

Saft, Scott. (2007). Exploring *aizuchi* as resources in Japanese social interaction: The case of a political discussion program. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 1290-1312.

My mother is a great talker (she was a pastor of a church) and also a great *aizuchi* performer, who routinely performs *aizuchi* in conversation, and I always wonder whether all her *aizuchi* truly are a device for signaling support, solidarity, encouragement and agreement to the speaker. Based on my own observation, when she performs *aizuchi*, she does not seem to be committed to the contents of what the speaker says, but rather by doing *aizuchi*, just as a hunter takes aim at her prey, she seems to be waiting for her turn, and as soon as the utterance finishes she snatches the floor. Aside from my mother's territorial behaviors in conversation, this CA-type study conducted by Scott Saft brings us new insights into the use of *aizuchi* in Japanese. Saft looked at institutionalized talk exchanges by multiple participants, namely a political discussion program on TV, rather than everyday conversations as have been used by many previous studies. He examined the occurrences of *aizuchi* in the data that functioned differently from the usages previously reported. In the data he paid attention to the behavior of the moderator of the discussion and found that *aizuchi* by a participant, not the moderator, signals that the participant is willing to be involved in the conversation more actively, becoming an active recipient of the talk exchange rather than just a listener or a bystander. This study clearly shows that in

discussion programs on TV, where floor-management by the moderator is crucial, participants use *aizuchi* to signal not just support or agreement to the utterance being made but also other functions such as the willingness to participate more actively in conversation.

Fujimura-Wilson, Kayo. (2007). Japanese exact repetitions involving talk among friends. *Discourse Studies*, 9, 319-339.

This study is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative designs. The author collected 45 samples of everyday conversations (33 in Japanese, 12 in English) by native speakers, and she counted the tokens of exact repetitions and analyzed them according to the language, age, and gender of the speakers. Furthermore, she performed an interview task asking the participants to evaluate two types of conversations: one the original recording and the other in which repetitions had been removed. She found there are significant differences in occurrence of exact repetitions between English and Japanese speakers: Japanese speakers produce more repetitions overall and have a higher ratio of other-exact repetitions than their English counterparts. In both language samples, females produced more other-exact repetitions, but the difference is extreme in English, in which male participants in English group produced very few occurrences of other-exact repetitions. The author analyzed the differences based on sociolinguistic perspectives, focusing on how people in different clusters in society perceive

repetitions. Older Japanese participants perceive other-exact repetitions in Japanese to be rather annoying, but younger participants tended to support the use of them. In her analysis, she finds repetition is used to show involvement in interactions. For the younger generation in Japan, the overuse of repetition indicates enthusiasm, while this is perceived as irritating and destructive by older generations in both cultures, especially in England. It is regrettable that the construction of this paper is somewhat confusing, and the framework of analyses is hard to follow, lacking some crucial information like the age and social status of the participants.

Heffernan, Kevin. 2008. An investigation of diachronic change in communication accommodation. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 27, 86-93.

During WWII English was the language of the enemy and the use of English was prohibited, but after the end of the war, English poured into Japan. Heffernan studied how Hollywood movie titles in Japan have changed during the past 60 years within the framework of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). Although it looks like a study of translating titles from English to Japanese, he proposes that this study is “an investigation into diachronic change in communication accommodation” that is geared to show how collective perception toward English (or Western culture) has changed in Japan. He hypothesizes that during the occupation period between 1945 and 1952 Western (American?) culture was perceived as more prestigious and

favorably accepted in the culture of Japan, which must have influenced the use of more Americanized language in movie titles. The results show that the use of Americanized expressions (i.e. loanwords, nonce borrowings, and transliterations) increased over time, but an extensive increase during the occupation period was not found. He explains that this gradual increase indicates the process of increased accommodation to English language. I was wondering if CAT could be applied to the analyses of styles of writing, but in any case, I could sort of understand the reason why the movie *What Lies Beneath* was introduced as *Howatto raizu biniisu* in Japan several years ago, although I believe many of the people who went to see this thriller had no idea what this title would mean even after the show. [It didn't make a lot of sense to native English speakers, either—*Ed.*] I wonder if the bottom line of accommodating English to the Japanese culture is, in fact, accepting what sounds English-like as a cool thing.

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