

THE USE OF *AIZUCHI* IN THE 'BLUE PERIOD' MANGA

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the use of *aizuchi* in the 'Blue Period' *manga*, which is classified as a type of *aizuchi teki na hyougen* based on the theory submitted by Sakamoto (2004). The source of this research is chapters 65 and 66 of Tsubasa Yamaguchi's 'Blue Period' *manga*, which appeared in the November 2023 and January 2024 editions of Monthly Afternoon *manga* magazine. This research used a qualitative descriptive research method and note-taking technique. The result is that there are 18 uses of *aizuchi teki na hyougen* which is 16 *aizuchi* are pronounced by male characters while the female characters only pronounce as many as 2 *aizuchi*. Overall, *aizuchi teki na hyougen* that most appeared was *keiyoushi*. Morphophonemic changes occur only in the *aizuchi teki na hyougen*, pronounced by male characters. The conclusion is that *aizuchi* is mostly spoken by male and has undergone many modifications compared to female and most of the *aizuchi* are adjective.

Keywords: *Aizuchi teki na hyougen*, *Manga*, Gender.

INTRODUCTION

The ability and skill in speaking become a measure of one's impetus in communicating with one another (Setyonegoro, 2013), which is used to convey a variety of ideas, messages, intentions, and opinions to others (Mardhatillah & Setiana, 2023). As a communicative activity, speaking can occur when the speaker and the interlocutor alternately engage in conversations with each other.

When the speaker is speaking, the interlocutor acts as the listener of that speaker. The responses made by the Japanese speaker are implemented into the *aizuchi*, which is a Japanese response performed by the other speaker as a listener while the speakers are speaking. (Pradnyani and Andriyani, 2023). In English, *Aizuchi* translated as a backchannel. Backchannel in linguistics refers to the verbal and nonverbal actions of the listener as an indication of whether the speaker's partner understands or is confused with the words spoken by the speaker. (Atkinson in Utami and Aryanto, 2022).

In communication, the Japanese don't recognize the passive side of the speaker, even if he is only a listener. *Aizuchi* is one of the most important components for the conversation to continue smoothly. While the conversation is going on, the listener must do three essential things to respond to the speaker: say *aizuchi*, ask, and convey empathy to the spokesperson (Yamaguchi et al., 2016).

In Japanese, if pronounced *ee*, *hai*, *soudesune*, *soudesuka*, *naruhodo* is considered normal and even recommended because it will produce an excellent impression to the speaker (Yuniastuti & Sepni, 2019). *Aizuchi* is different from the words in dictionaries, which have lexical meanings. Despite this, *aizuchi* can be grouped according to its type, as Sakamoto (2004) proposed, which divides *aizuchi* into two types, *aizuchishi* and *aizuchi teki na hyougen*.

However, most of the research focused on *aizuchi* with a type of *aizuchi-shi* (Fajrina, 2011; Simamora, 2023; Ambarwati, 2014; Septiani et al, 2020; Dityandari & Aryanto, 2020). This causes the type of *aizuchi-shi* classified as *aizuchi teki na hyougen* (Sakamoto, 2004) to be less thoroughly explored.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aizuchi

Aizuchi indicates that the speaker's partner has captured and properly transmitted what is spoken by his partner's speaker. *Aizuchi* is also one of the ethics of communicating in Japanese besides *zoutoubunka* (the culture of giving gifts) and *aisatsu* (the greeting) (Putra, 2022). The frequency of *aizuchi* pronunciation in Japanese conversation has proven more than in other languages, such as English from America, English from England, and Mandarin from China (Mizutani in Carpi, 2020). *Aizuchi* is a short phrase delivered by an interlocutor in response to a speech spoken by the speaker in the middle of a conversation (Utami & Aryanto, 2022). This statement is supported by an opinion that states that *aizuchi* is a response spoken when the partner uses their right to speak to the speaker (Yoshida et al., 2005).

Types of *Aizuchi teki na Hyougen*

Sakamoto (2004) divides *aizuchi teki na hyougen* (あいづち的な表現) into three types :

1. 副詞 (*fukushi*) or adverb consisting of 「なるほど」 (*naruhodo*), 「本当 (に)」 (*hontou ni*), and so on.
2. 形容詞 (*keiyoushi*) or adjective consisting of 「すごい」 (*sugoi*), 「えらい」 (*erai*), 「大変」 (*taihen*), 「いい」 (*ii*) and so on.
3. 動詞 (*doushi*) or verbs consisting of 「ありえない」 (*arienai*), 「わかる」 (*wakaru*) 「いえる」 (*ieteru*) and so on.

Morphophonemic

Morphophonemics is a branch of linguistics that analyses and classifies morphemes that arise because of the influence of phonological or grammatical factors that play a role in phoneme formation (Nasution, 2017).

The morphophonemic process in Japanese is divided into four (Koizumi in Nasution, 2017) :

1. *Fuka* (sound additions)

Example: adding /rare/ sounds to the word 「ほめる」 (*homeru*), so that it becomes

「ほめられる」 (*homerareru*).

2. *Chikau* (sound shift)

Example: change the sound of /ma/ on the word 「はじまる」 (*hajimaru*), so that it becomes 「はじめる」 (*hajimeru*).

3. *Sakujo* (noise removal)

Example: removing the sound /er/ from the word 「つける」 (*tsukeru*), so that it becomes 「つく」 (*tsuku*).

4. *Zero setsuji* (empty backup)

Example: The word 「ふく」 (*fuku*; means blowing) with the word 「ふく」 (*fuku*; means mening) has the same sound but has two different meanings.

METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this research is qualitative descriptive research using the note-taking technique. The steps the writer took to collect data are, reading the 'Blue Period' *manga* chapters 65-66 and gathering the data into a Microsoft Excel data tab that consists of a sample of *aizuchi*, the name of the character, gender, the source of the data (page volume and chapter), the type of *aizuchi teki na hyougen*, and the proof of *aizuchi* in the manga.

To answer the formula of the problem in this study, the author performed several stages, namely, classified the phonemic changes of *aizuchi teki na hyougen* that have been discovered, analyzed the morphophonemic changes of *aizuchi teki na hyougen* which have been found, counted the number of each sample based on its gender, and drawn conclusions related to the causative factors of the results and described them along with the findings in detail. The research object is a manga series titled "Blue Period" by Tsubasa Yamaguchi, chapters 65-66 appeared in the Monthly Afternoon manga magazine editions of November 2023 and January 2024.

DISCUSSION

In this study, 19 *aizuchi* belong to the *aizuchi teki na hyougen*. Based on the theory proposed by Sakamoto (2004), the *aizuchi teki na hyougen* that were found in detail are divided into several classes of words as follows:

Tabel 1: *Aizuchi teki na Hyougen*, which was found in the 'Blue Period' *manga*.

No.	Type of <i>aizuchi teki na hyougen</i>	Amount
1.	<i>Keiyoushi</i>	11
2.	<i>Doushi</i>	6
3.	<i>Fukushi</i>	1
Total		18

The result was that the *aizuchi teki na hyougen* was most pronounced by male characters, as many as 16 *aizuchi*, while the female characters only as much as two *aizuchi*. This result aligns with the *aizuchi* study reviewed from the anime carried out by Ambarwati (2014). Only Ambarwati's (2014) research can be used as a comparison when comparing *aizuchi* based on gender because previously, there was no study of *aizuchi* comparing *aizuichi* use based on gender.

Tabel 2: Comparison of *aizuchi teki na hyougen* between male and female characters

No.	Parts of speech	Male	Female
1.	<i>Keiyoushi</i>	9	2
2.	<i>Doushi</i>	6	0
4.	<i>Fukushi</i>	1	0
Total		16	2

The type of *aizuchi teki na hyougen* most pronounced by both genders is *keiyoushi* (adjective). The male character pronounces 11 *keiyoushi* while the female pronouns 2 *keiyoushi*. There is a difference in the *aizuchi teki na hyougen* that is the least spoken by both genders; the male character speaks the least of *fukushi* (adverb), which is only as much as one *aizuchi*. Here is a detailed presentation of *aizuchi teki na hyougen*, which appears in the 'Blue Period' manga chapter 65-66.

1) *Keiyoushi*

矢口 八虎	:	いや 俺ずっと在廊してるわけじゃねえーから
<i>Yaguchi Yatora</i>	:	<i>Iya ore zutto zairou shiteru wake jyanee kara</i>
(Yatora Yaguchi	:	No, it doesn't mean I'm always watching art exhibitions)
歌島	:	えっ <u>あぶねー</u> !
<i>Utashima</i>	:	<i>E <u>abunee!</u></i>
(Utashima	:	Woah, <u>that's crazy!</u>)

(GA-01/24 : BP/ch.66/p.45/no.07)

The sample of *Aizuchi* above is spoken by a male gender character named Utashima, whose character gives a response to the speech of a character named Yatora Yaguchi. In the conversation over Utashima, a character named Sumida suddenly came to visit Yatora, who was at the art exhibition. Utashima says that he and Sumida deliberately did not inform Yatora before their arrival because they wanted to make a small surprise for Yatora in the hope that Yatora would feel happy. However, Yatora denies it by saying that even though he is an art student, it does not mean he's always at art exhibitions all the time. Hearing the Yatora's words, Utashima replied by saying 「えっあぶねー!」 (*E abunee!*). The words were included *aizuchi* because Utashima spoke to them to respond to the Yatora's words. The word 「あぶねー」 (*abunee!*) is included in the *aizuchi teki na hyougen* because it is a *keiyoushi* (adjective) that is pronounced as a response form of Yatora's utterance. The word 「あぶねー」 (*abunee*) is derived from the word 「あぶない」 (*abunai*), which means 'dangerous', which is *i-keiyoushi* or a terminated *-i* adjective word that undergoes a *chikau* morphophonemic process which replaces the syllable sounding [ai] from the syllable /nai/ to the voice [e:]. In this *aizuchi*, a morphophonemic *fuka* process adds the phoneme /e/ after changing the sound /nai/.

矢口 八虎	:	スイカ頂いたからあとでー
Yaguchi Yatora	:	Suika itadaita kara ato de...
(Yatora Yaguchi	:	Because I got a watermelon, eat it later...)
矢口 八虎の母	:	え?...わー！ <u>すごい</u> ！おっきなスイカ～！
Yatora no Haha	:	E?...Waa! <u>Sugoi!</u> Okkina suika~!
(Yatora's mom	:	Huh? Wow, <u>cool</u> ! It's so big!)

(GA-11/23 : BP/ch.65/p.60/no.04)

The *aizuchi* sample above is spoken by a female character, Yatora's mother. After returning from a sleepover with other art primary students, Yatora returned home with a large watermelon given by her host. Yatora's mother, who received the watermelon, immediately said *aizuchi* 「すごい」 (*sugoi*) after *kandoushi* (interjection). The word 「すごい」 (*sugoi*) is included in *aizuchi* because it is a response uttered by Yatora's mother after Yatora said that he brought home a large watermelon.

2) Doushi

矢口 八虎	:	いやーあ、俺はみんなとは全然...貰つっても一番した だ...
Yaguchi Yatora	:	Iyaaa, ore wa minna to wa zenzen... Shoutsu ttemo ichiban shita dashi...
(Yatora Yaguchi	:	No, really. I'm nothing compared to all of you, guys. After all, I also received an award as the lowest champion)
歌島	:	<u>ケンソンするねー</u>
Yatora no Haha	:	<u>Kenson suru nee</u>
(Utashima	:	<u>Being humble, huh?</u>

(GA-01/24 : BP/ch.66/p.50/no.11)

The sample above is an *aizuchi* spoken by a male character named Utashima. In the dialog above, Utashima praises all his friends' achievements, including Yatora. Yatora gave a humble response that he did not want to sound cocky. Utashima responded by saying 「ケンソンするねー」 (*kenson suru nee*). From the kanji, 謙遜 (*kenson*) means humble. This utterance is *aizuchi* because it is Utashima's praising response to Yatora's words. Because it is a verb (*doushi*), this *aizuchi* is classified as *aizuchi teki na hyougen*. The morphophonemic process does not occur on the vocabulary 「ケンソンする」 (*kenson suru*) itself but on the *shuujoshi* (sentence-ending particle) behind it; it is the *shuujoshi* 「ね」. This *shuujoshi* undergoes the morphophonemic process of *fuka*, where the phoneme /e/ is added at the end of the utterance.

矢口 八虎	:え？
Yaguchi Yatora	:e?
(Yatora Yaguchi	:	...huh?)

恋ヶ窪	:	<u>わかんねえけど</u> 、店出した先輩と同じこと言ってたから
Koigakubo	:	<i>Wakannee kedo, mise dashita senpai to onaji koto itteta kara.</i>
(Koigakubo	:	I don't know, but I said the same thing to my senior who has quit the job)

(GA-01/24 : BP/ch.66/p.64/no.19)

The *aizuchi* sample above is spoken by a male character named Koigakubo. After receiving a letter from a fan, it did not make Yatora happy. On the contrary, Yatora felt that her painting still had many flaws. Seeing this, Koigakubo praised Yatora by saying that his humble nature showed that Yatora was now a full-fledged professional painter. The word 「わかんねえけど」 (*wakannee kedo*) spoken by Koigakubo is included in *aizuchi* because it is a response to the *kandoushi* (interjection) spoken by Yatora as well as Yatora's previous words saying that he still has many shortcomings. Since it is a verb, it belongs to *aizuchi teki na hyougen* which classifies *doushi* (verb) as one of its types. Just like the morphophonemic changes in the *keiyoushi* (adjective) spoken by male-gendered characters, the word 「わかんねえ」 (*wakannee*) is derived from the word 「わからない」 (*wakaranai*) where the syllable [ai] also undergoes the same morphophonemic process of *chikau*. The syllabic [ai] sound of the syllabic /nai/ is changed to the [e:] sound.

3) *Fukushi*

恋ヶ窪	:	なんかあったのか？
Koigakubo	:	<i>Nanka atta no ka?</i>
(Koigakubo	:	What's up?)
歌島	:	あ～ <u>なるほどねえ</u> 。要は「歌島の失恋話をパクって描いたら受賞した」みたいなことね？
Utashima	:	A～ <u><i>naruhodo nee</i></u> . You wa 'Shitsuren banashi wo pakutte kaitara jyushou shita' mitai na koto ne? Sorya yada wa~
(Utashima	:	Ah, I see. It's like 'Someone stole Utashima's heartbreak story and wrote it down and it became a winner'?)

(GA-01/24 : BP/ch.66/p.52/no.14)

The sample above is an *aizuchi* spoken by a male character named Utashima. The dialog above shows a minor dispute between the characters Yatora and Koigakubo. Yatora hoped his paintings could make everyone happy, like *okashi* (Japanese sweets). Koigakubo, who works at the *okashi* shop, disagrees because the shop where he works is about to go bankrupt. Utashima listened to Koigakubo's explanation and gave an *aizuchi* response followed by a simile deduced from the conversation between Yatora and Koigakubo. The word 「なるほど」 (*naruhodo*) that Utashima said is included in *aizuchi* because it is a *fukushi* (adverb), which is one of the classifications of *aizuchi teki na hyougen*, besides *doushi* (verb) and *keiyoushi* (adjective). The morphophonemic process does not occur on the word 「なるほど」 (*naruhodo*) itself but on the *shuujoshi* (sentence-ending particle) behind it, 「ね」 (ne). This *shuujoshi* undergoes a *fuka* morphophonemic process in which the phoneme /e/ is added at the end of the utterance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that *aizuchi* is spoken more by male than female characters. Of the 18 *aizuchi teki na hyougen*, 11 *keiyoushi*, six *doushi* and one *fukushi* were found. A total of 16 *aizuchi* were spoken by male characters, while only two *aizuchi* were spoken by female characters. Both male and female characters uttered the most about *keiyoushi*. A total of 5 samples experienced the morphophonemic process of *chikau* and *fuka* which is the most common morphophonemic process in this manga and male characters spoke all samples. The female characters themselves did not experience morphophonemic changes.

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