchi* repeating the previous phrase, "*suguda*"

(immediately). *Aizuchi* used by X functions as a continuer.

Data 19 (Video 1)
X ：「なんか花の屋さんも閉まってましたね。」
　"*Nanka hana no ya san mo shimastte mashitane.*"
　'Hananoya store is closed too.'
Y ：「**花の屋さん** (19) はね、工場。この向こうの 19 号線沿いにある。」
　"***Hana no ya san*** (19) *ha ne, kouba. Kono mukou no 19 go senzoi ni aru.*"
　'**Hananoya Store** (19), factory. There is along the 19 route.'

This data occurs during the day in a shop. X is Sasano Takashi, while Y is the shop owner. At first, X looked around the menpa in the shop. Then X asked the shop owner about the menpa size, and then the shop owner explained if he did not make it. X then asked again about the closing of the Hananoya shop. Y understood what X meant, and then he explained that the shop was located on route 19. Y used *aizuchi* to intercept the speech partners of "*Hana no ya san*" (hananoya shop). Y suggests the previous speech partner give a signal if he understands or comprehends what is meant by X. X's social status is higher than Y because X is a guest at Y's shop.

Data 20 (Video 2)
X ：「 楽しかったですね。」
　"*Tanoshikatta desune.*"
　'it is fun..'
Y ：「本当に**楽しかった**(20)です。楽しかった。もう本当に名残惜しいですけど。」
　"*Hontou ni **tanoshikatta** (20) desu. Tanoshikatta. Mou hontou ni nagorioshii desu kedo.*"
　'**Great fun** (20). Great fun. Although it is regretful.'

Data 20 occurred during the day on the terrace of Kazuko's house. X is Kazuko while Y is Matsuki Rina. X said that the time spent together was fun. Y repeated the previous statement, "*tanoshikatta*" (fun), because Y agreed with X's statement. X has a higher social status because X is the owner of the house. The repetition of the speech partner's utterance serves as a sign of approval.

Data 21 (Video 2)
X ：「美味しい唐揚げがすごく食べたいんですが、ここら辺…」
　"*Oishii karage ga sugoku tabetain desu ga, kokora hen...*"
　'I want to eat delicious karage, around here …'
Y ：「ううん、ここら辺はないんですよ。あの、ダムの下。」
　"*Unn, kokora hen ha nain desuyo. Ano, damu no shita.*"
　'Umm, here is no karage seller. Um, down there, around the dam area.'
X ：「ダムの下 (21)？」
　"***Damu no shita****? (21)*"
　'**around the dam area** (21)?'

This data takes place at a tourist information center during the day. X is Matsuki Rina, and Y is the guardian of the information center. X visited the information center and looked for people he could ask. When Y came out of the inside, X immediately greeted and explained that he was looking for karage and wanted to eat good karage. Y thought for a moment and revealed that the area does not exist. However, in the area under the dam there is. A little confused, X used *aizuchi* to repeat his previous partner's speech, namely "*damu no shita*" (under the dam). X repeats the Y utterance to ensure and takes more information regarding the speech partners' previous speech. X's social status is higher than Y because X is a guest of the tourist information center.

3.1.6 Short Speech and Repetition of Speech Partner's Utterance
Aizuchi in the short speech category has a function as an understanding signal and a confirmation signal.

Data 22 (Video 1)

X : 「めんぱ という (Y: ええ、「めんぱ」) はね(22)) うん (Y: あそこの花野屋さんで売ってますけど。)」

*"Menpa to iu (Y: **Ee, [menpa]** ha ne (22)) un (Y: asoko no Hananoyasan de uttemasukedo.)"*

'called as menpa (Y: **Yes, [menpa]** (22)) yes (Y: sold in that Hananoya store.)'

This data takes place in the shop during the day. X is Saano Takashi, and Y is the shop owner's grandmother. X asked Y about the menpa, but he had not yet finished his speech, then Y understood what X meant and gave an explanation if the Hananoya shop sold the menpa. Y uses short utterance *aizuchi* followed by the repetition of the speech partner's utterance, namely "*ee, menpa*" (yes, menpa). The *Aizuchi* used by Y serves as an understanding signal.

Data 23 (Video 1)

X :「 ちょっと戻って頂くと、そこ信号渡って、歩いて行くと。あの、あそこにも大橋があります。(Y：ああ，ありますか (23)) はい。」

*"Chotto modotte itadaku, soko shingou watatte, aruite ikuto. Ano, asoko ni mo ohashi ga arimasu. (Y : **aa, arimasuka (23))** hai."*

'You turn back a little, cross the traffic lights, and walk. There is also a bridge. (Y: oh, is there? (23)) yes.

The context of data 23 occurred during the day in front of the Hananoya shop. X is the shopkeeper for Hananoya, and Y is Sasano Takashi. Y asked X where he could find a residential area. X then explained the direction of the settlement. When X explained, Y replied with *aizuchi, "aa, arimasuka"* "oh, is there?" to make sure X's utterance. X has a higher social status because X is a guest. The *aizuchi* used is in short utterances followed by the repetition of the speech partner's utterance, which confirms it.

Table 2. Form and Function of *Aizuchi*

No	Form	Function
1	Short Speech	1) Continuer signal; 2) understanding signal; 3) approval signal; 4) signal indicates emotion; 5) signal to ensure; 6) rejection signal; and 7) the fill in the blanks signal.
2	Interjection Speech	1) Signals of understanding; 2) signal indicates emotion; 3) signal to be sure.
3	Interjection and short speech	1) Signals of understanding; 2) approval signal; 3) signal indicates emotion.
4	Repeated short speech	1) Continuer signal; 2) understanding signal; 3) approval signal; 4) rejection signal.
5	Repetition of the speech partner's utterances	1) Continuer signal; 2) understanding signal; 3) approval signal; 4) signal to be sure.
6	Short speech and repetition of speech partner's utterance.	1) Understanding signals; 2) signal to be sure.

4. Conclusions

In this study, the authors analyzed variations in the forms and functions of *aizuchi*. Based on data collection, the researchers found 428 data. After the analysis, it is concluded that there are six forms of *aizuchi* with their respective functions (as seen in table 2).

From the 308 data in the form of short utterances, 113 data were found to function as continuers, 31 data as signals of understanding, 55 data as signals of approval, 14 data as emotional signals, 14 data as confirmation signals, 20 data as rejection signals, and 61 the data serves as a signal to fill in the blanks. There were 37 interjection utterances. Two data functioned as continuers, one data functioned as an understanding signal, 32 data functioned as an emotional signal, and two data served as a confirmation signal. Next, found 12 interjection utterances followed by short utterances. Four data serve as signals of understanding, two data serve as signals of approval, and six data serve as emotional signals. There were 35 data of repeated short utterances, including 13 data that functioned as continuers, two data that functioned as an understanding signal, five data as an agreement signal, and 15 data that served to fill in the gaps.

Repeating the utterances of speech partners found 33 data, three of which function as a continuer. Six data serve as an understanding signal, 10 data serve as an agreement signal, and 14 data serve as a signal to confirm. Three data were found in short utterances followed by the repetition of speech partners, two data functions as a signal of understanding, and one data as a signal to confirm.

The frequencies of *aizuchi* found in this study were 16 *aizuchi* speeches appeared in one minute. This quantity indicates that the use of *aizuchi* by native speakers can be classified as a very high phenomenon in Japanese public communication. The dominance of the *aizuchi* form that appears is a short form of speech and a function that often appears as a continuer signal.

However, there are still some problems that the author has not been able to reach for further study. The author hopes that further research will examine *aizuchi* based on gender to know the variation of *aizuchi* used by male and female speakers and their frequency. *Aizuchi* study based on gender is an interesting problem to study to obtain comprehensive results using *aizuchi* in Japanese society.

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