



## Metaphor in “Burning Sun” South Korea online news: A semantic study

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### ABSTRACT

Understanding metaphors is fundamental in scrutinizing the language of journalism. However, attention devoted to peel out the use of metaphors in Korean news in this more digitalized era is still scant. Therefore, This paper reports on a description of the use of metaphorical expressions and their meaning in crime news of South Korea’s online news website. A qualitative approach was employed. The data were taken from online crime news articles published by a Korean online news website DongA.com in March to November. The website discussed about a scandal in a club in Gangnam ‘Burning Sun’ which involved sexual assault, prostitution, police alliance, drugs distribution, and tax evasion in 2019. Documentation method was used to collect the data. The sentences containing metaphorical expressions were analyzed further. The results showed that three types of metaphorical expressions were found in the news articles: structural metaphor, orientational metaphor, ontological metaphor. The contextual meaning from the metaphorical expressions was also found. Hence, the purpose of using metaphors in the online crime news can produce an intense impression for the readers without any exaggerated information.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Figure of speech especially metaphor, is widely used in journalism as a way to avoid 'boring' word choices. In this study, Researcher will describe the use of metaphors in Korean news. Since this research is a semantics studies which means studying the meaning of linguistic expression, therefore researcher will provide a broad explanation of the meaning and context of the metaphors used in the title and content of the news. Researcher will examine criminal news in research because a criminal news story is type of news that is popular among the public. Putranto (2023), Rusdiyanto, Cahyadi, & Siregar (2022), and as explained by Oetama in the book entitled *Pers Indonesia: Berkomunikasi dalam masyarakat tidak tulus* in 2001 in his book he explained that popular news is usually news that raises the topic of crime, violence, etc.

In this study, researcher took the object of research, which online news, because in this digital era humans are more active in reading news through their electronic devices than print media. In a research article by Baihaqi (2023), Nelson (2020), and Sudarmo, et al. (2021), it is explained that the existence of news published by print media has been surpassed by its popularity by the presence of the internet which provides a variety of information. Then one of the reasons why researcher chose South Korean online news objects is because South Korea is a developed country whose people use more digital facilities in their activities. In South Korea, online news gets a lot of attention from the society.

As described by digitalnewsreport.org on its website, it explains that there are 70% of the South Korean population who access online news per week, this data proves that how large is the consumption of news from online sites in that country. Some of the popular online news sites in South Korea quoted from the Read, All You Can in the website entitled [allyoucanread.com](http://allyoucanread.com) in 2020, <https://www.allyoucanread.com/korean-newspapers/>. Read, All You Can page which include: Tistory, dongA.com, Chosun, Hani, Yonhapnews.co.kr, etc. In this research, researcher will choose 20 articles about a crime news about a nightclub "Burning sun" published between March to November 2019 by dongA.com.

The type of news that researcher chose was criminal news, the reason why researcher chose this type of news was because the "sun burning scandal" classified as a criminal news. This news contains various kinds of cases, including prostitution, bribery, tax evasion, sexual harassment, to the spread of pornographic content that involves several South Korean celebrities as suspects. Saragih, Zinaidi, & Hafizah (2023), Shofiyannajah & Nurcahyo (2023), and as explained by Depdiknas in the website entitled Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia in 2019 provides a definition of criminal news which is a report on crime whose information is obtained from the police.

During 2019, South Korea was shocked by a criminal incident involving a nightclub called Burning Sun. This news overflowed because there were the names of a number of South Korean celebrities who were dragged into it, including an Idol named Seungri who came from the "Bigbang" which also co-founder of yuri holdings, a shareholder of Burning Sun. The Burning Sun scandal or better known as the Burning Sun Gate (버닝 썬 게이트) is a scandal regarding allegations of drug use, tax evasion, prostitution services, group chat that include celebrities as members that share illegal pornographic contents, to allegations of bribery against a leader of the police.

Therefore, based on the object of this research, pointing out form of the use of metaphors in criminal news and explaining the original form of representation of the use of Korean metaphors in the news.

## 2. METHOD

This study aims to determine the use of metaphorical expressions used in Korean crime news "Burning sun". With this, the method that will be used by researcher is a descriptive qualitative method. This method is a way for researcher to describe details about an object of research.

Al-Dabbagh (2020), and as explained by Mukhtar in the book entitled *Metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif* in 2013 he said a line which provides a definition of qualitative research as a way of describing all existing styles or circumstances.

The purpose of researcher using this method is to obtain accurate data so that this study will help provide a clear understanding of the concept of using metaphors used by Korean online media. Then researcher will make a systematic, factual, and accurate picture of the problem under study. By using a descriptive qualitative method, researcher will be able to describe a symptom by collecting data, reducing data, and drawing conclusions.

The subject of this research is a metaphorical expression used by journalists in writing Korean crime online news, and because this research is a semantic study, the researcher will examine the data in terms of meaning. Meanwhile, the object contained in this research is online criminal news with the theme of the 'Burning Sun' scandal which had become a hot topic in the world of Korean journalism in 2019.

In this study, the data collection technique used is the documentation method. The documentation method is when a researcher takes their research data from writing sources, this definition Afifah & Muhroji (2023), Andrian (2021), Dison, Mahendra, & Purwendi (2022) and as explained by Arikunto in the book entitled *Manajemen penelitian* in 2005 in the book he emphasized that the documentation method is a method used to obtain data that comes from writing such as: books, magazines, documents, regulations, etc.

Researcher chose to use the documentation method as a data collection technique because the researcher felt that this technique was suitable with the source of the data, in the form of online news about the Burning Sun nightclub scandal in South Korea. The first step taken by the researcher was to collect data in a bounded context, which Korean online crime news from the online news site DongA.com. After that, the next step taken by the researcher at this stage is to read carefully the headlines and contents of online criminal news which are used as data sources, and will mark the part that has metaphorical expressions in it.

This research is a descriptive qualitative study. The data obtained by researcher came from literacy and documentation methods. For the documentation method, researcher will carry out several stages as described by Miles & Huberman in the book entitled *Qualitative data analysis: A source book of new methods* in 1994 in their book that activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and continue to completion so that the data becomes saturated. Therefore, the steps that the researcher will take are: (1) data reduction (2) data presentation, (3) drawing conclusion.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With reference to some of the concepts stated by the experts. The use of metaphors in Korean online crime news will be examined with an emphasis on the subject matter which includes 1) the form of use and the type of metaphor used in the opinion of as explained by Lakoff & Johnson in the book entitled *Metaphors we live by* in 2003, the meaning contained in the use of metaphorical expressions. The two problems will explain gradually.

#### 3.1. The form of using metaphorical expressions

**Structural metaphor** used as a transfer of a concept to another, which is carried out based on the systematic correlation of daily activities seen in the data under study, one of which is ‘여성의 몸과 섹슈얼리티를 침해하고 도구화하는 남성들의 강간문화...’ (snatching woman of sexuality and body and making it an object of the male rapist's culture ...)

**Oriental metaphor** used in the news text makes the depiction of a concept related to the orientation of human physical experience found in one of the data ‘그룹 ‘빅뱅’ 멤버 승리(29)의 성접대 의혹, 가수 정준영(30)의 몰카 촬영과 유포로 연예계가 발칵 뒤집혔다.’ (Suspected prostitution provider Seungri as a member of Bigbang (29) and singer Junyoung (30) spreader and also the person who recorded the hidden camera has inverted the world of celebrity) Turning over is an activity to rotate something with your hands so that it becomes opposite to its original position.

Meanwhile **ontological metaphor** in the article is used as a depiction of an abstract thing that is related to concrete things. We found the use of metaphorical expressions in one of the data, namely ‘하지만 친한 연예인이 구설에 오르면 자신에게도 불똥이 튄다는 것을 이번에 체험한만큼 당분간 자중 분위기가 이어질 것으로 보인다.’ (However, if the judging and scolding from the closest celebrity to oneself. Will only feel like splashed with sparks, this time their experience for some time shows a sustainable atmosphere of caution.) The metaphor contained in the sentence is an ontological metaphor. Because the physical form of being splashed with sparks indicates an effect someone has gotten hit.

### 3.2. The meaning of the use of metaphorical expressions

The meaning of using a structural metaphor in the sentence ‘몸과 섹슈얼리티를 침해하고 도구화하는 남성들의 강간문화...’ (snatching woman of sexuality and body and making it an object of the male rapist's culture ...)

Refers to the context of a person who forcibly and casually takes something valuable from a woman. The use of the expression 'snatch' gives the impression that the thing being done is utterly impolite, without the owner's consent and seems very vicious.

Meanwhile, if seen from the meaning contained in the orientational metaphor ‘그룹 ‘빅뱅’ 멤버 승리 (29)의 성접대 의혹, 가수 정준영(30)의 몰카 촬영과 유포로 연예계가 발칵 뒤집혔다.’ (Suspected prostitution provider Seungri as a member of Bigbang (29) and singer Junyoung (30) spreader and also the person who recorded the hidden camera has inverted the world of celebrity)

In the context of this news, the world of celebrities is affected by the case entangled by seungri and other colleagues who have a background in the world of entertainment therefore, the expression '뒤집히다' is an appropriate way to describe the situation that occurs after the sun burning case was exposed. The world of celebrity has become more and more noticed by the public, and people have expressed their own opinions regarding celebrity involvement. Until there are many false rumours against other celebrities. This is what is meant by the 'inverted' world of celebrity.

Then in the use of the ontological metaphorical expression ‘하지만 친한 연예인이 구설에 오르면 자신에게도 불똥이 튄다는 것을 이번에 체험한만큼 당분간 자중 분위기가 이어질 것으로 보인다.’ (However, if the judging and scolding from the closest celebrity to oneself. Will only feel like splashed with sparks, this time their experience for some time shows a sustainable atmosphere of caution.)

What is meant by being splashed with sparks here is insults and all public insults received by celebrities who are involved in allegations of sexual harassment which automatically reach celebrities who are closely related before the case is exposed. Relatives were also affected by what was done by the suspect in the burning sun case.

The metaphor used in the news text aims to develop a way of speaking, according to the opinion of Fajar & Qahar (2023), Jang (2020), Kosimov (2022), Munday, Newton-John, & Kneebone (2020), Saleh, Rahman, Hasyim (2021), and Kim in the book entitled *커뮤니케이션의 새로운 은유들 (New metaphors in communication)* in 2015 that provides an explanation of metaphors that metaphor is a way of comparison. In terms of literature, metaphor is known as the symbol of creativity, which is a way to express language so that the choice of words is more varied.

A similar opinion is expressed by Ariastuti & Wahyudin (2022), Choi, Noh, & Park (2020), Masykuri (2022), Purwanto, Fadhly, & Rahmatunisa (2021), Sari, Hafifah, & Mayasari (2020), and Poniman in the book entitled *Tuturan metaforis ragam jurnalistik* in 2015, explains that the purpose of using language styles is to attract the attention of readers or listeners.

Therefore, the contents of the writing which are the ideas created by the author will be conveyed to the reader. With the use of this language style aims to convey an expression from outside the original meaning. So, indirectly, it asks the reader to have the ability to understand what is the meaning behind the figurative word.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Research that has been carried out from data objects obtained from the Korean online crime news "Burning Sun scandal" found the use of metaphorical expressions classified with the theory of as explained by Lakoff & Johnson in the book entitled *Metaphors we live by* in 2003 covering the types of structural, orientation, and ontological metaphors. The use of metaphorical expressions in the headlines and texts of the Korean online crime news "Burning Sun scandal" employs metaphors that conceptualize thoughts, experiences, and other abstract processes into something concrete in nature.

The use of this conceptual metaphorical form occurs because the viewpoint of the listening audience has experience sensing all the expressions used. Due to cultural and linguistic differences between Indonesian and Korean, the existence of the metaphor is slightly different and there is a Korean metaphor that cannot be translated into Indonesian.

In addition, journalists use metaphorical expressions aimed at enriching the lexicon used by journalists so that the news produced does not seem flat and does not become boring for readers. Then the purpose of using the metaphor in crime news can produce an intense impression for the reader when consuming news delivered by journalists without any exaggerated information. Because it is like the essence of news which is a fact that is conveyed to a reading audience without any reduction or addition of information.

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