



# Interpreting the Onomatopoeia in Javanese Language: The *Yowis Ben* Comic by Bayu Skak Case

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes comics as a visual art medium that communicates meaning through the interaction between images and text. The specific form of this interaction can be seen in the use of onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia in comics uses pictures as representations of sensory experiences to overcome the limitations of word use. Through pictures, onomatopoeia not only means the imitation of sounds, but also creates impressions, such as emotions or attitudes. This study aims to interpret the meaning of onomatopoeia accompanied by images in the comic *Yowis Ben: Lika-liku Anak Band (YBLAB)* karya Bayu Skak. The research used a descriptive qualitative method with the onomatopoeic categorization theory of Thomas & Clara (2004), and the onomatopoeic continuum theory of Sasamoto (2019). According to Thomas & Clara's (2004) framework, the findings of this research show that there is one imitation word for animal sounds (*Call of Animals*), two imitation words for natural sounds (*Sounds of Nature*), four imitation words for human sounds (*Sounds by Human*), and six imitation words for various sounds (*Miscellaneous Sounds*). In addition, based on the continuum theory from Sasamoto (2019), it was found that, images in comics make the word onomatopoeia, which is an imitation of sound, experience a narrowing of meaning by making it more specific through the appearance of the meaning of impressions, the meaning of feelings, the details of events or events, and the intensity of events.

Keywords: onomatopoeia; Javanese language; *Yowis Ben* comic; sounds imitation

## ABSTRAK

**"Menafsirkan Onomatope dalam Bahasa Jawa: Kasus Komik *Yowis Ben* karya Bayu Skak.** Penelitian ini menganalisis komik sebagai media seni visual yang mengkomunikasikan makna melalui interaksi antara gambar dan teks. Bentuk spesifik dari interaksi ini dapat dilihat dalam penggunaan onomatopoeia. Onomatope dalam komik memanfaatkan gambar sebagai representasi pengalaman indra untuk mengatasi keterbatasan penggunaan kata. Dengan gambar, onomatope tidak hanya bermakna tiruan bunyi, tetapi juga menimbulkan kesan, seperti emosi atau sikap. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginterpretasikan makna onomatope yang disertai gambar dalam komik *Yowis Ben: Lika-liku Anak Band (YBLAB)* karya Bayu Skak. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan teori kategorisasi onomatope Thomas & Clara (2004), dan teori kontinum onomatope Sasamoto (2019). Dengan menggunakan teori Thomas & Clara (2004) hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya satu kata tiruan bunyi binatang (*Call of Animals*), dua kata tiruan bunyi alam (*Sounds of Nature*), empat kata tiruan bunyi manusia (*Sounds by Human*), dan enam kata tiruan aneka ragam bunyi (*Miscellaneous Sounds*). Selain itu, berdasarkan teori kontinum dari Sasamoto (2019) ditemukan bahwa, gambar pada komik membuat kata onomatope yang merupakan tiruan bunyi mengalami penyempitan makna dengan membuatnya lebih spesifik melalui munculnya makna kesan, makna perasaan, detail kejadian atau peristiwa, dan intensitas kejadian.

Kata kunci: onomatopoeia; bahasa jawa; komik *Yowis Ben*; tiruan bunyi



## 1. Introduction

Comics represent a distinctive visual art form that combines imagery and text to convey ideas. What distinguishes comics from other visual narratives is their composition, which is arranged as a sequence of images juxtaposed in a particular order. To effectively communicate the creator's intended message within the comic medium, textual and visual elements must be seamlessly integrated, thereby cultivating an aesthetic experience that resonates with the audience's sensibilities. As a multimodal medium, comics allow readers to process verbal and visual elements simultaneously. Words can thus be interpreted as abstract symbols alongside images (Haendiges, 2024). Comic narratives arise from the interplay of images as visual signs and words as verbal signs. Textual elements typically appear in speech or thought bubbles to convey the characters' utterances, emotions, and contextual information, which support the visual narrative (Nurgiyantoro, 2005, as cited in Pandanwangi & Nuryantiningsih, 2018).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Onomatopoeia in Comics

This multimodal synthesis becomes particularly evident in the use of onomatopoeia in comics. In linguistic studies, onomatopoeia is understood as a device that exploits sound imitation to enhance the expressive qualities of language. However, when onomatopoeic expressions function solely as written textual components, their interpretation may involve a degree of arbitrariness due to variations in how sound imitations are perceived. This linguistic phenomenon is particularly evident in comics, where written text is interwoven with visual elements (Abbott, 1986). Consequently, the semantic interpretation of onomatopoeia in comics is shaped by the interaction between linguistic forms and visual cues, including characters' facial expressions and bodily movements within the narrative (Sasamoto & Jackson, 2016).

The function of onomatopoeia in comics can be observed in the Javanese comic *Yowis Ben: Lika-liku Anak Band* (YBLAB), written by Bayu Skak in 2021. This comic illustrates the interaction between onomatopoeia, textual elements, and visual representation, demonstrating the dynamic nature of onomatopoeic expression within the comic medium. In *YBLAB*, onomatopoeia performs various functions, including representing contextual situations, providing ambient background sounds, reproducing sounds produced by objects, and imitating natural auditory environments.

The deliberate use of onomatopoeic expressions in *YBLAB*, together with characters' facial and bodily expressions, contributes to the creation of a sensorial reading experience. This integration supports narrative immersion by enabling readers to interpret meaning through both auditory imagination and visual perception (Rohan et al., 2021). In comics, onomatopoeic expressions frequently operate as dual signifiers, functioning simultaneously as textual elements and visual symbols.

An illustrative example of this dual function is presented in Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1: Surprise scene  
(Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)



Figure 2: Playing guitar  
(Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

Both images contain the onomatopoeic expression *jreng*; however, its meaning varies according to the visual context of each panel. In Figure 1, *jreng* accompanies a scene in which characters express surprise upon encountering musical instruments, functioning as an imitation of ambient background sound. In contrast, Figure 2 depicts a character playing a guitar, where *jreng* represents the sound produced by plucking the guitar strings. This example illustrates how visual context may influence the interpretation of onomatopoeic expressions in comics.

## 2.2. Onomatopoeia in Multimodal and Visual Contexts

In principle, the interpretation of comics involves the interaction of multiple expressive modalities, encompassing both linguistic and visual components (Altenberg & Owen, 2015). Visual elements in comics therefore, function as semiotic resources that contribute to meaning-making processes. In visual and fine art contexts, symbols are primarily realized through depictions of figures, objects, and spatial settings, as well as through design principles such as line, color, texture, and contrast (Ismail et al., 2023). In comics, these visual semiotic resources interact directly with linguistic elements, particularly onomatopoeia, enabling meaning to be constructed through the integration of sound symbolism and visual representation.

From a semantic perspective, the study of onomatopoeic expressions through the integration of image and language represents an important field of research. Onomatopoeia is understood here as a linguistic form that encodes meaning through auditory mimicry (Sasamoto, 2019). This perspective aligns with earlier linguistic research that emphasizes the semantic and iconic dimensions of onomatopoeia. This approach aligns with previous researches as by Sudaryanto (1989), Sunarya & Sutono (2020), and Grabar et al. (2022).

## 2.3. Research Gap

Previous studies have examined onomatopoeia from various linguistic perspectives. Sudaryanto (1989) analyzed sound iconicity in spoken Javanese using an articulatory-phonetic approach, emphasizing that the meaning of onomatopoeia arises from auditory perception and is influenced by the listener's cognitive interpretation. Sunarya and Sutono (2020), on the other hand, focused on written Javanese texts, particularly onomatopoeic lexemes representing the sounds of moving objects, and showed that sound conceptualization contributes to semantic attributes such as size, weight, and texture. In a broader linguistic context, Grabar et al. (2022) analyzed the semantics of onomatopoeia related to love, affection, and gender in German and Russian, highlighting the role of phonetic features, physiological sound sources, and geographical factors in meaning construction.

Although these studies contribute significantly to our understanding of the semantics of onomatopoeia, they primarily examine onomatopoeia in spoken language, conventional written texts, or non-Javanese languages. Research specifically addressing Javanese onomatopoeia in multimodal narrative media such as comics remains limited. Comics integrate linguistic elements with visual and narrative components, which can influence the semantic interpretation of onomatopoeic expressions. However, this interaction has not been sufficiently explored in previous studies.

Furthermore, this study aims to fill the research gap by analyzing the semantic meaning of Javanese onomatopoeia in Bayu Skak's comic "YBLAB." The investigation focuses on how onomatopoeic expressions function semantically within the narrative context of a contemporary Javanese comic, with the goal of fostering a better understanding of their semantic nuances and their role in comic discourse.

## 3. Methods

This study uses a qualitative research methodology, characterized by the systematic collection and documentation of data in various forms, including written text, sentences, and visual representations

(Subroto, 1992: 7). An inductive approach is applied in the data analysis to identify and interpret meaning within the specific context of the research problem (Nugrahani, 2014: 25). The primary focus of this research is the semantic interpretation of onomatopoeia as utilized in comics. Accordingly, this study adopts a cognitive linguistic perspective, emphasizing the relationship between meaning and linguistic form (Sutedi, 2003).

The research is divided into three main stages. The first stage involves data collection, focusing on the identification of onomatopoeic words appearing within comic panels, along with their accompanying visual elements. Comic panels serve as the basic units of comics, containing both illustrations and text that jointly construct the narrative (Maharsi, 2011: 7). The onomatopoeic expressions selected as data are taken directly from the comic *Yowis Ben: Lika-liku Anak Band (YBLAB)* without any modification to their original form, including sound or punctuation.

Data collection is carried out using the documentation method, supported by systematic note-taking from the primary data source, namely the comic *Yowis Ben: Lika-liku Anak Band by Bayu Skak*, published by Pop Publisher Jakarta in 2021. The selection of this comic is based on its publication period, which suggests the potential presence of contemporary Javanese onomatopoeic expressions influenced by recent linguistic developments. The collected data are then classified according to their structural characteristics using the onomatopoeia categorization proposed by Thomas and Clara (2004), which consists of four categories: animal calls, natural sounds, human-generated sounds, and miscellaneous sounds.

The second stage of the research involves analyzing the semantic nuances of the onomatopoeic expressions identified in the YBLAB comic. This analysis examines the correspondence between visual elements and onomatopoeic words by employing Sasamoto's (2019) onomatopoeia continuum theory. This theory conceptualizes onomatopoeia in comics as a spectrum of meaning that extends beyond mere sound imitation and encompasses textual, mood-related, atmospheric, and emotional impressions (Sasamoto & Jackson, 2016). Consequently, the interpretation of onomatopoeia extends beyond linguistic form and includes nonverbal signals such as facial expressions and body posture, which can influence semantic variation (Rohan et al., 2021). This interpretive process is supported by the interaction between textual and visual elements, with onomatopoeia serving as evidence for the intended auditory and affective dimensions in the comic scenes (Sasamoto, 2019: 58).

To support the interpretation of onomatopoeic meanings, the analysis is supplemented by consultation with several digital dictionaries, including the Javanese Digital Dictionary (sastra.org), KBBI Online Kemdikbud, Cambridge Dictionary (1995), Oxford Learner's Dictionary Online (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>), Language Dictionary Online Japanese (Jisho.org), and Macdonell's Online Sanskrit Dictionary (1926). This step is necessary to verify the meanings of onomatopoeic expressions, particularly in cases where non-Javanese terms appear in the YBLAB comic.

## 4. Results

Based on Thomas & Clara's (2004), the onomatopoeic expressions identified in the *Yowis Ben: Lika-liku Anak Band (YBLAB)* comics are classified into four categories: call of animals, sounds of nature, sounds made by humans, and miscellaneous sounds. This classification reflects the distribution of onomatopoeic forms as they appear in the comic narratives.

### 4.1. Call of Animals

In the category of calls of animals, onomatopoeia is used to imitate sounds related to animal movements or vocalizations. In the YBLAB comics, one onomatopoeic word belonging to this category is *werr*. The term *werr* functions as an auditory representation of the sound produced by the flapping movement of a bird's wings. This usage corresponds with Horne (1974, accessed via Sastra.org) characterization of



“*wêr*” as denoting rapid upward movement, which aligns with the depiction of birds swiftly ascending into the air.

#### 4.2. Sounds of Nature

Onomatopoeia frequently serves as a linguistic device for replicating sounds from the natural world, encompassing auditory representations of natural objects and phenomena. Within this category, two specific onomatopoeic terms, *Whuz* and *Whoosh*, deserve special mention, as they are closely linked to the audible manifestations of wind.

- 1) *Whuz* is used to imitate the sound of wind movement. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (1995), *whuz* or *whiz*, characterized by the phonetic element /z/, conveys a symbolic hissing sound and denotes actions characterized by swiftness or objects in rapid motion.
- 2) *Whoosh* represents a softer auditory imitation of wind. The *Cambridge Dictionary* (1995) defines *whoosh* as the sound produced by air or objects moving swiftly through space. These carefully selected onomatopoeic expressions adeptly capture the auditory essence of wind-related occurrences, providing an effective means of auditory and visual engagement, particularly within the context of comic narratives.

#### 4.3. Sounds Made by Humans

Sounds made by humans include onomatopoeic expressions that imitate sounds produced by human body movements, such as hand, mouth, or other physical actions. Four onomatopoeic forms are distinguished in this category:

1. *Plak* imitates the sound produced when a hand contacts an object, akin to a striking motion. Poerwadarmintha (1939) elucidates that “*Plak*” denotes the auditory manifestation of hand movements impacting an object.
2. *Puk-puk* is a Javanese onomatopoeic term commonly used to describe gentle tapping or patting, particularly on the shoulder or back. In Javanese usage, it often appears with the prefix *di-* and conveys the meaning *dicablek-cablek pundhake* (“patted on the shoulder”) (Poerwadarmintha, 1939).
3. *Krauuss..krauss*, closely mimics the sound of teeth crushing crunchy food during chewing. This sound corresponds to what is commonly described as crunch, defined as the sound of hard food being crushed between the teeth, or like something being crushed or broken (Cambridge Dictionary, 1995).
4. *Gyut*, originating from Japanese comics, conveys the concept of hugging or squeezing something tightly. This word is documented in the Japanese Online Dictionaries (Jisho.org, 2023), accompanied by the kanji ぎゅ づ [gyū], signifying squeezing something tightly; the sound made by someone (or something) being squeezed, or ‘squeezing (pressing) something tightly, the sound made by someone (or something) being squeezed’.

#### 4.4. Miscellaneous Sounds

The category of Miscellaneous Sounds encompasses a versatile array of onomatopoeic expressions meticulously crafted to replicate the auditory characteristics of various objects and events commonly encountered in daily life. Six onomatopoeic forms are identified in this category:

- 1) *Srutt...srutt*, is a Javanese onomatopoeia utilised to mirror the sound of dispensing water using a sprayer. The term “*srut*” can be traced to MacDonell’s Online Sanskrit Dictionary (1926:369), represented as स्रुत् ‘*srut*,’ signifying the act of flowing with shedding or distillation.
- 2) *Brak*, imitates the sound of a forceful impact resulting in damage. Gericke and Roorda (1901, accessed via Sastra.org) ) describe *brak* as an onomatopoeic representation of splitting or breaking, while Poerwadarmintha (1939) associates it with torn or damaged objects.
- 3) *Sret..sret...urek..urek*, combines two Javanese terms, *Sret* refers to slow or unsteady movement (Wojowasito, 1980, accessed via Sastra.org), while *urek* denotes repetitive finger movement

associated with dredging or extracting (Poerwadarminta, 1939). Together, they describe a deliberate, manual action performed gradually.

- 4) *Bug*, represents the sound of a hand making contact with an object, evoking the imagery of an item falling or impacting. Poerwadarminta (1939) associates “*bug*” with depicting goods descending or ‘the sound of falling goods.’
- 5) *Vro-oom*, captures the essence of a motorbike engine in operation, replicating the auditory experience of a motorbike’s roaring engine. The Cambridge English Dictionary (1995) interprets “*Vro-oom*” as the sound produced by a motorbike’s engine during operation.
- 6) *Jrengg*, is defined in the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (2016) as an onomatopoeic expression representing the sound of musical instruments, particularly a guitar.

## 5. Discussion

Sasamoto (2019) proposes that the meaning of onomatopoeia in comics cannot be interpreted solely through linguistic form, but must be understood through its interaction with visual elements. These three interactions are carried out through three main aspects: expression, movement, and way (process-based movement), which construct multimodal meaning in comic narratives. This section explains how these visual aspects work in conjunction with the onomatopoeic expressions found in the *Yowis Ben: Lika-liku Anak Band* (YBLAB) comics.

### 5.1. Expression

As defined by Ekman (1997), expression refers to an individual’s state or readiness to respond to an event or emotional stimulus. Expressions are typically identified based on facial expressions and behaviors. In the context of the “YBLAB” comic, various types of expression are expressed by the characters, including:

#### 1) Sadness

Figure (3) depicts a scene of a sad man. According to Ekman (2003), sadness is characterized by drooping upper eyelids, a blank stare, and slightly downturned corners of the mouth. This aligns with the visual representation in Figure (3), which shows irregular lines in the man’s eyes, symbolizing his blank stare. The illustration also includes the onomatopoeic word “*werr*,” which imitates an animal sound. It mimics the sound of a small, rising object, in this case, a bird taking flight. This auditory representation can evoke the emotion of sadness in the context of the story.



Figure 3: A man cried (Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

## 2) Happiness



Figure 4: Student jump  
(Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)



Figure 5: Happy student  
(Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

In Figures 4 and 5, the dominant emotional expression is happiness, characterized by a wide smile that alters facial morphology, often hiding the eyes and revealing teeth (Ekman, 2003). Although both scenes express joy, the emotional differences are distinguished by the onomatopoeia used.

In Figure 4, the onomatopoeia *whuz*, which describes the sound of wind, conveys a sense of lightness and enthusiasm, reflecting a joyful emotional state in harmony with the surrounding environment. In contrast, Figure 5 uses the onomatopoeia *brak*, which mimics a loud crashing sound. Here, happiness is expressed in a more disruptive and explosive manner, suggesting an overflowing joy that interrupts an existing emotional or physical situation. These examples demonstrate how different onomatopoeic forms can shape different emotional interpretations despite similar facial expressions.

## 3) Madness



Figure 6: Student angry  
(Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

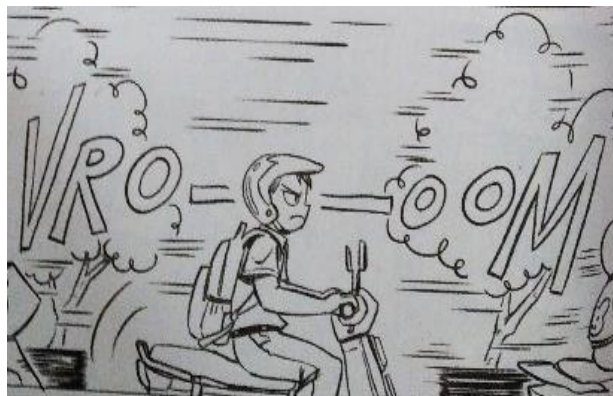


Figure 7: Student ride a motorcycle  
(Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

Anger is visually expressed through facial features such as drawn-in brows, sharp gaze, and tightly pressed lips (Ekman, 2003). In Figure 6, the onomatopoeia "*plak*" accompanies a forceful physical action, thus emphasizing the character's frustration and unrestrained attitude. Similarly, in Figure 7, the onomatopoeia "*vro-oom*" mimics the sound of a motorcycle engine accelerating. This sound, accentuated by visual elements such as smoke and speed lines, symbolizes heightened emotional intensity and uncontrollable rage. In both cases, the onomatopoeic expression amplifies the emotional state depicted visually.

## 4) Embarrassed

In Figure 8, embarrassment is depicted through flushed cheeks, recognizable by pronounced facial features, and a subtle smile. Blushing symbolizes shame, and often arising from emotional vulnerability or attraction (Probyn, 2005). The onomatopoeic word "*jreng*," which imitates the sound of a guitar, emphasizes this emotional state by incorporating the embarrassment in a performative context. The combined visual and auditory cues convey an emotional mix of affection, nervousness, and confidence.





Figure 8: Student feel embarrassed while playing guitar  
(Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)



Figure 9: Student got surprised  
(Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

### 5) Surprised

In Figure (9), the onomatopoeia “jreng” is noted, even though the guitar instrument does not appear in the depicted scene. Instead, the visual composition primarily features a comprehensive ensemble of instruments, emphasized by the accompanying line drawings. This juxtaposition suggests that the onomatopoeia “jreng” is an auditory representation of guitar sound, even as it functions as a background musical component within the scene.

Furthermore, within the same visual context, the character’s facial expression is prominently depicted. It is characterized by wide-open eyes and an open mouth, which, as Ekman (2003) states, indicates a state of surprise. Thus, the inclusion of the term “jreng” in Figure (9) serves two purposes: first, it is an auditory simulation of the sound of a guitar in a musical arrangement, and second, it is a semantic element that contributes to the overall expression of surprise conveyed by the character within the visual narrative.

## 5.2. Movement

Movement in comics is typically represented by motion lines, which visually convey dynamic actions or physical changes (Maharsi, 2011). In the YBLAB comics, movement is categorized into **natural movement** and **human movement**, both of which are closely related to onomatopoeic expressions.

### 1) Natural Movement



Figure 10: Cold night (Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

Figure (10) depicts a scene with wavy lines, followed by an illustration of leaves swaying in the wind, suggesting a gust and thus creating a unique visual narrative. This composition effectively conveys the movement of the wind from left to right. The dark sky further suggests a nighttime scene.

Two onomatopoeic expressions stand out in this image: “wuush” and “brrrrr.” “Wuush” resembles the sound of the wind and complements the visual representation of the air currents affecting the figures’ surroundings. According to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary (2023), “brrrrr” represents a



sound associated with the body's response to cold and fits well with the figures' shivering gestures and postures. In combination with the visual elements, the onomatopoeic expression "*wuush*" thus effectively captures the acoustic aspects of the wind's direction and the depiction of the cold night atmosphere.

## 2) Human Movement

In comic, human movement serves as an important visual resource for conveying action intensity and emotional states. In YBLAB comics, human movement is expressed through rapid task execution and repetitive physical actions.

### a) Executing tasks rapidly



Figure 11: Student do homework (Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

Figure (11) consists of three consecutive panels depicting a figure attempting to complete an assignment under time pressure. In the first panel, the teacher announces the return of the previous week's homework, and the student quickly realizes that the assignment is incomplete.

In the second panel, the student's sense of urgency is visualized through sweat and vertically oscillating solid lines, suggesting intense concentration and hectic activity. This visual tension is reinforced by accompanying onomatopoeia that reflects the auditory aspects of rapid movement.

In the third panel, the student is depicted actively writing, with horizontal movement lines on either side of the figure suggesting rapid, lateral hand movements. The onomatopoeia *urek... urek... urek* is used to represent the sound and rhythm of rapid writing. Interpreted in conjunction with the visual cues, the combination of *sret... sret* and *urek... urek... urek* implies focused urgency and accelerated action due to anxiety about an approaching deadline.

### b) The repetitive motion of striking the foot



Figure 12: Student get mad (Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

Repetitive body movements are another recurring form of human movement in the YBLAB comics. In Figure (12), a figure is depicted repeatedly and forcefully striking a mattress with their feet. The onomatopoeic utterance "*bug*" appears three times, accompanied by sweeping lines of movement that visually emphasize the repetition.

Other onomatopoeic elements, such as “Grrrrr,” appear above the figure’s head, suggesting grumbling or suppressed vocalizations. The irregular, curvilinear lines surrounding the figure further convey a heightened emotional response. In this multimodal context, the repeated onomatopoeic sound “bug...bug...bug” effectively imitates the sound of repeated smacking while simultaneously amplifying the figure’s state of anger.

### 5.3. Way (Process-based Movement)

According to the KBBI Online Dictionary (2016), the term “way” refers to systems, processes, and modes of action. While “movement” in comics is usually understood as the driving force of a character, “way” emphasizes the processual unfolding of an action. In the YBLAB comics, this aspect illustrates how onomatopoeia depicts not only sounds or movements, but also the processual development of actions within specific visual contexts. Several recurring patterns of process-based movement are identified, including the spraying of water, the damage of objects, emotional gestures, and intentional physical contact.

#### 1) *The process of water spraying*



Figure 13: Bird got sprayed (Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

Figure (13) shows a bird being bathed with a sprayer. The onomatopoeic phrase “*srut...srut*” is highlighted in bold and serves as an acoustic representation of the water spurting from the sprayer. According to MacDonell’s Online Sanskrit Dictionary (1926:369), “*srut*” means to flow or distill. In this visual context, the onomatopoeia conveys the movement of water from the sprayer, from spurting to atomizing into fine droplets, a process visually emphasized by the radiating spray lines. The integration of visual and linguistic elements thus represents not just sound, but the spraying process itself.

#### 2) *The process of object damage through impact*



Figure 14: The cage was damaged, and a man got shocked (Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

Figure (14) depicts a sequence of a cage being accidentally dropped, followed by a shout of “*Alhamdulillah.*” The figure’s shocked expression is illustrated by wide eyes, an open mouth, and a zigzag line above his head. In the following frame, the cage is shown splitting in two, with the bird flying away from the broken cage. The onomatopoeic word “*brak*” written in bold capital letters, represents the sound of a strong impact. In this context, “*brak*” serves to auditorily simulate the damage caused by the effect, reinforcing the connection between action, sound, and outcome.

3) *The way pride is expressed through gesture*



Figure 15: A man got comforted (Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

In Figure (15), a male figure is reassured by a gentle pat on the shoulder from an older person. The act of patting someone on the shoulder serves as a tactile gesture of gratitude and encouragement, and is often associated with recognition of effort and achievement (Febianti, 2018). The visual representation of a broad smile and closed eyes reinforces this emotional state. The onomatopoeic “*puk...puk*,” emphasizes the rhythmic repetition of the gesture. The combination of visual cues and onomatopoeic words represents the process of expressing pride and affirmation.

4) *The way a child seeks attention*



Figure 16: A man got comforted (Source: YBLAB Comic, 2021)

Figure (16) illustrates a boy hugging his mother’s arm and softly addressing her as “*ibuk*” (“mother” in Javanese). The Japanese-derived sound “*gyut*” means something like “to squeeze tightly” or “to hug.” The boy’s facial expression, his pursed lips, and focused gaze suggest a conscious intention to initiate a serious conversation. Pease (1988) notes that looking at the forehead of the conversation partner signals a focused, goal-oriented communicative attitude. The mother’s response, “*Opo maneh*” (“What else?”), confirms the intentional nature of the interaction. In this scene, “*gyut*” is not merely a sound imitation but also functions as a procedural cue for intentional physical contact to attract attention.

#### 5.4. The Impact of Foreign Languages and Visual Elements in YBLAB Comics

The analysis of 14 onomatopoeic expressions in the Yowis Ben: Lika-liku Anak Band (YBLAB) comics reveals a remarkable presence of onomatopoeia of foreign origin. Several forms, such as *"whuz," "woosh,"* and *"vroom"* from English; *"gyut"* from Japanese; *"srutt"* from Sanskrit; and *"jreng"* from Indonesian, are not part of the traditional Javanese vocabulary. This finding suggests linguistic mixing in Javanese comics, where local onomatopoeic forms coexist with foreign word or expressions. This coexistence of foreign elements with traditional Javanese forms aligns with the broader trends of language contact and influence in the Javanese language, as described in Suparta's (2017) studies on language change and external influences.

The results not only illustrate linguistic multimodality but also demonstrate that onomatopoeia in the YBLAB comics serves more than just sound imitation. Based on 14 illustrations, the analysis shows that visual elements play a crucial role in the semantic interpretation of onomatopoeic expressions. As Sasamoto (2019, p. 63) argues, the visual representation of onomatopoeia provides direct cues that help readers interpret meaning. In the YBLAB comics, visual representations narrow and refine the semantic range of onomatopoeic words by linking them to specific emotional states, movements, or situational contexts.

This semantic narrowing allows onomatopoeia to convey additional layers of meaning beyond mere sound imitation, including emotional expressions and affective nuances. Furthermore, the same onomatopoeic form can produce different meanings in different visual contexts, as illustrated by the varying interpretations of expressions like *"jreng"* and *"brak"* in different panels. These findings confirm the important influence of visual elements on meaning construction in comic discourse and highlight the role of onomatopoeia as a multimodal linguistic device in Javanese comics.

### 6. Conclusions

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the semantic features of onomatopoeic expressions in the comics "Yowis Ben: Lika-liku Anak Band" (YBLAB) by Bayu Skak (2021). The results identify fourteen onomatopoeic words in the comics that typically function as sound paintings and exhibit a clear correspondence with their dictionary-defined sound sources. However, when these expressions are analyzed together with fourteen supporting visual data, a process of semantic narrowing becomes apparent, making their meanings more specific and context-dependent.

This semantic narrowing arises from the integration of additional layers of meaning, including emotional impressions conveyed through facial expressions, detailed event dynamics depicted through body movements, and structured processes illustrated by the characters' actions. These semantic expansions are primarily shaped by the visual context of the comic panels, which directly and concretely reproduces the depicted events. Consequently, onomatopoeic expressions in YBLAB comics transcend their traditional role as mere sound imitations and function as multimodal carriers of meaning.

The interpretation of onomatopoeic words in comics cannot therefore, be understood solely through their referential or acoustic associations. Rather, their meaning arises from an inseparable interplay of linguistic forms and visual elements, particularly the characters' facial expressions, gestures, and body language, which together contribute to the overall narrative in the comic.

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