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Kayo Noda

Teacher
Uzbekistan State World University
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
E-mail: privet2nina@gmail.com
ORCID iD: 0009-0006-1695-6762

Kayo Noda

O'qituvchi
O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti
Toshkent, O'zbekistonn

THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF *AIZUCHI* AND *AIZUCHI* BEHAVIOR IN JAPANESE CONVERSATION

YAPONCHA SUHBATDA *AIZUCHI* VA *AIZUCHI* XATTI-HARAKATLARINING SHAKLI VA FUNKSIYASI

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to be of help in teaching conversation, which is one of the most important teaching items in Japanese language education. In Japanese conversation, not only does the speaker speak unilaterally, but the listener also actively participates in the conversation as a listener, by making backchanneling (from this point, the Japanese term “*aizuchi*” will be used). Currently, Japanese language education does not provide learners with an opportunity to acquire natural *aizuchi*. To provide a guideline for future *aizuchi* instruction for learners, it will be necessary to first observe the *aizuchi* of native Japanese speakers.

As a first step, this paper reviews existing research on *aizuchi* and establishes a framework for future instruction on this topic, observing the progress of a typical casual conversation between two native Japanese speakers, focusing on the form and function of *aizuchi*. When an individual starts talking about a certain topic, that person temporarily becomes the speaker and the other the listener. The procedure conducted was as follows: (1) Japanese native speakers paired up and conducted a conversation, with the data recorded and used; (2) the parts in which one speaker was the narrator were extracted as topics; and (3) the listener was observed along the flow of the conversation to see what kind of *aizuchi* they used to support the speaker's narration. By focusing on the changes in the *aizuchi* used, it was found that *aizuchi* in Japanese conversation have four functions (Basic, Understanding, Evaluation, and Involvement), and that these have roughly fixed forms. It was observed that native speakers

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqola yapon tili ta'limida muhim bo'lgan suhbat darslarini o'qitishda yordam berishni maqsad qiladi. Yapon tilidagi muloqot jarayonida nafaqat gapiruvchi, balki tinglovchi ham faol ishtirok etadi. Tinglovchi *aizuchi* deb ataladigan qisqa javoblar orqali suhbatga qo'shiladi. Hozirgi paytda yapon tili ta'limida o'quvchilarga tabiiy *aizuchidan* foydalanish ko'nikmasi yetarlicha berilmayapti. Shuning uchun kelgusida *aizuchi* bo'yicha samarali o'qituv metodikasini ishlab chiqish uchun, avvalo, yapon tilining ona til sohiblari bu vositadan qanday foydalanishini o'rganish zarur. Maqolaning dastlabki bosqichida mavjud ilmiy manbalar tahlil qilinadi va *aizuchi* o'qitish bo'yicha metodik asos ishlab chiqiladi. Keyin esa ikki nafar yapon tilida so'zlashuvchi shaxsning oddiy suhbatidan namunalar asosida *aizuchining* shakli va funksiyalari tahlil qilinadi. Suhbat davomida ma'lum mavzuni bir kishi bayon qilganida u so'zlovchiga, boshqa kishi esa tinglovchiga aylanadi. Tadqiqot quyidagi tarzda o'tkazildi: (1) ona til sohiblari juftlikda suhbatlashdi va suhbat yozib olindi; (2) bir so'zlovchining gaplari mavzuli parcha sifatida ajratib olindi; (3) tinglovchining bu gaplarga qanday *aizuchi* orqali munosabat bildirgani tahlil qilindi.

Tahlil natijasida *aizuchi* to'rt asosiy funksiyani bajarishi aniqlangan: asosiy tasdiq, tushunishni ifodalash, baholash va faol ishtirokni ko'rsatish. Har bir funksiya uchun muayyan ifoda shakllari mavjud. Ona til sohiblari turli vaziyatda turli shakldagi *aizuchidan* foydalangan va bu holat suhbatni yanada rivojlantirishga xizmat qilgan.

used different aizuchi to fulfill different functions, and that this allowed the speaker to develop his/her talk.

In conclusion, the study examined native speakers' use of aizuchi. It suggests that teaching learners simple strategies like aizuchi and turn-taking can improve communication.

Key words: aizuchi, aizuchi behavior, function, form, small talk, topic, listener, Japanese conversation, native Japanese speaker, Japanese language learner.

Xulosa qilib aytganda, ushbu maqolada yapon tilining ona til sohiblari o'rtasidagi muloqotda aizuchi va unga oid xatti-harakatlar kuzatildi va tahlil qilindi. Endi esa shu asosda yapon tilini o'rganuvchilarning tinglovchi sifatidagi xatti-harakatlarini ham o'rganish kerak bo'ladi. Ushbu tadqiqotning maqsadi – o'rganuvchilarni ona til sohiblari kabi harakat qilishga majbur qilish emas, balki muloqotni yengillashtirish uchun ularga aizuchi, navbat olish, o'zlari so'zlovchiga aylanish, savol berish va eshitganlarini takrorlab so'zlovchini davom ettirishga undash kabi strategiyalarni o'rgatish zarur bo'lishi mumkinligini ko'rsatishdir.

Kalit so'zlar: aizuchi, aizuchi xatti-harakati, vazifa, shakl, kundalik suhbat, mavzu, tinglovchi, yaponcha muloqot, yapon tilida so'zlashuvchi, yapon tili o'rganuvchisi.

INTRODUCTION

This research was initiated by a question that arose from my experience as a Japanese language instructor. Having been involved in Japanese language education for an extended period, I often engaged in informal conversations with students before, during, or after class, outside of the structured textbook grammar and sentence patterns. Listening to students discuss their daily lives and share their thoughts on domestic and international news provided valuable opportunities to observe their everyday Japanese speech, which I found intriguing. However, as a native speaker, I frequently experienced dissatisfaction with the students' listening behavior when it was my turn to speak. This dissatisfaction did not stem from a lack of communication but rather from instances where students failed to respond appropriately or interrupted with unrelated questions, despite my use of vocabulary and expressions within their comprehension level. I began to speculate whether such listener behavior could potentially cause issues for learners when interacting with Japanese speakers in various contexts, such as in professional settings or local communities. Consequently, I questioned whether it would be necessary to provide guidance on effective listener behavior within the framework of Japanese language education. The primary objective of this research is to identify the sources of discomfort and dissatisfaction experienced by native Japanese speakers when learners assume the role of listeners. One hypothesized cause of these negative perceptions is related to issues with aizuchi and aizuchi behavior. Therefore, the goal is to understand the form and function of aizuchi – an essential skill for listeners participating in a conversation – and to develop appropriate aizuchi behaviors. The purpose of this paper is to elucidate the aizuchi and aizuchi behaviors exhibited by native speakers.

N.Mizutani states that the way Japanese people speak is “rather than one person finishing his/her talk and the other person starting to express his/her own thoughts, the basic attitude is that two people complement and encourage each other to create a flow

of conversation” [Mizutani, 1980; 32], and N.Mizutani named the form of Japanese discourse in which the speaker and listener create the flow of conversation together as “co-talk”. N.Mizutani also states that “it is a big problem to grasp the flow of the conversation, but it is particularly noticeable in foreigners that they cannot correctly use aizuchi, which is thought to play a central role in the flow of conversation” [Mizutani, 1984; 262]. K.Ueno follows N.Mizutani’s idea by stating that “the listener participates in the conversation by making aizuchi and repeating the other person’s utterances” [Ueno, 2017; 116]. In Japanese conversation, it is expected that the listener will take appropriate listener actions according to the speaker’s utterances, and it can be said that the speaker expects this.

J.Horiguchi noticed that the words used in aizuchi, which had been referred to as “so-called aizuchi”, cover multiple parts of speech, including responses, interjections, and adverbs, and proposed the term “aizuchi words” to group them all together [Horiguchi, 1988]. This term has since come to be widely used in research on aizuchi. According to J.Horiguchi, aizuchi is a verbal cue, and J.Horiguchi organized aizuchi signals into five categories according to function. J.Horiguchi’s inclusion of negation and emotion signals as aizuchi signals suggest that listeners do not simply exist to listen to the speaker, but can maintain their role as listeners while speaking, as in the “co-talk” style, and therefore suggests that in Japanese, the range in which listeners can participate in a conversation is wider than in other languages. S.Imaishi takes the position that “there is no interjection that simply conveys that you are listening to what the speaker has said” and considers interjections to be feedback information that conveys understanding to the speaker and excludes “asking back to convey that you have not understood” [Imaishi, 1993; 98] from interjections. S.Imaishi also considers whether the listener expresses their attitude toward the speaker’s utterance to be an essential element in describing the function of interjections. S.Imaishi’s analytical method, which considers whether the listener makes an interjection without determining the intention of the information the other person gives, or after determining it, is novel in that it compares the speaker’s intention with the information the listener has received. R.Ohama, who examined the relationship between turn-taking and aizuchi in Japanese conversation, noted that many studies have adopted definitions of aizuchi based on its function, user, and location, but found problems in the fact that “aizuchi is used to define things that should not be clarified through research or analysis, but rather is used to define things that precede research or analysis” [Ohama, 2006; 141].

This paper does not take the view that aizuchi is a “continue signal” (continuer) as defined by A.E. Schegloff, that is, a sign that one is listening and understands the content and gives up the opportunity to ask again if one does not understand something [Schegloff, 1982]. Since conversation “develops through the interaction between the speaker and the listener” [Otsuka, 2016; 71], I would like to consider aizuchi from a broad perspective. S.Sugito divided the roundtable materials into small sections and analyzed the succession of the participants’ utterances [Sugito, 1987]. In this paper, I will also examine the aizuchi responses and aizuchi behavior of native Japanese speakers in casual conversations in which the participants can be either listeners or

speakers. In addition, A.Inai and I.Saida call listener behavior that supports the other person's speech "reactions" other than aizuchi, and propose that learners incorporate reactions such as impressions, evaluations, and questions in response to the other person's speech into Japanese conversation as guidance for listener behavior [Inai & Saida, 2019]. However, the functions of aizuchi defined by S.K. Maynard [Maynard, 1993] and J.Horiguchi [Horiguchi, 1988] include expressing emotions, adding information, correcting, and making requests, but in order to express emotions, add information, correct, and make requests, there are formal limitations to responding words such as "un" and "eh", vocal expressions such as "ah" and "ha", and conceptual expressions such as variations of "is that so?" based on the "so" system. In this study, I also believe that aizuchi, including the reactions mentioned by A.Inai and I.Saida [Inai & Saida, 2019], should be performed with actual speech.

METHODS

In Japanese language education, the question of what should be taught as aizuchi is discussed from the viewpoint of the defining conditions of aizuchi. In an overview of aizuchi research, T.Chen states that "the study of aizuchi such as 'hai' and 'ee', which are often seen in the field of Japanese linguistics, has a long history" [Chen, 2002; 222], and that they have been classified as parts of speech such as responses, interjections, and that their meanings and functions have been studied. Research on aizuchi in Japanese began with A.Miyaji, who looked for clues to establish a grammatical system for spoken language by focusing on "Tori" (receiving information) in terms of its relationship with "Yari" (providing information), the speaker's expressive intention in verbal interaction "Yari-Tori" [Miyaji, 1959]. A.Miyaji states that response and prompting are "insufficient as responses to completed prepositions, and finished interjections in expressions within the same subject" [Miyaji, 1959; 87], while on the other hand, "a response should appear when the preposition has been finished, and has something in common with interjections in expressions within the same subject" [Miyaji, 1959; 87]. A.Miyaji also mentions the difference between response and prompting in relation to the difference in parts of speech. According to A.Miyaji, a response is made when the other person has finished saying something, and "it is almost impossible in normal conversation to insert a response before the other person has finished saying something" [Miyaji, 1959; 87]. As examples of impossible responses, she gives the response "Ha, ha (Oh, really)" to "Yesterday", and the response "No, no (That can't be)" to "To her".

K.Okutsu named the positive responses "hai", "ee", "un", and "haa" as the "hai" type, and the negative responses "ie", "iya", and "uun" as the "no" type, and analyzed their functions using Japanese spoken language as material. He states that "in conversation, it is important to frequently send signals that you are receiving the other person's utterances positively", and that "listening silently also means ignoring the other person's utterances" [Okutsu, 1989; 12]. H.Oki further examines K.Okutsu's example of "hai". H.Oki uses the term Ainote to analyze K.Okutsu's response words. According to H.Oki, Ainote is mainly inserted in the middle of the other person's

speech as interjections, stating that “Ainote does not involve a judgment of affirmation or negation” [Oki, 1993; 65]. T.Moriyama states that the most basic function of language is to transmit information and argues for the need for research that focuses on the information transmission process. He also states that research on aizuchi is an important trend in discourse research, regarding it as a linguistic behavioral issue that is also related to cultural theory [Morimoto, 1989]. Y.Kurosaki uses dialect discourse data to examine the actual state of aizuchi in response expressions and the function that aizuchi plays in the progress of discourse [Kurosaki, 1987].

S.Imaishi attempted to define aizuchi from four points of view: (1) function, (2) form, (3) whether there is turn-taking, and (4) their relationship to the speaker’s speech form. She stated that aizuchi are a type of “listener’s response to the speaker’s utterance (feedback information)” [Imaishi, 1993; 98]. In addition to “signals of understanding”, S.Imaishi [Imaishi, 1993]’s classification of aizuchi by function includes J.Horiguchi [Horiguchi,1988] functions of agreement, denial, and expression of emotion, as well as Y.Matsuda [Matsuda, 1988]’s functions of creating pauses. Table 1 below summarizes previous research that clearly defines aizuchi (See Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of definitions of aizuchi in previous studies

Previous studies	Definitions of aizuchi
C.Komiya	“Among responses, this is used voluntarily to indicate that you are listening or that you understand something, without expressing a positive or negative judgment in response to a speaker’s utterance” [Komiya, 1986; 45-46].
Y.Kurosaki	“A response expression that sends the unit signal ‘I’m listening’ or ‘I understand’ without expressing a judgment of approval or disapproval in response to the speaker’s utterance” [Kurosaki, 1987; 120].
N.Mizutani	“Something that a listener is added to during a talk to help the talk move forward” [Mizutani, 1984].
E.Yamamoto	“Utterances that appear to be made to help the speaker progress in a broad sense” [Yamamoto, 1992; 24-25].
S.K. Maynard	“Any short expression (including non-verbal behavior) made by a listener while a speaker is exercising the right to speak that indicates a response that is deemed to be a surrender of the speaker’s turn is not considered an aizuchi” [Maynard, 1993; 58].
E.Watanabe	“Short expressions sent by the listener of their own free will [Komiya, 1986] to encourage, assist, or supplement the progress of the speaker’s utterance. Morphologically, they appear as utterances centered on aizuchi such as hai, ee, un, aa, heee, so desuka, naruhodo [Horiguchi, 1988], repetitions or paraphrases of the preceding utterance in whole or in part, anticipation of what the speaker has said [Horiguchi, 1988], laughter, etc.” [Watanabe, 1994; 112].
S.Imaishi	In terms of function and form, aizuchi is not a “signal that you are listening” but rather a “signal that you understand” what the speaker is saying. It is distinguished from “asking back” and “silence”, which convey that you do not understand. The form of aizuchi is also used differently in the process of transmitting information [Imaishi, 1993].

T.Nobori	The definition is based on S.K. Maynard [Maynard, 1993]’s concept of “utterance order”. (1) Aizuchi, (2) Repetition, (3) Rephrasing, (4) Laughter, (5) Anticipation. (1) Aizuchi are classified into “emotional expressions” and “conceptual expressions” following C.Komiya [Komiya, 1986] [Nobori, 1994].
J.Horiguchi	“An expression conveying that the listener has shared the information sent by the speaker while the speaker was exercising his/her right of speech” [Horiguchi 1988].
A.Murata	“An expression that conveys that the listener has received the expression sent by the speaker” [Murata, 2000; 242].
K.Fujii	“We call the so-called interjections such as ‘Um, hmm, ah, yes, I see, that’s right, I see’, and so on, which are uttered by the listener without threatening the speaker’s position, ‘Aizuchi’” [Fujii, 2001; 81].
C.Tsukahara	“Among the so-called ‘aizuchi words’ such as ‘Yes’, ‘Un’, ‘Yeah’, and ‘So’, those that are not in response to the speaker’s question and have the function of showing ‘I’m listening’, ‘I understand’, ‘I agree’, ‘I’m interested’, or ‘I’m concerned are considered aizuchi” [Tsukahara, 2001; 2].
C.Liu	Following the definitions of C.Komiya [Komiya, 1986] and S.K. Maynard [Maynard, 1993], she defines aizuchi as “a short message sent by a listener while a speaker is exercising their right to speak, or immediately after the speaker has finished speaking” [Liu, 2003].
R.Ohama	“We will adopt a criterion based solely on ‘expressive form’. In other words, anything that follows the same expression form will be adopted as an ‘aizuchi’. The ‘aizuchi-words’ will be taken up as ‘aizuchi words’, and expressions that correspond to it, as well as repetition, paraphrase, and sentence completion. An ‘aizuchi word’ is an emotional expression of C.Komiya, and expressions that correspond to it are C.Komiya [Komiya, 1986] ‘s conceptual expression” [Ohama, 2006; 166].

The classification of aizuchi in this paper is based on the definition by S.K. Maynard [Maynard, 1993], which includes any reaction of the listener to the speaker. The main functions and forms of aizuchi in this paper are shown in Table 2 (See Table 2).

Table 2. Functions and linguistic forms of aizuchi responses within the topic of this study

S.K. Maynard [Maynard, 1993]		The function of aizuchi in this paper		Examples of the language forms used in this paper
1.	A signal to continue	a.	Basic	words (such as “yes”, “yeah”, “oh”), nodding
2.	Nodding to show understanding	b.	Understanding	acknowledgements (such as “Ah”, “He” “Ha”, “Hmm”, “Ho”, “Oh”, etc.), paraphrasing, repetition (flat, falling intonation), anticipation, nodding
3.	A aizuchi that supports the speaker's judgment			
4.	An expression that shows agreement with the other person's opinion or way of thinking			

5.	Strong emotional expressions	c.	Evaluation	words (such as “Really?” and “That’s nice”) and expressions that express emotions other than aizuchi
6.	Expressions for adding, correcting, or requesting information	d.	Involvement	repeating what the other person says (rising intonation), asking questions, requesting information, etc.

This paper posits that interjections such as “un” or “ah” play a crucial role in the flow of conversation and should not be analyzed in isolation, as they influence the speaker’s subsequent words. From the perspective of Japanese language education, it is essential to provide learners with practical guidance on the specific linguistic forms that should be utilized to demonstrate empathy. This analysis aims to elucidate the linguistic forms employed by conversation participants to express an attitude of acceptance, as defined by T.Kuroshima [Kuroshima, 2013], and to identify the words used to convey an empathic response. The participants in the conversation survey were three native Japanese speakers (all females), B1 (70 years old), B2 (68 years old), and B3 (55 years old). B1 (70 years old) and B2 (68 years old), and B1 and B3 (55 years old) were asked to talk freely for about 40 to 50 minutes, and two conversations were recorded and transcribed as materials. Three topics extracted from the conversations were analyzed. The data was collected by the author from 2021 to 2022.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

(1) is a conversation between B1 and B2, with B1 as the speaker on the topic “European cheese”. B1 talks about how she suffered from stomach pains due to cheese during a trip to Europe. B2, the listener responds with 02 “Yes”, 04 “Ha ha, yeah, yeah”, 06 “Hmm”, 12 “Oh” 14 “Yes”, and 16 “Hmm”, and ends the topic with 18 “Ah, I guess you need to do things in moderation”. Each aizuchi is shown in bold in the transcription.

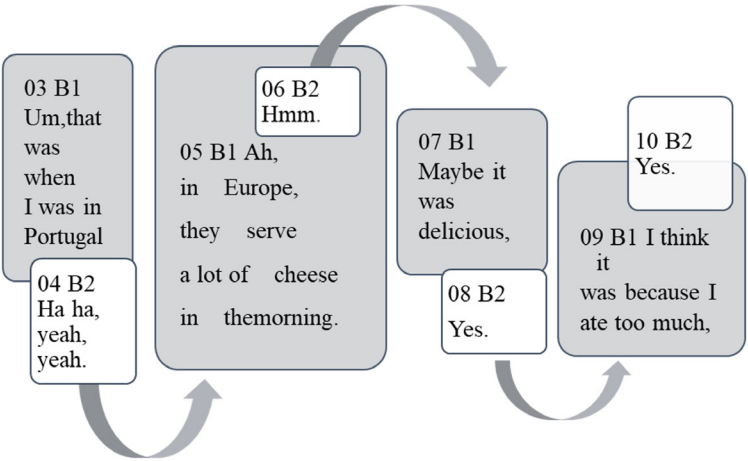
- (1)
- 01 B1 When you went on a trip, did you eat cheese? Um,
- 02 B2 Yes.
- 03 B1 Um, that was when I was in Portugal.
- 04 B2 Ha ha, yeah, yeah.**
- 05 B1 Ah, in Europe, they serve a lot of cheese in the morning.
- 06 B2 Hmm.**
- 07 B1 Maybe it was delicious,
- 08 B2 Yes.**
- 09 B1 I think it was because I ate too much.
- 10 B2 Yes.**
- 11 B1 I got really sick in the middle of the night, I got a pain, my stomach hurt.
- 12 B2 Oh.**
- 13 B1 My intestines hurt like they were going to turn upside down.
- 14 B2 Yes.**
- 15 B1 I guess if I eat too much dairy products.
- 16 B2 Hmm.**

17 B1 It doesn't seem to work.

18 B2 Ah, I guess you need to do things in moderation.

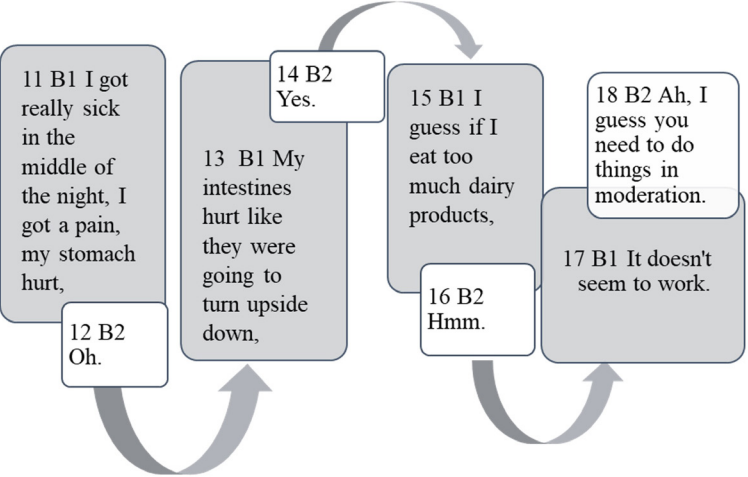
B2's responses are "Uh huh" when B1 is in the middle of speaking, and "Hmm", "Oh", and "Ah" when B1 has given some information. In response to B1's "It seems like it's bad (if you eat too much dairy products)", which is seen as the end of the topic, B2 comments at 18 "Oh well", followed by "Maybe moderation is important". In this way, native speakers maintain their position as listeners while accepting what the other person is saying (See Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Pattern of aizuchi behavior in (1) 1



04, 06, 08 and 10 are directed at 03, 05, 07 and 09 respectively, which are in the middle of B1 providing information. The information has not yet been finalized so B2 gives Basic and prompts the speaker to speak next.

Figure 2. Pattern of aizuchi behavior in (1) 2



12 is Evaluation and Involvement directed at 11, which is considered confirmed information. 14 Understanding directed at 13, which is also considered confirmed

information. 16 is Basic directed at 15. The information has not yet been finalized so B2 gives Basic and prompts B1 to speak next. When B1 finalized the information and B2 confirmed what B1 wanted to deliver to B2, B2 gave Understanding and Evaluation in 18.

(2) is a topic “Chocolate Parfait” with B1 as the speaker and B2 as the listener. In 05, B1 talks in a somewhat exaggerated way about the chocolate parfait she had in Sapporo, Hokkaido, as a child, saying that she “still can’t forget it”. In 10, B2 responds with “Oh” and then says, “It must have been really delicious”, evaluating B1’s somewhat exaggerated way of speaking.

(2)

01 B1 Really, why is there such a delicious chocolate parfait somewhere?

02 B2 Yeah, I haven’t had it recently.

03 B1 Hmm, I ate it a long time ago, in Sapporo or somewhere, my aunt took me there,

04 B2 Hmm.

05 B1 It was at a famous parlor called something-or-another parlor,

06 B2 Yes.

07 B1 Umm, heh, what was it called, a parfait,

08 B2 Yes.

09 B1 Oh, that was it, I still can’t forget it.

10 B2 Wow.

11 B1 A parfait that was as delicious as a dream.

12 B2 Really? Hokkaido?

13 B1 In Hokkaido,

14 B2 Ah.

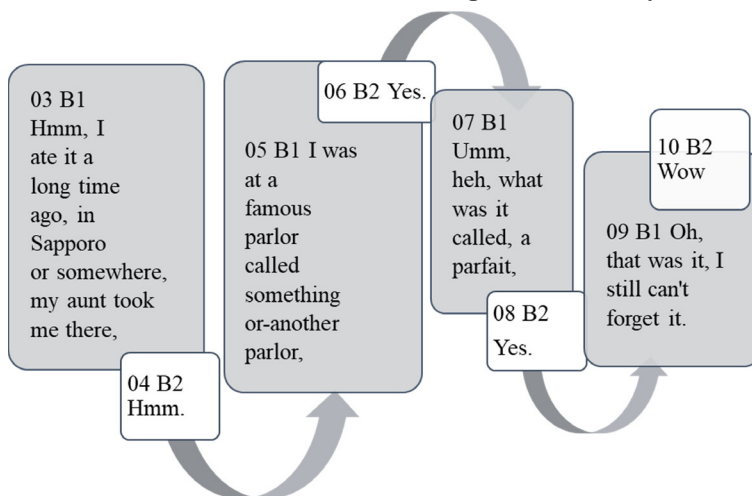
15 B1 In Sapporo.

16 B2 Yes.

17 B1 I still can’t forget the parfait I had.

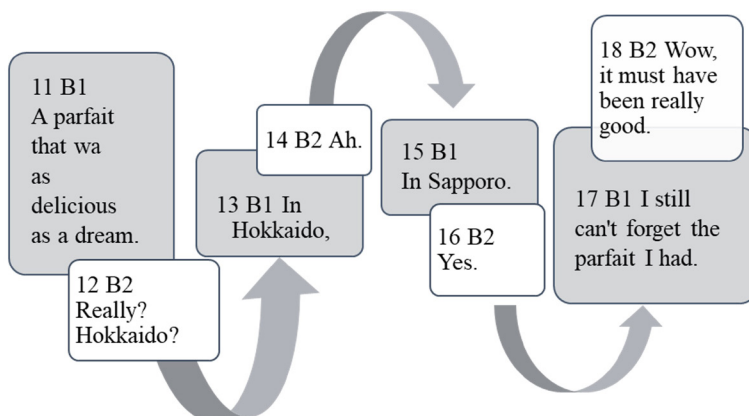
18 B2 Wow, it must have been really good.

Figure 3. Pattern of aizuchi behavior in (2) 1



04 is Understanding directed at 03, which is a new topic proposed by B1, and B2 conveys her understanding of it. 06 and 08 are directed at 05, 07 respectively, which are in the middle of B1's providing information. The information has not yet been finalized so B2 gives Basic and prompts B1 to speak next. B2 will only make an Evaluation once B1 has finished describing her experience as memorable in 10.

Figure 4. Pattern of aizuchi behavior in (2) 2



12 is Evaluation and Involvement directed at 11, which is considered confirmed information. 14 is Understanding directed to 13 as the information was partially confirmed. After Hokkaido, B1 further clarified the location, but B2 responded by Basic considered the topic would develop. At 17 B1 says that it was an unforgettable experience, and B2 responds by expressing her Evaluation.

In (2), B2, 9 “Really? Hokkaido? (Evaluation and Involvement)” and 13 “Wow, it must have been really delicious (Understanding and Evaluation)” and in (3), B4, 10 “Wow, what? Is it a potato soup made with regular potatoes? (Understanding and Involvement)” and 12 “Wow, oh, it looks delicious (Understanding and Evaluation)” were some examples of native speakers making multiple responses in one utterance. Such responses are similar to the way empathy is shown through stages as described by T.Kuroshima. T.Kuroshima states that empathic responses are composed of two stages, “attitude expression words” and “verbal empathic responses”, but in this study, “attitude expression words” are responses with the functions of understanding and evaluation, and “verbal empathic responses” are responses such as Evaluation and Involvement. Furthermore, the use of multiple aizuchi in one utterance corresponds to T.Kuroshima’s sequential pattern of “acceptance plus empathetic response” [Kuroshima, 2013].

In (3), B1 is the speaker and B4 is the listener, and the topic is “Potage soup”. In response to B1’s 03 “Um, potage soup?”, the listener B4 responds with 04 “Oh, oh, so there’s something like that”, and after hearing the explanation of potage soup in 05, 21, and 23, B4 responds with “Oh, yeah, yeah” in 16 and 18, and then says “There’s something like that” and “So there’s something like that” showing interest in the fact that there is a menu item that she didn’t know about even though she has

been there before. In 22, after responding with “Oh”, “Ah” and other interjections, B4 says “Looks delicious”. In this study, this is also considered an interjection expressing evaluation, just like “It must have been really delicious” in (2).

(3)

01 B1 So, what I like about that cafe is.

02 B4 Yes.

03 B1 Umm, potage, soup?

04 B4 Oh, oh, they have that.

05 B1 Umm, that, um, is made very carefully.

06 B4 Ah.

07 B1 That's potage soup, right?

08 B4 Oh, I see.

09 B1 That, um, I like it.

10 B4 /nods/

11 B1 Mostly that, that, and,

12 B4 /nods/yeah.

13 B1 And the crepes, hhhhh, um, the really small crepes?

14 B4 Ah.

15 B1 Um, something with just ham, hmm, cheese, in between, not a crepe.

16 B4 Ah, yeah, something like that.

17 B1 It's like a galette.

18 B4 So they have that.

19 B1 Ah.

20 B4 Oh, huh? Is it a potage made with regular potatoes?

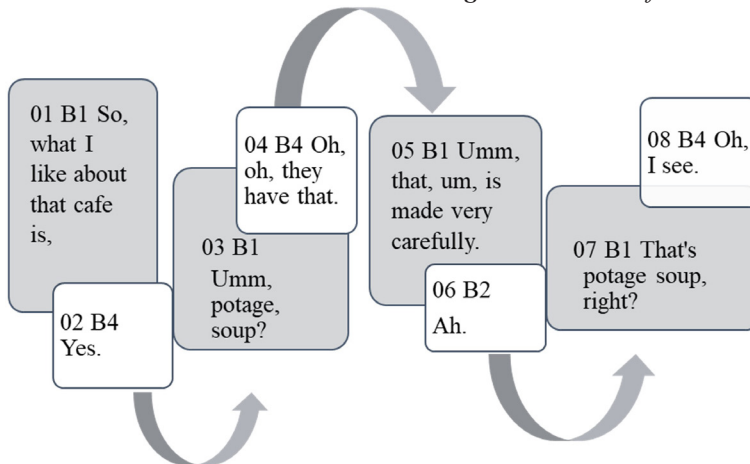
21 B1 I thought it might have a lot of different things in it.

22 B4 Wow, ah, it looks delicious.

23 B1 Hey, it's really kind to your stomach,

24 B4 /nods/yeah, yeah.

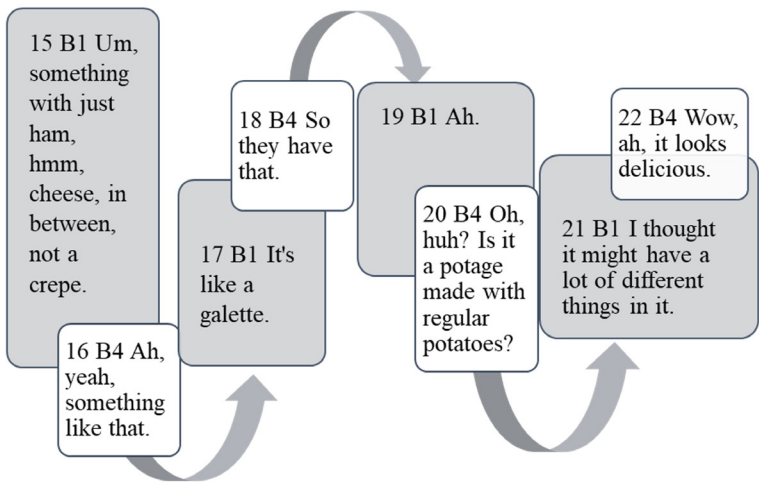
Figure 5. Pattern of aizuchi behavior in (3) 1



02 is Basic directed at 01 which is in the middle of B1 providing information. In

04 B4 shows Understanding towards B1’s information that she likes potage soup. 06 and 08 by B4 is also considered as Understanding directed to B1’s explanation about the soup on 05 and 07.

Figure 6. Pattern of aizuchi behavior in (3) 2



16 and 18 are Understanding directed at 15 and 17 respectively, which is a new topic proposed by B1, and B4 conveys her understanding of these utterances. 20 is Understanding and Involvement directed at previous utterances of 07 concerning potage soup. 22 is Understanding and Evaluation directed at 21.

In this conversation, B4 nods before verbal responses at 10, 12, and 24. This nod is what A.Nishizaka calls “attention by the listener” [Nishizaka, 1996; 41], which is necessary for a speaker to be a speaker and indicates that the speaker’s utterance has reached the receiver through language or nodding. The listener not only accepts the speaker but also expresses his or her impressions and takes other actions to support the speaker’s narration. B4 also participates in the conversation by asking a question at 20. K.Kushida proposes a “listener” that is a counterpart to the narrator, separate from the general concept of the listener, and describes the linguistic behavior that the listener exhibits to advance the narration. The listener in this study is considered to correspond to the “listener” in K.Kushida [Kushida, 2009] (See Table 3).

Table 3. Patterns of aizuchi behavior among native speakers

1.	Basic responses include linguistic forms such as “yes”, “yeah”, and “uh-huh” and gestures such as nodding, and are used at a stage when the speaker’s information is not yet clear to the listener.
2.	Aizuchi of understanding occurs when the speaker has completed their utterance, and the information associated with it has been confirmed by the listener. In linguistic forms, this includes “Hmm”, “Oh” “I see”, etc., and nodding is also thought to have the function of understanding.
3.	The main variations in the form of basic aizuchi are “un”, “hai”, and “ee”, which are spoken as if observing the speaker’s utterance, but aizuchi of understanding take various forms and change depending on the listener’s level of understanding and empathy for the content of the speaker’s utterance.

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|----|---|
| 4. | The aizuchi for Basic, Understanding, Evaluation, and Involvement may be used individually, but they may also be used in combination, such as an understanding aizuchi before an evaluation aizuchi, or an understanding or evaluation aizuchi before an involvement aizuchi. |
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Native speakers' aizuchi behavior is characterized by using aizuchi according to their functions (Basic, Understanding, Evaluation, and Involvement) and by changing in line with the progress of the speaker's speech. Changes in aizuchi follow the speaker's narration, and as the narration progresses, aizuchi also change in stages. Following T.Kuroshima's manifestation of "empathy that goes through stages", this is a characteristic of aizuchi behavior by Japanese native speakers, known as "aizuchi that goes through stages".

C.Tsukahara [Tsukahara, 2001], who investigated the actual use of aizuchi on talk shows, limited his definition to aizuchi words, but noted that aizuchi have the function of showing agreement, interest, and concern, and noted how Japanese people use a variety of different aizuchi depending on the situation. From this conversation, we can see that the forms of aizuchi used by native speakers are not monotonous. T.Kuroshima focused on "how the listener shows empathy for the narrator's experience. According to T.Kuroshima, an empathic response does not occur suddenly, but "is often composed of two stages, following 'acceptance'". She also states that "when an empathic response is made, 'acceptance' almost always occurs first", and that "the order of acceptance and empathy is rarely reversed" [Kuroshima, 2013; 158-159]. T.Kuroshima then states that the two components of "acceptance through attitude-expressing words" and "an empathic response through words" constitute a two-stage empathic response, and that the two components of attitude-expressing words and an empathic response through words form a "chain of empathy" [Kuroshima, 2013; 170], realizing "empathy through stages" in line with the speaker's narration.

According to J.Togashi, "Wow", "Ho" and "Hmm" are signs that indicate various information processing that takes place in the mind, and each has its own unique function, rather than being simply a hesitation or a form of connecting pauses. J.Togashi states that "Wow" in particular is a surprise that occurs after previously unknown information has been properly organized and appears when information provided by a speaker is linked to new information that the speaker does not know [Togashi, 2005]. The information one already has is linked with the new information obtained from the speaker, and the interjections "Wow" and "Ah" are used. The information provided by the speaker must be understood before this can occur, but for native speakers, the use of interjections such as "Ah", "Wow" and "Hmm", which indicate understanding of the new information obtained up to that point after the speaker has finished speaking, is a natural linguistic behavior.

CONCLUSION

The data in this paper shows that native speakers' aizuchi behavior indicates that aizuchi are used in stages depending on the topic and its development. In the future, it will be necessary to observe the aizuchi behavior specific to Japanese language learners and investigate how it affects communication with native Japanese

speakers. We will further explore whether there are any points in the conversation that make native speakers or learners feel uncomfortable, or whether there are any points where aizuchi seem problematic, not only in situations where the conversation is stalled or communication is difficult, but also in situations where the exchange is progressing. In conclusion, this paper observed and analyzed the backchanneling and backchanneling behavior of Japanese native speakers in native language situations. Based on the patterns of native speakers that have been revealed, it is necessary to observe the behavior of Japanese language learners as listeners. The purpose of this study is not to make Japanese language learners behave as listeners in the same way as native speakers, but as a way to facilitate communication, it may be necessary for them to learn strategies such as backchanneling, taking the next turn, creating a flow in which they themselves become speakers, and asking and repeating what is said to encourage native speakers to speak in a way that is understandable.

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