

Argumentation, Relevance Theory and Persuasion: An Analysis of Onomatopoeia in Japanese Publications Using Manga Stylistics

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Abstract

This paper presents an application of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995) to pictures by studying the role that weak implicatures may play in the persuasiveness of multimodal argumentative discourse. We take a relevance-theoretic approach to the discussion of visual and multimodal argumentation with a particular focus on the role of onomatopoeia. To examine the possible mechanism by which persuasion operates through onomatopoeia, we analyse a corpus of Japanese-style comics (manga), where visuals and verbal text interact to convey onomatopoeia. We argue that the use of onomatopoeia in manga contributes to the recovery of weak implicatures which, in turn, helps to reinforce the persuasiveness of the communicated messages in the examples analysed.

Keywords

onomatopoeia, the showing-saying continuum, impressions, multimodality, manga, relevance

Bibliographical Notes

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1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to provide a real-world analysis of a culturally-embedded style of communication not often associated with argumentation theory. Close examination of the use of manga-style formats used in different types of magazines sheds light on the inference process of multimodal argumentation. Until recently, the focus of most argumentation scholars has often been on verbally expressed, propositional elements of discourse.

Those argumentation scholars who have, nevertheless, paid attention to visual communication, have more often than not, focused on functions of visuals / images as conveying either the premise or the conclusion of an argument (see, for example, Tseronis

2013 for a fuller discussion). Scholars from multimodal analysis have focused on various modes and their combination as a means of meaning-making, while scholars who take a cognitive approach have focused on how viewers interpret these images. Neither approach has made an explicit statement as to what effects non-verbal aspects of the argumentation have on viewers nor has explained how the use of images contributes to communication in the context of multimodal argumentation. Furthermore, it has not been adequately explained how the use of non-verbal modes can contribute to argumentation, making communication more or less persuasive.

This study seeks to explain how argumentative uses of non-verbal stimuli contribute to readers' interpretation processes. To do this, we focus on onomatopoeia in Japanese manga. Onomatopoeia is generally defined as words that mimic sounds, such as “pop” or “beep” in English. As explained in Section 2.2, onomatopoeia is one of the well-known features of manga. In Japanese manga, onomatopoeic expressions are not only used as verbal expressions but are also part of aesthetics through their particular visual presence (see Image 1):

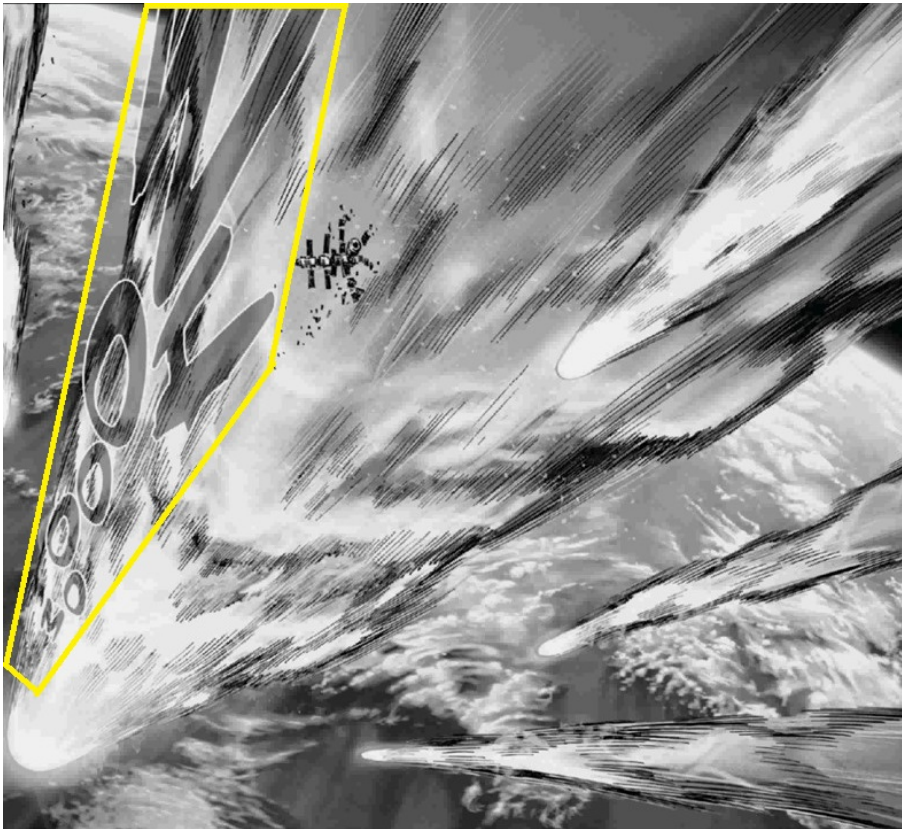


Figure 1. One-Punch Man (2013) by ONE and Yusuke Murata. Chapter/Punch 21, Volume 4, Loc 24 of 212 Kindle edition. Viz Media/ SHUEISHA Inc.

As we can see in the left panel in Figure 1, an onomatopoeic expression “whooom” is presented along the vertical flow of meteor movement, as though it is part of the meteor’s impact while still carrying the linguistic element of the onomatopoeia. This onomatopoeia communicates the manner in which the meteor falls as well as how it feels as a bystander.¹ In this way, the verbal / non-verbal distinction and the visual / non-visual distinction cross-cut in the uses of onomatopoeia in manga, allowing for the merging of images and words as single communicative units. This hybrid nature of onomatopoeia in manga enables the simultaneous communication of images and text, thus enhancing rhetorical effects, or persuasiveness, of the text. Indeed, Kjeldsen (2012: 251-252) explains the value of images in communication as follows: “Pictures are able to provide vivid presence (evidentia), realism and immediacy in perception, which is difficult to achieve with words only.”

In this study, we focus particularly on manga in a variety of genres such as adverts, educational texts, and travel reviews intended to persuade audiences.² By drawing upon the relevance-theoretic notion of weak implicature, we seek to explain how the use of onomatopoeia in manga gives rise to propositional and non-propositional effects. The manner in which onomatopoeia is presented in manga, that is, the way onomatopoeic manga carries both linguistic and aesthetic elements, creates instances of multimodal onomatopoeia. Positioning Japanese manga onomatopoeia in this way, their so-called meaning-making function can be understood as utilising weak implicatures as a tool of persuasion by giving rise to impressions which guide readers to accept the message of the producer, hence, enhance rhetorical effects. Multimodal onomatopoeia found in Japanese manga serves to emphasise aspects of composition or style as directed by the artist by drawing the reader’s eye to an intended position within the frame.

Manga is particularly well-suited for the analysis of multimodal argumentative discourse, as it is the *prima facie* case of interaction between verbal and non-verbal discursive elements that may help most effectively reach the communicative goal the makers of the specific manga seek to achieve. In the context of multimodal argumentation in manga, the use of onomatopoeia contributes to the communication of rhetorical effects and hence to persuasiveness intended by the communicator. By studying onomatopoeia in manga from a cognitive pragmatic perspective, the proposed analysis sheds light on the interaction between the artistic choice to use onomatopoeia and its effects, which is subsumed under the current view of style in relevance theory.

In Section 2, we will present an overview of manga and onomatopoeia in manga. Section 3 will introduce concepts from Relevance Theory, which form the basis of our analysis in Section 4, followed by our conclusion in Section 5.

2. Manga and Onomatopoeia

¹ We present a detailed relevance-theoretic explanation on the role of onomatopoeia in communication in Section 3.

² In Japan, manga are commonly used as part of adverts, school text books or for other non-entertainment purposes.

2.1 Manga

Manga is one of Japan's best known cultural exports. Domestically, in 2009, manga accounted for ¥420 billion (approximately \$5.5 billion) (Kinsella, 2000; Syed, 2011). In Japan, manga enjoys a pervasive, diverse readership in comparison to the comics in English-speaking countries (Schodt, 2011) and is part of an everyday media platform rather than a special genre only for eager fans.

The definition of manga has changed over the history of the medium. Gravett (2004: 8) has drawn attention to problems with the boundaries of manga as defined in the West. For example, the Oxford English Dictionary defines manga as follows:

A Japanese genre of cartoons and comic books, drawn in a meticulously detailed style, usually featuring characters with distinctive large, staring eyes, and typically having a science-fiction or fantasy theme, sometimes including violent or sexually explicit material. Occasionally also applied to animated film (cf. anime n.3). In extended use, denoting cartoons in this style from other countries.³

This definition conflates manga and anime, and solely locates manga in science fiction and fantasy genres. Both aspects of the definition are incorrect, as manga is found in almost all genres, not just limited to SF or fantasy, and is entirely different from animated films. While most often found in black and white print, manga can occasionally be coloured for special volumes. The narrative text is included within comic panels, as opposed to an illustrated novel where the text and imagery are kept separate. Given the variation in what can be considered manga across time, complex definitions are not surprising.

The production of manga differs from that of comics elsewhere in the world due to the *mangaka* (manga creator) and assistant system.⁴ Formats differ from those found in Western comics; most commonly, manga is found in the format of a weekly / monthly anthology printed on paper of various colours or as *tankobon* (a smaller sized collected volume) (Zanettin, 2008: 8). Digital editions of manga are also available across various mobile devices and computers.

Genre is a complex topic within manga. There can be significant variations across nine⁵ distinct manga genres. These genre distinctions generally address the age and gender of the readership. However, it should be noted that this is not always the case, since, for example, *shonen* (boys' manga) is often read by adults or girls. This complexity of manga and the blurring of genre boundaries are evident in the samples discussed later in this paper. The stylistic elements associated with manga, such as the larger eyes, when compared to Western comics, are one of the most recognisable traits of manga. However, these are not a guarantee

³ <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/244747?rskey=rKMGS&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid> [last accessed 30 August 2017]

⁴ The manga-production system involves a *manga-ka* and a manga assistant. The *manga-ka* is the main creator of manga while assistants take a role in various aspects of manga production ranging from aesthetic, to administrative to domestic work.

⁵ These nine genres can be further categorised into twelve content genres, such as science fiction, action-adventure, romance, etc.

of manga status as many manga series in the *gekiga* (dramatic manga) genre eschew this type of eye in favour of stronger realism in stylistic choices. Simply put, ‘manga’ can be understood as a Japanese culturally codified, genre-specific style of an illustrated narrative which is originally produced in the Japanese language by Japanese creators. In the next section, we examine one of the characteristics of manga: the use of onomatopoeia.

2.2 Onomatopoeia in Manga

Onomatopoeia, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is “the formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named.” Examples from standard English include “buzz,” “bang,” and “splash.” The use of onomatopoeia is a key multimodal component of comics in general, and of manga in particular, and is often considered to be one of the most notable characteristics of comics to an audience new to or outside of the medium of comics (see Hague, 2014: 63). Onomatopoeia is generally found on the page in visualised or typographic form. In the field of comics studies, scholars such as McCloud (1993), Eisner (2004) and Cohn (2013) consider onomatopoeia as sound effects (commonly abbreviated as SFX) (see *whooom* in Image 1, for an example). As McCloud (1993) notes, these effects are often depicted using highly stylised fonts which are different from the typeface used in the standard text of the comic in order to visually emphasise a particular sensory experience. According to McCloud (2006: 146), onomatopoeia is often characterised by particular graphic effects such as fonts and shapes, and is used in order to strengthen the creator’s intention:

Thanks to film and television, we’ve gotten used to stories that continuously use **sight** and **sound** and offer rich, immersive experiences. But as comics [sic] creators, if we want to **reproduce** that kind of experience, we need to do it using only **one** sense. Words play an important role in comics by **bridging** that gap. They give **voice** to our characters, allow us to describe all **five** senses--and in the case of **sound effects**, they graphically **become** what they describe-- BANG!--and give readers a rare chance to **listen**--with their **eyes**.
[emphasis as in original]

Casas-Tost (2012) further argues that the relationship between the signifier and signified is a distinctive characteristic of onomatopoeia. She explains that onomatopoeia is phonetically driven and identifiable by linguistic features that imitate the sound attached to what is being represented on the page of the comic. All of the aspects that Casas-Tost (2012: 40) attributes to onomatopoeia confer a large amount of expressive capacity especially when onomatopoeic devices / effects are used in comics. The fact that onomatopoeia has both verbal and non-verbal elements places it on the showing-saying continuum (see Section 3 below), thus providing direct and indirect evidence for inference (Sasamoto and Jackson, 2016). The proposed analysis placing onomatopoeia on the showing-saying continuum enables us to account for how the use of onomatopoeia in manga communicates intangible, quite ineffable ‘meanings’ rather than prescribed semiotic meaning.

Due to the way onomatopoeic expressions appear on the comic page, there are issues in general relating to the layout and reading pace of the comic page. Yus (2006: 5)

acknowledges challenges in interpreting comic pages as it is “clear that people do not pay the same attention to the same items in the picture and do not follow the same order” due to their own expectations and their experience with the form. This can lead to varying levels of reading pace beyond the control of the author as captions, dialogue, images, and even the reading path (left-to-right for Western Comics, right-to-left for manga) add complexity to the experience. This complexity of comic reading precedes any discussion of compositional elements of the page, as the authors must spatially accommodate additional information and ensure its reading path is optimized since “[t]he reader will expect this organisation of dialogues and devote very little mental effort to determining the order of, for example, dialogues” (Yus, 2006: 5–7). While dialogue will at least have the clear indicator of a speech bubble, the same cannot be guaranteed for onomatopoeia, which moves more freely around the panel or page as design allows, and is embedded firmly in the aesthetics of each panel.

3. Relevance Theory

3.1 Overview

Relevance Theory is a cognitively-grounded theory of communication, which is centred on two principles of relevance that explain how and why communication is achieved. The *Cognitive Principle of Relevance* describes how human cognition has developed in such a way that it is geared towards the maximisation of relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). By establishing the cognitive basis for maximising relevance, the *Communicative Principle of Relevance* accounts for the ‘process’ of how human cognition works in communication⁶. When the hearer is presented with an ostensively communicated stimulus, he⁷ presumes that what is communicated is optimally relevant i.e. worth processing. The hearer then searches for an interpretation compatible with this presumption (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 260). As described in the Presumption of Optimal Relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995), the hearer, upon receiving an ostensive communicative stimulus, presumes that the stimulus produced is relevant enough to be worth processing, and that it is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator’s abilities and preferences.

Relevance is defined as a balance between the processing effort required for interpretation and the cognitive effects recovered as a result of interpretation. On the one hand, the more cognitive effects the hearer can recover while interpreting an utterance, the more relevant the utterance is. On the other hand, the less the processing effort required, the more relevant an utterance is. These cognitive effects take many forms but are primarily improvements to a viewer’s representation of the world. The hearer, following the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure, seeks out that interpretation which is congruent with what is relevant to the hearer:

⁶ Relevance Theory has primarily focused on verbal communication but the framework can be and is extended to visual and non-verbal communication (see Forceville and Clark, 2014). In this study, the term ‘hearer’ is used in discussion of general theoretical concepts, while we opt for the term ‘reader’ when discussing manga in particular. Similarly, the term ‘utterance’ is used in general as a term for convenience. However, it should not be taken that we claim Relevance Theory is concerned only with verbal communication.

⁷ For convenience, we use a feminine third person singular pronoun for the speaker/image-maker and a masculine third person singular pronoun for the hearer/viewer.

The Relevance Theoretic Comprehension Procedure:

- a. Follow a path of least effort in deriving cognitive effects: test interpretive hypotheses (reference assignments, disambiguations, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.
- b. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied. (Sperber and Wilson, 2002: 24)

The selection of what is most ‘relevant’ by the hearer is expected to be directed by the communicator’s intention.⁸ The hearer must then follow the path of interpretation until they reach the intended meaning that achieves optimal relevance.

As the hearer proceeds through the interpretation process, it is plausible that the intended interpretation the hearer recovers leads the hearer towards choosing a particular element to attend to over another. In this way, the communicator can guide the hearer to a context in which the hearer would process the utterance in a way desirable for the communicator so that he or she accepts a warrant (a statement authorising our movement from the data to the claim) as to a claim (conclusions whose merit must be established; the goal the argument is directed towards), and the data (the facts appealed to as a foundation for the claim, sometimes referred to as grounds).

3.2 Relevance, Weak Communication and Persuasion

In Relevance Theory, it is generally acknowledged that communication involves both explicit and implicit aspects. As Allott (2013) clarifies, implicatures are not part of the encoded meaning of an utterance, but are something the hearer needs to work out based, in part, on what is encoded. That is, the speaker relies on the hearer’s ability to infer what she intends to communicate using the linguistically encoded meaning of an utterance as a clue. As Sperber and Wilson (1995) explain, communication is a matter of degree. Some assumptions are so strongly communicated that the speaker can expect that the hearer cannot help but recover them and, indeed, that the utterance would not be relevant enough without them. These are strong implicatures. On the other hand, other utterances might communicate a range of very weak assumptions, some of which are so weak that they only amount to extremely intangible impressions. Impressions, along with other non-propositional effects such as attitudes and affects are called expressive meanings; they are extremely intangible and almost impossible to spell out in propositional terms (see, for example, Sperber and Wilson, 2015; Wharton, 2001; 2003; 2009 for further discussion). Sperber and Wilson (2015) consider an impression as a sub-type of cognitive experience. According to these authors (2015: 139), an impression is “an array of propositions have become manifest to you, and although you are not aware of them individually, this overall change in your cognitive environment warrants the inference.” As they explain, a hearer might not recover a full representation of each individual proposition involved in an interpretation. However, this array of propositions taken together lead the hearer to a certain conclusion. This is particularly relevant to our analysis of

⁸ As we see in Section 4, in the case of argumentative communication, this is the communicator’s intention to persuade.

persuasion from the relevance-theoretic perspective. As we discuss in more detail in 3.3, communication of impressions helps the communicator to prepare the hearer's cognitive environment in such a way that he or she might (or might not) accept a series of warrants (or data) supplied by the communicator to count as support for a claim, that is, to give rise to rhetorical effects.

How such impressions are constructed can be understood as the varying degree of strength of implicatures. As mentioned above, some utterances communicate a broader array of extremely weak assumptions rather than one strongly evidenced proposition, and, hence, communicate weak implicatures. If what is communicated is even more nebulous (or weaker), the hearer would recover a layer of impressions (or a layer of an extremely intangible assumptions). As we have seen earlier, relevance is defined as a balance between cognitive effects and processing effort. Cognitive effects primarily alter the hearer's representation of the world. When the hearer recovers impressions that consist of a range of extremely weakly communicated assumptions, these assumptions would accumulate in the hearer's representation of the world. Any further communicative stimuli would be processed in the hearer's modified cognitive environment, which now contains these weakly communicated assumptions. That is, these weakly communicated assumptions prime the hearer to follow a path to the goal the communicator intends. This in turn prepares the hearer's cognitive environment so that the hearer would interpret other communicative stimuli involved in the discourse favourably to the speaker. In the next section, we address how onomatopoeia helps communicate weak assumptions and impressions.

3.3 Onomatopoeia, the Showing-Saying Continuum and Persuasion

Sasamoto and Jackson (2016) present a relevance-theoretic account of the role of onomatopoeia in communication. They argue that onomatopoeia is located on a continuum of showing and saying, and contributes to relevance by allowing the speaker to share an impression with the hearer/reader. The showing-saying distinction has been recognised in pragmatics for decades (see Grice, 1957). A typical case of *showing* includes pointing at a dark cloud in the sky as a response to the question "Why do you think it will rain soon?" The *saying* equivalent of this is to produce the utterance "Because there is dark cloud approaching." In contrast to Grice (1957), however, works in Relevance Theory (e.g. Wharton, 2001, 2003, 2009; Wilson and Wharton, 2006; Sasamoto and Jackson, 2016) acknowledge that there is a continuum, rather than distinction, between *showing* and *saying*. For example, an individual can say "I am angry" in a very angry tone of voice to communicate her anger. Here, the utterance "I am angry" delivers the intended meaning by means of a linguistically encoded representation while the tone of the voice *shows* evidence for the emotional state the speaker intends to communicate. A comprehensive theory of communication should be able to account for both cases.

In his analysis of interjections, Wharton (2009) develops the notion of the showing-saying continuum further and demonstrates how interjections communicate via both *showing* and *saying* elements. Following Wharton (2009), Sasamoto and Jackson (2016) propose that onomatopoeia exhibits both verbal and non-verbal elements, and is located on the showing-

saying continuum, providing both direct and indirect evidence for inference.⁹ That is, onomatopoeia has both *showing* and *saying* elements that provide a verbal clue for the hearer to recover the intended meaning, as well as non-verbal elements, which allow for the sharing of an impression.¹⁰ Onomatopoeia is unique in that it represents evidence for what the speaker wishes to communicate but the evidence itself also resembles an element of the cognitive experience to be communicated. For example, the onomatopoeic word “hiss” communicates not only the encoded concept *A SHARP SIBILANT SOUND, but it also provides the hearer with an impression of the communicator’s own experience of the hiss.

The notion of the *showing* and *saying* continuum is particularly relevant to the current study which seeks to account for the role of onomatopoeia in manga from the perspective of argumentation. In particular, we focus on the role of images in persuasive communication. As mentioned in section 2.2, a key stylistic element of manga images is the presence of onomatopoeia, where the textual and the visual combine to produce a hybrid of verbal and non-verbal elements. The hybrid nature of onomatopoeia allows it to simultaneously function in the manner of pictures and text.

Let us take for example the onomatopoeias in Figure 2 below. As multimodal devices, onomatopoeias are often presented as highly stylised with visual effects added to the font. These features lend an aesthetic quality redolent of the sound attributed to each onomatopoeia used, combining the visual with aural sensory experience. That is, not only does onomatopoeia in manga communicate through the means of both *showing* and *saying* elements as ‘standard’ onomatopoeia, it has an added *showing* element by simply being presented in the highly-stylised manner often observed in manga. Indeed, as Jackson (2016) discusses, there is a sense in which *showing* evidence can be made more salient. If this is correct, then, it is not surprising that additional *showing* evidence provided by the aesthetic element of onomatopoeia strengthens the intended effects in a given context.

⁹ The *showing-saying* distinction is generally analysed in terms of the ‘directness’ of the evidence provided for the communication. Direct evidence can help recover the intended interpretation on the basis of the linguistic coding and relatively few inferential steps, while indirect evidence requires more inferential steps.

¹⁰ As discussed in Sasamoto and Jackson (2016), some onomatopoeias are so highly novel and creative that the *saying* element has yet to be established (lexicalised).



Figure 2. Attack on Titan (2012) by Hajime Isayama. Volume 2, Episode 9 ‘The Beating of a Heart can be Heard,’ Loc 179 of 195 Kindle edition. Kodansha Comics.

As we see in Figure 2 above, the onomatopoeia (*gagi*) in the central panel is presented in a very spiky, aggressive spear-like shape, and rendered in a daunting horror font.¹¹ This is a highly creative onomatopoeia as a combination, while each individual sound (*ga* or *gi*) has a highly stabilised meaning, or *saying* element whose denotation is often associated with a forceful impact. The onomatopoeia *ga gi* would also provide direct evidence, or *show*, the impression of the impact. However, the use of this onomatopoeia does not just communicate a ‘forceful impact’ via a combination of *showing* and *saying* elements. As we can see from the image, the onomatopoeia is presented in a highly stylised font and this visual input conveys a further *showing* element. As mentioned in 3.1, relevance is a balance between processing effort required and cognitive effects recovered. Processing highly stylised onomatopoeia, together with other multimodal elements at once, requires extra effort, which

¹¹ Note that this image is taken from a translated version. In this version, the original Japanese is kept while an English equivalent also appears. Interestingly, the sound represented in the English equivalent is not the same as the Japanese original. This kind of annotation or addition in English is highly prevalent in translated versions.

suggests that there should be extra effects that justify the extra processing effort. This strengthening of relevance via the multimodality of onomatopoeia is achieved by the additional showing elements found in the stylised presentation. As Sperber and Wilson's (2015) explanation of expressive meanings would predict, the communication of weak assumptions and non-propositional effects in a wide range of communicative acts gradually revises the cognitive environment and develops a suitable environment for the author's intentions to be recovered. The analysis of multimodal artefacts in section 4 demonstrates how interpretative and pragmatic inference processes contribute to the recovery of intended effects by the communicator, or, the producer of manga in this case, leading to rhetorical effects, or persuasiveness of discourse. The producers of manga-stylised texts, through the use of onomatopoeia, can be considered as 'communicating' such impressions as those discussed for Figure 2 above, or as improving the degree of manifestness that the impressions convey (Sasamoto, forthcoming). The weak implicatures communicated by these impressions can be shown to help the producers of manga to be more effective in creating a certain effect for the readers which facilitates the acceptance of the message.

4. Data Analysis

There are some recent studies that focus on onomatopoeia in comics. For example, Guynes (2014) analyses the use of onomatopoeia in comics from the perspective of American visual language (c.f. Cohn, 2013). He argues that "comic book onomatopoeia embody all meaning-making modes of Pierce's thirdness, and as signs they indexically suggest the sounds in the real world which they purport (by symbolism) to signify" (Guynes, 2014: 70). Pratha et al. (2016) also present findings from corpus analysis that show differences in sound-effect uses between American comics and Japanese manga. While both Guynes (2014) and Pratha et al. (2016) offer rich descriptions of the way onomatopoeia is used in comics and manga, their analyses do not make an explicit claim as to how onomatopoeia contributes to enhancing the persuasiveness of claims in instances of visual and multimodal argumentation. By examining the use of manga-style formats used in a variety of publications, we hope to provide a real-world analysis of a culturally-embedded style of communication not often associated with argumentation theory. We examine a travel review (4.1), a magazine for new parents (4.2), an advertisement (4.3), and educational manga (4.4). In each example, the onomatopoeia is outlined on the image and transliterated in the Latin alphabet.

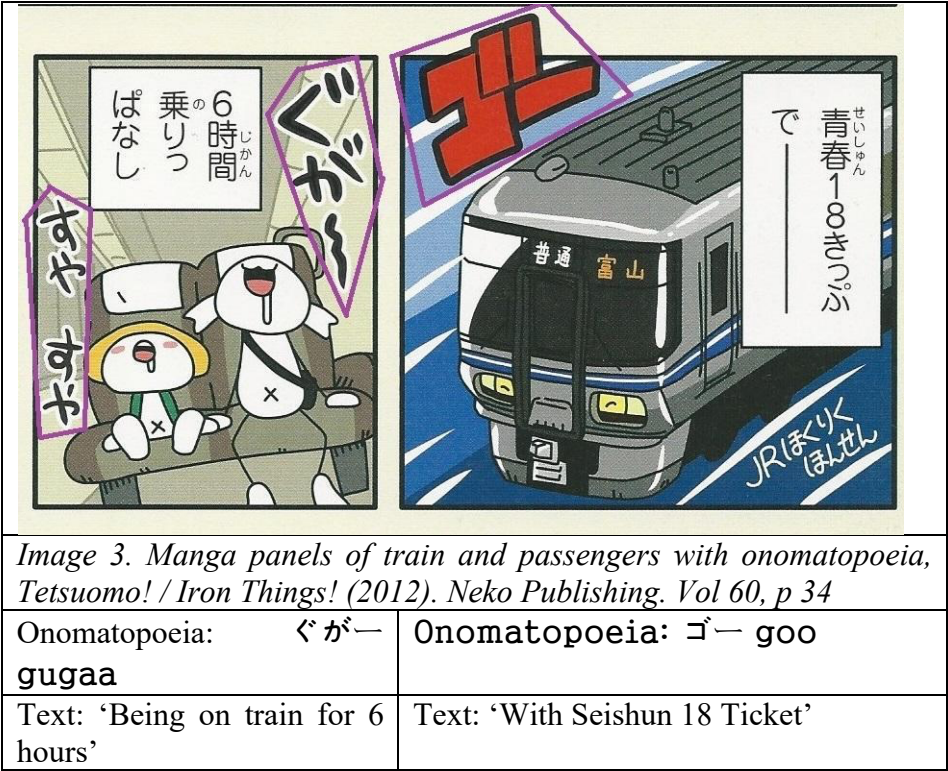
4.1 Train Journey Review

Figure 3 is an extract from a magazine aimed at young children who are interested in trains.¹² Like many children's magazines, the aim of this magazine series is to educate them about trains and to create a fan base for trains.¹³ The particular manga in Figure 3 is taken from a review section of the magazine. In this section, different train lines and types of trains are reviewed in the manga format. The review promotes particular train lines and types of trains

¹² The reading direction is right to left.

¹³ There is a huge fandom for trains in Japan, involving both children and adults.

to the readers. It takes the form of an account of a journey taken by two characters, the reviewers, depicted as anthropomorphic rabbits.



The use of onomatopoeia is particularly effective, as it helps readers to ‘experience’ the atmosphere of being on the train. The onomatopoeia *goo*, which is placed at the top left of the illustrated train on the right panel, often denotes a loud, roaring sound. In this example, the *saying* element of onomatopoeia conveys the loudness of the train while the *showing* element of the expression provides direct evidence for the impression of the manner in which this train is running. In addition, it is important to note here that the onomatopoeia is displayed with additional aesthetic elements, in a thicker, chunkier bold font given in red. These additional aesthetic elements represent additional *showing* elements that would further trigger the communication of non-propositional effects. Earlier in Section 3.3, we saw how words such as interjections and onomatopoeias have both *saying* and *showing* elements, following Wharton (2009) and Sasamoto and Jackson (2016). That is, not only does onomatopoeia convey a linguistically encoded meaning, it also provides the non-verbal elements that enable the speaker to share an impression of sensory experience. So, in this case, the linguistic meaning of the onomatopoeia *goo* conveys the loud, roaring sounds, and the non-verbal, *showing* element of *goo* conveys how it feels to experience such noise. However, in addition to these ‘basic’ *showing* and *saying* elements conveyed by the onomatopoeia, *goo* in this example has a specific, additional *showing* element, due to the red colour that stands out from the blue, in very strong, thick lines. Such non-propositional effects reinforce the intended

claim of the reviewers as to the qualities of the train, with both its aesthetic *showing* and linguistic *saying* qualities working in combination to help the reader recover the meaning that the reviewers intended.

In contrast to the roaring, fiery and forceful qualities of the train onomatopoeia, the reviewers illustrated as rabbits appear in the second panel, drooling with their mouths open, seated inside the train. The use of onomatopoeia communicates that the reviewers are not drooling from hunger, but are fast asleep and snoring, breathing heavily, as the onomatopoeia *gugaa* is often used to denote the action of sleeping or snoring. At the same time, the *showing* element of the onomatopoeia provides direct evidence for, or communicates the impression of the manner in which the characters are sleeping and snoring. The change in fonts and colour of the onomatopoeia compared to the one in the first panel (on the right) highlights the difference between the exterior and the interior of the train, assisting in persuading the reader that while the train itself is roaring and loud from the outside, the inside is so quiet that the journey is pleasant enough for the reviewers to sleep soundly and even to snore. Again, all this is communicated as impressions via the use of onomatopoeia and its showing elements, rather than via the text.

One could say that it is the onomatopoeias in the above panels that carry the argument that the author wants to make, namely that the specific train line and the trains that run on it guarantee a pleasant trip. It should be noted that the written text offers only factual information about the type of ticket bought and the duration of the trip. The quality judgments regarding the specific train line are thus conveyed non-propositionally by the contrasting onomatopoeias in the two panels. This review extends beyond reportage to persuade the reader to arrive at or agree with the claim made by the reviewers regarding the quality of the journey. The use of onomatopoeia communicates an array of feelings that warrant the quality the content producer wishes to communicate as a tool for persuasion.

4.2 Maternity Magazine

Figure 4 is taken from a magazine for pregnant women and new mothers.¹⁴ The purpose of this magazine is to share information about birth and parenting and to educate new mothers and pregnant women. This particular manga series provides readers with anecdotes relating to new babies in a comical manner, expressing empathy for new parents. The two panels in Figure 4 focus on the sounds the babies make on a maternity ward, and the reaction of the nurses. The claim here concerns the impact that the babies' behaviour has on the maternity nurses.

¹⁴ The reading direction is right to left.



Image 4. Panels from a manga in a Japanese maternity magazine, *Hiyoko Club* (2010) comic Vol 74. Benesse Corporation, issue no. 6, magazine no. 200, p 208

Onomatopoeia: ぐあああ Guaaa; きあああ Kiaaa	Onomatopoeia: びえええ bieeee; きあああ Kiaaa; ゐああ Wiaa
Text: 'Why do babies cry if one starts crying?' 'It's a mystery'	Text: 'Well, I won't be behind'

The onomatopoeia literally surrounds the lone nurse in the right panel above. As the red outlines around the onomatopoeia show, half of the visual space in the left panel and more than half in the right one is taken up by the onomatopoeia, communicating thus the impression of the behaviour of the babies. This complex combination of onomatopoeia across the two panels would provide an almost cacophonous experience for the reader. The *saying* element of these onomatopoeias conveys particular types of crying whilst *showing* direct evidence for, and thus sharing the impression of, certain crying behaviour, i.e., “bieeee,” a high-pitched noise, shriek, wail, a longer sound, or a high-pitched crying; “Kiaaaa,” a long hysterical scream; “Wiaa,” a sob of pain, groaning, or a high-pitched grunt of complaint; “Guaaa,” a scream, gulping, or clenching up. On the other hand, the highly stylised typeface of onomatopoeia in this image also *shows* evidence for the emotional state one would experience when having screaming babies around. Through the aesthetics of the size and heavy font used, and through the typographical form which resembles ink and brush work, the onomatopoeia comes to seem more organic, and less regulated and formal than the font in the text bubbles/boxes, which diverges from the standard text in the speech bubbles of the adults in the image. The array of assumptions that can be recovered from these onomatopoeias persuades the reader that the noise of the babies is loud, raw, unrefined and uncontrolled. The aesthetic quality of the typography and the lexical meaning of the onomatopoeia combine in a multimodal way to provide the data for the claim regarding the

stressed disposition of the babies in the maternity ward. When these attributes are combined, the impact for the reader is intensified, leading to persuasion rather than mere informing.

The sharing of the maternity nurses' experiences is achieved through the role onomatopoeia plays as a tool for *showing* evidence for conclusions about the babies' emotional states, and the reason for the expressions on the nurses' faces and their body language. The multimodal stimuli in this image, including onomatopoeia, lead the reader to access existing cognitive assumptions, and to recover intended effects through these particular visual elements as well as any linguistic meaning of the onomatopoeia. By sharing this impression with the readers, the manga creator can achieve a common ground with readers which would in turn allow them to show their empathy towards new parents who often experience babies' uncontrollable and challenging crying.

4.3. Gourmet Manga Advert

Figure 5 is taken from a manga advertisement for a seafood restaurant. In this particular manga, the restaurant manager is making a recommendation from the menu, and explains the history of the dish, and how best to eat.¹⁵

¹⁵ In this example, speech bubbles are numbered to indicate the reading direction. The translation of the text appearing in each speech bubble is given in the Appendix.



Figure 5. Panels from a manga-style advert of a restaurant, Manga Kani Doraku (2016).

In this example, we can see the use of onomatopoeia in the bottom two panels. These panels indicate that the hot-pot is cooked and is now ready to eat. *Howaa* in the bottom left panel is an onomatopoeic expression that is often used to denote something that is warm or hot, such as steam. The *showing* element of this onomatopoeia, together with the *saying* element, communicates the impression of the aromatic steam from the hot pot. *Gutsu gutsu* on the right panel is an onomatopoeia often used for things that are being stewed. In this panel, we can see the hotpot is stewing nicely. The position where these two onomatopoeias are placed is also interesting – they are placed just above the bowl, being part of the hotpot. This communicates how the steam is coming from this pot, emphasising the appetising state of the hotpot even more. The onomatopoeic expressions under the two customers' faces (*gokuri* on the left, and *gubi* on the right) *show* evidence for their excitement. Together with other aesthetic and verbal elements in the panels where the onomatopoeic expressions appear, the onomatopoeia communicates the quality and atmosphere of the restaurant (and of the food served in it), thereby enhancing the appeal of the dish and thus reinforcing the evaluative claim of this particular advert.

4.4 Education Manga

Figure 6 is taken from a manga series that aims to reduce the potential damage from a disaster, based on heritage knowledge, experience of ancestors, and the great East Japan earthquake in 2011.¹⁶ In this particular manga, the female character follows the advice given by the old woman wearing a kimono. Two panels where onomatopoeia appears depict the scene where the female lead character experiences the earthquake on 11th March 2011.

¹⁶ In this example, speech bubbles are numbered to indicate the reading direction. The translation of the text appearing in each speech bubble is given in the Appendix.

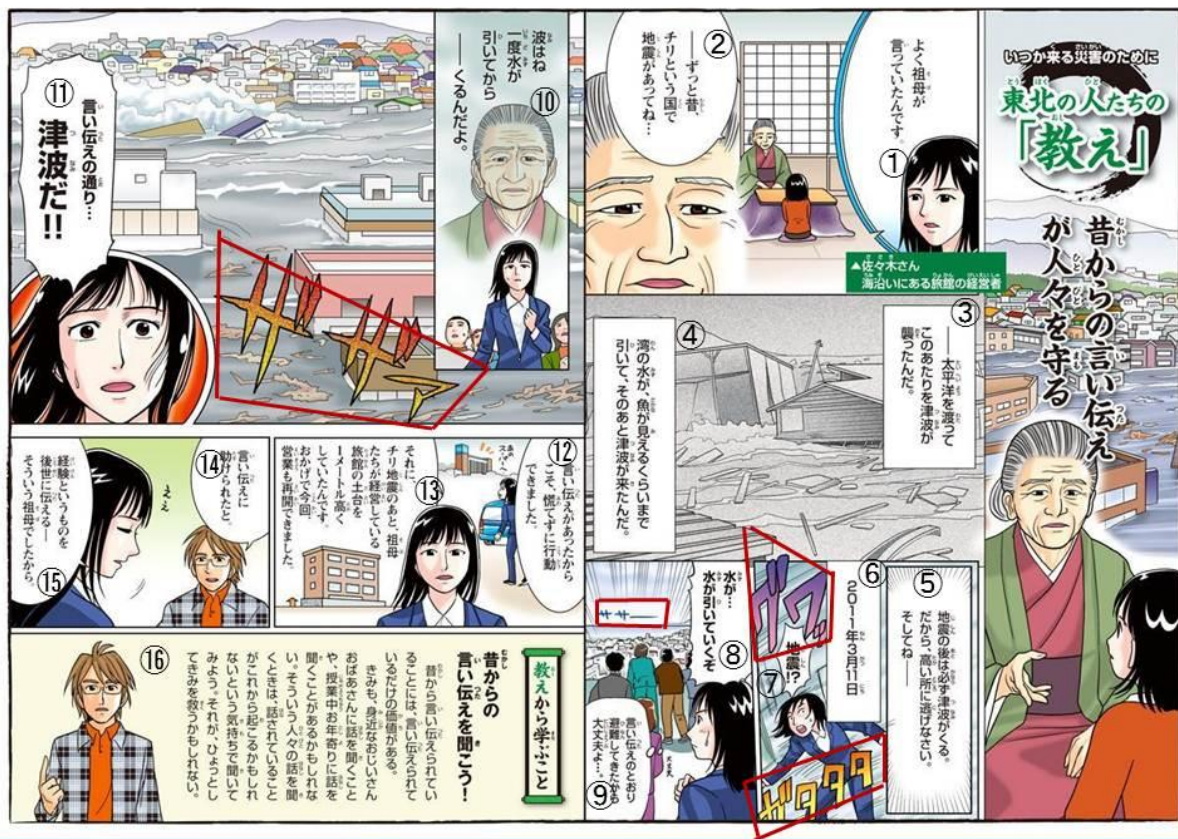


Figure 6: Panels from disaster - education manga (Benesse Corporation 2014).

The severity of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami is accentuated by the use of onomatopoeia. The onomatopoeia *guwa* and *gatatata* are both often used to denote heavy impacts, while the onomatopoeic expression *zaa* in the left panel is often used to denote heavy rain or waterfalls. In addition to these *saying* elements, the *showing* aspect of *zaa* in the left panel conveys the impression of how forceful the tsunami was, while the *showing* aspect of *gatatata* and *guwa* in the panel at the bottom right provides evidence for the strength of the tremble of the earthquake. Again, the use of onomatopoeia gives direct access to (or *shows*) the experience of an earthquake, giving rise to an array of weak assumptions about earthquakes. A relationship of resemblance between the evidence provided through the *showing* element of these onomatopoeias and the stimulus that would give rise to an experience (an actual earthquake) plays a role in this. The aesthetic elements of these onomatopoeias, all in bold and sharp lines, enhance the impression of the tsunami, and accentuate the severity of the experience for the reader. By allowing for the sharing of impressions with the readers, the producer augments the persuasiveness of the message they are trying to convey.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to demonstrate the benefits of synthesising argumentation and Relevance Theory through persuasion and communication of weak implicatures and impressions. This in turn can help to explain how persuasion operates in instances of visual and multimodal argumentation. The combination of the *showing* and the *saying* aspects of onomatopoeia (Sasamoto and Jackson, 2016) as analysed in the above manga can be considered to convey a range of weakly communicated assumptions. Weak inferences in onomatopoeia help to enhance persuasiveness of the claims presented in manga-style publications. We have shown how the use of onomatopoeia would prepare the reader's cognitive environment so that the communicator's claim would have more chances to be received favourably. The relationship between persuasion, relevance, onomatopoeia and the multimodal argument as outlined in this paper would benefit from further analysis, with some empirical evidence regarding the reception of such onomatopoeias. This awaits further investigation.

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Appendix:

Figure 5: Panels from a manga-style advert, Manga Kani Doraku (2016, our own translation)

- 1) All looks so tasty!
- 2) *Sashimi* looks good, and so does *chawan-mushi* (savoury steamed custard).
- 3) Do you have something like a hot-pot dish for family?
- 4) If you prefer a hot-pot, how about '*kani-suki*' (crab hot-pot), which is our signature dish?
- 5) Well, we'll have it then.
- 6) Sorry for the wait!
- 7) Wow, it's transparent and clean!
- 8) (They say) the soup is based on white-soy sauce, which hasn't changed since the opening of this restaurant!
- 9) It has long tradition!
- 10) First, we add vegetables that would draw out sweetness
- 11) Crab will be done a couple of minutes after adding to the pot. Wow that looks brilliant!
- 12) This smells great!
- 13) Bon appetite!

Figure 6: Panels from disaster - education manga (Benesse Corporation 2014, our own translation)

- 1) *My grandmother* often said,
- 2) A long time ago, there was an earthquake in a country called Chile.
- 3) Tsunami came across Pacific Ocean and attacked this neighbourhood.
- 4) Water level in the bay went so low that we could see fish (in the water), and after that tsunami came.
- 5) After an earthquake always comes tsunami. So you must evacuate to a higher ground
- 6) 11th March 2011
- 7) Earthquake!?
- 8) Water, water is disappearing.
- 9) We'll be OK because we evacuated as legend tells.
- 10) Water goes away before coming (as tsunami).
- 11) Just as legend says... Tsunami is here!!
- 12) As we knew the legend, we could act without panicking.
- 13) Also, after the Chile earthquake, my grandmother raised the foundation of the hotel which they owned for 1 metre. Thanks to that, we could re-open (our business) this time.
- 14) (You are saying) the legend helped.
- 15) My grandmother was such that she made sure her experience was passed on.
- 16) What you can learn: listen to legend from the past.

- a. Legend from the past is valuable. You might listen to your grandparents' stories or your classes might invite old people to tell their experience. When you listen to them, think what they are talking about might actually happen in near future. That might help you in crisis.