

# ‘Chung’-based Slang Terms Revisited: A Peircean View and a Lakoffian Methodology

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## I. Introduction

This research aims to shed new light on the Korean ‘chung’-based slang terms (i.e., the idiomatic complex nouns with the ‘X-chung’ form) with Peirce’s translative perspective on the sign process (Peirce, 1931-1958; Petrilli, 2003; Vega et al. 2008; Lim, D., 2014; Lim, D., 2023) and Lakoff’s experientialist methodology in Cognitive Linguistics (Lakoff, 1989; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) in an attempt to help enhance the observational, descriptive, and explanatory adequacy in its theoretical account. As many previous studies work and agree on the terms’ status as part of neologism in a Saussurean

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formalist way (i.e., with a focus on the dyadic form-content formula), their reasoning (e.g., the inductive and deductive) methods seem to make sense when they conclude that such neologism examples are the solid evidence for distinct hate speech and pejorative language, especially, owing to the purposefully constructive and intentionally nonliteral use of the morpheme ‘충’ (chung, “bug/ worm”) semantically specified by some partially salient feature of a modifying element (tentatively labeled as ‘X’ here). In the same logic, it may stand to reason that many linguists pinpoint linguistic<sup>1)</sup> metonymy and metaphor as the main figurative devices (i.e., ‘X’ + ‘chung’ ← metonymy + metaphor) (Jang, G.-H., 2018). Despite the fact that mentioning two figurative devices look sufficient enough to describe the semantic mechanisms of the ‘X-chung’ form, this research argues that Peirce’s translative paradigm of the sign can provide a more systematic and flexible viewpoint, especially, by providing a transdisciplinarily compatible platform on which various metasemiotic and metatheoretical accounts can collaborate for the investigation into a phenomenon or hypothesis in focus (Pettrilli, 2003; Lim, D., 2023). In this regard, a new proposal is that, in Cognitive Linguistics which is relevant and open to a Peircean view, an experientialist Lakoffian approach (thus, an interpreter-specific, experience-sensitive, and ICM-related<sup>2)</sup> one) to the

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1) There are fundamental differences between linguistic (or classical) metaphor and conceptual (or cognitive) metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kwon, 2017; Lim, J.-R., 2022).

2) In Cognitive Linguistics, ICM stands for ‘Idealized Cognitive Model’ (Lakoff, 1989). Idealized Cognitive Models (ICM, henceforth) are the models about the organization of knowledge (e.g., categorization) cognitively relative to and interactively functional in mentally idealized contexts (Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff, 1989; Lim, J.-R., 2022). In terms of the prototype, what matters is each experienter’s evaluation of prototypicality as well as his/ her categorization processes (not the results of its structure of representation) (Lakoff, 1989). As cognitive categorization is neither 100% objective (cf. similarity-based) nor 100% subjective (cf. dissimilarity-based), Lakoff (1987) views it as being ICM-based. ICM’s examples involve conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy (ibid.).

mapping process in conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy can be made in such a way that the perceptual analogy and the purposeful featural selection are the two semiotically manipulative (thus, purposefully translative) processes<sup>3)</sup> essential for the 'chung'-based slang terms. Although this is not an attempt to integrate Peirce's theory into Lakoff's theory (or vice versa), such a transdisciplinarily experimental application is expected to provide a meta-level vantage point by being able to see through the fundamentally tripartite components and properties of the sign (e.g., the sign vehicle a.k.a. representamen; the interpreted content or interpretive effect a.k.a. interpretant; the referent a.k.a. object & iconicity; indexicality; symbolicity) and, in the processes, figure out the irreducibly triadic (and, thus, inevitably translative) relationship/ dynamics of the sign process (i.e., semiosis) (Peirce, 1931-1958; Petrilli, 2003; Lim, D., 2014). Here, the commonality in Peirce and Lakoff is the metasemiotic and metatranslative literacy which goes against and beyond phonocentrism/ glottocentrism. If the 'X-chung'-related semiosis and semiotics involve more than simple literalist reading and figurative devices, they must operate in more fundamental dimensions and in more dynamic manners. Drawing on the two examples of Peirce's sign properties (i.e., iconicity and indexicality on the basis of semiosis-internal similarity and contiguity/ causality) and the two examples of Lakoff's research methodologies (i.e., conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy) as the cognition-intrinsic and domain-sensitive mapping abilities slash mechanisms, this research hypothesizes that the linguistic examples of the 'X-chung' form/ structure are

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3) Here, the negative-versus-positive contrast should be treated separately in axiology (thus, not directly based on the X's linguistic whole-for-part metonymy as such (Jang, G.-H., 2018)) in relation to the embodiment-sensitive meaning networks of 'chung' as polysemy (cf. urban life, the *StarCraft* culture, etc. to be considered as main factors).

nothing but the verbally realized outcomes (thus, translative products) generated not by simple literary devices but by sign-property-specific cognitive processes. Then, a new abduction-friendly and hypothesis-based research method should be to analyze the concrete features or properties of ‘chung’ for the source domain and those of the referent-specific clue ‘X’ for the target domain in iconicity-centered and indexicality-sensitive ways in order to specify the mapping<sup>4)</sup> processes. Upon a property-centered metasemiotic analysis using encyclopedic knowledge on ‘chung’ and its modifier examples, the result reveals that the featural similarity between the ‘chung’-centered properties in the source domain and the respective sets of ‘X’-related properties in the target domain is mainly scarce<sup>5)</sup> and biased.<sup>6)</sup> Besides, it turns out that ‘chung’ is more tightly related to conceptual metonymy (e.g., “vermin” as a salience-high

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- 4) The mapping requires a mental projection of some features/ properties in the source domain on to those in the target domain. It takes place across disparate domains (in conceptual metaphor) or within a common domain (in conceptual metonymy) (Lim, J.-R., 2022). As the construal asks (and allows) for the Peircean sign dynamics of open-ended networking—unlike Saussure’s (1916) dyadic formula advocating the phonocentric paradigm/ syntagm reading—across sign modalities/ spheres, a conjecture about the basic semiotic factors in the process may be made by adopting Peirce’s 3 major sign types/ properties. If the conjecture is valid, each linguistic form as a symbol should function as a semiotic vehicle/ prompter that helps each sign user/ translator conceptually maneuver for its underlying meaning network(s) in/ for each domain. And, thanks to iconicity and indexicality as sign properties, the semiotic characteristics found in the mapping examples should show some degree of iconicity and indexicality either inside a sign or between/ among signs. Simply put, the Peircean metasemiotic notions are expected to be instantiated in the Lakoffian cognitive processes, too.
- 5) The examples of ‘X’ are found to share a small number of value-laden features (e.g., [+ annoyance], [+ hatefulness], etc.). In the self-referring usage, however, even the few features weaken and fade (e.g., ‘부딪’ (bumeok, “pour and eat”), ‘출근’ (chulgeun, “going to work”), ‘설명’ (seolmyeong, “explanation”), etc.). Many formalists fail to explain such variability.
- 6) The slang term users are found to focus on their subjective (negative) emotions exclusively. It is based on the biased idea of “I hate a feature of you/ them. I hate bugs/ worms. Therefore, you/ they are bugs/ worms.”, which is hardly justifiable as the essential prerequisite for the cognitive ontology of (linguistic or conceptual) metaphor and metonymy in those slang terms.

and value-rich concept/ referent under the superordinate term or category 'chung'; "Zerg units as a swarm or as individual entities" interlingually rendered as 'X-chung' and culturally popularized due to the abhorrent appearances and behaviors of Zergs in the *StarCraft* game series; etc.) and more loosely linked to conceptual metaphor because of a lack of empirical evidence for the insect-related iconicity in the specific properties or features of the 'X' examples. Yet, as opposed to the formalist analysis, in which compositionally inexplicable (i.e., exocentrically interpreted) 'chung' is argued to be generated via objective-similarity-based linguistic metaphor and, at the same time, each 'X' example is argued to result from linguistic metonymy (e.g., the whole-for-part type), the new experientialist analysis can make a plausible inference that each slang term user's corporeally, perceptually, conceptually, or cognitively interpreted properties or features might have helped the production of conceptual metaphor (e.g., [X IS (PART OF) CHUNG]) and conceptual metonymy (e.g., "the vermin" for the bugs/ worms, 'chung' for any Zerg-related perceptual feature, etc.) via cognitive embodiment and selective ICM-sensitive projection/ mapping. So, it is obvious that slang term users devise a metasemiotic strategy of projecting their negative emotions (e.g., annoyance, aversion, etc.) against "chung" (e.g., the vermin, Zergs, etc.) on to those against others—by means of selective/ perceived iconicity—and, in the process, concealing their grandiose desires to feel greater or better than others via 'chung'-based belittlement and dehumanization. Nonetheless, the dynamics of the 'chung'-based slang terms is intrinsically active and variable due to the sign's dynamic nature as an index (i.e., produced and interpreted via contiguity or causality). Therefore, the recent phenomenon of verbal derogation needs more intricate research in sociopsychological manners not as a fixed linguistic formula but as an effect-centered (meta-) semiotic strategy.

In what follows, this research is going to demonstrate that a Peircean semiotic perspective can make a contribution to the theoretical adequacy of an account on the ‘chung’-based slang terms, especially, by collaborating with Lakoffian methodologies in Cognitive Linguistics in a metasemiotic way.

## II. Literature Review

In terms of the research on ‘chung’-based slang terms, there are four major linguistic levels on which theoretical examinations are made: (1) the morphological level, (2) the semantic level, (3) the lexical level, and (4) the pragmatic level.

On the morphological level, a main focus is placed on the structures and functions of the morphemes. Taking the nature of the morphemic function (e.g., root vs. affix on the basis of the functional centrality) into account, Jang, G.-H.(2019) argues that ‘chung’ should be treated as a suffix<sup>7)</sup> in spite of the distinct grammatical category (i.e., a noun) described in standard Korean dictionaries. Jang, G.-H.(2018) observes that, in the form ‘X-chung’, ‘X’ can be a noun, a noun phrase, a clipped word, or a root. Despite such variety, all the ‘X’ examples are argued to represent some property of markedness often disapproved of by the slang users (ibid.). And, to express their attitude against those who are characterized by an ‘X’-related property, the slang users develop the use of the ‘chung’ suffix (ibid.).

On the other hand, Ann(2018) considers ‘chung’ as a lexically free and

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7) As a theoretical support, Jang, G.-H.(2019) uses Chae’s(2017) research on another Hanja-based morpheme ‘족’ (jok, “race/ tribe”), especially, in regard to the early abstraction stage of grammaticalization toward affixing processes.

distinct word mainly because of the lexically distinct and independent meaning as well as the recently increasing morphological productivity (thus, high frequency in the contemporary pragmatic use). Taking the side of the proponents for anti-affix analysis, Kim, B.-K.(2017) also argues that ‘chung’-based neologisms should not be considered as an instantiation of affixation even though the grammatical behavior of ‘chung’ is bound rather than free (ibid., 68-69).

On the semantic level, especially, in lexical semantics, not much new research is implemented as the semantic nature of the neologisms seems to be clear, explicit, and fixed (Yoo, 2018, 44; Jang, J.-A., 2019, 30; Seo, 2022, 58). Yet, most studies are inclined to pay their attention to the semantic structures or mechanisms of the ‘chung’-based neologisms. They describe the ‘chung’-based slang terms as possessing the semantic structure of [ [X] [chung (“bug/ worm”)] ], in which ‘X’ denotes a distinct negative property of (or clue for) a referent (e.g., ‘일베’ (ilbe, “a website called *The Best of the Day*”)) while ‘chung’ depicts each referent as a person akin to a bug/ worm by means of linguistic metaphor (Jang, G.-H., 2018). One noteworthy study is Jang, G.-H.(2018). Due to such examples’ peculiar tendency toward the explicit and intentional expression of aversion and contempt, he argues that ‘chung’ is selected purposefully via the subjective and creative mechanism of linguistic metaphor. He adds that the other form ‘X’ should be analyzed as the whole-for-part type of metonymy. He, then, distinguishes the semantic negativity (e.g., ‘일베’ (ilbe, “a so-called infamous website”)) from the semantic neutrality (e.g., ‘설명’ (seolmyeong, “explanation”)) in the main meanings of the ‘X’ examples. He also observes some evidence for semantic evolution from other-oriented aversion to self-deprecation (e.g., ‘출근’ (chulgeun, “going to work”)) in the meanings of the ‘chung’ slang terms.

In regard to the lexical level, a key aspect that draws attention is the word-formation-related characteristics of the ‘chung’-based neologisms. Such kind of research includes Jang, G.-H.(2018) and Ann(2018). Jang, G.-H.(2018) states that a key feature of the ‘chung’-based neologism is a relatively flexible yet productive rule that allows for not only the regular construction of noun-‘chung’ words (e.g., ‘출근충’ (chulgeunchung, “commuting bug”)) but also the more unpredictable formation of other types of complex words which include (1) the (bound-) root-‘chung’ words (e.g., ‘맘충’ (mamchung, “mom bug”), ‘진지충’ (jinjichung, “serious bug”), etc.) and (2) the clipping-‘chung’ words (e.g., ‘부먹충’ (bumeokchung, “pour-and-eat bug”), ‘틀딱충’ (teulddakchung, “clanking denture bug”), etc.) (Jang, G.-H., 2018, 95-99). He pinpoints that those kinds of lexical structures may not represent the entire ‘chung’-based neologisms. Rather, he suggests that researchers should view the current use-based patterns as a tentatively popular tendency rather than the firmly established word-formation rules (ibid.).

Regarding the lexico-semantic research on ‘chung’, an interesting exception is Zhang’s(2012) Hanja-centered investigation into the semantic classification of the radical ‘chung’ (蟲). Zhang(2012) compares two different versions of 蟲’s dictionary senses (not as a word but as a radical that takes part in the word-formation processes of those characters/ words which possess ‘chung’ (蟲 or its simplified form) for their semantic contents respectively) in order to examine the semantic taxonomy of the particular radical ‘蟲’ in an era-specific manner. What is noteworthy is the theoretical finding about the coexistence of the semantic differences and similarities between the ancient version’s information and the contemporary version’s usage data. In spite of a great chronological distance, it turns out that both of them describe the major semantic senses of the radical ‘chung’ as (1) the insects (whether they fly or



crawl), (2) the worms (whether extremely small or not) (cf. some insects' larva examples included), (3) the vipers (or poisonous snakes), (4) other kinds of small animals which usually crawl and/or curl, and (5) some peculiar natural phenomenon like the rainbow. Zhang(2012) concludes that the categorical similarities in the 'chung' radical's major senses must be ascribed to the relative commonalities of the human beings' life experiences while the specific examples in each category may differ due to the physical differences in the environmental condition in the respective eras.

On the pragmatic level, most research results agree on the key point that there exists a strong nuance or perception of negativity (e.g., aversion, contempt, etc.) toward a target group denoted by various keywords (e.g., '일베' (ilbe, "*The Best of the Day*, a website"), '설명' (seolmyeong, "explanation"), '맘' (mam, "mom"), '급식' (geupsik, "food service"), '지균' (jigyun, "regional balance"), etc.).

Jang, G.-H.(2018) points out that 'chung' is devised because of the behaviors/ states/ entities causing aversion, contempt, or mockery (Jang, G.-H., 2018, 105). Since (1) the general perceptions of human beings toward 'chung' ("bugs" or "worms") are characterized by aversion, disgust, and irritation (ibid., 105-106) and (2) the bugs and worms in nature are often used as the major metaphorical symbol(s) for insecurity, inferiority, weakness, and hopeless incapacity (Ann, 2018, 170; Jang, G.-H., 2018, 109-110), he concludes that 'chung' has an adverse function of making any vague range of people fall into some explicitly stigmatizing category (or categories) by means of subjective metaphorical categorization (Jang, G.-H., 2018, 105-112).

In her big-data-based investigation<sup>8)</sup> into the lexical characteristics of the

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8) However, the use of the search phrase 'aversion toward adolescents' in her big data mining does not and cannot guarantee the researcher a direct or strong correlation between the high frequency of the word 'chung' and the interpretation of its main target as the Korean

youth-aversion-related words available on Korean social media, Ann(2018) finds out that ‘chung’ is a frequently used word (cf. 28th in the rank; 175 in the frequency number of the tokens; out of 7,975 nouns in the 3,426 text samples available on Korea’s social media sites like *Daum*, *Naver*, and *Twitter*; only pertinent to the year of 2017). She expresses a great concern about the rapidly increasing frequency in the use of ‘chung’ in the contemporary Korean society’s social media discourse addressed by the mainstream male adult population toward the youth population. Her main concern is centered on the stigma effect, which is caused by the intentional invention and prolific distribution of the ‘chung’-based neologisms (Ann, 2018, 170).

From a brief literature review, it becomes clear that there are two major research trends: (1) the form-content formula (thus, a formalist analysis) in focus and (2) the data-centered and use-oriented descriptivism (based on several major examples). Such trends do presuppose and exploit one rigid model: the dyadic model of the sign (Saussure, 1916). Its dichotomy often results in or translates into form-centered glottocentrism in lexical semantics. Although these trends are methodologically useful and technically economical, they do not guarantee the high explanatory adequacy. For instance, while many studies<sup>9)</sup> make a value-sensitive observation about the ‘chung’-based slang neologisms in arguing that ‘chung’ should be analyzed as the negative

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adolescents in particular (cf. a possibility that ‘chung’ might be used by many Koreans toward and against other (young or old) Koreans).

9) However, not all studies on the recent Korean neologisms treat and delineate the ‘chung’-based slang neologisms duly and impartially. For example, in a longitudinal investigation into the formation and stabilization of Korean neologisms for the period of 2005 through 2019, Kim, J.-H.(2020) makes no mention of any ‘chung’-based slang neologism case. Furthermore, a high number of studies on the recent Korean neologisms have a tendency to make a brief summarization about the basic morpholexical pattern (i.e., [ [X] [chung] ] ) and the major abstract meaning (i.e., deprecation) only.

semantic contributor for the explicit semantic degradation of a target individual or group, they do not look further for an underlying mechanism (cf. subjective metaphorical categorization in Jang, G.-H. (2018)).

On the other hand, the problem is that many researchers' major attention is given to those terms' status as part of neologism only (i.e., if not novel, no interest). And, an in-detail investigation into the metasemiotic/metapragmatic mechanisms and dynamics of those 'chung'-based slang terms is still lacking. In the next chapter, an alternative metasemiotic and metatranslative approach is going to be implemented to see if a Peircean semiotic view and a Lakoffian experientialist methodology can be considered together in the theoretical quest to find empirical clues which may be useful for the enhancement of this account's explanatory adequacy.

### III. A Peircean/ Lakoffian Approach to the 'Chung' Slang Terms

Given that the 'chung'-based slang terms are often considered as the affix-based complex nouns derived via linguistic metaphor and metonymy for the effect of referent-specific and property-specific derogation, there can be two main directions in follow-up research: (1) to keep that analysis as the status quo or (2) to cast doubt on its adequacy due to its simplicity and rigidity and seek out another explanation as a working hypothesis. In this chapter, the research takes the second direction as an alternative and examines the applicability of an integrated<sup>10)</sup> view in using Peirce's triadic sign notions in

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10) This is not designed to conduct a semiotic or cognitive explanation for linguistic/ literary kinds of metaphor and/or metonymy. This also does not seek to assess and compare Peirce's metaphor and Lakoff's metaphor.

semiotics and Lakoff's experientialist notions (e.g., ICM, conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, etc.) in linguistics. Upon observing the semantic/pragmatic variability of 'chung' in the actual usages of 'X-chung' slang terms, this alternative account attempts to provide a more concrete, systematic, and flexible description of the pertinent phenomena.

In order to implement this new approach in a coherent way, a new theoretical method/ procedure of abductive reasoning can be taken into account first. According to Peirce's abductive procedure, a hypothesis is put forward initially and, then, put to the test by means of instance-based examination (Peirce, 1931-1958). In other words, macroscopically in the logical argumentation and, also, microscopically in the 'X-chung'-related property specification, the hypothesis-based approach can be applied to various types of sign processes. In the former case, at least, three premises slash notions are hypothesized<sup>11)</sup> as follows: (1) the sign's meaning (making) as translation<sup>12)</sup>

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11) Here, it seems reasonable to state that Lakoffian experientialism and Peircean pragmatism have seven things in common: (1) no static/ fixed dyadic model of the sign; (2) no rigid/ universal code of a language in a Saussurean or Chomskyan sense (thus, no formalism or cognitivism); (3) no phonocentrism/ glottocentrism (cf. corporeal and/or non-anthroposemiotic dynamics, too, at work); (4) semiotically translative processes across various sign systems and domains; (5) major sign properties (e.g., similarity/ iconicity; contiguity or causality/ indexicality; differentiability- and conventionality-based arbitrariness/ symbolicity) at work in the sign processes; (6) significant roles of a sign experiencer; (7) possible intervention of diverse contexts/ environments not as a factor but as a component in a semiosis (Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lim, J.-R., 2022; Queiroz & Merrell, 2006: 49-51) despite the facts that (1) Lakoff does not elaborate on Peircean semiotic notions in his theory and that (2) Peirce and Lakoff differ in many theoretical aspects.

12) Peirce views the sign (process) as a panuniversal phenomenon in which its interpreter/ translator plays a key role in dealing with the irreducibly triadic dynamics of a sign's components. He proposes that a sign's meaning-making process should be understood as a translative process among/ across sign components (Petrilli, 2003; Lim, D. 2014; Lim, D., 2023). In his triadic sign paradigm, a sign can be classified into, at least, three types (i.e., symbol, icon, and index) depending on the (inter-/ intra-) semiotic factors like differentiability

processes/ products, (2) the iconicity-based semiosis or mapping (i.e., conceptual metaphor), and (3) the indexicality-based semiosis or mapping (i.e., conceptual metonymy). In the latter case, several different sets of 'chung'-related properties can be proposed hypothetically as those in the source domain by adopting the Lakoffian methodologies (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff, 1989). In relation to those diverse sets of 'chung'-related properties in the source domain, then, each set of 'X'-related properties can be analyzed as those in the target domain. Thus, 'X' and 'chung' as the sign vehicles slash prompters may be connected to and/or realized by complex and dynamic networks of other sign components that function as interpreted contents and/or (immediate/ ultimate) referents.

Macroscopically, an abductive approach to logical argumentation can be made to overcome the shortcomings of the other methods (e.g., an inductive method, a deductive method). Based on the four main observations<sup>13</sup>), three hypotheses are to be proposed to infer toward an optimal and feasible explanation (Douven, n.d.; Stewart, n.d.).

(1) Main hypotheses<sup>14</sup>) to be proposed

a. The bug-/ worm-related properties of 'chung' must be based on (inter-/

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(thus, conventionality), similarity, and contiguity (or causality). A sign's main properties are, then, symbolicity, iconicity, and indexicality. Then, a translative process can be characterized by a certain sign type or property (Peirce, 1931-1958).

13) The observed facts can be summarized as follows: (1) 'chung' is used in referent-specific words; (2) 'chung' represents negative, positive, or neutral properties of a referent depending on the user's intention in a context; (3) In the [ [X] [chung] ] structure, "X" represents the pertinent referent's concrete property or feature that can be varied (thus, should be interpreted) in context-sensitive ways; (4) Without 'chung', "X" cannot refer to the pertinent referent's concrete property or feature (cf. only a general one).

14) Here, conceptual metaphor/ metonymy should be distinguished from the purely linguistic notions of metaphor/ metonymy (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lim, J.-R., 2022).

- intra-) semiotic translation processes involving cognition and perception (thus, related to ICMs (cf. not dependent on absolutely objective features)).
- b. ‘chung’-related properties/ features must be motivated by cross-domain iconicity (and its mapping) and expressed as each (bound/ free) root head in a word-formation process (thus, interpretable via conceptual metaphor).
  - c. ‘X’-related properties must be motivated by domain-internal indexicality (and its mapping) and expressed as each modifier in a word-formation process (thus, interpretable via conceptual metonymy).

And, in an attempt to test these hypotheses, at least, five usage-based observations can be described as evidence for the validity of each hypothesis.

(2) Other observations as validation instances

- a. Each ‘chung’ interpretation (thus, semiotic translation) can be made available and adequate only by means of the user’s corporeal pragmatics, which is informed by his/ her corporeally developed encyclopedic knowledge including his/ her embodied axiology (e.g., ‘설명충’ (seolmyeongchung, “explanation bug”), ‘급식충’ (geupsikchung, “food service bug”), or ‘틀딱충’ (teulldakchung, “clanking denture bug”) on hostile social media vs. in a casual peer-to-peer conversation).
- b. The specific and unique set of the ‘chung’-related properties/ features<sup>15)</sup> (e.g., those as bugs vs. worms vs. the vermin vs. a member of the swarm, etc.) can be made available and adequate only by means of the

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15) Such features may not be the absolutely objective properties that correspond to the reality of the entity in focus (thus, not following the classical theory of categories).

user’s selective projection and mapping between the ‘chung’-related and ICM-based properties in the source domain and the less concrete yet intention-rich properties about ‘X’ in the target domain (e.g., ‘한남충’ (hannamchung, “South Korean male bug”), ‘맘충’ (mamchung, “mom bug”), ‘부먹충’ (bumeokchung, “pour-and-eat bug”), ‘노력충’ (noryeokchung, “effort bug”), ‘퐁꼬충’ (ddongggo chung, “ass hole bug/worm”), ‘출근충’ (chulgeunchung, “commuting bug”), etc.).

- c. The flexible indexicality-high typology of conceptual metonymy can help explain diverse semantico-pragmatic features underlying the reductionist morpho-lexical choices in/ for the target domain (e.g., ‘그돈’ (geudon, “that money”), ‘환기’ (hwangi, “ventilation”), ‘퐁꼬’ (ddongggo, “ass hole”), ‘맘’ (mam, “mom”), etc.).
- d. The major type of conceptual metaphor in the ‘X-chung’ examples is the ontological metaphor (cf. the existence of the category for certain referents enabled by each slang user’s intentional and manipulative linking between “chung/ bug/ worm” and “X”).
- e. Regarding the subjectively negative emotions (e.g., annoyance, aversion, etc.) found to be available in the source domain (about the vermin in particular), different Korean users interpret/ translate their ‘X’-related properties/ features (in the target domain) differently and choose to (or not to) implement their mapping between the domains accordingly (e.g., ‘출근’ (chulgeun, “going to work”)).

Microscopically speaking, in following Peirce’s(1931-1958) perspective on the sign and its meaning (making process as translation per se) (Petrilli, 2003; Lim, D., 2015; Lim, D., 2023), a new hypothesis can be made in terms of the semantic features/ properties in each ‘chung’-based slang term. With the

translative mechanism of a meaning (as well as the triadic model of the sign) taken into account, at least, four hypotheses<sup>16)</sup> can be inferred.

- (3) New hypotheses based on the sign's translative mechanism
  - a. cognitive embodiment via intersemiotic translation<sup>17)</sup>

(thus, a set of main properties/ features (as part of some ICM) may vary as for each 'chung' user due to his/ her unique experiences)
  - b. cognitive enactment via intersemiotic translation
 

(thus, a peculiar set of properties/ features<sup>18)</sup> (as part of the sign user's/ translator's bodily-experience-based, ICM-related, and semiotic-translation-specific effects made in purpose-sensitive and context-specific ways) may vary as for each sign user due to the self's internal/ external contingencies.)
  - c. relative iconicity-based mapping across domains
 

(cf. conceptual metaphor: the semiosis examples of 'chung' in the source domain projected on to those of 'X' in the target domain via subjectively conceived/ perceived iconicity (rather than via objective and physical similarity))
  - d. relative indexicality-based mapping or networking underlying the domain for each sign form/ vehicle (a.k.a. representamen)
 

(cf. conceptual metonymy: the semiosis example(s) of 'X' (or any sign

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16) Much to our surprise, these abductively inferred hypotheses are also major working hypotheses in Cognitive Linguistics (Lim, J.-R., 2022).

17) Jakobson(1959) proposes the tripartite typology of translation by getting inspired by Peirce's perspective. Intersemiotic translation occurs when a message (in any form of any sign system) gets transformed/ transferred into something else in another sign system (ibid.).

18) Here, with the Peircean perspective, features may not be purely objective knowledge, though. For the notion of enactment, see Hutto's(n.d.) summary about enactivism.



form) required to look for and get the access to the specific referent or referent-specific (and context-specific) meaning networks (as part of some ICM) via subjectively relevant and effective indexicality)

At this stage, it is worthwhile to examine and analyze main properties in domain-specific ways. There are two conceptual domains in focus: the source domain (S. D.) and the target domain (T. D.). The term 'the source domain' refers to the conceptual domain in/ from which specific properties (or roles) are interpreted/ employed as being semiosically salient and, thus, worth the sign experiencer's attention and exploitation (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The source domain is, therefore, intrinsically concrete with easy accessibility. The term 'the target domain' refers to the conceptual domain to/ in which the source domain's properties (or roles) can be projected/ connected under the condition that the sign experiencer can perceive and interpret (that is, translate) certain target-domain-related properties as being similar and relatable via iconicity-motivated conceptualization (ibid.). Thus, the target domain is ontologically vague, abstract, and/or unstable with high reliability on other source examples. In the case of conceptual metonymy, on the other hand, those characteristics of each domain and the motivating sign property do change: domain-internal mapping motivated by indexicality (cf. the "stand-for" relationship) (ibid.). Then, what kinds of properties can be collected and considered here? Let us check them out step by step.

### 3.1. Source Domain: Properties

By means of the (open-ended) triadically translative dynamics<sup>19)</sup>

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19) This implies that the binarism-centered denotation-connotation reading in the modifier-head

(decodable and analyzable in a Peircean or experientialist researcher's metasemiotic manner), the properties/ features of 'chung' can be inferred and discussed in detail. In that context, at least, three different sets thereof can be inferred as follows: (1) those in general; (2) those perceived by laypeople in daily (modern/ urban) life; (3) those recently experienced by *StarCraft* users. Those in general refer to the properties that are considered to be the objective and general knowledge about the entities in focus. The perception-based properties refer to those properties which are interpreted/ translated via each individual's sensorimotor knowledge based on his/ her perceptual experiences. The *Star-Craft*-related properties are those properties which are specified in the *StarCraft* games and acquired through the game-based experiences of a user. In order to collect the property-related information on 'chung', this research opts for online search as a main method. Upon entering the key phrases like 'scientific properties of insects', 'scientific benefits of insects', 'reason for hatred for insects', '충 특징' (chung teukjing, "characteristics of chung"), '충 어원' (chung eowon, "etymology of chung"), and '충 역사' (chung yeoksa, "history of chung"), the researcher in charge gets to read and collect the commonly cited properties on the basis of the search results. Subsequently, those common properties are classified into three main categories: (1) those which are scientific facts, (2) those which are proved as the reasons for people's hatred or fear for insects, and (3) those which are induced by and related to a specific entity/ phenomenon in today's Korean society (e.g., online games), especially, in terms of contemporary 'chung'-related etymology.

Each set of the 'chung'-related properties may be exemplified as follows.

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structure is to be rejected and criticized in the first place.

- (4) S. D. #1: properties in general
- a. adaptive and effective in a given environment:  
    evolutionarily well-developed
  - b. sensitive and reactive to external stimuli
  - c. economical and optimal in motion
  - d. optimally social and/or autonomous
  - e. effective in (nonverbal) communication
  - f. possess many innate abilities and skills
  - g. often, behaviorally mature from an early stage
  - h. highly productive (including reproduction)
  - i. highly conservative (in behavioral patterns)
  - j. good at learning new things from experiences
  - k. available in many different ecological systems
  - l. the history of evolution is far longer
  - m. essential and helpful for the Earth and, also,  
    sacrificed enormously for (and by) the human species
- (Agarwal & Sunil, 2020; Fukano & Soga, 2021; Smithsonian, n.d.)

Astonishingly yet predictably, it is not possible to observe the general objective properties representing the objective reality about the bugs and/or worms in any part of the 'chung' usages.

- (5) S. D. #2: those perceived by people in daily (modern/ urban) life
- a. tiny or, at times, invisible
  - b. creep, crawl, scurry, jump, and/or fly in an unpredictable manner
  - c. often cause discomfort and disgust to the individual human being(s)
  - d. often associated with the concept of danger/ risk/ fear

- (cf. infection/ wound)
- e. annoying/ irritating (either physically or emotionally)
- f. cause harm and loss to farmers/ gardeners  
(by eating leaves and fruits)
- g. often display a collective behavior of swarming
- h. often unafraid of human beings and found in indoor spaces  
(cf. pet insect owners' cases: unique exceptions)
- (Jose, 2019; Fukano & Soga, 2021; Klobucar & Fisher, 2023)

Speaking of the people's urban-life-related perceptions about 'chung', a key fact is that human beings naturally express disgust and discomfort when exposed to an instance of a bug or worm in a physical or conceptual way (particularly, in evolutionary psychology) (Jose, 2019; Fukano & Soga, 2021; Klobucar & Fisher, 2023). In addition, today's urbanized<sup>20)</sup> lifestyle is another big factor for the exacerbation of people's negative emotions (e.g., disgust, fear, anxiety, etc.) against bugs and worms (Fukano & Soga, 2021).

Elsewhere, a new set of 'chung'-related properties can be inferred from the online game culture that pertains to *StarCraft* (Blizzard Entertainment, 1998; Blizzard Entertainment, 2010).

(6) S. D. #3: those shared by *StarCraft* users (cf. Zerg<sup>21)</sup>)

20) In this context, urbanization implies modern society's mode of life/ living, and it does involve almost everyone in the contemporary Korean society (thus, not to be treated as denoting opposite meanings of rural residents' lifestyle).

21) In the video game series *StarCraft* and *StarCraft II*, there are insect-like creatures in the Zerg species (e.g., '파멸충' (pamyelchung, 破滅蟲, Defiler), '공생충' (gongsaengchung, 共生蟲, Broodling), '궤멸충' (gwemyeolchung, 潰滅蟲, Ravager), '맹독충' (maengdokchung, 猛毒蟲, Baneling), and '감염충' (gamyemchung, 感染蟲, Infestor)). The first two units appear in *StarCraft* while the others are introduced in *StarCraft II* additionally (Star Craft Wiki Editors,

- a. weaker than other species (cf. low attack capacity)
  - b. less fast than other species
  - c. possess dangerous tools and cause harm and damage to the others  
(e.g., spores, viruses, corrosive bile, fungi, neural parasites, etc.)
  - d. capable of and good at infesting any entity and/or planet
  - e. possess the characteristics of viruses, bugs, worms, and insects
  - f. generally hated and feared by many other species<sup>22)</sup>
  - g. possess physically unusual (e.g., unpleasant, disgusting, and alien-like) characteristics
  - h. almost always gather and move as a swarm  
(cf. when isolated, not very strong)
  - i. make unintelligible, annoying, and brute-like sounds  
(cf. intentional sound synthesis)
  - j. programmed/ determined to invade, attack, and destroy others' territories
  - k. generate a positive result (i.e., victory) when players destroy the enemy
  - l. targeted as a main enemy group by other species and, also, by many respective players
  - m. annoying, vicious, and harmful in their nature  
(as for the respective human observers)
- (Blizzard Entertainment, 1998; Blizzard Entertainment, 2010; Star Craft Wiki Editors, n.d.)

From the new game-related examples, it is easy to infer that the specific properties are a strategically specified combination<sup>23)</sup> of the physical features

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n.d.).

22) Nonetheless, almost all of the animal species (that is, 90%) consist of the invertebrate species (Rafferty, n.d.).

of invertebrate species. To be precise, they are an intentionally assembled set of various negative features of the vermin. Although artificially created and virtually experienced, those ‘chung’-related Zerg units with the vermin-centered properties are the very entities with which many Koreans are familiar by engaging in the pertinent games and/or discourses in the online game culture. When compared with the real bugs/ worms, the Zerg units are more frequently encountered and more directly experienced by Korean gamers. For such reasons, it is not surprising to see many Korean adolescents/ adults associating some ‘chung’-related usages with the Zerg-based semiosis<sup>24)</sup> examples.

Among these three sets which contain candidate properties for the source domain, an analysis shows that the second set and the third set contain the majority of the semantic features which are similar to those features that the slang term users tend to rely on in referring to some specific human individual(s) (e.g., irritation/ annoyance, discomfort, harmfulness, disgust, aversion, etc.).

Based on the finding, it is possible to argue that (1) the very properties that the slang term users seek to employ and express for the source domain of “chung” must be those of the “vermin” in the urban/ modern life contexts and that (2) the fixed set of some objective features about ‘chung’ cannot constitute a distinct category (with a clear boundary). Namely, the analysis

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23) It is worthwhile to note that the graphic designers’ intersemiotic translation into yucky creatures and the Korean version developers’ interlingual translation into ‘chung’-based terms do share vermin-like features regardless of the sign modalities.

24) For example, vermin-centered and villain-related interpretations/ translations can be induced from the terms with ‘chung’. Also, as one can choose the Zerg swarm as his/ her team in a game, some may not opt to use the negative features constantly and exclusively. Such shifts are related to the sign property called indexicality.

results can help infer the possibility of the ICM examples at work and the unviability of the classical notion of category (and its membership defined as a fixed bundle of objective features) in an empirically and experientially evident manner. In the former case, therefore, the lexical use of the morpheme 'chung' to imply and express the main properties of the vermin (instead of those of bugs/ worms) should be analyzed as a concrete example of conceptual metonymy<sup>25</sup>) (Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff, 1989). In the latter case, on the other hand, the unavailability of the fixed set of objective features in the minds of the 'chung' slang term users can be viewed as the evidence for the high operative functionality of ICM and prototypicality in their semiotic translation/ interpretation processes (also as the counterexample to the classical notions of category and its membership (Lim, J.-R., 2022, 85-88)). In the semantic/ semiotic specification of the major 'chung'-related properties, it turns out that the concreteness of the 'chung'-related properties is found to be available in (and as the main quality of) the source domain while selectively (thus, metonymically) realized in the term users' minds. Although the metonymic use as the vermin is observed, the high variability in the 'chung'-related pragmatics/ semantics (e.g., widening, narrowing, bleaching, etc.) suggests that this is a conceptual metonymic phenomenon (thus, not linguistic/ literary rhetoric). Then, a target-domain-centered examination may help shed more light on the data in focus.

### 3.2. Target Domain: Properties

Then, what kind of semantic (and pragmatic) features does each slang term

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25) (cf. the whole-for-part type, especially, the anthropocentrically subjective features against any vermin example)

possess and exhibit for the target domain? As it is difficult to delineate the full exhaustive list of all the features by means of the researcher's speculation, a new proposal is to select the word-initial element 'X' that precedes 'chung' as the linguistic clue about the target domain and try to infer the most evident property/ feature of each clue (or keyword) from its hypernym. Such information can be summarized as follows.

(7) T. D.: hypernyms of 'X'<sup>26)</sup> as its main properties<sup>27)</sup>

a. action/ behavior (involving a particular object/ event)

(e.g., 1. food: 부먹, 짭먹, 짭짭 2. job: 출근

3. speech: 설명, 혼수, 시비, 한입만, 노력

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26) For the detailed contents and usages in Korean, check out the topic 'chung (slang)' on *Namu Wiki* (Namu Wiki Editors, n.d.). The transliteration information is provided here: '부먹' (bumeok, "pour and eat"); '짭먹' (jjikmeok, "dip and eat"); '짭짭' (jjeopjjeop, "smack smack"); '출근' (chulgeun, "going to work"); '설명' (seolmyeong, "explanation"); '혼수' (hunsu, "backseat driving"); '시비' (sibi, "picking a fight"); '한입만' (hanyipman, "just one bite"); '노력' (noryeok, "effort"); '흡연' (heupyeon, "smoking"); '환기' (hwangi, "ventilation"); '급식' (geupsik, "food service"); '학식' (haksik, "food service in college"); '한남' (hannam, "South Korean male"), '맘' (mam, "mom"), '지균' (jigyun, "regional balance"), '지잡' (jijap, "regional miscellaneous" or "no-name colleges in regions"); '피시' (pisi, "p.c., initialism of political correctness"); '고시' (gosi, "public administration examination"); '공시' (gongsi, "civil service examination"); '인방' (inbang, "Internet broadcasting"); '일베' (ilbe, "The Best of the Day"); '메갈' (megal, "Megalia"); '에phem' (epem, "F.M. Korea" or "Football Manager Korea"); '롤' (lol, "League of Legends"); '스투' (seutu, "StarCraft Two"); '샌박' (saenbak, "Sandbox"); '시계' (sigye, "watch" from "Overwatch"); '삼엽' (samyep, "trilobite" from a pun word of "Samsung"); '무도' (mudo, "Infinite Challenge" from '무한도전' (Muhandojeon)); '코인' (koyin, "coin" from "Bitcoin"); '빠따' (bbadda, "(baseball) bat"); '키보드' (kibodeu, "keyboard"); '그돈' (geudon, "that money"); '국밥' (gukbap, "soup with the rice"); '진지' (jinji, "seriousness"); '틀딱' (teulldak, "clanking dentures"); '퐁꼬' (ddonggo, "ass hole"); etc. (Namu Wiki Editors, n.d.).

27) In some bleached usage, some properties in the target domain and those in the source domain show a semantically weakened linking for much attenuated or neutralized senses (especially, when referring to the self as a member of some 'X-chung' swarm).



4. hobby: 흡연 5. others: 환기, etc.)

(cf. food + job/ status: 급식, 학식)

b. status

(e.g., 1. region: 한남 2. marriage/ offspring: 맘

3. education + region: 지균, 지잡

4. ideology: 피시 (p. c.), etc.)

c. (public) event

(e.g., 고시, 공시, 인방, etc.)

d. (online) place

(e.g., 일베, 메갈, 에phem, 룰, 스투, 샌박, 시계, etc.)

e. object/ entity

(e.g., 삼엽, 무도, 코인, 빠따, 키보드, 그돈, 급식, 학식, 국밥, etc.)

f. state/ quality

(e.g., 진지, etc.)

g. body part

(e.g., 툭딱, 똥꼬, etc.)

From the hypernyms, one can infer that each of the specific behavior/ status/ event/ place/ entity/ state/ body-part examples should be treated as the main property available for the target domain in each case of the 'chung' slang terms. As far as conceptual metaphor is concerned, every property example should possess some specific slang-related feature(s) as part of the target domain in two ways (i.e., in a case-specific way and in a generic 'chung'-related way). In both ways, the initial construal of each 'X' element requires not the formalist form-centered reading of an objective fact but the context-specific (thus, indexicality-sensitive<sup>28</sup>) interpretation processes in an experience-centered way (thus, semiotically translative processes involving

ICMs). Naturally, an indexicality-high ICM interpretation/ translation involves conceptual metonymy for an X's properties not because of the X itself but because of indexicality and translation. For the same factors, semantic change, too, is natural and predictable.

Among the conceptual metonymy<sup>29)</sup> examples, in which an 'X' (as a semiotic clue/ prompter) is supposed to help each sign user get the access to its real-world referent (either its referential meaning or its referred ICM network) (Lim, J.-R., 2022), every objective and general property (e.g., the particular behavior/ status/ event/ place/ entity/ state/ body-part itself) does (and can) not provide any peculiar feature(s) directly related to the (negative) "chung" concept or quality (e.g., "South Korean males", "mom", "commute", "pour and eat", "ventilation", etc. → so what?). Almost the only way that an 'X' can help evoke the distinct (negative or "chung"-related) nuances or values seems to be each slang term user's mental projection of subjective emotions (cf. often negative ones like annoyance and hatred) about a certain social occurrence<sup>30)</sup> involving an X's main property (thus, a subjective axiology to be distinguished from the 'X' and its metonymy). If the driving forces of the

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28) Characterized by (physical/ conceptual) proximity and causality, indexicality is essential for any sign process (Peirce, 1931-1958). When it is combined with a sign user's phenomenological translation of his/ her bodily experiences, his/ her sign-specific ICM example can come into being.

29) Once Peirce's translative sign dynamics gets understood, diverse types of conceptual metonymy start to make sense coherently in spite of the seemingly unrelated and elusive characteristics in the sign form-content pairs. Whether referentially/ inferentially/ symbolically/ mereologically determined or not (Benczes et al., 2011), all the various metonymy examples must have been induced (thus, could be decoded) by the triadic sign dynamics with high indexicality.

30) Thus, a subjective axiology needs to be distinguished from the X and its metonymy. More importantly, conceptual metonymy (Benczes et al., 2011) should be distinguished from simple linguistic metonymy (Jang, G.-H., 2018).

'X' examples' usages include the subjective emotion-centered axiology, indexicality-high conceptual metonymy types, and arbitrary mental mappings of contextually (or psychologically) selective features, how do the 'X-chung' slang terms operate as a whole? As linguistic metaphor (i.e., toward the nonliteral exocentric reading of 'chung' based on similarity) cannot be justified due to the absence of objective similarity in reality, further inquiry into conceptual metaphor is asked for as an alternative. In the next section, the mapping processes are going to be examined in focusing on the relationship between the domain-specific properties in terms of conceptual metaphor.

### 3.3. Translative Issues in the Mapping

Now, the real question is if (and how) some properties in the source domain can be connected with the (allegedly) corresponding properties in the pertinent target domain by means of iconicity-based mapping processes. What is astonishing is the fact that almost no<sup>31)</sup> 'chung'-related property or feature in the source domain can find the corresponding property or feature of a pertinent clue 'X' in the target domain in the respect of similarity-based<sup>32)</sup> mapping except for each slang term user's subjective emotions (e.g.,

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31) Exception 1: '식(충)' #1 "a glutton" & '식(충)' #2 "an idle (drone-like) person" based on visual iconicity owing to the shared features like "eating" and "not working/ producing" (cf. Exception 2: '출근' "going to work (as one of the commuting people)" & "moving to a destination (as a member of the traveling swarm)" based on visual iconicity).

32) A traditional sense of linguistic metaphor tends to resort to objective (often physical) similarity between the target object and the metaphorical vehicle/ medium (e.g., 'lion' for "a brave/ powerful person"). Therefore, it is called 'paraphrase' (Hills, n.d.). Conceptual metaphor, however, accepts perceived/ conceived similarity (as well as conceptual analogy with logical or structural similarity), which is related to iconicity. The latter is fundamental in cognition and its semiotic networking (ibid.).

annoyance, discomfort, aversion, etc.) about the “bug/ worm” (to be precise, “the vermin”) for the source domain and his/ her subjective emotions about each clue-related case (e.g., each particular act/ entity/ state/ place/ status/ event, etc.) for the target domain. When confronted with this problematic reality about the main properties’ lack of actual similarity, conceptual metaphor (but not linguistic metaphor) can provide a probable explanation by quoting its premise about the semiotic iconicity<sup>33)</sup> (i.e., subjectively perceived/ conceived similarity) exemplified and observed in (or across) diverse sign modalities/ spheres (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). If the negative-emotion-based properties (e.g., [+ annoyance], [+ aversion], etc.) are the only properties that each sign user has in common for the source and target domains, it means that the slang term examples are based on (1) extremely far-fetched conceptual metaphor, (2) perception-based (and bias-centered) ICM examples, (3) axiology-saturated conceptual metonymy (e.g., “X” as a cognitive anchor point standing for some social occurrence about the referent; “chung” as a whole standing for “the vermin” as a part), and (4) minimal verbalization into a complex noun. Here, the main type of the ‘chung’-related conceptual metaphor examples can be analyzed as the ontological<sup>34)</sup> type (cf. the structural<sup>35)</sup> type). It means that the manipulatively concealed/ highlighted mechanisms of the

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33) In other words, (inter-/ intra-/ meta-) semiotic translative processes centering on subjectively conceived/ perceived similarity (as a sign property: iconicity) can be seen as iconicity-centered translation/ interpretation, in which conceptual/ cognitive metaphor is one type of such examples.

34) In the ontological type, the term user's emotional state of [+ annoyance] in the target-domain-related context gets translated via the prototypical feature of [+ annoyance] in the source-domain-dependent (i.e., bug-based or vermin-centered) manner.

35) In the structural type, the target individual's behavioral patterns in the target domain get translated via the bug's/ worm's (of a swarm) behavioral patterns in the source domain (cf. (1) appear; (2) act in a certain repetitive way; (3) disappear or get shunned).

cognitive models are the only source/ cause of the ‘chung’ slang terms.

Source Domain		Mapping	Target Domain	
“충 (chung)” “bug/ worm” (= “벌레 (beolle)”)		→ (?)	“X” (e.g., specific ICM examples & property examples related to ‘X’)	
(concealed)	Highlighted	→	Highlighted	(concealed)
(all-the other general properties)	laypeople’s perception-centered properties about the vermin (e.g., annoyance, aversion, etc.)	→	each term user’s context-sensitive emotions/ perceptions (e.g., annoyance, aversion, etc.)	(all-the other general properties)
(all-the other general properties)	respective <i>StarCraft</i> users’ experience-based properties about certain Zerg units (e.g., annoyance, aversion, etc.)	→	about a certain social occurrence involving some property of “X”	

[Figure 1] Mapping in/ for the [X IS (PART OF) CHUNG] Metaphor  
 (cf. The crossing-out indicates the covert concealment of the pertinent examples.)

Then, can conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) solve all the adequacy-related problems? Much to our dismay, challenges still remain. Such lack of shared or similar features between the target domain and the source domain is more vivid in the recently devised slang terms (e.g., ‘chung’ slang terms beginning with certain ‘X’ examples like ‘설명’ (seolmyeong, “explanation”), ‘환기’ (hwangi, “ventilation”), ‘퐁꼬’ (ddongggo, “ass hole”), ‘노력’ (noryeok, “effort”), ‘그돈’ (geudon, “that money”), ‘국밥’ (gukbap, “soup with the rice”), etc.). Why? To make matters worse, some of the slang terms have already gone through semantic change, and they are now used in two separate usages (e.g., ‘출근충’ (chulgeunchung, “commuting bug”); ‘설명충’ (seolmyeongchung, “explanation bug”); ‘학식충’ (haksikchung, “college food service bug”); ‘부먹충’ (bumeokchung, “pour-and-eat bug”) → (1) negative & pejorative: [+ aversion], [+ annoyance] vs. (2) neutral & self-mocking (cf. humorous): [- aversion], [- annoyance]). How come? Although a Saussurean formalist may resort to the third-party description of those characteristics in the name of arbitrariness, he/ she cannot describe or explain the underlying mechanisms of such aberrant variations. And these are tough questions to tackle for cognitive linguists, too.

Here, if equipped with a Peircean translative perspective as an alternative approach, it is possible to argue that the (intra-/ inter-) semiotic linking among the sign form ‘chung’ (for the source domain), the interpreted contents (in relation to each user’s experiences), and the (immediate/ ultimate) referent (for the target domain) should be viewed as a series of manipulatively translative processes<sup>36)</sup> fueled by cognitive embodiment/ enactment, partial iconicity (e.g., [+ annoyance]; [+ swarm-like]; the structure of [[X] [chung]]), high

36) For the theoretical exemplification of a metasemiotic and metatranslative account on the Peircean triadic sign dynamics, refer to Dhonghui Lim’s study (Lim, D., 2023), for example.

indexicality, and imaginative conceptualization (cf. varied ICM contents due to embodiment/ enactment and translation).

In addition, contrary to the view of the nonlexical affixal function (Jang, G.-H., 2018), it is reasonable to argue that the form 'chung' may be connected with any set of bug-/ worm-related features depending on various factors (e.g., cognitive highlighting/ concealing in conceptual metaphor (Kwon, 2017, 147-148); era-specific ICM examples with urbanization and online game cultures (in-) activated; perceived iconicity sensitive to the annoying type or to the individuality of each bug/ worm in the mapping) in the translative processes. Thus, either as lexical prototype features in the bug/ vermin/ worm category or as nonlexical peripheral features in some more abstract vermin/ swarm category, the properties of 'chung' can be translated/ interpreted/ realized in very dynamic and flexible ways thanks to the nature of cognition and meaning (making) in human semiotics. And, all these phenomena can be explained via semiotically translative processes.

#### IV. Further Discussion

In order to justify the mapping dynamics of the 'chung'-based slang terms, some scholars like Jang, G.-H. argue that the metaphorical construal of 'chung' as "a bug/ worm" (or, to be precise, "any individual whose main properties or qualities can be compared to those of a bug/ worm") should be applied only to the morphemic reading of 'chung' while the construal of any 'X' element that functions as a modifier should be analyzed in the respect of linguistic metonymy (cf. the whole-for-part type) (Jang, G.-H., 2018). With a sign-process-sensitive approach and analysis made in regard to the

metapragmatic usage of ‘chung’-based derogatory terms, it becomes evident that the proposal of linguistic metaphor can only be justified and comprehended under the condition that there exists a (noticeable or reasonable) degree of similarity between the properties/ features of the source domain and those of the target domain in the mapping processes. However, when it comes to the mental projection and mapping processes that must have taken place prior to the word-formation and pragmatic practice processes for such slang, there exist no objective similarity-based connection/ correspondence examples between the properties of the source domain and those of the target domain.

Then, where did/ do the so-called “metaphor-based” meanings of ‘chung’ (“a bug/ worm”) come from? Would the referent-related behaviors, entities, and/ or states provide any empirical evidence for the metaphorical reading of ‘chung’ when interpreted in collaboration with the part-for-whole metonymic device? It certainly cannot and will not because of the lack of (objective) similarity between the domain-specific properties.

From the in-detail delineation of the major properties or features of each domain, it becomes clear that there are some noteworthy facts in a domain-specific manner. When it comes to the properties of ‘chung’ in the source domain, there are three entirely disparate sets of ‘chung’-related properties: (a) scientific-facts-based properties, (b) laypeople’s everyday-experience-based properties (or short-sighted and overgeneralized impressions), and (c) recent online-game-related properties. Then, when the categories and properties of the element ‘X’ are taken into account, all the pertinent morphemes’ (or words’) usages reveal some distinct (meta-) linguistic characteristics: (1) the use of a concise and explicit keyword (or clue morpheme) that helps find out the specific referent (slash a specific group of individual referents) (e.g., related to a distinct behavior/ status/ place/ entity/



state, etc.), (2) mostly, the use of value-neutral morphemes or words (cf. a particular axiological value projected separately), (3) the difficulty in figuring out and working out the correct and concrete meanings of the respective slang words on the basis of the literal meanings of the actual 'X' instances (unless the term users and hearers/ readers have been accustomed to or informed of the precise context-specific world knowledge involving such slang terms), and (4) the subjectively arbitrary projection of some particular emotion(s).

Simply put, there is absolutely no empirical evidence for the existence or availability of the objectively analyzable and theoretically valid connection (or, any kind of connection, not to mention the logical correspondence) between the random subjective sensation or perception of negative emotions about a peculiar behavior/ entity/ state (e.g., explain, go to work, school meals, non-Seoul region-specific colleges, *Ilbe (Ilgan Beseuteu, a website)*, *Bitcoin*, *Muhan Dojeon ("Infinite Challenges"*, a TV program), seriousness, a mom, etc.) in the target domain and the laypeople's anthropocentrically biased opinions about the 'chung' examples (including the new generations' socioculturally acquired experiences of annoyance and aversion in the *Star-Craft*-related contexts) made available for/ in the source domain.

Strictly speaking, as is analyzed and pinpointed in Chapter 3, the similarity-based linguistic metaphor—which has been popular ever since Aristotle (Johnson, n.d.)—cannot describe and explain the full range of 'chung' slang terms adequately. And, Gyeong-Hyeon Jang's(2018) claim about subjective creativity as a criterion cannot, either. A more flexible (and broader) notion of perceived similarity or partial/ selective iconicity<sup>37)</sup> may be more

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37) One possible scenario in which the subjectively perceived senses of annoyance and aversion about bugs/ worms can be used as the major properties of the source domain while the subjectively perceived senses of annoyance and aversion about any peculiar behavior, entity,

helpful in Cognitive Linguistics (1) by applying conceptual metaphor to them and (2) considering the subjective emotions as the similarly perceived features. Yet, the latter scenario<sup>38)</sup>, too, encounters challenges when it deals with the neutral nuances in the self-referential usage of the ‘chung’ slang terms.

Then, is there any alternative way to explain all these usages and phenomena? This research proposes that, as was predicted via abduction, (1) a sign process must require and constitute (a series of) semiotic translative processes in an irreducibly triadic manner and that (2) each sign user should be able to implement his/ her (meta-/ inter-/ intra-) semiotic translation practices for linguistic production (or comprehension) by using some degree of iconicity/ indexicality/ symbolicity purposefully. Regarding the ‘chung’-based slang terms, unlike Johnson’s (n.d.) recent—and loose—view about the framework-based version of conceptual metaphor, it also proposes that ‘chung’ slang terms must be based on the (un-) consciously intentional linking across and among the sign components, which is motivated and justified only by the minimal featural iconicity in the perceptual/ emotional dimension (e.g., annoyance, aversion). In other words, without the shallow ontological basis of minimally perceived iconicity and, more importantly, without the manipulative translation processes, those recent slang terms’ mapping practices are unviable. Only under the conditions (1) that it is possible to use an extreme abstraction-centered and semiotic-translation-based

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or state in some human individuals’ everyday life can be used as the major properties of the target domain.

- 38) Examples of no or little cross-domain mutuality causes different terms to have selectively varied features/ properties even for ‘chung’ (e.g., ‘출근충’ (chulgeunchung, “commuting bug”) like one of the swarm vs. ‘설명충’ (seolmyeongchung, “explanation bug”) like some bugging insect vs. ‘똥꼬충’ (ddongggochung, “ass-hole worm”) like some eccentric worms vs. ‘흡연충’ (heupyeonchung, “smoking bug”) like one of the vermin vs. ‘에phem충’ (epemchung, “*F. M. Korea* bug”) like some swarm, etc.).

iconicity (thus, a partial subjective-attention-centered analogy) as the conceptual glue between the two disparate sets of some particular properties in the two disparate domains and (2) that there exists reliable truthfulness in the view that ‘chung’ is a semiotic vehicle/ prompter which can evoke various yet peculiar senses depending on each sign user’s translation purposes, each sign user’s manipulation-based linking act (and the mental translation processes thereof) can result in meaningful communication practices.

Speaking of the referent types, the nonliteral encyclopedic senses of ‘X-chung’ include diverse cases: the socioculturally less appropriate cases (e.g., ‘맘충’ (mamchung, “mom bug”), ‘찹찹충’ (jjeopjjeopchung, “smack-smack bug”), ‘흡연충’ (heupyeonchung, “smoking bug”), etc.), the economically less constructive cases (e.g., ‘키보드충’ (kibodeuchung, “keyboard bug”), ‘코인충’ (koyinchung, “virtual currency bug”), ‘공시충’ (gongsichung, “civil service exam bug”), ‘고시충’ (gosichung, “state exam bug”), etc.), the sociopolitically less impartial cases (e.g., ‘일베충’ (ilbechung, “*Ilgan Beseuteu* bug”), ‘메갈충’ (megalchung, “*Megalia* bug”), ‘틀딱충’ (teulddakchung, “clanking denture bug”), etc.), the psychophysically less delightful cases (e.g., ‘출근충’ (chulgeunchung, “commuting bug”), ‘노력충’ (noryeokchung, “effort bug”), etc.), the materialistically less impartial cases (e.g., ‘롤충’ (lolchung, “*League of Legends* bug”), ‘스투충’ (seutuchung, “*StarCraft Two* bug”), ‘시계충’ (sigyechung, “*Overwatch* bug”), ‘삼엽충’ (samyepchung, “*Samsung* bug”), etc.), the thematically less impartial cases (e.g., ‘개독충’ (gaedokchung, “Christian bug”), etc.), the sexually less familiar cases (e.g., ‘퐁꼬충’ (ddongggochung, “(male) homosexual bug”), etc.), and even all sorts of subjectively less pleasant cases (e.g., ‘한남충’ (hannamchung, “South Korean male bug”), ‘설명충’ (seolmyeongchung, “explanation bug”), ‘부먹충’ (bumeokchung, “pour-and-eat bug”), ‘한입만충’ (hanyipmanchung,

“just-one-bite bug”), ‘그돈충’ (geudonchung, “that money bug”), ‘진지충’ (jinjichung, “serious bug”), ‘국밥충’ (gukbapchung, “soup-with-rice bug”), ‘지균충’ (jigyunchung, “regional balance bug”), etc.). Thanks to the hyperdynamic, hyperflexible, and hypersensitive nature of cognition, this kind of diverse (intra-/ inter-/ meta-) semiotic networking can be made possible. Elsewhere, it is theoretically intriguing that, in each of these cases, the active agents of the case evaluation/ judgment are the respective slang term users themselves as (meta-/ inter-/ intra-) semiotic translators.

Then, (trans-/ meta-) semioethic issues remain as new tasks for researchers and ordinary sign users.

## V. Conclusion

Being confronted with the challenging phenomena involving the ‘chung’ slang, this research begins with the conjecture about the sign process in a Peircean view. And, then, to test its applicability and enhance the explanatory adequacy, it employs Lakoff’s methodologies.

If Peirce’s perspective and proposal on the sign process (that is, a sign’s meaning-making process a.k.a. semiosis) as a fundamental kind of ‘translation’ per se (Peirce, 1931-1958; Petrilli, 2003; Lim, D., 2014; Lim, D., 2023) can be taken into account as a valuable and reliable hypothesis, then, this hypothesis can yield a follow-up proposal that the ICM-oriented and selective-attention-based semiotic networking (essential for the establishment of the ‘chung’-based slang term usage) should be analyzed as a practical cause slash evidence for the strategically manipulative translation processes (un-) consciously and intentionally implemented by the ‘chung’-based slang term

users. Furthermore, it can be argued that the connection among the (minimum) three components of the sign must be motivated by the minimum degree of perceived iconicity and the maximum degree of indexicality (thus, the form-content formula “not” given as truth-condition-based tautological knowledge). In the actual sign processes, the ICM-based cognitive linguistic mechanisms and the prototype-induced metasemiotic dynamics (e.g., the wide variation of ‘chung’-related senses/ meanings, which demonstrated several disparate sets of semantic properties and pragmatic features in the account on the metaphorical mapping between the source domain and the target domain) must have come into play for the creation and proliferation of the ‘chung’-based slang terms. In addition, the abstraction-rich properties that show up even in the source domain of ‘chung’ (e.g., annoying, harmful, contemptuous, aversion-worthy, dangerous, smaller or lower in value, etc.) must be derived from the conceptually abstract and hybrid package of many negativity-oriented senses and emotions that some specific cultural conditions (and the bodily experiences of the experiencers) have created and concretized, rather than from some objective semantic evolution. Therefore, the concrete yet concise property that can represent all those diverse semantic senses and pragmatic features of the ‘chung’-based slang terms must involve “the vermin” (thus, conceptual metonymy at work) in an experientialism-sensitive way.

Simultaneously, as a variety of ‘chung’-based slang term examples exhibit diverse yet mutually (non-<sup>39</sup>) interactive semantic/ pragmatic features for the

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39) Examples of no or little cross-domain mutuality causes different terms to have selectively varied features/ properties even for ‘chung’ (e.g., ‘출근충’ (chulgeunchung, “commuting bug”) like one of the swarm vs. ‘설명충’ (seolmyeongchung, “explanation bug”) like some bugging insect vs. ‘똥꼬충’ (ddongggochung, “ass-hole worm”) like some eccentric worms vs. ‘흡연충’ (heupyeonchung, “smoking bug”) like one of the vermin vs. ‘에펜충’ (epenchung, “*F. M. Korea* bug”) like some swarm, etc.).

source/ target domain interpretation, it is necessary to view ‘chung’ as a lexically compact bound root<sup>40)</sup> slash semiotic prompter that is sensitive to each user’s ICM examples and contextual translation purposes (thus, open to various “chung”-related conceptualizations).

Since there is only a minimum degree of perceived iconicity between the relevant properties in the two distinct domains (e.g., subjective emotions of annoyance and hatred) as for conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy, this kind of slang usages imply that (1) the users’ translation strategies include manipulation (e.g., belittlement; dehumanization; arbitrary projection) and (2) the phenomena need more scrutinized research including (trans-/ meta-) semioethics.

Elsewhere, as a brief diachronic look into ‘chung’-based slang terms proves the preexistence of semantic change<sup>41)</sup> even in the etymologically earlier stages, the popular claims about the ‘chung’-based slang terms as a recent phenomenon of neologism-related and aversion-centered hate speech may benefit more from in-detail revision based on a Peircean translative perspective, especially, in collaboration with Cognitive Linguistics.

If these proposals deserve any theoretical consideration, then, the classical, objectivist, and formalist linguistic theories will have to go through some revision work. On the other hand, other conceptually or cognitively oriented theories should be able to gain a better vantage point by considering and accepting the Peircean perspective on the sign, meaning, and translation.

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40) Taking English neoclassical compound nouns for instance, borrowing lexical examples from Latin(ate) sources resulted in the birth of certain neoclassical elements as bound root morphemes (Minkova & Stockwell, 2014). Similarly, Hanja-based words can also have such unique examples.

41) The word ‘식충’ (sikchung) is a good example (e.g., from ‘식충’ (sikchung) #1 “a glutton” to ‘식충’ (sikchung) #2 “an idle person” and to ‘식충’ (sikchung) #3 “unproductive person”).

[Keywords] 'chung'-based slang terms, translative semiosis, experientialism,  
Peirce, Lakoff

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[국문초록]

## ‘충’ 기반 속어 용어 재고찰: 퍼스의 관점과 레이코프의 방법론

임동휘 · 권연진

본 연구는 한국어의 ‘충’ 기반 속어 용어를 분석하는 과정에 설명적 충족성을 향상시키기 위해서 기호의 의미 (생성) 자체를 기호 내재적 번역 메커니즘으로서 간주하는 퍼스(Peirce)의 독특한 관점을 적용해 보는 것을 그 주요 목표로 둔다. 의미와 기호 자체에 메타기호적, 메타번역적인 방법으로 접근할 때, 퍼스의 주요 기호 유형 및 속성에 기반하여 체험주의에 대한 여러 가설들(예. 체화, 이상적 인지모형, 개념적 은유, 개념적 환유 등)을 상정하고 타진할 수 있다. 특히, 기호학 분야에서 퍼스의 삼원론 관점과 인지 언어학 분야에서 레이코프(Lakoff)의 주요 방법론들이 협업을 위해 함께 고려될 때, ‘충’ 기반 속어 용어의 형식과 용법 예들은 (1) 각각의 개념 영역 (예. 근원 영역, 목표 영역) 속에 포함되는 주요 속성/자질들을 대상으로 하여 (2) 도상성/ 지표성이라는 주요 기호 속성을 중심으로 분석될 수 있다. 그 분석 결과는 다음과 같이 정리된다. (1) 목표 영역에서 형식 ‘X’와 연관된 주관적 감정/ 정서 예들이 지각된 속성으로서 작용하는 반면에, 근원 영역에서는 (개념적 환유 속의) “해충” (vermin) 개념을 중심으로 한 감정/ 정서 예들이 체험적으로 지각된 속성의 예들로서 작용하고 있다 (단, “충”의 사실적/ 객관적 속성과 “X” 예들의 사실적/ 객관적 속성 사이에 실증적으로 관찰되는 유사성 또는 공통점은 작거나 없다); (2) (최소한의 자질 속성 선택을 한 상태에서) 주관적 가치론 정보를 의도적으로 투사하는 것이 “X”와 “충”이라는 개념이 인지적으로 함께 존재할 수 있는 주요 방법이다; (3) (타자 지향적이든지, 자기 지시적이든지 여부에 상관 없이) ‘충’ 속어 용어 예시들의 구체적인 의미 망은 각 용어 사용자의 이상적 인지모형 예시뿐만 아니라 그가 처한 (상황) 맥락에도 민감한 방식으로 실현

된다. 이러한 분석 결과는 다음과 같이 요약이 가능하다: (1) 최소한의 도상성 사용, (2) 기호 생성/해석 과정, 즉, 기호 작용에 나타나는 번역적인 (translative) 조작, (3) 최대한의 지표성 활성화.

결론적으로, 퍼스가 주장하는 삼원론적 기호 관점과 기호의 번역적 본성을 레이코프의 방법론들과 함께 적용함으로써, 본 연구는 '총' 기반 속어 용어의 구체적인 예시들과 용법들을 총족성과 체계성을 갖춘 방식으로 기술하고 설명할 수 있음을 시연하였다. 추가적으로는, 이러한 접근법을 통해서 (1) 'X-총' 형식의 속어 용어가 보이는 기호 번역적 현상 그리고 (2) 개념적 은유/ 환유 원리들과 기호 번역적 조작 메커니즘 사이에 존재하는 모호한 경계 등의 차원에서 (초학문적 및/또는 메타 성격의) 기호윤리학적 고찰이 중요하다는 시사점을 얻을 수 있다.

[주제어] '총' 기반 속어 용어, 번역적 기호 작용, 체험주의, 퍼스, 레이코프

[Abstract]

**‘Chung’-based Slang Terms Revisited:  
A Peircean View and a Lakoffian Methodology**

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This research aims to take a Peircean metasemiotic approach to the ‘chung’-based slang terms in Korean by employing Peirce’s notion of meaning (making) as the sign’s translative process. When the sign is approached metasemiotically and metatranslatively, it is feasible to posit and test the hypotheses on experientialism (e.g., embodiment, ICM, conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, etc.) on the basis of Peircean sign processes and properties. In collaboration with Lakoffian methodologies in Cognitive Linguistics, the Peircean method sets out to analyze the ‘X-chung’ form in terms of the main properties for the source domain and the target domain in iconicity-/ indexicality-sensitive ways. The result shows that (1) vermin-centered emotions function as the perceptual properties in the source domain (cf. conceptual metonymy) while X-related subjective emotions function as those in the target domain in spite of the lack of objectively similar properties between “insects” and “X” examples (thus, minimum iconicity); (2) the intentional projection of subjective axiology (with minimum featural selection) is the main tool for the cognitive ontology of “X” and “chung” altogether (thus, translative manipulation); (3) whether other-oriented or self-referential, the meaning networks are sensitive to not only one’s ICMs but also his/ her contexts (thus, maximum indexicality). In conclusion, Peirce’s notions of the sign and its translative nature can help describe and explain the ‘chung’-based slang terms adequately and systematically by collaborating with Lakoffian methodologies. Additionally, this approach implies the importance of (trans-/ meta-) semioethics regarding (1) the translation phenomena of the ‘X-chung’ slang terms and (2) the thin line between conceptual metaphor/ metonymy and translative manipulation.

**【Keywords】** 'chung'-based slang terms, translative semiosis, experientialism,  
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