

# Differentiation of Yes/No and Wh-questions in the Aizu Dialects

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Ginsburg et al. (2013) suggest that in Aizu Dialect questions, pitch peak is not placed on the question word (e.g., *nani*) unlike Standard Japanese (e.g., Ishihara 2003, Kibe 2010) and that both Yes/No (Y/N) and Wh-questions have a falling intonation more frequently than in Standard Japanese. It is also documented that the Aizu Dialects variably show intervocalic voicing of stops (/atama/ ‘head’ < [adama]; /hikui/ ‘low’ < [higui]). These characteristics make some Wh- and Y/N questions superficially very similar as exemplified below ( ↓ : falling intonation).

(1) Wh-question: *nani-/g/a miekka* ↓ ‘What do you see?’

(2) Y/N question: *nani-[g](</k/) a miekka* ↓ ‘Do you see anything?’

The present research investigates what kind of strategies native Aizu dialect speakers use to distinguish these possibly confusing question forms. Preliminary research indicates there are these strategies: 1) Use rising intonation for Y/N questions and falling intonation for Wh-questions; 2) Delete the particle *ga* after *nani* to indicate it is a Wh-question (*nani miekka* ‘What do you see?’) while particle *ka* remains in a Y/N question; 3) Weaken *nani* into *nan* to indicate it is a Y/N question (*nan-ka miekka* ‘Do you see anything?’); 4) Use a velar nasal for /g/ in Wh-questions, and 5) Use different pitch and accents for *nani* in Y/N and Wh-questions.

The first three strategies are also used in Standard Japanese. With regard to 5), we observe two differences, namely a larger pitch difference between *na* and *ni* in a Wh-question and a sharp drop of the pitch after *nani* in a Y/N question. The pitches of *na*, *ni*, *ka* and *ga* and the pitch tracks of Wh- and Y/N questions of the same speaker are shown below. This tendency is found among many other speakers. Since it is generally accepted that the Aizu dialect is a non-accent dialect, the use of pitch to signal different types of questions is very intriguing. Perception experiments may show how Aizu dialect speakers use pitch to distinguish question forms.

Table 1: Pitches of *nani-ga* and *nani-ka*

	<i>na</i> in Wh	<i>ni</i> in Wh	<i>ga</i> in Wh	<i>na</i> in Y/N	<i>ni</i> in Y/N	<i>ka</i> in Y/N
<b>pitch</b>	108Hz	191Hz	198Hz	137Hz	191Hz	137Hz

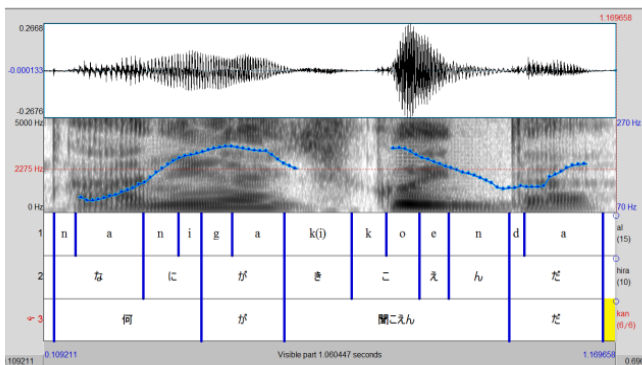


Fig. 1: Pitch track for Wh-q.

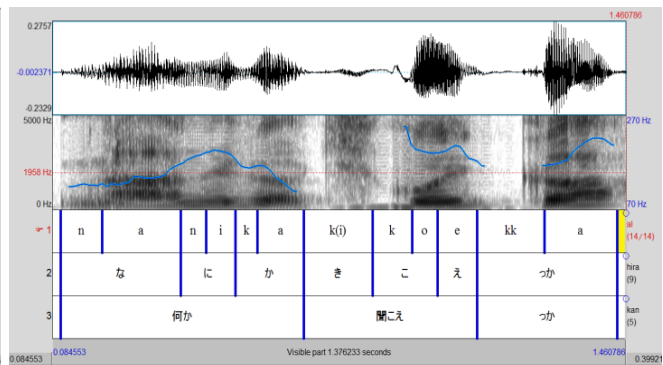


Fig. 2: Pitch track for Y/N-q.

**References:** [1] Ishihara, S. 2003. *Intonation and interface conditions*. MIT dissertation. [2] Kibe, Y. 2010. *Intonation-no-chiiki-sa Shitsumonbun-no-intonation*. In *Hogen-no-hakken shirazaru chikisa-o shiru*. Tokyo: Hituzi Shobo. 1-20. [3] Ginsburg, J., Wilson, I., Kaneko, E., and Ogasawara, N. 2013. *Aizu hogen no gimonbun no onsei tokucho*. *Proceedings of the 96<sup>th</sup> Dialectological Circle of Japan Meeting*.