

INNOVATIVE MIMETIC VERBS IN JAPANESE AND CONSTRUCTION APPROACH TO THEM

The article will determine several lexical semantic links between mimetic verbs and construction approach to the innovative mimetics in Japanese, and exhibit that meaning for mimetic verbs demands a treatment precise from that of lexical verbs. There will be also represented a brief research on construction grammar; showed lexical semantic properties of mimetic verbs, and demonstrated the nature of innovative verbs in Japanese and their relation to mimetics.

Key words: *mimetic verbs, innovative verbs, construction approach, construction grammar.*

It is generally acknowledged by linguists that when a word is correlated with an object in the real world, the word is called “sound symbolism”. This correlation can be formalized by onomatopoeia or mimetic words. Mimetic words are generally accepted as a phenomenon of language. However, the actual number of words in Japanese that are expressed by sound symbolic elements is disputed by linguists. There are those who feel that language is mainly arbitrary and that sound symbolism is just a usual phenomenon; others claim that language is inherently sound symbolic and always doing attempts to equate sound with sense. There is the same question about whether the Japanese language is having more or less sound-symbolic or whether it maintains a ‘steady state’ equally remains without a certain answer. Even if there are exceptions to every pattern in human languages, it can be demonstrated that some sound symbolism has a biological basis. It is obvious that mimetic words play a more crucial role than many linguists feel or believe [1, p.84].

Linguists are getting one step closer to understanding that mimetic words have universality, using the evaluation range they are classifying the examples of mimetic words. As the purpose of language is communication, the criteria for evaluation of mimetic words universality is whether one easily-understands naturally or not. In other words, understanding of mimetic words needs to be natural to have universality. If the mimetic words are not easily-understood, then they can be considered to be of a random meaning. One of the most distinctive features of mimetics in terms of interpretation process is their high level of flexibility beyond conventional meanings, as well as, the flexibility in the wide range of argument structure with which a mimetic verb is commonly associated. It is obvious that the relative freedom in meaning and argument structure separates mimetic verbs from prosaic ones.

Recent studies in terms of cognitive linguistics have highlighted some important facts about the semantic extension of Japanese onomatopoeia. Many instances of metaphorical and metonymical extensions have been mentioned in terms of Japanese mimetics.

This paper is focused on the innovative verbs in Japanese that are formed from nouns of various sources including loanwords, Sino-Japanese nouns, mimetics and proper names. Regardless of their different origin, these innovative verbs exhibit a collection of unique

properties, ranging from phonological, morphological, to semantic and pragmatic. These properties are not strictly predictable from the component parts including the nature of the parent noun and verbal morphology. Such an unpredictable nature is suggestive of a constructional analysis. The form-meaning-function complex takes a templatic representation, which expresses the phonological and morphological characteristics, and associated with it are semantic and pragmatic properties. These phonological, morphological, semantic, and pragmatic properties combine to capture the nature of innovative denominal verbs as a construction [4, p.800].

There are a number of innovative verbs in Japanese that are formed based on nouns of various sources such as loanwords - both of Chinese origin and of other languages - and proper names. Some examples of innovative denominal verbs in the present-tense form are given in

- a. Sino-Japanese loanword-base こくる (*kokuru*) ‘make a confession’ (告白 *kokuhaku* ‘confession’), じこる (*jikoru*) ‘have a traffic accident’ (事故 *jiko*) ‘accident’;
- b. Non-Chinese loanword-based コピーる ‘make a copy’ (コピー *kopii* ‘copy’), テロる (*teroru*) ‘commit an act of メモる (*memoru*) ‘take notes’ (メモ *memo* ‘memo’);
- c. Proper name-based マクる (*makuru*) ‘go to McDonald’s’ (マクドナルド *makudonarudo* ‘McDonald’s’), スタバる (*sutabaru*) ‘go to Starbucks’ (スタルバックス *sutaabakkusu* ‘Starbucks’), ググる (*guguru*) ‘conduct a Google search’ (ググる *guguru*) ‘Google’).

The Japanese innovative verbs in (1a) are based on nouns of Sino-Japanese compounds: 告白 (*kokuhaku*) ‘confession’, for example, is a Sino-Japanese noun from which こくる (*kokuru*) ‘make a confession’. The verbs in (1b) are based on loanwords from languages other than Chinese. These verbs are based on the borrowed nominal forms. The denominal verbs in (1c) are all based on proper names, regardless of the origin of the base noun. However, the primary focus of the investigation dealt with in this article is on innovative verbs derived from mimetic verbs [4, p.801].

Although we provide glosses for the examples of innovative denominal verbs to facilitate the reader’s understanding, it should be kept in mind that such innovative verbs that are formed based on mimetic words, whose categorial status is not always clear cut. Examples of this class are provided in (1d).

- 1) d. にこる (*nikoru*) ‘smile’ (にこにこ *nikoniko*) description of smiling);
- 2) ちびる (*chibiru*) ‘be stingy’ (ちびちび *chibichibi*) description of a small amount);
- 3) ぐずる (*guzuru*) ‘be peevish’ (ぐずぐず *guzuguzu*) description of slowness, laziness).

The part of speech category of mimetic words in Japanese is often difficult to identify because a mimetic base can be found in a range of categories depending on the linguistic environment in which it appears. For instance, the mimetic base from which にこる (*nikoru*) is derived, i.e., にこにこ (*nikoniko*), serves as an adverb, as in ニコニコと (*nikoniko-to*), or a verb as in ニコニコとする (*nikoniko-suru*), where する *suru* ‘do’ is a verb. Innovative verbs based on mimetic words pattern with innovative denominal verbs, and thus we will treat (1d) as belonging to the same class as (1a–1c). So, innovative denominal and mimetic based verbs constitute a construction as they are characteristically associated with a cluster

of properties that range from phonological, morphological, to semantic and pragmatic [4, p.801].

There should be mentioned that innovative verbs tend to undergo clipping of base nouns, and when they do, the clipping restricts the length of verbal roots, they all take the same conjugation pattern, which provides a specific morphological shape of the verbal roots. Moreover, they consistently display a particular accentuation pattern, and show a unique semantic nature and pragmatic use. We shall argue that each of the properties related to the form, for example, phonological and morphological properties, cannot strictly be attributed to the base nouns from which innovative verbs are derived. Nor is their meaning and special use compositional from base nouns and verbal suffixes. Any linguistic pattern is recognized as a construction as long as some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist. In addition, in the first and second examples in (1d) stands for a geminate. For example, にこ (*niko*) and ちび (*chibi*) are normally used with the adverb-forming suffix と *to*. Their surface forms as adverbs are にこっと (*nikotto*) and ちびっと (*chibitto*), respectively, inducing gemination of the suffixal consonant patterns are stored as constructions even if they are fully predictable as long as they occur with sufficient frequency [2, p.50].

While innovative denominal verbs have been assumed to be based on nouns, as the examples of (1d) illustrate, mimetic words can be a basis for innovative verbs that bear the same set of properties. A mimetic base is unspecified for its parts of speech category, and it may be argued that a different mechanism is called for in order for an innovative verb that consists of a mimetic word to receive an appropriate interpretation [3, p.401].

In the case with denominal verbs, then, it follows from the template that the meaning of a mimetic-base innovative verb corresponds to a state, an event, or a process that has some connection to a sound or an image that the mimetic word conveys. Such connection, in fact, is again captured in terms of semantic frames. For instance, にこる (*nikoru*) in (1d) contains a mimetic expression of にこ (*niko*) or ニコニコ (*nikoniko*), which symbolizes a state or an act of someone smiling. The common experience of symbolizing facial expression gives rise to the scene that the verb にこる (*nikoru*) labels. A more innovative example of a mimetic-based verb is ぶるる (*bururu*). The base mimetic expression ぶる (*buruburu*) or ぶる (*buru*) generally describes an involuntary bodily movement that normally occurs when humans experience cold temperature (shivering). In the case of ぶるる (*bururu*), the image of a shaking body is applied and extended innovatively to cell phones: ぶるる (*bururu*) as an innovative verb refers to the vibrating situation of a cell phone when it receives an incoming call while it is in the manner mode. The situation in which a cell phone vibrates constitutes a scene to be profiled; and the profiled scene corresponds to what ぶるる (*bururu*) labels as its meaning. Unless the speaker and the listener share the knowledge of the image to which ぶるぶる (*buruburu*) or ぶる (*buru*) is connected and the association of the image to a cell phone, the intended interpretation is not successful. The conceptualization of verb meaning based on semantic frames, thus, generalizes innovative verbs of both denominal and mimetic-base types [2, p.54].

To summarize, it should be mentioned that mimetic verbs exhibit a set of meaning-related properties that separates them from prosaic verbs. First, mimetic verbs show an

extraordinary range of flexibility in their meaning, leading to polysemous situations. The nature of such meaning ranges from conventionalized meaning on a par with that of prosaic verbs to innovative meaning that often relies on specific contextual information and pragmatic conventions for its proper interpretation. Second, related to the first point, mimetic verbs appear in a variety of argument structures as well as adjunct selections. Third, regular polysemy or systematic transfer of meaning that is commonly observed with prosaic verbs does not characterize the polysemous situation that emerges from mimetic verbs. And, finally, mimetic verbs do not follow the same lexicalization pattern as prosaic verbs, and manner incorporation in mimetic verbs is a natural consequence of the nature of mimetic bases upon which corresponding verbs are built.

In this paper it has been discussed various properties associated with innovative denominal verbs in Japanese and also demonstrated that their formal and functional characteristics cannot be attributed to those parts that comprise them. Such an unpredictable nature fits a constructional approach very well and we have claimed that innovative denominal verbs indeed constitute a construction. The form-meaning-function complex takes the templatic representation that captures the phonological and morphological properties. These formal properties are associated with a specific pragmatic function. Once the formal and functional properties characterize the nature of the construction, the semantic nature follows from its parts coupled with the general pragmatic conventions.

The categorical status as verbs, by means of the morphological shape of the verb *する* *suru*, suggests that mimetic verbs denote states, events, or processes; and the images are conceptualized states, events, or processes in semantic frames or scenes. So, that is why frame semantics approach gives a lot of possibilities to analyze the way of functioning for Japanese mimetics, as well as, the right ways of convening all the units during the process of their translation. It is obvious that one word can be in used for creating a positive or negative attitude to the situations or moments in the life. Such an approach is meant for the mimetics semantic analysis and its further realization in the text according to the extralinguistic information. Sound symbolic frame cannot be realized in “parts”, it will be always an integral part that gives an opportunity to create belles-lettres, as well as, a great chance to the translator to depict the reality [1, p.82].

The image of a mimetic base serves as the most salient part of a profiled scene. The relation between the image of a mimetic base and a semantic frame in which the image is conceptualized is actually not constrained, resulting in a wide range of possible interpretations including innovative meaning that requires metaphorical extension or a high degree of contextual information. Furthermore, the image of a mimetic base seems to contribute its descriptive function to a given semantic frame. That is, the range of semantic frames in which an image is conceptualized and the range of semantic frames in which another image is conceptualized do not need to pattern in a parallel way.

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ІННОВАЦІЙНІ ОДИНИЦІ ОНОМАТОПОЕТИЧНОЇ ЛЕКСИКИ В ЯПОНСЬКІЙ МОВІ: КОНСТРУКТИВНИЙ ПІДХІД ТВОРЕННЯ

У статті визначено низку лексико-семантичних відмінностей між дієсловами-ономатопеями, розглянуто та проаналізовано особливості конструктивного підходу для творення інноваційних одиниць ономатопоетичної лексики. Продемонстровано, що значення дієслова-ономатопеї при перекладі потребує іншого, більш детального підходу. Запропоновано короткий аналіз особливостей конструктивної граматики, а також продемонстровано природу інноваційних дієслів та їхній зв'язок із дієсловами-ономатопеями.

Ключові слова: дієслова-ономатопеї, інноваційні дієслова, конструктивний підхід, конструктивна граматика

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ИННОВАЦИОННЫЕ ЕДИНИЦЫ ОНОМАТОПОЭТИЧЕСКОЙ ЛЕКСИКИ В ЯПОНСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ: КОНСТРУКТИВНЫЙ ПОДХОД ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

В статье определены некоторые лексико-семантические отличия между глаголами-ономатопеями, рассмотрены и проанализированы особенности конструктивного подхода при образовании инновационных единиц ономатопозитической лексики. Показано, что значение глагола-ономатопеи требует использования более детального подхода при переводе. Предложен краткий анализ особенностей конструктивной грамматики, а также определена природа инновационных глаголов и их соотношение с глаголами-ономатопеями.

Ключевые слова: глаголы-ономатопеи, инновационные глаголы, конструктивный подход, конструктивная грамматика.