

AN ANALYSIS OF ONOMATOPOEIA RELATED TO THE WORD “LAUGH”

Anjalie Indrachapa Ratnayake¹

Japanese has a large inventory of sound-symbolic or mimetic words, known in linguistics as idiophones. Sound symbolic words are found in written as well as spoken Japanese. They are popularly known as onomatopoeia. These words are not just imitative of sounds but cover a much wider range of meanings. Many sound-symbolic words in Japanese are for things that don't make any noise originally, most clearly demonstrated by しいんと *shiinto*, meaning "silently". Various types of laughs can be heard in everyday life; a cheerful laugh, unpleasant laugh, embarrassing laugh etc. Japanese people have a deep interest in what they hear and see. In addition, every single onomatopoeia related to laugh contains special meaning. Japanese language learning students should have a keen interest in how Japanese onomatopoeia related to laugh was made, how the structure of these words were made and how Japanese people apply these word in everyday life. The purpose of this research is to identify the *characteristics* of phonological and morphological of Japanese Onomatopoeia “laugh”. This paper shows how the Japanese onomatopoeia of laugh only begin with A, KA, HA, and NA sound. For example *ahaha* “Haha”, *kerakera* “sound of shrill laughter”, *herahera* “foolish laugh”, *nikoniko* “friendly grin”. A, KA, and HA sounds are describing the voice of laugh, for example くすくす笑い *kusukusu warai*, meaning “Giggle” and only NA sound is describing the facial expression of laugh. For example にやにや顔 *niyaniya gao*, meaning “Grinning face”. This research reveals that there are 5 forms of onomatopoeia which represent the Sustainability, Voice pitch, the Gender, the Duration and the Emphasis Of laugh. It's difficult to understand the description of the Japanese Onomatopoeia dictionaries as there are many indescribable onomatopoeias related to Japanese laugh. Therefore it is not that easy to use these Japanese Onomatopoeias correctly on daily conversation for Japanese-language learners. The findings may be useful for Japanese language learning students who are interested in Japanese Linguistics.

Key Words: Japanese Onomatopoeia, Japanese Linguistics, laugh

¹ Department of Modern Languages,