

HUMAN ONOMATOPOEIA AND MEANING IN THE WEBTOON *STUDY GROUP SEASON 1* BY SHIN HYUNG WOOK AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the forms and meanings of human onomatopoeia in the Webtoon Study Group Season 1 by Shin Hyung Wook, as well as its implications for Indonesian Language learning in Senior High School (SMA). This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The data source is the Webtoon *Study Group Season 1* by Shin Hyung Wook, and the research data consist of onomatopoeic words. Data were collected using the observation and note-taking technique, and subsequently analyzed using the referential identity method based on Thomas and Clara's (2004) theory of onomatopoeia forms and Simpson's (2004) theory of onomatopoeia meaning. The results show that the most dominant form of onomatopoeia is sounds made by humans, totaling 35 data points. Based on meaning, 11 data points (31.43%) possess lexical meaning (found in the KBBI), while 24 data points (68.57%) carry non-lexical meaning, where the interpretation depends heavily on the context. The findings of this study are implicated in Indonesian Language learning for Grade XI Phase F, specifically within the short story writing module. Onomatopoeia can be utilized as a linguistic element to depict sounds, movements, atmospheres, and characters' expressions, thereby making the story more vivid and communicative.

Keywords: Onomatopoeia forms; onomatopoeia meaning; webtoon; Indonesian language learning;

1 INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool used by humans to convey ideas, thoughts, and feelings (Chaer, 2002). Along with technological advancements, the use of language does not only appear in oral and written forms but is also integrated with visual elements in digital media, one of which is digital comics or Webtoons. In such media, the use of signs, symbols, and linguistic elements plays an important role in constructing meaning, including the use of onomatopoeia as a form of sound imitation that reinforces the depiction of actions, atmospheres, and characters' expressions. A sign itself is understood as something that represents something else (Darma et al., 2020).

The variety of signs explained by Charles Sanders Peirce in Ambarini and Umaya (2010) includes icons, symbols, and indices. Onomatopoeia is categorized as an iconic sign because the word form shares a resemblance with the sound or action it represents. Harper (2010) in Fayzulloyevna and Farkhodovna (2025) also outlines that onomatopoeia is a word-formation process that imitates the sound or action it refers to. In comics, onomatopoeia functions not only to represent sounds but also helps overcome the limitations of static images so that events in the story feel more alive. Nonetheless, the forms and meanings of onomatopoeia are highly diverse, often depending on the story context, which potentially leads to differing interpretations among readers.

An onomatopoeia that frequently appears in Webtoons is the sound of punching (Bajraghosa, 2020). One action Webtoon that extensively utilizes onomatopoeia is *Study Group Season 1* by Shin Hyung Wook. This action-genre Webtoon features numerous fight scenes, movements, and interactions between characters dominated by the use of onomatopoeia, making it interesting to study in terms of form and meaning. Furthermore, the school-life theme raised in the story is close to the experiences of senior high school students, making it relevant as a learning resource.

Research on onomatopoeia has been widely conducted; however, most studies still focus on the analysis of form and meaning without linking it to Indonesian Language learning. For instance, research by Ananda dan Gunawan (2025) examines the forms and contextual meanings of onomatopoeia in the Webtoon *Who's Mr. President?*, but has not yet implicated the research results in education. Based on observations conducted on 50 eleventh-grade students, only 46% were familiar with the term onomatopoeia, while the

other 54% had never heard of it. This condition indicates that students' understanding of onomatopoeia still needs to be improved.

The results of this study are expected to be implicated in Indonesian Language learning for Grade XI Phase F in the short story writing module. The research findings can be utilized as a linguistic reference in story writing. Accordingly, onomatopoeia can help describe sounds, movements, atmospheres, and characters' expressions more clearly, thereby rendering the story more vivid.

2 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach is used in this study, as the presentation of the processed data is explained in words or described descriptively. Djajasudarma (2006) explains that a qualitative approach refers to research efforts that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from language users. With this approach, the researcher can elaborate on the data in detail through descriptive explanations.

Tojiri et al. (2023) explain that research data can be obtained through various methods, such as surveys, experiments, field observations, or document analysis. The data collection technique in this study employs the observation and note-taking technique. The observation technique was used because the research data were obtained by reading and closely examining the *Webtoon Study Group Season 1* by Shin Hyung Wook. The researcher read each episode carefully to identify the emerging onomatopoeia. Subsequently, the discovered data were noted down and grouped according to the forms and meanings of the onomatopoeia.

The analysis employs the referential identity method (metode padan referensial) with the dividing-element technique (teknik pilah unsur tertentu). According to Muhammad (2014), the referential identity method is an analytical method where the determination of the problem is based on referents or points of reference outside of language. In the analysis process, the interpretation of the form and meaning of onomatopoeia was carried out by considering its occurrence context in each scene, so that the analysis results are more accurate and the subjectivity of interpretation can be minimized. Then, the presentation of the analysis results uses an informal technique in the form of descriptive explanations.

3 RESULTS

Based on the research conducted, three out of four forms of onomatopoeia were found based on the theory of Thomas and Clara (2004). These forms are nature onomatopoeia, human onomatopoeia, and miscellaneous/object onomatopoeia. Among the three forms, human onomatopoeia is the most frequently used, appearing in 35 data points. Human onomatopoeia frequently appears and is used to describe the sound of punches, footsteps, and other activities performed by humans. Furthermore, based on Simpson's (2004) theory of onomatopoeia meaning outlined in Jaya (2023) study, non-lexical meaning is the most widely found, accounting for 24 data points or 68.57%.

Table 1. Classification of Onomatopoeia Forms

No.	Onomatopoeia Form	Data Amount	Percentage (%)
1.	Animal onomatopoeia	0	0%
2.	Nature onomatopoeia	2	3,77%
3.	Human onomatopoeia	35	66,04%
4.	Miscellaneous/object onomatopoeia	16	30,19%
Total		53	100%

3.1 Forms and Meaning of Onomatopoeia

Forms and Meanings of Onomatopoeia Based on the research results, a total of 53 onomatopoeic data points were found across three episodes of the *Webtoon Study Group Season 1* by Shin Hyung Wook. The data show the presence of four forms of onomatopoeia: human sounds, animal sounds, nature sounds, and object sounds. However, the discussion in this study is focused on the most dominant form, which is human-produced onomatopoeia. The discussion regarding the forms of human onomatopoeia and their meanings is elaborated through several data points as follows:

Data (1)

Context: In the morning under a clear sky, several characters are seen walking toward the school gate. The characters are walking casually. As their footsteps move sequentially on the road surface, the onomatopoeia "TAP TAP" appears.

"TAP TAP"



Image 1. Data 1 (Source: Webtoon *Study Group*, Ep. 2)

The onomatopoeia "TAP TAP" imitates the sound of footsteps produced by walking slowly or with light steps performed by the characters. The word "TAP TAP" is categorized as non-lexical onomatopoeia because it is a sound imitation whose spelling is adjusted by the author to depict the sound of footsteps. The meaning of this onomatopoeia is not defined and is not found in the dictionary. Contextually in the story, the meaning of this onomatopoeia is to describe a constant and unhurried rhythm of footsteps. The situation in the image also shows a calm and relaxed state. The repetitive sound indicates that the activity occurs continuously or repeatedly.

Data (2)

Context: In the scene within the panel, a character is suddenly seen in front of Teacher Hankyung, panting heavily from running fast to escape a fight situation, or more precisely, to avoid being hit by Hyunwoo. The character's physical condition looks very exhausted. The breath, which was initially regular, becomes heavy and intermittent. At that moment, the onomatopoeia "HOSH HOSH" appears.

"HOSH HOSH"



Image 2. Data 2 (Source: Webtoon *Study Group*, Ep. 1)

The onomatopoeia "HOSH HOSH" originates from the human respiratory system. The sound describes heavy and intermittent inhalations and exhalations due to fatigue. The word "HOSH HOSH" is a non-lexical onomatopoeia. This word is not yet found in the KBBI, so its meaning is explained through the story's context. The context of the story reveals a character who is exhausted and out of energy due to running fast. The repetition of the sound indicates that the condition lasts for several moments.

Data (3)

Context: Teacher Hankyung is in a condition filled with anxiety and tension. Various events that have occurred and will be faced make her mind restless. Her facial expression shows worry and anxiety as she remembers past experiences. In this atmosphere, the onomatopoeia "DEG DEG" appears.

"DEG DEG"



Image 3. Data 3 (Source: Webtoon *Study Group*, Ep. 2)

The onomatopoeia "DEG DEG" originates from biological activity or internal organs of the human body. The word is categorized as lexical onomatopoeia because its root meaning is found in the KBBI. The word "DEG" comes from the word 'degup' (heartbeat), which means the imitation of a loud heartbeat. Although the author modified the word degup by only writing "DEG", the meaning remains aligned. Contextually in the story, the sound imitates a heartbeat that beats faster and stronger due to feelings of fear and tension. The repetition of the sound provides an illustration of a continuous heartbeat rhythm. The panel image shows the character feeling scared and tense.

Data (4)

Context: Sehyun along with several other characters are inside a room. Sehyun is experiencing bullying and physical violence from the perpetrators. He is kicked hard until he falls to the floor. As a result of the repeated violence received, Sehyun experiences breathing difficulties and begins to cough. At that moment, the onomatopoeia "UHUK" appears.



Image 4. Data 4 (Source: Webtoon *Study Group*, Ep. 2)

The onomatopoeia "UHUK" originates from the human respiratory system and throat. The word is classified as lexical onomatopoeia because this form exists in the KBBI, defined as the imitation of a coughing sound. This sound represents a forced cough coming out as the body's response to disturbances in the respiratory tract. In the context of the story, the character is seen falling and coughing slightly after being beaten by another character. The use of this onomatopoeia clarifies the character's physical condition after receiving a fairly hard blow. In addition, the sound "UHUK" also gives the impression that the character is experiencing fatigue and breathing difficulties due to the pain felt.

Data (5)

Context: In the first scene, Gamin is involved in a fight with another character. He manages to launch a powerful punch at the opponent's body. The second scene is similar, showing Hyunwoo launching attacks at his opponent repeatedly and powerfully. The impact resulting from the punch causes the onomatopoeia "BUGH" to appear.



Image 5. Data 5 (Source: Webtoon *Study Group*, Ep. 1)

The onomatopoeia "BUGH" is produced from direct physical contact on the human body, visualizing the impact sound when a character's body receives a hard punch or blow from another character. The word is a non-lexical onomatopoeia because its meaning is not explicitly defined in the KBBI. Although the word "BUGH" is frequently used, its formal meaning is not established in the dictionary, thus requiring the story's context to determine its exact meaning. This onomatopoeia is used to describe the sound of a punch. In the context of the story, the characters are fighting and hitting each other hard, causing the sound "BUGH". The visual effect of sharp lines reinforces that the character punches hard and fast.

3.2 Implications for Indonesian Language Learning in Senior High School (SMA)

Based on the research results, the use of onomatopoeia in the Webtoon *Study Group Season 1* by Shin Hyung Wook can be implicated in Indonesian Language learning in SMA, particularly in Grade XI Phase F. The results of this study are relevant to Chapter 3, namely "Menggali Nilai Sejarah Bangsa Lewat Cerita Pendek" (Exploring National History Values Through Short Stories), especially on the topic or sub-chapter "Menulis Cerita Pendek Berdasarkan Kejadian Sehari-hari" (Writing Short Stories Based on Everyday Events). In the lesson module, students are directed to write short stories based on daily experiences by paying attention to the intrinsic elements of short stories.

The research findings regarding the forms and meanings of onomatopoeia can be utilized as a linguistic reference in the short story writing process, particularly to depict sounds, movements, atmospheres, or characters' expressions in a more vivid and communicative manner. The onomatopoeia found in the Webtoon can serve as examples of language use capable of strengthening the depiction of events in a story. By understanding the forms and meanings of onomatopoeia, students can develop creative writing skills through a more varied word selection, making the stories they write more expressive and easily understood by readers.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that among the three types of onomatopoeia identified in the Webtoon *Study Group Season 1* based on Thomas and Clara (2004) theory namely nature sounds, human sounds, and object/miscellaneous sounds, human produced sounds emerge as the most dominant form, accounting for 35 data points. Human onomatopoeia is widely used to describe various human activities, such as the sound of punches, footsteps, and other movements that reinforce the depiction of scenes in the Webtoon. Furthermore, non-lexical meaning is also found to be more dominant than lexical meaning. The dominance of non-lexical meaning indicates that most onomatopoeias in the Webtoon are used to describe specific sounds that are more flexible for the author to employ. In addition, the results of this study can be implicated in Indonesian Language learning in SMA, particularly for Grade XI Phase F, within the module "Exploring National History Values Through Short Stories," specifically on the topic of writing short stories based on everyday events. The findings regarding the forms and meanings of onomatopoeia can be utilized as a linguistic reference to help students create descriptions of sounds, movements, atmospheres, and characters' expressions so that the written stories become more vivid, communicative, and interesting.

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