Exploring a Figure of Speech: The Realisation of Onomatopoeia in "Aquaman: Through Fire and Water" Webcomic

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ABSTRACT

The present study analyses the realisation of onomatopoeia and determines the extent of the onomatopoeic words in creating meaningful imagery, illustrating actions as well as evoking readers' sensory associations toward the storyline of a webcomic entitled "Aquaman: Through Fire and Water". Qualitatively, this study used Krippendorff's (2018) Content Analysis (CA) as an approach. Methodologically, Miles & Huberman's (1994) interactive qualitative data analysis was applied to analyse the data. Respectively, Bredin's (1996) framework of Onomatopoeia was also adopted to look at how the onomatopoeic words are realised. The findings showed that *Direct Onomatopoeia* (50%) is the most occurring type from 26 onomatopoeic words found, followed by *Associative Onomatopoeia* (46,15%) and *Exemplary Onomatopoeia* (3,84%). The realisations of the onomatopoeic words reveal that the integration of the onomatopoeic realisations with the aesthetic depiction of the images throughout the webcomic can fairly create meaningful imagery and illustrate actions of the webcomic. Thus, it evokes readers' sensory associations toward the scenes and storyline of the webcomic.

Keyword: Onomatopoeia, Figure of Speech, Webcomic, Aquaman: Through Fire and Water

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis jenis-jenis onomatope dan realisasinya dalam menciptakan gambaran yang bermakna, mengilustrasikan tindakan, serta membangkitkan rangkaian sensorik pembaca terhadap alur cerita pada komik digital berjudul "Aquaman: Through Fire and Water". Secara kualitatif, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Analisis Konten (CA) oleh Krippendorff (2018). Secara metodologis, analisis data kualitatif interaktif oleh Miles & Huberman (1994) diterapkan untuk menganalisis data. Oleh karena itu, konsep Onomatope dari Bredin (1996) juga diadopsi untuk melihat bagaimana kata-kata onomatope direalisasikan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Onomatope Langsung (50%) merupakan jenis yang paling banyak muncul dari 26 kata onomatope yang ditemukan di dalam komik, diikuti oleh Onomatope Asosiatif (46,15%) dan Onomatope Exemplar (3,84%). Realisasi dari kata-kata onomatope tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa penggabungan dari realisasi onomatope dengan penggambaran gambar secara estetika dalam komik digital cukup mampu menciptakan penggambaran yang bermakna dan mengilustrasikan tindakan dalam komik digital tersebut. Dengan demikian, hal ini membangkitkan rangkaian sensorik pembaca terhadap adegan dan alur cerita dari komik digital yang dibaca.

Keyword: Onomatope, Gaya Bahasa, Komik Digital, *Aquaman: Through Fire and Water*

1. Introduction

Comics, in their expansive nature, are undeniably the most popular and enjoyed form of literary texts over the last several decades (Berube, 2022; Davies, 2019). They distinctively appear in printed and digital versions, which both possess their own sensations and versatilities. However, webcomics, along with the development of digitalisation in genre of text, are widespreadly more enjoyed by most of readers around the world than the printed version one. It arguably has the broadest reach of any form of comics because it has its own set of possibilities that simply are not available in print comics such as the free-to-read access and mobile-based readability (Al-Faruque, 2023). More, the clear images, unique lettering, and immersive choice of words and expressions of a webcomic work together to create meaning and illustrate action and time in distinctive ways and in multiple realms of both meaning-making and action-showing (Jacobs, 2014; Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021).

The advancement of digital publishing has enabled webcomic publishers to have and release worldwide publication where webcomics can reach simultaneously global audience. Therefore, to achieve the demographics of target readers, the content of the webcomics must be constructed in such a way that it creatively conveys and communicates thoughts, narration and even the writer's intention by providing direct evidence of both acoustical and textual aspects (Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021). In this respect, the presence of onomatopoeia in webcomics will give a significant impact and sense of enjoyment so as to attract readers' attentions in reading the webcomics (Bredin, 1996; Moore, 2015; Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021).

Onomatopoeia is a type of figure of speech that uses words to mimic the sounds made by both living things and inanimate objects (Bredin, 1996; Fidler, 2006). It can also be defined as a linguistic form that is used due to the similarity between its phonological form and the associated object, regardless of the sound-based nature (Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021). Additionally, Körtvélyessy (2020) figured out that onomatopoeic words are evidently unique due to their imitative nature based on the phenomenon of sounds of extra-linguistic reality. In order to distinguish the conceptual clarity of Onomatopoeia, Bredin (1996) further classifies three types of Onomatopoeia. The first and most obvious type is *Direct Onomatopoeia* in which a denotation of the sound of a word resembles the sound that it names. He then considers the words *hiss*, *splash*, *bang*, *buzz*, and *zoom* as examples because, according to him, these words have some acoustical similarities to their denoted objects, but not very many (p. 558). The second type is *Associative Onomatopoeia* in which the sound of a word resembles a sound that is associated with the objects that the word denotes. Here, the words *cuckoo*, *bubble*, *smash*, and *whip* are some the examples. He explains that none of the onomatopoeic words has a sound that resembles the objects or actions that they denote, yet, there is a close association between the sound and object in that cases (p. 559). This type of Onomatopoeia constitutes two levels of conventionality—a conventional relationship between a thing and a sound and a conventional naming association between a word and the object it refers to. The third and final type is *Exemplary Onomatopoeia* the sound of a word resembles a real sound based on the physical work or the quantity of the sound that the word denotes. In this sense, the onomatopoeic *slothful* might represent the technical concept of this type. According to Bredin (1996), *slothful* denotes slow-moving; having a sound which encourages us to utter it slowly and with a certain self-conscious effort, and these are qualities (slowness, effort) which are connoted by the lines themselves (p. 564).

The issues of the relationship between figures of speech, sound-symbolisms and their meanings such as Onomatopoeia in both written and oral materials are relatively little explored, yet, it has recently begun to attract the attention of scholars working on cognitive linguistic studies. The majority of the onomatopoeia-related studies focus on textual and literary analysis (Firdaus, Hardiah & Damayanti, 2021; Handayani, Fitrisia & Achmad, 2022; Mensuan, 2023; Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021). They suggested that the presence of onomatopoeic words in comics, poems and other literary texts play a fundamental role in both meaning-making and action-illustrating. Some other studies were conducted on the integrated framework of onomatopoeia and phonetic and sound-symbolism (Körtvélyessy, 2020; Laili & Putri, 2021). The underlying idea is that sound symbolic words constitute an extensive part of the lexicon. A further question regarding onomatopoeic forms concerns their place in word-formations such as metonymy (Benczes & Szabó, 2022) and suffixation (Hernandez, 2023). More, other researchers have also raised the idea that onomatopoeia can be associated with early-language acquisition (Laing, 2019a, 2019b).

Concerning the previous studies above, this study attempts to add a novel and emphirical contribution as well as increase understanding on the realisation and function of onomatopoeia in a webcomic, particularly the one being analysed in this study. Webcomics have become ingrained into our shared culture which need in-depth exploration towards how their contents shape us and reflect our values in images and words (Stainbrook, 2003). However, little evidence has proven that a closer inspection of how comic writers employ onomatopoeic words and expressions in their comics. Hence, the present study attempts to fill the gap by addressing the following research questions:

1) How are onomatopoeic words realised in the "Aquaman: Through Fire and Water" webcomic?
2) To what extend do the onomatopoeic words create meaningful imagery, illustrate actions and evoke readers' sensory associations toward the storyline of the webcomic?

2. Method
2.1 Design
The present study used Descriptive Qualitative design. Qualitative researches explore an understanding of a socio-cultural problem based on building a holistic picture, formed with words, and conducted in a natural setting (Ary *et al.*, 2018; Creswell, 2009). Further, Krippendorff's (2018) Content Analysis (CA hereafter) was also occupied as an approach in order to analyse the realisation of onomatopoeic words and phrases in the "Aquaman: Through Fire and Water" webcomic. CA is a research approach for establishing replicable and accurate inferences from texts (documents, graphics, images, even audible materials) to the contexts of their usage (Krippendorff, 2018). It was appropriately used in this study because webcomics are part of written discourses (documents). In regard, Morgan (2022) outlines that any written discourse containing text is a potential source for qualitative content analysis (p. 64).

2.2 Data and Source of Data
The data of this study were all onomatopoeic words found within the webcomic entitled "Aquaman: Through Fire and Water" which was out on January 23, 2024. Written by Ethan Sacks and published by DC Comics, this particular webcomic comprises 21 pages overall. It can be accessed and read for free through the following link: https://readcomiconline.li/Comic/Aquaman-Through-Fire-and-Water/Full?id=225170. Furthermore, the webcomic was selected as the research subject because of the following justifications:

1) It is a superhero comic which is much more appealing and enjoyed by readers of all ages nowadays, especially the young ones. In this respect, superhero comics are deemed to have the potential to influence (young) readers to do good things as presented in the comics (Martin, 2007).
2) It was published by DC Comics Inc. which is still the most popular and enjoyed comic-based heroic character-producer. DC Comics have represented some of the most enduring and recognisable heroic characters related to 20th- and 21st-century popular culture. More, Avery-Natale (2013) figured out that DC characters have survived more throughout the years than the other heroic characters, like Marvel characters.
3) Concerning the main character, Aquaman has the appeal of attracting comic readers due to his ability to survive and battle both on the surface and underwater which is deemed cool, especially since its commercially successful movie in 2018 (Kvetanová & Radošinská, 2021).
4) It comprises a number of onomatopoeic words which are deemed functionally important in order to create particularly vivid imagery for readers to be, as if, in the situation as in the webcomic. The presence of onomatopoeic expressions can also evoke readers' sensory associations toward the storyline being read.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure
In order to obtain accurate and reliable data that can be used for analysis, interpretations and conclusion drawing, analytic data collection procedures were necessarily and pertinently carried out. Hence, the procedures of data collection were carried out as follows:

1) Reading the webcomic through the link several times to make sure the data were thoroughly identified.
2) Taking notes and sorting out the onomatopoeic words whilst coding them into Bredin's (1996) types of onomatopoeia.

3) Tabulating the data comprehensively for in-depth analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

In order to answer each of the research questions, meticulous data analysis procedures were necessarily and carefully carried out. In this respect, Miles & Huberman's (1994) framework of interactive qualitative data analysis consisting of *data reduction*, *data display* and *conclusion drawing/verification* was applied respectively. Firstly, in the data reduction stage, we thoroughly identified and sorted out each and every onomatopoeic word in the webcomic carefully. Here, Bredin's (1996) framework of Onomatopoeia was occupied to analyse the data. Secondly, in the data display stage, a general frequency (percentage) count was carried out in order to take into account the occurrence of onomatopoeic words within the webcomic by counting and tabulating the data in Excel worksheets. This answered the first research question. Lastly, in the conclusion drawing/verification stage, the realisation of the onomatopoeic words was elucidated following Bredin's (1996) framework of Onomatopoeia in order to look at how this type of figurative speech create meaningful imagery, illustrate action as well as evoke readers' sensory associations toward the storyline of the webcomic. Emphirically, this method was appropriately applied because it is in line with a hermeneutic approach to Content Analysis, in which the researchers attempt to draw a deep understanding by providing an interpretive account of textual analysis with broader socio-cultural aspects (Avery-Natale, 2013).

2.5 Trustworthiness

For the purpose of the reliability and credibility so as to provide evidence of both credibility and confirmability of this study, inter-rater agreement and peer-debriefing were applied in order to test the interpretative and factual accuracy of the analysis. Two fellow researchers with expertise in Onomatopoeia (figures of speech) and Discourse Analysis in digital documents were invited to serve as the raters and debriefers to assess whether or not one or more key points were missing, overemphasised, or repeated in the analysis. In this concern, we scheduled several meetings with the raters/debriefers. Here, the raters/debriefers acted as a sort of critical detective to review and evaluate the aspects that need more detailed evaluation of the analysis.

3. Result and Discussion
3.1 Onomatopoeic Words in the Webcomic

An onomatopoeia-based coding of the selected webcomic was carefully carried out to answer the first research question. Following Bredin's (1996) framework of Onomatopoeia, the results are displayed in the following **Table 1**.

Table 1. The Frequency (displayed in percentage) of the Onomatopoeic Words in the Webcomic

Onomatopoeic Words	Interpretations	Types	Location in the Webcomic	F	%
Splaashh	A solid thing falls into the water.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 3 Page 6	2	5,26%
Cough.. Cough.. Cough..	Someone expels the air in response of something gets into or irritates his/her throat.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 3	1	2,63%
Rummmbblle	Something shakes the ground, usually because of an explosion.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 4 Page 19	2	5,26%
Booooooom	Something explodes.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 5 Page 19	2	5,26%
Wham	Something solid and hard hits another solid thing or makes a forcible impact.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 6 Page 14 Page 17	4	10,52%
Craaashhhhh	Two things hit each other causing a huge damage.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 7	1	2,63%
Splish	Something solid is descended on the water.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 9	1	2,63%
Slaaashhh	A flashy, sweeping stroke	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 12	1	2,63%

	of a very sharp object such as knife, sword or blade.				
Clang	Something hits a metal thing.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 14	1	2,63%
Crack	Something breaks slowly without a complete separation of the parts.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 14 Page 18	2	5,26%
Crunch	A stick-like thing is pierced into another solid thing.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 18	1	2,63%
Pluck	A slimy thing sticks on a flat thing.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 19	3	7,89%
Clink	Two or more bottles are knocked to each other.	Direct onomatopoeia	Page 21	1	2,63%
Swiiifff	A huge splash of water splashing forcefully on something/someone.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 3	1	2,63%
Shump	Something slides down a straight ramp.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 6	1	2,63%
Sccreeeeeee	A huge building is about to collapse slowly.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 6	1	2,63%
Wooooshh	Something is drowning fast into the water.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 7	1	2,63%
Fwoosh	Someone/something moves up in the air very quickly.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 8 Page 13	2	2,63%
Vzzyyuuumm	A laser is shooting something in a flash.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 11 Page 14 Page 17	3	7,89%
Skrraatchhh	A cut made with a flashy, sweeping stroke.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 13	1	2,63%
Whump	Something solid strikes causing a blow on something else.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 13	1	2,63%
Kaabooooom	Something explodes hugely.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 16	1	2,63%
Krrackklle	Something is cracking.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 18	1	2,63%
Sploosh	A striking splash of water shoots into something.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 18	1	2,63%
Thwump	A sound made by bending the top part of an armchair.	Associative onomatopoeia	Page 21	1	2,63%
Snap	Something solid is broken apart.	Exemplary onomatopoeia	Page 17	1	2,63%
Total				**38**	**100%**

The discrepancies in the proportion of onomatopoeic words found in the webcomic suggest that the representation of onomatopoeia differs referring to the nature of graphically represented sounds and actions. As shown in **Table 1**, it can be seen that the word "wham" is the most occurring onomatopoeia comprising 4 (10,52%) words found in the webcomic, followed by the words "vzzyyuuumm" and "pluck" comprising 3 (7,89%) words found, and then the words "splash", "rummmbblle", "booooooom", "fwoosh" and "crack" comprising 2 (5,26%) words found for each. The other 30 onomatopoeic words were found only 1 (2,63%) word for each in the webcomic.

Furthermore, regarding the types of onomatopoeia, it can be seen that Direct Onomatopoeia (50%) is the most occurring type found, followed by Associative Onomatopoeia (46,15%) and Exemplary Onomatopoeia (3,84%) in the last position. The result is displayed in the following **Table 2**.

Table 2. The Frequency (displayed in percentage) of the Types of Onomatopoeia in the Webcomic

Types of Onomatopoeia	F	%
Direct Onomatopoeia	13	50%
Associative Onomatopoeia	12	46,15%
Exemplary Onomatopoeia	1	3,84%
Total	**26**	**100%**

The discrepancies in the proportion of each type of onomatopoeic words found in the webcomic suggest that the writer of the webcomic emphasises on a specific type of onomatopoeia. The most occurring use of Direct Onomatopoeia might represent comic-specific words that are interconnected with our cultural vocabulary. By utilising a certain type of onomatopoeia may possibly draw readers' attention by presenting an ostensive communicative stimulus (Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021). It should be highlighted that Onomatopoeia is nonetheless an integral aspect of the mainstream comics aesthetic (Guynes, 2014).

3.2 Realisation of the Onomatopoeic Words in the Webcomic
It is common for comic book writers to capture the sense of power and existence of the characters in action with onomatopoeic expressions. The presence of onomatopoeic words offers an intriguing challenge to the notion that the relationship between word-form and meaning is entirely arbitrary, as the sounds of the onomatopoeic words appear to reflect or mimic (at least partially) their interpretations (Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021). Due to space limitation, only 5 most fundamental onomatopoeic realisations were selected for in-depth analysis.

To begin with, **Figure 1** presents an image where an old man who is sitting on a small boat gets splashed by the sea water which then makes him cough. There are two onomatopoeic words are found in this image; *swiiifff* and *cough.. cough.. cough.. .* The first and most obvious onomatopoeia in this image is "swiiifff" because of the yellowish hollowed font of the word. The position of the word may also directly capture readers' attention that the onomatopoeic word represents the sound of the sea water splashing hugely toward the old man sitting on his boat. Semiotically, the image cannot perform the audible sound, yet, the onomatopoeic word "swiiifff" helps conveying the intensity and properties of the sound. Figuratively, such an onomatopoeic word may bring language alive in the readers' imagination by capturing the sound in relation to the image since onomatopoeia is often used to portray non-dialogue sounds, such as an action and related symbolic effects, expressed in highly stylised letters embedded in aesthetics (Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021).

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Figure 1. The onomatopoeic words "swiiifff" and "cough.. cough.. cough.." from page 3.

Another onomatopoeic word in the image is "cough.. cough.. cough..". Representationally, the words are realised within a dialogue-balloon with its tail pointing at the old man. This indicates that the words are uttered by the only person in the image (the old man sitting on a boat). The breath marks or 'whiskers' (≡ ≡) on both of the top-left and down-right sides of the words emphasise the realisation of the onomatopoeic words. Since the image does not move, the presence of such particular onomatopoeic words can illustrate the action of coughing performed by the old man due to the huge splash of water. Linguistically, the word 'cough' is a Direct Onomatopoeia which means that it resembles the sound that it names (Bredin, 1996). Even before the narrative of the webcomic begins, the presence of the onomatopoeic words helps intensifying and emphasising the narrative (Guynes, 2014; Mensuan, 2023; Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021). Essentially, this will ease readers to preliminarily understand what may be happening in the upcoming sections of the webcomic.

Furthermore, **Figure 2** presents another fundamental onomatopoeic word which may evoke readers' imagination toward the storyline being read. The onomatopoeic word "booooooom", without a doubt, denotes an explosion of something (Bredin, 1996). As seen, the word is written in transparent hollowed capital letters in which readers can obviously see the vivid image of an oil rig explodes so hugely that both fire burns and the water spurts out of the sea. The string of the phoneme 'o' within the word presents the sound as continuous and homogeneous. This indicates that the scene of explosion might be happening in a quite duration of time. Written in the top-centre of the frame, the writer of the webcomic may want to emphasise the situation in the scene. Such a realisation of the onomatopoeia will encourage readers' imaginations as well as synesthetically make a sense of rumble toward the image of the webcomic.
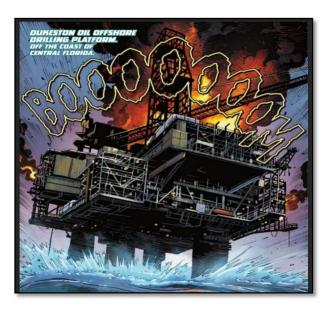

Figure 2. The Onomatopoeic Word "booooooom" from Page 5.

Importantly, the presence of such a particular onomatopoeia in the webcomic functions like a glue which brings images and language together (Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021). It is not unusual that a certain onomatopoeic word may fill almost all side of the webcomic page due to the writer's intention to bring up the importance of a specific action or circumstance within the webcomic that readers need to focus on (Bredin, 1996; Moore, 2015). For instance, the word "booom" in all sizes and shapes is a common Direct Onomatopoeia which is always associated with great explosions. It informs readers of the relationship between the situation in the foreground and the situation in the background of the scene (Fidler, 2006). As Bredin (1996) suggests that it seems to be a common human instinct to devise onomatopoeic name for such a particular sound as 'boom' to be in relation to an explosion. Even in different languages, the onomatopoeic word 'boom' remains denoting a sound of explosions (Bredin, 1996). Thus, this may directly capture a vivid imagery in readers' minds of the storyline being read, even when the narrative is absent on one page.

The realisation of suitable onomatopoeia also lies on the availability of non-verbal sounds (Bredin, 1996), like 'fwoosh'. The onomatopoeic word "fwoosh", as presented in **Figure 3**, is an Associative Onomatopoeia

which consists of a conventional association between something and the sound of an action performed. If such an onomatopoeia is considered more deeply, it is evident that it resides on a quick movement of floating through the air. In the webcomic, the word "fwoosh" is realised vividly on the right-bottom of the page. Written in transparent hollowed capital letter, it is integrated with the colours of the image. The close position next to the main character (Aquaman) will surely make readers capture the action done by the character (moving up quickly through the air whilst lifting a lifeboat).

Figure 3. The Onomatopoeic Word "fwoosh" from Page 8.

The presence of such a particular onomatopoeia could communicate the sensory experience such as nuances and impressions of the scene presented in the webcomic. This is because the onomatopoeia conveys to the readers what they would experience through various sensory channels if the activity were to occur physically in front of them (Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021). However, readers might experience a bit better if the hollowed word was filled with a firm colour, like black or dark brown. Ideologically, the writer may want to focus on showing the main character's power by posing what he does in the image (saving the civilians by lifting the lifeboat away from the fire). Nevertheless, the size and shape of the word can fairly illustrate the action and evoke readers' sensory associations toward the scene and storyline of the webcomic.

Further, **Figure 4** presents an onomatopoeic word "vzzyyuuumm" which resembles the sound of a laser shooting the main character (Aquaman) in a flash. Representationally, the word is written in a hollowed reddish capital letter adapting the background of the image which denote that the shooting laser puts a great damage to Aquaman and his surroundings. Aesthetically, such a realisation of the onomatopoeic word makes the focal art can still be viewed. The writer of the webcomic seems to demand that the scene on the page will make an impact and create meaningful imagery upon readers' minds. Given the fact that readers are often interested in the visual-storytelling aspect of a webcomic, a creative style of writing is necessarily required to attract international readers so as to add a value to the comic itself (Al-Faruque, 2023).

Figure 4. The Onomatopoeic Word "vzzyyuuumm" from Page 11.

More, the position of the onomatopoeic word which is close to the image of the laser will surely make readers easily capture that the focus of the storyline and may evoke readers upon a new scene presented on the page. Discursively, this adds drama to a climactic scene where Aquaman is hurting when the laser electrifies his body. Embedding onomatopoeic words close to a certain and rarely-occurred object in a comic will possibly carry a focus of attention from the readers toward what is going on in the scene of the webcomic (Guynes, 2014; Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021). This could also be connected to the types of assumptions that readers could discover through direct evidence provided by the onomatopoeia presented in the image (Moore, 2015; Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021).

Last but not least, **Figure 5** presents another popular yet important onomatopoeic word in the realm of comic, especially superhero comics—*wham*. The onomatopoeic word "wham" is a Direct Onomatopoeia resembling the sound of something or someone makes a forceful blow or hit on something/someone else. This particular onomatopoeia is quite popular amongst superhero comics such as DC comics and Marvel comics. The realisation of this word is often associated with the image of someone being hit, such as shown in **Figure 5** below.

Figure 5. The Onomatopoeic Word "wham" from Page 17.

As seen, the onomatopoeic word "wham" is realised in a hollowed blue capital letter. It matches the background of the image which is mostly dominated by blue colour. Representationally, the position of the word (bottom-right) as well as the size of the font suitably fit for readers' eyes to see. Semiotically, with the image of Aquaman being hit on the face, readers can easily interpret that the function of the onomatopoeic word "wham" is to mimic the action of hitting and punching in order to visualise more by only reading the webcomic. In this context, the onomatopoeic word represents a type of action more than sound: the nerve-wracking actions of fighting. It is noteworthy that the meaning and interpretation of the onomatopoeic word 'wham' can be grasped by readers without adverting to the sound (Fidler, 2006). Through this aesthetic feature, readers will be served with direct linguistic evidence as an onomatopoeic expression carries a further action-showing element by mimicking the sound resembling the action (Bredin, 1996).

3.3 Discussion
In line with what Bredin (1996) ever said that the presence of onomatopoeia within literary discourses such

as comics and poems has become an object of consciousness between the intertwined relations of words and their acoustical meanings which give a sense of linguistic experience (p. 557). It is likely an opaque thing to get into our sense when the realisation of onomatopoeia is absent within such literary texts. The findings of this study reveal that through the presence of specific onomatopoeic words, readers' sensory and cognitive associations are stimulated respectively. However, we cannot also forget that the comic medium addresses two intrinsic features simultaneously—the visual aspect of the drawn picture and the written aspect of narration and dialogue inside and along the storyline. These two things are intertwinedly fundamental in comic construction. That is, it is important to consider that the use of onomatopoeia must be viewed in relation to the rest of the written language and graphics around the webcomic because they can affect one another and their meanings are typically created throughout the pages of the webcomic (Guynes, 2014; Mensuan, 2023; Rohan, Sasamoto & O'Brien, 2021; Stainbrook, 2003).

4. Conclusion

The present study has provided an understanding on the framework of onomatopoeia in a webcomic. The analysis of the onomatopoeic realisation leads to the conclusion that Onomatopoeia has functions far beyond conceptualizing sound imagery within a webcomic. It can inform readers about relative relation between texts (backgrounding, marking of text units) and what happens to the characters and other entities in each scene of the webcomic's storyline. Importantly, the integration of the onomatopoeic realisations with the aesthetic depiction of the images in the webcomic can fairly create meaningful imagery and illustrate actions of the webcomic. Thus, it evokes readers' sensory associations toward the scenes and storyline of the webcomic. Methodologically, to extend the study, other aspects and approaches to both onomatopoeia and textual analysis (sound-symbolism, metonymy, stylistics, multimodality) should be the research agenda for extending studies on figures of speech probing into onomatopoeia and its relation to textual analysis.

5. Acknowledgements

6. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no any competing conflict of interest.

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