Exploring Onomatopoeia Elements Found in Mickey Mouse Adventures Webcomic

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Abstract

A webcomic is a series of images sequenced and combined to form a story that can be accessed online. Onomatopoeia is used to build the story and give the comic a more dramatic visual effect. This research aims to explore the onomatopoeia contained in the Mickey Mouse Adventures webcomics edition one. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The data were collected through observation methods with several stages, such as reading the comics, recording the types of onomatopoeia found, and analyzing the meaning of the onomatopoeia. The theory used to determine the type of onomatopoeia is the theory of Thomas and Clara (2004) while analyzing the meaning of onomatopoeic words is based on the theory of Thomas (1995). The results showed that there are 4 types of onomatopoeia with 66 data found from all types of onomatopoeia in webcomics, including: "sound made by human" with 26 words (39%), "miscellaneous sounds" found 24 words (36%), "calls of animals" 11 words (17%), lastly "sound of nature" for 5 words (8%). The type of onomatopoeia sound made by human beings is the most dominant one used in webcomics. The meaning of onomatopoeia in webcomics is included in abstract and contextual meanings.

Keywords: *Mickey Mouse, Onomatopoeia, Meaning, Webcomic*

Introduction

Language facilitates human communication which serves as a tool to convey thoughts, emotions and goals. Fromkin et al. (2011) view language as the foundation of human power. The opportunity for people to understand the use of language in communication is called linguistics. Within the scope of linguistics, phonology studies the systematic use of speech sounds to form words and utterances (Katamba, 1989:1). On the other hand, another important aspect of linguistics is semantics.

In human perception, semantics serves as a concept that occurs when someone talks about an object and understands its meaning without thinking about it because they already know what is being talked about. Leech (1981) states that semantics focuses on signs in language and how those signs relate to what they refer to or point to. Onomatopoeia is one of the elements in semantic studies.

Onomatopoeia comes from Greek, which is a combination of the words "onoma" (name) and "poiein" (make), so it means the creation of a name based on the sound it imitates (Laili, 2008). Doft (2008:4) explains that onomatopoeia refers to auditory icons, which are objects created by imitating the sounds they produce. Furthermore, Sugahara (2010) defines onomatopoeia as a unique linguistic expression because its phonological structure is directly related to its meaning. Variations in onomatopoeia across cultures reflect differences in the way sounds are imitated and interpreted according to the local environment. For example, the sound a pig makes is represented as "oink" in English and "ngok" in Indonesian. Prihadi (2021) states that onomatopoeia not only enriches the description of sounds in writing, but also adds an expressive dimension to narratives, especially in media such as comics.

Onomatopoeias also have meaning, which is conceptual thinking that helps individuals organize and store information by connecting what they are learning with what they already understand (Croft and Cruse, 2004). According to Lyons (1977), meaning is the relationship between a sign (word or symbol) and what it reflects. Experts categorize meaning into several types. Leech (1981) identifies eight types, including connotative, figurative, affective, reflective, collocative, thematic, and social meanings. Thomas (1995) highlights two types relevant for analyzing onomatopoeic words: abstract meaning, which is related to definitions in dictionaries (e.g., word or phrase definitions), and contextual meaning, which varies depending on the situation. Contextual understanding often depends on the context of the sound, responding to the situation, place, environment and time of use. Thus, understanding the meaning of onomatopoeia helps in understanding spoken or written expressions.

Onomatopoeia is often used in writing and comics to describe sounds concretely and vividly, adding an audiovisual dimension to the narrative. According to Scott McCloud (2002:9), comics aim to inform or inspire readers aesthetically and are present on various platforms such as newspapers, magazines, and the internet. The advantage of comics lies in their ability to present stories that are easily understood by various groups through a combination of images and text. Webcomics, which are published online, have attracted greater attention due to their ease of access and potential to reach a wide audience.

Walters (2009) refers to webcomics as static art combined with text, while Stainbrook (2003) emphasizes that comics reflect our cultural ideals through words and images. Despite their simplicity, comics are capable of conveying complex and in-depth stories. However, this study focuses on analyzing the Mickey Mouse Adventures webcomic, with special attention to the types of onomatopoeia used and their meaning in a particular issue. This webcomic has achieved significant popularity, with 72,769 reads as of October 3, 2024.

Based on the journey of Mickey Mouse and his friends through various colorful adventures and interesting stories. One of the main attractions of the Mickey Mouse Adventure webcomic is its extensive use of onomatopoeia, which not only enriches the narrative but also demonstrates how sound can be creatively represented in visual language. Through onomatopoeia, readers are invited to "hear" the sounds that appear in the story, bridging the experience between visual, textual and auditory imagination. This phenomenon reflects a significant development in the way language is used to represent sound in the digital comics medium.

Numerous studies have been carried out on topics related to onomatopoeia. For instance, Hersa (2021) investigated the translation techniques of onomatopoeia in Ariel Duyung's Good/Bad Fortune comic, identifying 62 instances of onomatopoeia, with only 6 out of 18 translation techniques applicable. Prihadi (2021) analyzed the Batman Beyond comic, finding that fighting-related onomatopoeia predominated, reflecting the action and conflict in the narrative. Firdaus (2021) analyzed onomatopoeia in the Peanut comic by Charles M. Schulz, identifying primary and secondary types using Ullman's (1962) theory. Out of 71 words, secondary onomatopoeia was most common. The study noted that some words had the same form but different meanings based on context, with the Consonant-Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CCVC) structure being the most frequent.

Continue article by Maheni et al. (2021), identifies and analyzes onomatopoeia in the Wonder Woman comic. Applying Elizabeth's (2013) theory, the study found 49 onomatopoeic words, with "fighting" being the most frequent at 23 instances (46.9%). The research highlights both lexical and contextual meanings of the identified onomatopoeia. As comics evolve into digital formats like webcomics, studies such as Zein and Sitio (2024) have emerged. They analyzed onomatopoeia in the webcomic Aqua man: Through Fire and Water, finding that direct onomatopoeia was most common and effectively integrated with visual aesthetics to enhance storytelling and evoke sensory responses from readers.

In terms of previous research, most studies have used Ullman's (1962) theory to determine the types of onomatopoeia that appear in comics, particularly in the fighting genre. The focus often lies on how onomatopoeia depicts action sounds, such as explosions, punches, or fast movements, which are relevant in creating a dynamic and dramatic atmosphere in the narrative. This research, alternatively,

draws data from a webcomic about the adventures of Disney's iconic character Mickey Mouse, which is not only limited to the action category, onomatopoeia in this webcomic also includes everyday sounds that add an immersive dimension to the story. This study analyzes onomatopoeia using the theories proposed by Thomas and Clara (2004). Although often considered a minor aspect of linguistics, onomatopoeia plays an important role in comic writing, enhancing engagement and expression.

This study aims to identify the types of onomatopoeia in the Mickey Mouse Adventures webcomic and describe the meaning contained in the onomatopoeia words found. The results of this study are expected to provide insight into the meaning of onomatopoeia that appears in webcomics, which we may often use without realizing it in everyday life. Until now, no studies have been found that specifically discuss onomatopoeia in Mickey Mouse characters. Therefore, this research offers a new perspective by raising the theme of the adventures of Mickey Mouse and his friends in the Disney world. This study also aims to be a source of learning for readers who want to deepen their understanding of the types and meanings of onomatopoeia. In addition, this study can enrich the appeal of literature by allowing the exploration of creative wordplay and vocabulary. Thus, this research helps readers understand the nuances of emotion and atmosphere that the author wants to convey, while appreciating the beauty and complexity of language in webcomic media.

Method

The data source in this study is a webcomic entitled Mickey Mouse Adventures, which can be accessed and read for free through the following link: https://readcomiconline.li/Comic/Mickey-Mouse-Adventures. In the first edition, there are three main subtitles, namely The Phantom Gondolier (abbreviated as PG), Shark Bait (SB), and The Daily Blat (DB). In the data collection process, this research applies a non-participant technique, namely the free listening technique as explained by Sudaryanto (2015) in (Shofi & Denafri, 2021).

This technique involves systematic observation and recording of words containing onomatopoeic elements in the Mickey Mouse Adventures webcomic without directly involving the researcher in the dialog or interaction that occurs. Data collection was done through several main steps. The researcher first carefully read the first edition of the webcomic to understand the content of the narrative as a whole. Next, words containing onomatopoeic elements were identified and recorded in a table. The table also included details such as the context of use, the type of onomatopoeia, as well as its specific category.

To determine the type of onomatopoeia, this study refers to the theory of Thomas and Clara (2004), who divide onomatopoeia into four main categories: (1) sounds made by humans, (2) miscellaneous sounds, (3) sound of nature, and (4) animal calls. In addition, this study uses Thomas' (1995) theory to analyze the meaning of onomatopoeia. The meanings are classified into two main categories, namely Abstract Meaning and Contextual Meaning, which provide deeper insights into the linguistic functions of onomatopoeia in webcomic narratives.

In terms of analytical approach, this research uses descriptive qualitative method as described by Creswell (2009). Qualitative methods help understand and investigate the meanings people give to certain issues, while the descriptive approach, according to Cevilla (1993:3) as cited by Dari (2021), allows researchers to describe facts or phenomena factually, methodically, and accurately. Thus, this study utilizes images and words as a tool to describe the analysis, so that the results obtained are not only informative but also able to provide a rich and comprehensive picture of the use of onomatopoeia in the Mickey Mouse Adventures webcomic.

Results

Based on the onomatopoeia framework developed by Thomas and Clara (2004), the following table presents the research findings. A total of 66 onomatopoeia words were successfully identified in the Mickey Mouse Adventures webcomic. All types of onomatopoeia were found with "human voice" having 26 words (39%), "other voice" consisting of 24 words (36%), followed by "animal voice" found with 11 words (17%), and finally "natural voice" with 5 words (8%). Details of the findings can be seen in the table below:

Table. 1 The Type of Onomatopoeia Found in Issue One.

| No	Type of Onomatopoeia	Frequency	Percentages
1.	Calls of animals	11	17%
2.	Sound made by human	26	39%
3.	Sound of nature	5	8%
4.	Miscellaneous sounds	24	36%
	Total	**66**	**100%**

The table above shows that the most frequent type of onomatopoeia in the Mickey Mouse Adventures webcomic is "sound made by human," with a total of 26 words (39%) of all onomatopoeia found. The use of this type of onomatopoeia gives readers a deeper understanding of the feelings, thoughts, and interactions between characters in a realistic manner. For example, human sounds such as laughter (*HA*

HA HA) can convey joy, while the sound of clearing the throat (*HMM*) is often used to indicate that a character is thinking before continuing a sentence in a particular scene. By representing human sounds in text form, authors can create a more vivid and immersive reading experience for their audience. This technique is one of the unique strengths of a medium like webcomics, which combines visual and textual elements to create a multidimensional reading experience. By inviting readers to imagine the sounds in the story, authors provide additional depth that makes the story more interesting, dynamic, and memorable.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the sound-made-by-human type of onomatopoeia is the most frequently used by the characters in the Mickey Mouse Adventures webcomic. This finding is in line with the research of Zein and Sitio (2024), which states that direct onomatopoeia—namely onomatopoeia that clearly reflects the source of the sound—is the most commonly used type. However, it is different from the results of research by Prihadi (2021) and Maheni et al. (2021), which found that onomatopoeia related to fighting are more dominant because they reflect the action and conflict in the narrative. To provide a deeper understanding of onomatopoeia, this study presents some of the data obtained. The data is supplemented with images in the form of screenshots from the webcomic, which are equipped with subtitles. These images are used to illustrate and identify the onomatopoeia words found, as explained in the following presentation.

Calls of Animals
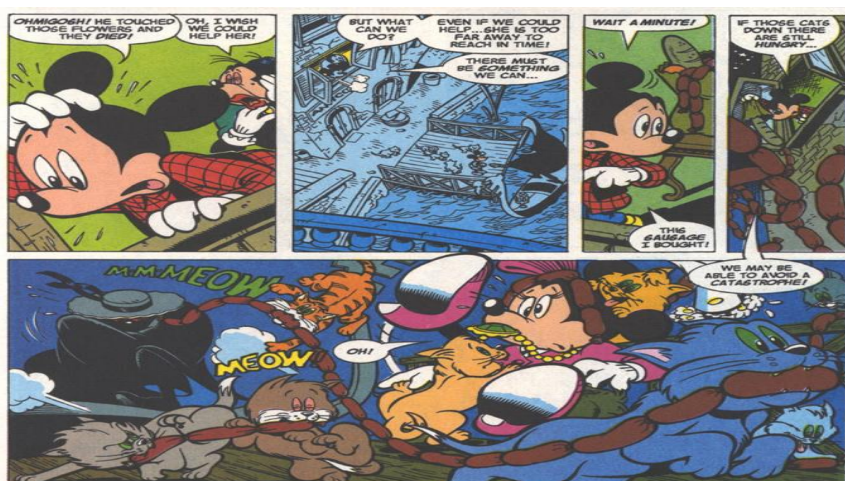
Figure 1. Mickey throws a sausage at the cats (PG: 4)

Figure 1 above, conveys Minnie wearing an unknown necklace that, unknowingly to her, turns out to be cursed and that she is unable to remove. Following that, Minnie experiences a hypnotic state. Unknown to Mickey and Signora, Minnie is already on the pier when they are searching for a solution. To get it, the Boatman approaches to Minnie. Prior to that, Mickey noticed some cats hanging about Minnie. He then noticed the sausage he had earlier purchased and hurled it in Minnie's direction, causing the cats to fight over it. It worked, Minnie eventually regained consciousness, and Mickey swiftly picked Minnie up and returned.

As the cat's struggle to get the sausage, the word MEOW represents the distinctive sound made by cats. According to Thomas and Clara's (2004) theory, calls of animals are imitations of sounds that come from animals, which means that sounds like MEOW fall into the category of onomatopoeia, which are words that imitate sounds that come from animals, in this context, Cats.

The meaning contained by the onomatopoeic word 'MEOW' does not belong to contextual meaning. Thomas (1995) states that contextual meaning depends on the situation in these words, which can change the meaning of the word. Likewise, in the case of *MEOW,* the meaning remains consistent even when used in different contexts. This makes it have an abstract meaning, as Thomas (1995) explained because abstract meaning indicates the meaning of the word produced in the dictionary. According to Oxford English Dictionary (OED), *MEOW* is recognized as a crying sound from a cat, and this meaning does not change even if the context is different. As such *MEOW* in this case is more relevant to be considered an abstract meaning rather than a contextual meaning.

1. **Sound Made by Human**

Figure 2. Mickey's nephews try to wake him up (SB: 1)

Figure 2 above, Mickey's nephews trying to wake Mickey up because he promised to take them to the beach. Still sleepy, Mickey and his nephew walk towards the kitchen, seeing smoke coming out of the kitchen, Mickey thought there was fire in the kitchen, but before making Mickey even more panicked, his nephews explained that it was just smoke from his toast for breakfast.

The onomatopoeia found is COUGH! represented in a dialog balloon with a tail pointing at Mickey. Thomas and Clara (2007) mentioned that sounds made by humans refer to words that mimic sounds produced by humans. Mickey Mouse is a classic example of anthropomorphism, where although he is depicted as a mouse, he has human-like characteristics and behaviors (Epley et al., 2007).

The word COUGH! has both abstract and contextual meanings. Abstractly, COUGH! means the sound of coughing, as described in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). In context, the *COUGH* sound produced by the character shows that Mickey coughs because of the smoke. Nonetheless, in different contexts, this word can have a more specific meaning. For example, in a medical context, *COUGH!* signifies a real cough, in a humorous context *COUGH!* can be used for humorous or attention-getting effects, and in situations such as public speaking, *COUGH!* can indicate a voice disorder. Thomas (1995), contextual meaning is the meaning determined by the particular situation in which the word is used.

2. Sound of Nature

Figure 3. Mickey and Minnie on the boat (PG: 9)

Figure 3 above, represent in detail because of prior failures. Boatman was determined to use his magical abilities to obtain Minnie back, so he tried again. In order to kidnap Minnie, he employed sea plants that were found on the seabed. The plants grew to be very big and wrapped tightly around Minnie's body. Mickey,

meanwhile, moved quickly to protect Minnie since he would not allow her danger. Determined to save Minnie, he bravely pursues to Boatman with Signora's boat. There were many challenges along the choppy sea voyage, but Mickey never gave up. When Mickey finally succeeds in reclaiming Minnie from Boatman, he makes a quick trip back to land.

In this scene, the blue onomatopoeia word *SPLOOSH!* is the main focus. Thomas and Clara (2004) mention that nature sounds refer to words that mimic sounds produced by natural or physical phenomena. Furthermore, it is explained by Grindon (1897: 35), that onomatopoeia are words from any language, ancient or modern, that connect to the basic sounds of nature. The word *SPLOOSH!* is often used to describe the sound of moving water, such as splashing or waves hitting a surface. Since *SPLOOSH!* imitates the sound of water which is an element of nature, this word can be categorized as a sound of nature.

Based on the image, the sound *SPLOOSH!* occurs when Mickey and Minnie escape from Boatman using the boat, creating a splashing sound as their boat hits the water's surface. Thomas (1995) defined contextual meaning as a word's meaning in many contexts and unique situations, whereas abstract meaning is the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence. Based on the data, the word *SPLOOSH!* describes the splashing sound that occurs when a hard object collides with something wet, and this falls into the abstract meaning because according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the meaning is general and not tied to a specific context. Furthermore, contextually, the meaning of *SPLOOSH!* depends on the situation in which it is used, such as describing the sound of someone jumping into water or something spilling, which is understood through the context of a story or picture. Based on the explanation of conceptual meaning, this data can be categorized as conceptual meaning.

3. Miscellaneous Sounds

Figure 4. Mickey and Goofy amidst a horde of crocodiles (SB: 1).

Figure 4 above, depicted Mickey and Goofy are unable to land in this dense forest in this scene, so they are forced to land in an alligator-filled river. They are aware that the river is dangerous, but they are forced to attempt to cross it. Hungry alligators attack them as they attempt to cross the river. Their balloon boat gets trapped, making the situation worse after they hurl their paddles to fend off the alligators. They finally reach the riverbank safely when Mickey decides to fight the river by jumping on the alligators' backs.

In the picture, there are two onomatopoeia words: POP! Which is red and HISSSSSSS! Which is black on a white background. The miscellaneous category includes sounds that come from inanimate objects. Therefore, both POP! And HISSSSSSS! falls under this category as they both imitate sounds from inanimate objects.

Furthermore, it refers to Thomas' (1995) theory of abstract meaning, POP! represents the sound of a small explosion as described in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). In contrast, *HISSSSSSS!* does not fully correspond to abstract meaning as it is not always listed in the dictionary with a specific meaning. In terms of contextual meaning, *POP!* Mimics the sound of a small explosion or other sounds such as a balloon popping or a bottle cap opening, and its meaning can vary depending on the context in which it is used. Based on the picture above, the word *POP!* is sounded when the crocodile bites the boat for the first time before it releases the air inside the boat. On the other hand, *HISSSSSSS!* describes the sound of wind coming out of a balloon boat after a small explosion due to a crocodile bite. *HISSSSSSS!* falls under contextual meaning because it can refer to a variety of other sounds, such as the hiss of a snake or gas escaping from an appliance, depending on the situation.

Conclusion

From the analysis, it is found that there are 66 data types of onomatopoeia from issue one of the webcomic. This finding shows that of the four types of onomatopoeia based on Thomas and Clara (2004), especially those belonging to the category of "sound made by human," play an important role in the development of comic stories. Onomatopoeia not only adds an immersive visual dimension but also makes comic narratives more interesting and livelier for readers. In addition, the meaning contained in onomatopoeia words is often on line with the meaning found in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) as a reference.

According to Thomas (1995), the definition of a word, phrase, or sentence found in dictionaries is well-known as abstract meaning, while contextual meaning is a word's meaning in a particular circumstance and context. The extensive use of onomatopoeia in the webcomic *Mickey Mouse Adventures* indicates that

onomatopoeia not only serves to describe the action more clearly but also adds a dramatic effect that enriches the overall reading experience. As such, onomatopoeia performance a significant role in enhancing the quality as well as appeal of webcomic stories, providing elements that make the narrative more vibrant and immersive.

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