Construing Korean Proverb ‘Arms Bend Inward’ through Property Selection Processes

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Kwon, Iksoo. 2012. Construing Korean Proverb ‘Arms Bend Inward’ through Property Selection Processes. Korean Journal of Linguistics, 37-3, 481-500. Proverbs assert their veracity about social and moral matters by linking features of generic social situations to mundane and individual human affairs. This paper focuses on the generic-to-specific mapping in the construal, exploring how a generic statement such as a proverb is used and understood in a relevant specific context. Particularly, this paper aims to revisit Lakoff and Turner’s (1989) model, GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor and to show that the model itself does not fully explicate which properties of the source domain are picked and mapped onto their counterparts in the target domain. Rather, it merely provides a pool of relevant inferences and entailments for the generic statement. This paper argues that property selection process (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1997) enables us to transparently explain the processes of construing a proverb; if we are able to characterize the domain of experience that constitutes the source domain in terms of selection processes, it will constrain the semantic extensions that occur in the corresponding target domain. This paper analyzes the Korean proverb phalun anulo kwunpanu ‘arms bend inward,’ roughly equivalent to saying in English, charity begins at home, as a case study and shows that the selection process helps to provide motivated accounts of how proverbs are construed. (University of California at Berkeley)

Key words: proverb, conceptual metaphor, property selection processes, GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, construal

1. Introduction

Proverbs are economical; people are generally quite good at understanding proverbs outside of context, as when one simply reads a list of proverbial expressions (Gibbs 1994: 309-314). Even though the linguistic content in proverbial expressions does not involve individual people’s specific experiences, people understand the expressions with

1 The draft version of this paper has been presented at the 10th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference, Krakow, Poland in 2007.
case, seeing human concerns as the concept that the proverbial expressions refer to. How do people easily understand a single generic statement without specific linguistic contents enough to simulate? For this reason, construal of proverbs has attracted a number of scholars (Hoffman and Honeck 1987; Honeck, Kibler, and Firment 1987; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Gibbs 1994; Radden and Kövecses 1999; Panther and Thornburg 1999; Moreno n.d.). Among these various approaches, this paper aims to revisit Lakoff and Turner's (1989: 162) account, which seems to provide plausible explanation of an understanding procedure of proverbs in terms of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1993 and 2008), particularly GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor (Lakoff and Turner 1989) (see Section 3 for details).

Although it provides us with coherent and consistent accounts for the mapping, however, Lakoff and Turner's model does not fully elucidate how we process and construe a salient meaning from a statement. Even if it is good enough to show us a maintained topology of mapping, the model does not tell us which entity in the source domain motivates the interpretation of the target domain upon a specific context. This paper aims to argue that the property selection processes (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1997) enable us to fully account for and model the process of construing a proverb. The fundamental logic of the process is as follows: if we are able to understand which semantic property is selected among those evoked by the linguistic content and to characterize experiences that constitute the source domain, then it will be possible to constrain the semantic extensions that occur in the corresponding target domains (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1997: 34).

This paper particularly looks into a Korean proverb ḏulun anulo kwaŋnunta 'arms bend inward' (the closest axiom in English is 'charity begins at home'; see Section 2.2 for its distribution in detail) as a case study. To grasp the properties of the source domain evoked by the proverb, this paper investigates the general interpretation of the proverb in Section 2. The section also includes discussion of the properties of each element in the proverb. In Section 3, I provide detailed explanations of the selection process — how our gestalt cognitive system selects properties and creates salient meanings, considering how the semantic extension of target domain is constrained, which eventually endorses the necessity of the selection process in understanding the Korean proverb.
2. Backgrounds

2.1 Proverbs and Their Semantic Contents

Proverbs assert their veracity about social and moral matters by linking features of social situations to other, more mundane, domains with widely known and clearly identified conceptual entailments (Gibbs 1994: 309). This characterization entails that proverbs are axioms that carry highly concentrated and metaphorically extensible meanings. The meanings are related to our mundane situations and can be instantly understood, as showing a specific schematic picture of situations and, at the same time, as distributing the general schematization of the proverbs to specific cases.

In proverbs, people see human concerns as the target domains to which isolated proverbs refer (Gibbs 1994: 311). For this reason, proverbs are well understood outside of context. For instance, we know that the statement *too many cooks spoil the broth* is not merely an account of the spoiled food, but evokes something more than a description. Even unfamiliar proverbs to a specific culture can be grasped by the culture without difficulty; Merwin (1973) suggests that the unfamiliar proverbs from Asian cultures could make sense for western people despite their unfamiliarity. In addition, some proverbs are understood differently culture by culture. For instance, the proverb *a rolling stone gathers no moss* indicates in Western cultures a situation in which a person is not settled down and is unstable, which normally accompanies negative connotation. In contrast, it would indicate a situation in which a person works very diligently in Korean culture (Seongha Rhee, p.c.). So, familiarity that people have with regard to a certain proverb does not have a significant effect on its construal. Rather, understanding semantic properties of individual linguistic elements is the key to construing a proverb, which determines the specific meaning of the expression, and which is further extended metaphorically.

2.2 The Korean Proverb *Phalun Anulo Kwupnunta* and Its Semantic Content

The proverb that this paper is interested in *phalun anulo kwupnunta* 'arms bend inward' is a declarative statement. It is not a mere
statement; however, when the statement is spoken, it requires the addressee to make some extra processing effort to make sense out of it. It requires the addressee to simulate the linguistic content (Feldman 2006), i.e., to relate the linguistic content to her experiences.

(1)  phal-un  an-ulo  kwup-nun-ta
     Arm-Top  inside-Direc  bend-Imprf-Decl
     'Arms bend (sway) inward'

The closest proverbial expressions in English can be *charity begins at home* or *men are blind in the excuses of the familiar or in their own causes*. The range of contexts which the proverb in (1) covers seems to be extensible. Here are an attested text excerpted from a newspaper and a typical scenario for the proverb's use.

(2)  'Arms bend inward': it turned out that a policeman in active duty who had been convicted to be involved in illegal gambling was not punished by his colleagues (Apr 19, 2006. No-Cut News, the author's translation).
(3)  'Arms bend inward': In a job interview of a company, the interviewer tries to judge who is more competent between the two participants who survived at last. Then, the interviewer realized that one of the two was his close friend's son. Finally, the boss picked him instead of the other interviewee.

As shown in (2) and (3), the proverb *phalun anulo kwupnunta* is used when the policeman who is involved in an illegal gambling is not punished or when the boss favors his friend's son and the FAVORITISM M3 affects the consequence of the official job-opening. Furthermore, the boss's or the colleague policeman's FAVORITISM toward his close friend's son or the corrupted policeman, respectively, is regarded as a

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2 It has been brought to my attention by one of the reviewers that it would be even more interesting to compare the proverb in question to other Korean proverbs whose meanings are similar to it such as *choksun tongsayk* 'color of grass and green are the same' and *kacaynun leyphyen* 'a crawfish takes side of a crab.' However, the comparative analysis is a matter for future research.

3 This paper uses small caps to represent semantic primes that are evoked by an utterance in question.
NATURAL tendency that human beings would have. In addition, sometimes it can further be used as a meaning of IMmorality or UNDESIRABILITY in some contexts.

The main question that this paper poses is as follows: how can the meanings FAVORITISM toward colleagues or acquainted persons, the NATURAL TENDENCY, and even UNDESIRABILITY be derived from a single proverbial expression? This paper argues that the motivation that enables us to understand the illocution of the proverb *phalan Undo kwupnunta* must lie in the way we embody the linguistic content in our daily lives. To account for the motivation, I consider the semantic properties of the individual linguistic elements that constitute the statement.

### 2.2.1 The Linguistic Content *Phal* 'Arms'

The linguistic item *phal* 'arms' in the proverb is one of the human body parts that has many subparts and physiological properties. It has a joint that enables it to bend in one direction, hands (fingers) which enable people to manipulate objects, and the like. By having *phal* as a grammatical subject in the proverb, this proverb evokes a most familiar and mundane tool in a daily life and provides a concept that people easily embody and sympathize. This is a smart uptake for the sake of construal, because the meaning of words and sentences and the meaning of linguistic structures are motivated and grounded more or less directly in experience, in our bodily, physical and social/cultural experiences (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1997: 29).

For this reason, *phal* in the proverb is an instantiation of the embodiment; the *phal* in the proverb is conceptualized as an entity that has a natural PROPENSITY to bend thanks to its joint. In addition, there is no way for an arm to move without HUMAN'S CONTROL. These lead us to the semantic properties from the lexicon *phal* in the source domain: HUMAN BEHAVIOR, BODILY CONTROL, and PROPENSITY.

### 2.2.2 The Linguistic Content *Kwup* 'Bend'

The predicate *kwup* 'bend' in the proverb enables the proverbial expression to convey richer metaphorical interpretations. Generally,
straightness entails symmetry, and further to desirability while crookedness entails the opposite (e.g. to be upright [a positive evaluation of someone's moral character], upstanding citizens (Cienki 1998: 128)) (Foster 1984, 1983, Attneave and Olson 1967, Wilkin and Tenenbaum 1983, Lowe 1985). The predicate also entails that the entity that bends undergoes a CHANGE of state. According to Leyton's Asymmetry Principle (1992: 9), "we normally interpret an asymmetry in the present as having originated from symmetry in the past." In the proverb phalan anulo kwupnunta kwag- indicates that in our conceptualization, phal 'arms' used to be in a symmetric state, namely to be straight, and then it undergoes a change of state from symmetrical state to ASYMMETRICAL one.

In sum, the predicate kwag- evokes a situation in which an entity that had been originally straight underwent a CHANGE of state, entailing asymmetry (UNALTERED IS STRAIGHT; Cienky 1998), further to be uncontrolled (CONTROL IS STRAIGHT AND UP, SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR IS NOT STRAIGHT, LEGAL IS STRAIGHT, CRIMINAL IS CROOKED; Cienky 1998), which eventually has an impression of undesirability. For this reason, the predicate kwag- has semantic properties such as CHANGE of a certain state, and an ASYMMETRICAL state, which are later metaphorically extended to semantic properties such as IMMORALITY/UNDESIRABILITY.

2.2.3 The Linguistic Content Anulo 'Inward'

The linguistic item anulo, which means 'inside,' also adds up another group of semantic properties to the construal. In particular, it is related to the salient construal of the proverbial expression, FAVORITISM, because the concept of inside is closely related to the semantic property FRIENDLINESS that is easily extended to FAVORITISM by inferences. Our folk knowledge tells us that the favoritism is often based on the homogeneous membership that is shared by members of a certain group.

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4 Etymological origins of the words wrong and correct support the close relationships between STRAIGHTNESS and DESIRABILITY and between CROOKEDNESS and UNDESIRABILITY.

(i) wrong < PIE *wer 'to turn, bend' (OED)
(ii) correct < PIE *reg- 'to move in a straight line' (OED)
Evidence for the dichotomy of IN and OUT is pervasive in our mundane lives. Speaking of a family, for instance, HOMOGENEITY that the membership is based on, i.e., blood ties, strengthens the relationship among the members, which is a plausible motivation for favoritism. The HOMOGENEITY shared by the group members can thus be metaphorically extended to the concept of FRIENDLINESS.

The semantic property friendliness also seems to be plausible with regard to the orientation of human's viewpoint, eyesight. As seen in <Figure 1>, the distinction between inside or outside is determined by the orientation of eyes; in <Figure 1>, an 'inside' refers to A rather than B. In the bodily expressions of our cultures, we also adopt the inside and outside dichotomy; people who are close enough to belong to share a certain membership, friendship for instance, often greet each other by hugging or embracing or by having the counterpart inside the range of her eyesight at least, as seen in <Figure 2>. If one greeted someone with his back facing the counterpart's face, it would not be natural at all.

Even though the dichotomy might have different construals depending on the character of conceptual container (e.g. move your butt out of the danger zone!), the default connotation of inside rather than outside is more likely to go well with the friendliness. There is another empirical evidence showing the close relation between outside and disfavor. Back in 1980's, subway stations in Seoul used to use the utterance in (4) in broadcasting scripts.

\[ \text{yelcha-ka tuleo-kaiss-uni ancen-sen} \]

\[ \text{train-Nom enter-Prog-Caus safety-line} \]
The way that *pakk* 'outside' is used entails that the viewpoint located inside the safety line anchors to the location of the trains, not to the platform where people wait for the trains; the phrase entails that machines are favored more than human beings who stand on the platform. These opinions against the phrase resulted in a new phrase in the broadcasting script as shown in (5).

(5)  `As the train is entering [the platform], please step back out of the safety-zone.'

The authority concerned reacted to the opinions by simply omitting the problematic phrases 'out of the safety line.'

Based on a number of embodied examples showing the close relationship between inside and FRIENDLINESS, the way that *an* 'inside' is used motivates the phrase's metaphoric extension and even its conventionalization into FAVORITISM. In brief, TO FAVOR SOMETHING IS TO HAVE SOMETHING INSIDE metaphor is accounted for in the construal and such construal is drawn from the properties of INSIDE, HOMOGENEITY and its extension, FRIENDLINESS.

The semantic properties that the statement *phal anulo kwapnantu* are summarized as follows: the properties of *phal* 'arms' are related to HUMAN, BODILY CONTROL and PROPENSITY; the predicate *kwap* 'bend' entails that an entity undergoes a CHANGE of state from a symmetric state to an ASYMMETRIC state; the notion of *an* 'inside' used in the expression *anulo* 'inward' can be regarded as FAVORITEM from its FRIENDLINESS and HOMOGENEITY. Then, how each of the
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A semantic property can make the overall meaning of the proverb such as ‘charity begins at home’. How can its individual lexical items make the proverbial expression understood as FAVORITISM and GENERAL PROPENSITY? The next section argues that the selective cognition of relevant properties that best-fit the given situation is the key to the construal.

3. Proverbs, Conceptual Metaphor, and Property Selection Process

3.1. Previous Approach Revisited

Lakoff and Turner’s model (1989) provides a way of explaining metaphorical mappings that take place in the construal of proverbs; rather than providing abstract, nonimagistic, and nonverbal explanations, the model elaborates entailments and inferences of source and target domains and captures the rich range of semantics of proverbial expressions. Since proverbial expressions talk about human concerns in general, their target domains always include generic information, which can further apply to individual experiences. The domains that participate in the construal of the proverb *phalun anulo kwapnunta* are shown in (6) and (7) and the mappings are shown in <Figure 3>.

![Figure 3. Mappings in the Construal of Phalun Anulo Kwapnunta]

(6) Source Domain

- a. arms are straight under the control of physical tension.
- b. if it loses the control, an arm or its joint comes to be not straight.
- c. arms bend inward, not outward (arms sway inward in a
physiological sense).

d. joints make arms bend inward.
e. the unidirectionality of arms' bending is a physiological nature.

(7) Target Domain
a. people are impartial under the control of moral volition.
b. if she loses the control, her mind becomes not fair.
c. she favors an acquainted person, not an alien.
d. her mind makes her favor a specific person.
e. her prejudice is a natural propensity.

The entailments and the mappings in the model are consistent and coherent. The individual mappings such as A PERSON IS AN ARM (or A PERSON AS AN ARM in a metonymic sense), TO BE UNFAIR IS TO BE BENT, FAVORING AN ACQUAINTED PERSON IS SWAYING INWARD and others seem to be involved in the construal. These generic level entailments and mappings are all conspired to make the addressee to put some extra efforts to match them to whatever suitable context that they fit in.

The extra efforts let the interlocutor apply the idea conveyed by the proverbial expression to her individual case and make sense out of the generic statement regarding human affairs. GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor plays a key role in the construal. The construal process is described as follows: an interlocutor recognizes what is overtly mentioned in the proverb, *phul*, *ah*, and *kswup*. The attributes of arms are connected to the physiological constraint that restricts their movement; the natural event that an arm would bend inward makes the reader understand relationship between attributes and behaviors. The natural relation is linked to human affairs and then, the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor gets the interlocutors the specific-level knowledge via the corresponding generic-level structure and finally makes them access the target domain of individual cases.

3.2. Problem Raised

Although it helps us understand the metaphors in the proverb by providing access to the knowledge of entailments and inferences in the domains, Lakoff and Turner's model has some limitation. The model
merely lists the relevant entailments and inferences, and does not explain how a proverbial expression fits an individual case, as schematized in Figure 4.

In the model, the role of the generic level schema is pivotal since it maintains the topology of the entailments and the inferences evoked by a metaphorical expression. As shown in Figure 4, however, the schematic knowledge at the generic level does not elaborate how this proverb works for a certain specific situation and how it works for another, but merely covers the individual situations. The GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor is good enough for us to attain a general schema of mapping structure of a linguistic expression and a pool of entailments/inferences evoked by a metaphorical expression, but that does not fully elucidate how a certain knowledge at the generic level is selected and mapped to a specific situation that the proverb fits. The same question can be asked in the case of the proverbial expression *phalon anulo kwupnunt*. The proverb evokes the general schema covering several meanings such as FAVORITISM, NATURALNESS, and UNDESIRABILITY. Then, how is it that one of the interpretations, for example, FAVORITISM is more salient than NATURALNESS or UNDESIRABILITY in certain contexts?

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Some can merely say that the salient meaning is determined upon the context. This statement, however, does not mean that the generic schema in Lakoff and Turner’s model is fully capable of predicting which specific situation the proverb fits itself in. It would rather suggest that only when we recognize that a specific situation is compatible with the generic schema, we come to construe the intention of the statement inductively.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) Note that the direction of the arrows between Schema at Generic Level and ‘Situations 1, 2, 3, and etc.’ are reversed because I intend to represent the inductive way of construal.
If the construal process had taken place as shown in <Figure 4>, two similar proverbial expressions that share knowledge at the generic level could have been used interchangeably in a certain situation. It is not the case, however. Suppose that there are two proverbs that are similarly schematized such as *a bad carpenter blames his tools* and *blind blames the ditch* The generic level knowledge that each proverb shares appears the same; the generic level knowledge in both of the proverbs is INAPPROPRIATENESS from the event of blaming others or the situation rather than his/her own fault. However, we intuitively use the two proverbs differently; the former is used, for instance, when a poorly-prepared politician grumbles at his failure of being elected and says, “I failed because of the damn secretary”; the latter is used when a corrupted politician criticized media for airing his corruptibility. Even though they share INAPPROPRIATENESS from attributing his/her own fault to others or situation at the generic level, the uses of them differ. This suggests that the knowledge at the generic level should be qualified or narrowed down for its usage in the source domain before being extended to their counterparts in the target, which is shown in <Figure 5>.

In <Figure 5>, one or more salient property (or properties) among others that constrain the characteristics of source domain is (or are) selected and is (are) mapped to the individualized knowledge at generic level. This paper argues, as Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1997) contends, that property selection processes will sort out irrelevant information in the construal of proverbs.

![Figure 5. Selection Processes in Mapping of Proverbs](image-url)
4. Property Selection Processes in the Proverb Phalun Arako Kwupnunta

4.1. Property Selection Processes

Property selection processes (PSP) are proposed by Ibarretxe-Antuña (1997) as an implementing mechanism for metaphorical mappings. PSP characterize the properties evoked by an overtly expressed metaphorical statement, and select certain salient semantic properties so that they contribute to the salient interpretation of the metaphorical expression in the context.

For instance, in her work on the predicate smell and its metaphorical extensions, she accounts for the metaphorically extended meaning investigation of the polysemous predicate among other meanings (e.g., the police have been sniffing around here again (Ibarretxe-Antuña 1997: 33)); she suggests that properties in the source domain are narrowed down to <voluntary>, and <detection> by selection processes among others such as <internal>, <voluntary>, <identification>, <subjective>, and <emotional>, and that subsequently we can construe the metaphorical sense of smell as investigation. These processes show not only how some of the properties that characterize the source domain are mapped onto the target domain, but also what properties are mapped (Ibarretxe-Antuña 1997: 37-38). In the same vein, this paper argues that PSP can provide us more motivated accounts for the qualified interpretation of proverbs than partial mappings in the traditional model can.

Selection processes in our cognition is fundamental and inherent. According to Ibarretxe-Antuña (1997), the cognitive motivation of PSP is related to human's selective gestalt perception of stimuli; in our daily lives, we are surrounded by numerous stimuli; among them, we pick up relatively salient stimuli which are perspicacious due to their novelty and intensity, without even recognizing that we are selecting them. Sweetser (1990) also refers to the focusing ability of our visual and

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6 It is noteworthy that the properties in PSP are neither to be understood as semantic primitives that synonyms share or antonyms do not share or as such as in the connotational analysis framework (Katz and Fodor 1963; Katz and Postal 1964; Katz 1972). Rather, it is to be understood as shorthand ways of referring to the definite properties (Ibarretxe-Antuña 1997).
auditory sense - the ability to pick out one stimulus among many. My claim is that this pervasive cognitive motivation helps to construe proverbial expressions that include novel metaphors that require interlocutors to simulate and to make sense out of the seemingly isolated generic statements. PSP that rely on the selective gestalt cognition is thus qualified to capture the selection process in the construal of proverbial expressions.

4.2. Analysis of the Proverb an Arm Bends Inward

The statement *phalun anulo kwupnunta* can function either as a mere description in a certain context or as a proverb. If the statement is a mere description of the physiological attribute of arms, the interpretation of the linguistic elements in the proverb merely consists of the senses of *phal* 'arms,' *kwup* 'bend,' and *an* 'inside' without selection processes in the construal. If the statement is recognized as infelicitous in a given context, it triggers the interlocutor's extra effort to search and pick the most relevant properties in a given context. The relevant properties that are evoked by the linguistic elements in the proverb (Section 2) are represented in <Figure 6>.

Among the numerous properties of the linguistic contents in the left column in <Figure 6>, only a few properties are selected by our inherent gestalt cognition; less salient elements such as *flesh*, *wrist*, and *hand* are sorted out. Abstract characteristics are inferred from the selected linguistic contents; a *joint* has its physiological constraint that bends an arm only in one direction; manipulating muscles is done by some *physical tension*, namely *bodily control*, and the tension is controlled by human's intention; *an* evokes the dichotomy of IN and OUT and in the dichotomy, *inside* usually refers to a certain group that shares homogenous membership (<homogeneity>); *kwup* indicates that an entity undergoes a <change of state>.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Contents</th>
<th>Property Selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arm</td>
<td>(Source) arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joint</td>
<td>joint &gt; physiological constraint; unidirectionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flesh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrist</td>
<td>physical tension &gt; bodily control; inside &gt; homogeneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical tension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bend</td>
<td>bend &gt; change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straighten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**<Figure 6. Selection in the Source Domain of the Proverb Phalun Anulo Kwupnuntu>**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Contents</th>
<th>Property Selected</th>
<th>Property Selected</th>
<th>Salient Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arm</td>
<td>(Source) arm</td>
<td>(Target) human’s behaviors</td>
<td>favoritism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joint</td>
<td>joint &gt; physiological constraint; unidirectionality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flesh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrist</td>
<td>physical tension &gt; bodily control; inside &gt; homogeneity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>physical tension</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>inside</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>outside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bend</td>
<td>bend &gt; change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>straighten</td>
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**<Figure 7. PSP in the Construal of the Proverb – FAVORITISM>**

In the target domain, some of the selected abstract characteristics in the source are grouped and yield a salient meaning. For instance, the main interpretation of the proverb is FAVORITISM when properties and characteristics such as <arm>, <bodily control>, <homogeneity>, and
<change> are selected and form a group. As shown in <Figure 7>, the selected properties in the source domain are metaphorically mapped onto their counterparts; <phal> in the proverb corresponds to <human behaviors>; <bodily control> in the statement corresponds to <control> in general or intention behind behaviors; <homogeneity> corresponds to <friendliness> (See Section 2.3). <Figure 7> represents the construal process of the proverb, which means FAVORITISM.

When different members form a group in the target domain of the process, the proverb has a different meaning. The proverbial expression sometimes indicates that it is NATURAL that people favor an acquainted person over a stranger, and that it is UNDESIRABLE to do so. The construal processes of the interpretations are represented in <Figures 8 and 9>.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Selected (Target)</th>
<th>Salient Meaning</th>
<th>Property Selected (Target)</th>
<th>Salient Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>human's behaviors</td>
<td>undesirability</td>
<td>human's behaviors</td>
<td>naturalness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control</td>
<td></td>
<td>propensiy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friendliness</td>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immorality</td>
<td></td>
<td>friendliness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<Figure 8. PSP in the Construal - UNDESIRABILITY>  <Figure 9. PSP in the Construal - NATURALNESS>

In <Figure 8>, the properties in the target domain are <human's behavior>, <control>, <friendliness> and <immorality> which correspond to <arm>, <bodily control>, <homogeneity>, and <change>, respectively. The <immorality> metaphorically corresponds to the <change> of state in the source, to <arm> evokes CHANGE from its original shape and further to IMMORAL from its ASYMMETRY (discussed in section 2.2). The selected properties in the target domain are grouped and yield a meaning of NATURALNESS. <Figure 9> represents how the reading of NATURALNESS is obtained; <arm>, <joint>, <bodily control>, and <homogeneity> are selected in the source and their correspondents in the target, <human's behaviors>, <propensity>, <control>, and <friendliness> are grouped and yield a meaning of NATURALNESS. The joint's <physiological constraint> is mapped onto a person's <propensity> because a person's propensity
determines her behaviors just as the joint’s unidirectional constraint determines its movement.

The grouped properties in <Figures 7 – 9> are bridged by our inferences and yield relevant interpretations; the interpretations rely on prototypical scenarios that the properties evoke: for instance, when a person (<human’s behavior>) loses his control of his discipline (<control>) about fairness, he would unfairly favor an acquainted person (<friendliness>). The scenario seems to work for the general definition of FAVORITISM. Another salient meaning UNDESIRABILITY can be accounted for in a similar way; a person (<human’s behavior>) loses its control (<control>), favors an acquainted person unfairly (<friendliness>), consequently a change into an immoral state takes place (<change>; <immorality>), which is derived from the change into an asymmetric state, and the situation would thus be assessed to be UNDESIRABLE. Lastly, properties such as <human>, <propensity>, lack of <control>, and unfair favoritism for acquainted people (<friendliness>) let the mapping of the proverb construed as NATURALNESS in a similar fashion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Contents</th>
<th>Property Selected (Source)</th>
<th>Property Selected (Target)</th>
<th>Salient Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arm</td>
<td>arm</td>
<td>human’s behaviors</td>
<td>favoritism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joint</td>
<td>joint</td>
<td></td>
<td>naturalness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flesh</td>
<td>physical tension</td>
<td></td>
<td>undesirability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrist</td>
<td>body control</td>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hand</td>
<td>homogeneity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inside</td>
<td>physical tension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside</td>
<td>bend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bend</td>
<td>straighten</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<Figure 10. PSP in the Proverb *Phulan Ando Kwamnunt*>
In sum, only a few relevant properties in the source domain are grouped and yield salient meanings. During these processes, different combinations of the selected properties yield different metaphorical meanings via abstraction, inferences and metaphorical mappings. The construal of the proverb *phalun anulo kwupnunta* is thus summarized in Figure 10.

5. Conclusion

Proverbs make the addressee put some extra efforts to make sense out of a mere statement in a given context. This indicates that there are lots of implicit efforts to understand the proverbial expression whose construal necessarily evokes a fair amount of background cultural knowledge, novel conceptual metaphors, and inferences. This paper focused on the fact that a single statement evokes rich information and knowledge to process, and raised a question, how do people make such rich meanings out of a single isolated generic statement?

This paper revisited Lakoff and Turner’s (1989: 162) account among many others, which provides plausible explanation of an understanding procedure of proverbs in terms of conceptual metaphor theory. Although it is plausible to show us maintained topology of mapping, this paper argued that Lakoff and Turner’s GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor does not fully elucidate how we process and construe a salient meaning from a statement because the model does not tell us which entity in source domain motivates the interpretation of the target domain upon a specific context. This paper argued that property selection processes (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1997) enable us to fully grasp and model the construing process of a proverbial expression.

This paper particularly looked into the Korean proverb *Phalun anulo kwupnunta* ‘arms bend inward’ (the closest axiom in English is ‘charity begins at home’) as a case study. This proverb can be used at least in three contexts in which a person’s action of FAVORITISM is referred to, in which the NATURALNESS of the favoritism is referred to, and in which the UNDESIRABILITY of the favoritism is referred to. To pursue detailed accounts, I collected properties evoked by the linguistic contents and explored contexts where the proverb can be used. I introduced properties selection processes with which we could select
and synthesize relevant properties in the construal of proverbial expressions in Section 3. The necessity of selection processes in our cognition has been discussed in the same section. Section 4 provided detailed analyses of the proverb in terms of property selection processes, exploring properties which the linguistic elements in the statement such as *phal* 'arms,' *kwup* 'bend,' and *anulo* 'inside' evoke; it has also discussed how our inference system yields the salient meanings based on the properties.

**References**


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