

REPRESENTATION OF KIM JONG-UN'S SUCCESSION IN BBC NEWS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This research attempts to reveal representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession in BBC News through textual and discursive practice analysis. The data of this thesis are taken from BBC News website on 29 and 31 December 2011. The theory applied to seek the objective of the research is Critical Discourse Analysis developed by Fairclough. Through textual and discursive practice analysis, the writer finds pthat BBC employs more passive material clauses than active material clauses in depicting Kim Jong-Un's succession. BBC also represents Kim Jong-Un's succession as premature process where Kim Jong-Un is portrayed as a young and inexperienced leader. Besides the prematurity of the succession, the present writer finds that BBC represents Kim Jong-Un's succession as continuity of Kim's family dynasty. Thus, the succession is based on his resemblance to Kim Il-Sung, the founder of Democratic People's Republic of Korea, rather than Kim Jong-Un ability and competency.

Keywords: representation, discourse, textual, discursive practice

1.1 Introduction

This research attempts to investigate the representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession in BBC news as displayed at www.bbc.co.uk. The study elaborates representations of Kim Jong-Un's succession and divulges discourse practices as presented in the news. Fairclough (1995: 42) shows that media represents interest behind their news through discourses. North Korea (NK) has become international attention after Korean War resolved in to two different countries: South and North

Korea. Both countries are separated politically and ideologically. Kim Jong Il, the son of Kim Il Sung, was appointed as the successor after the death of his father. In 2011, after the death of Kim Jong Il, Kim Jong-Un, the son of Kim Jong-Il, takes the position as North Korean leader. Now, in the hand of the new leader, Kim Jong-Un, powerful countries such as United States, and international organization such as UN are addressing these issues. The pressures do not come up only in international forum but also in public discourses. Mass media, in this case, is the proper and efficient medium to enhance the pressure through discourses and framing public opinion. At this point, the study of discourses is needed.

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is employed to investigate the representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession in BBC News. The basic feature to analyze discourse practice of representation of Kim Jong-Un in BBC News is text. The present writer will limit the study of discourse practice in Kim Jong-Un, North Korea, and North Korean politics. To enhance critical studies of representation, the present writer will relate textual analysis of BBC News to other related discourses on Kim Jong-Un's succession. In Fairclough's CDA framework, two terms describe this as intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

Fairclough (1995: 57) asserts three levels of discourse analysis: text, discursive practice and social practice. Text analysis concentrates on the formal features (vocabulary, grammar, syntax and sentence coherence) in which discourses and genres are realized linguistically (Phillips and Jorgensen 2002: 68-70). Meanwhile, discursive practice involves production and consummation of text. This analysis mediates text and a larger social context. Text analysis in

Fairclough employs linguistic approach proposed by Halliday that is called as systemic functional linguistics (SFL). SFL will be used to give linguistic insight of the discourse within news. SFL as Halliday proposed is a way to see language as social semiotics (Bloor and Bloor, 2004: 238).

Representation is a semiotic phenomenon and it can be described through language analysis (Matthiessen and Halliday, 2006: 29). Semiotics can be defined as process of signification of sign. Definition of sign is varied, but, the simplest definition of sign is something that represents something else (Chandler, 2002: 17). However, in this research, the present writer is going to utilize Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) instead of semiotics theory to analyze representation. There are three “extra” functions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The metafunction employed in this research is ideational metafunction: language is used to organize, understand and express our perceptions of world and of our consciousness (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 29). There are two distinct classifications in ideational metafunction, experiential and logical. Experiential largely deals with content of idea while the logical concerns with the relationship between ideas. Ideational metafunction deals with transitivity and it seems to be the core of representation strategy used in news. Moreover, transitivity deals with the clause as representation; it is the way to represent the world through language (Richardson, 2007: 54). Ideational metafunction that deals with representation focused on transitivity or process. However, process alone cannot stand in construing representation. Participant and

circumstance are the other elements that collaborating with process in construing representation.

Process is the core of transitivity, it may tell the event or state of being. There are six processes describing three possible phenomena: world abstract relation, physical world, and world of consciousness (Halliday and Mathiessen, 2004: 172). The world of abstract relation constitutes symbolization, identification, attribution, existence, and locution (saying). The world of abstract relation is represented by relational, verbal, and existential process. Meanwhile, physical world constitutes creation, action, and behaviour; it is represented by material and behavioral process. The last is world of consciousness. The world of consciousness constitutes the state of consciousness or psychological event such as sensing, feeling, and thinking. The world of consciousness is represented by mental process. Therefore, representation of experience can be analyzed by tracking down the process occurred. Linguistically, process is realized by verbal group, participant by nominal group, and circumstance by adverbial group or prepositional phrase.

Representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession is interesting since it depicts how internationally news broadcaster tries to find information from closed-information state. Moreover, North Korea is one of the remaining of communist countries and nowadays gains international attention for its new leader, Kim Jong-Un, and nuclear experiment. Additionally, in political point of view, BBC news is a western media which is, compared to a communist country, an enemy of North Korea. This research is aspired:

1. To analyze and find out the representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession in BBC News textually.
2. To analyze and discover the discourse practice of Kim Jong-Un's succession representation in BBC news.

1.2 The Method

This research employs qualitative method, by means, it will not be using statistical analysis including number and calculation. Qualitative method uses descriptive and interpretative analysis (Sugiyono, 2009: 9). The collected data will be textually analyzed with SFL, particularly their transitivity, and it will be set into Fairclough CDA framework: discursive practice and social practice analysis. Conclusively, in analyzing the data, the present writer will use interpretative process in examining the data and descriptive method in describing the analyzed data.

The present writer attempts to investigate discourse practice behind the representation of Kim Jong-Un Succession in BBC news through critical discourse analysis. Therefore, the data used in this research are taken from www.bbc.co.uk.

The titles of article are the following:

1. North Korea: Kim Jong-Un Hailed 'Supreme Commander': published on 24 December 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16325390>
2. North Korea Names Kim Jong-Un Army Commander: published on 31 December 2011 at (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16370671>)
3. Profile: Kim Jong-Un published on 31 December 2011 at (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11388628>)

1.3 Results and Discussion

In this section, the present writer will elaborate the text production and consumption regarding the representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession in BBC News. Utilizing textual analysis in 3.1, the present writer now will interpret the news to find out discursive practice in the representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession. In this section, the present writer uses the alternate source to compare representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession in BBC News. Some sources used are KNCA, New York Times, Times, and Globe and Mail.

1.3.1 Representation of Kim Jong-Un in BBC News

BBC News uses various sources in examining Kim Jong-Un's succession: experts, watchers, diplomats, News Agencies, unknown-sources, rumors, and speculations. There are two major points found in BBC News about representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession that are Kim Jong-Un as premature leader for NK and North Korean's political system that enhances Kim Jong-Un's succession.

From the textual analysis, Kim Jong-Un's succession is simultaneously represented in material, relational, verbal, and mental process. These processes are constructed in active and passive clause. Table 3.1 illustrates the comparison of active and passive material clause in representing Kim Jong-Un's succession.

Active	Passive
Who took over after the death of his father ...	The move puts Mr. Kim at the head of North Korea's ...
Kim Jong-Un inherits 1.2 million-strong ...	The Swiss-educated Mr. Kim was made a four-star general
Kim Jong-Un has taken on the mantle of ...	The Swiss-educated Mr. Kim was given senior position....
The young leader is fast consolidating power ...	Kim Jong-Un was appointed at a meeting ...

	... which puts the young Kim in charge of the world's fifth largest army
	He was awarded a series of high ...
	He had been anointed successor ...

Figure 3.1 Comparison of Active and Passive Material Clause Representing Kim Jong-Un's Succession

The angle of coverage surely emphasizes different sense. In active clause, Kim Jong-Un is seen to be dynamic participant who is willing to take an action in the succession. Vice versa, in passive clause, Kim Jong-Un is characterized as out of action participant. Thus, in material processes, BBC dominantly depicts Kim Jong-Un as inactive participant. This may lead reader to assume that Kim Jong-Un is a reflexive leader that depends his leadership to other elements in North Korean political system.

There are six clause complexes with the main process in verbal process, mostly expresses the sources of BBC coverage of Kim Jong-Un's succession. The participants in verbal clause indicate that BBC uses state-media (North Korean state-media), the paper (*Rodong Shinmun*), news agency (KNCA), and Kenji Fujimoto (ex-Kim Family's chef). These verbal processes project locution or "say" about Kim Jong-Un's succession. Verbal processes also articulate the supports from North Korean elements toward Kim Jong-Un's succession.

There are some relational clauses in the analyzed data. Some of them articulate possessive relational clauses about Kim Jong-Un capability and health

problem. Figure 3.2 illustrates the identifier and attribute of Kim Jong-Un related to his succession in relational clauses.

Identifying	Attributive
Supreme commander of the country's armed forces	His father's favorite
Youngest son of Kim Jong-II and his late third wife Ko Yong-hui	The Morning Star King
Supreme commander	The great successor
	Army commander
	Head of the party, state and army

Figure 3.2 Identifiers and Attributes of Kim Jong-Un's Succession

From the figure, it can be discovered that Kim Jong-Un is represented as the head of the country that includes the highest position in Worker's Party and North Korean Army. Attribute "the great successor" refer to his position as the inheritor of Kim's family. Besides, the data shows Kim Jong-Un in his family which includes his is the favorite son of Kim Jong-II, the youngest son in the family, and called as the Morning Star King by her mother.

Some circumstances of role occur in data. Mostly refer to Kim Jong-Un new position as North Korean leader. Figure 3.3 illustrate circumstances of role for Kim Jong-Un related to his succession.

Circumstance of Guise	At the head of North Korea's vast armed forces
	As supreme commander of the country powerful armed forces
	Supreme commandship of the Korean People Army
	As the coming man
	As his successor
	As the great successor

	In charge of the world's fifth largest army
Circumstance of Product	To eternal victory

Figure 3.3 Circumstance of Role Representing Kim Jong-Un's Succession

Other circumstance occurs in the data is circumstance of extent that specifies the time and place related to Kim Jong-Un succession. There are less exact circumstantial of time that depicts Kim Jong-Un's succession such as "earlier this month", data 12 "on 8 October", data 15 "on Friday". Circumstance of location does not only occur in exact place for the process occurs but also in an abstract location such as in the government and Worker's Party. Figure 3.5 illustrate the circumstance of time representing Kim Jong-Un's succession.

	Spatial	Temporal
Extent		For the first time
Location	In the government and Worker's Party	Last year
	In an editorial	At a meeting on Friday
	Over North Korea	On 8 October
	In the frame	After the death of his father Kim Jong-II
	In North Korea	On Monday
		Since his return to Pyongyang
		Within a fortnight of his father's death
		On 17 December 2011

Figure 3.4 Circumstance of Extent of Kim Jong-Un's Succession

The use of circumstance of time “within a forthright of his father death” and “after his father’s death” construes condition that boosts the succession. The two circumstances do not only indicate the time but also the condition prerequisite for Kim Jong-Un’s succession, which is the death of Kim Jong-II.

There are some circumstances of manner occur in the data. Most of the circumstances of manner in the data are circumstance of quality with typical –ly adverb. However, circumstance of degree also occurs in the data analyzed. Figure 3.6 illustrate the circumstance of manner related to Kim Jong-Un’s succession.

Circumstance of Quality	(we declare) from our hearts
	(Kim Jong-Un has been) formally (named)
	(he was not) initially (thought)
	Reportedly (calling him the Morning Star King)
	(she) clearly (doted on her son)
	Immideately (Jong-Un was hailed)
	(Has taken the mantle) with little political or military experience behind him
	Swiss-educated like his brothers (Kim Jong-Un avoided western influence)
Circumstance of Degree	(he had been annointed successor) partly
	(A few North Korea watchers went) so far as (to say)

Figure 3.5 Circumstances of Manner in Representing Kim Jong-Un’s Succession

The use of circumstance of means mainly represents the way of process occur as in “immediately Kim Jong-Un was hailed”, however, the circumstance also represents the quality maintained by Kim Jong-Un: little political or military experience and Swiss-educated. Additionally, the use of circumstance of degree

“partly” in the data expresses the degree of Kim Jong-Un’s resemblance to his grandfather.

Two circumstances of contingency occur in the data analyzed. The circumstance of contingency in the clause gives the condition where the process depends. The circumstance “in accordance with” brings the condition required for Kim Jong-Un’s succession. The second circumstance of contingency is “until he is ready to rule on his own”. The circumstance brings sense of negative condition. Thus, the the circumstance is construed as Kim Jong-Un is not ready to rule on his own.

The data also expresses the reason of Kim Jong-Un’s succession through circumstance of cause. The cause of the succession in this case is his identical similarity to his grandfather, Kim Il-Sung. Circumstance of matter occurs in the data is “fearful of power struggle” that expresses the matter considered as verbiage to incomplete Kim Jong-Un’s succession.

1.3.2 Discursive Practice Analysis of Representation of Kim Jong-Un’s Succession

1.3.1 Kim Jong Un: an Premature Leader for North Korea

BBC conveys that Kim Jong-Un is in his late 20’. This youngness has been mentioned several times in the data. Nominal group “the young Kim” in data 12 vividly articulates the youngness of Kim Jong-Un as NK leader. As a leader, BBC also adds modifier “young” noun leader in the data “the young leader is fast consolidating power over North Korea”. The youngness of Kim Jong-Un is not

only in age but also in experience in politic and military. The data involves material process “has taken” that maintains information about Kim Jong-Un has been a leader through the scope “the mantle of North Korea’s supreme leadership”. “With little political or military experience behind him” arises as circumstance of manner. BBC expresses Kim Jong-Un lack of experience in relational process “has little political experience behind him” in paratactic clause complex. The relational process indicates possessive relational process represented by “has”. Another clause in the data is explaining that how experts actually think that senior officials of North Korea direct Kim Jong-Un in the succession. The choice of using paratactic strategically makes sense; Kim Jong-Un has little political experience and someone else with much political experience ease the transition of power. This claim may lead reader to undervalue Kim Jong-Un as North Korean leader. Huffington Post depicts similar representation of Kim Jong-Un’s succession as prematurity. The *Huffington Post* similarly expresses that Kim Jong-Un is inexperience and young. The dissimilar feature from BBC coverage is in the scrap Huffington Post uses modifier “experience and youth” to in nominal group “Kim Jong-Un” while BBC uses relational process.

The use source of representation “some analysts” gives sense of academic review. By using the some analysts, BBC conveys that the representation is an objective truth. It says, through mental process, “experts believe senior official are guiding the transition”. The use of source “experts” gives a similar stressing for an objective truth about the representation. The senior official guiding the transition mentioned in the data is Chang Song-Taek.

Other media also depicts similar tone on this matter. One of them is *Huffington Post*. *Huffington Post* similarly depicts Kim Jong-Un as “the young man”. The intertext data from *Huffington Post* uses different lexical verbal group “play” that is followed by scope “a crucial role” and “in helping” Kim Jong-Un “hold” the scope “a grip on power and also verbal process “inherit” with the scope “his father’s trademark “military-first policy”. In *The Economist*, Kim Jong-Un is represented as “a youth”. Even more, the media enhances the representation with “his small circle of advisers”. “His small circle of circle of advisers” exhibits that several advisors assist the young leader in managing his country. Thus, the representation of Kim Jong-Un found with intertextuality and interdiscursivity among BBC, *Huffington Post*, and *The Economist* present similar representation of Kim Jong-Un as premature leader for NK.

KNCA reposts Indonesian paper “Suara Karya” about the youngness of Kim Jong-Un as “HE Kim Jong Un is recognized as the youngest leader not only in the DPRK but in the world” (21 December 2011). KNCA as state news agency seems to be confident to admit that Kim Jong-Un is young. However, regardless to the youngness of their leader, North Korean feels that Kim Jong-Un is the right leader for them. KNCA in the news represents dissimilar representation of Kim Jong-Un’s succession. Through the line of Kim’s family, KNCA tries to convince reader to believe that Kim Jong-Un is able to bear the burden of North Korean revolutionary cause. At this point, one cannot neglect the contradictory representation of Kim Jong-Un’s succession in news. Both sources, western and North Korean, strive to frame public opinion by framing Kim Jong-Un’s

succession. This competition is called as hegemony or “war of position”. War of position is not merely meant as physical war but also war of discourse.

Passivization of Kim Jong-Un’s succession also enhances representation of Kim Jong-Un’s immaturity. Material process represent Kim Jong-Un as goal through mental process “put”, “was made”, “was given” and “was appointed”. A dependent clause “which puts the young Kim in charge of the world’s fifth largest army” situates Kim Jong-Un’ as goal. Another dependent clause sets Kim Jong-Un as range/scope through material process “was awarded”. Another dependent clause expresses Kim Jong-Un as goal through material process “he had been anointed”. Two clauses convey Kim Jong-Un as goal through material process “formalizing” and “grooming”. In verbal process, Kim Jong-Un’s is situated as verbiage through verbal process “has been hailed”. A mental clause represents Kim Jong-Un as phenomenon through mental process “assumed”. Again, in data 16, Kim Jong-Un is represented as phenomenon in mental process “referred to”. Data 18 and 19 place Kim Jong-Un as phenomenon as well through mental process “was not initially thought” and “saw”. The actors reveal in the material process related to Kim Jong-Un’s succession is Kim Jong-Il, Kim Jong-Un’s father.

However, passive clause is dominant than the active one. It seems that BBC aims to represent Kim Jong-Un as inert individual rather as an active person in gaining highest position in NK. The present writer assumes it must have related to North Korean political system enhanced Kim Jong-Un’s succession.

3.2.2 North Korea Political System Enhances Kim Jong-Un's Succession

In data analysis, the present writer found similar attention related to Kim Jong-Un's succession. The material process "inherits" describes Kim Jong-Un's succession that depicts Kim Jong-UN as leader of 1.2 strong military and obtains policy known as *Songun*. Lexical item "inherits" expresses that Kim Jong-Un receives from his parent by genetic transmission. This accentuates the sense of dynasty where a son succeeds a King. Kim Jong-Un is also attributed as "the Morning Star King". Even though the attribute, textually, is given by her mother, BBC in this case is the attributor since it does not mention the source of the claim. To support the claim, BBC uses circumstance of manner "reportedly". Moreover, the clause is a clause complex where the main clause in mental process "was thought" in passive construction, thus, without active participant sener. The choice of inserting this "fact" into news coverage concerning Kim Jong-Un's succession may lead reader to assume that NK is monarchy-based state.

The clause complex in data 12 conveys Kim Jong-Un's succession is based on a will written by Kim Jong-Il, Kim Jong-Un's father. This braces the image of Kingdom of North Korea under Kim's dynasty. BBC also represents Kim Jong-Un as Kim Jong-Il favorite son and his mother is Kim Jong-Il favorite wife. BBC fully describes the detail of Kim Jong-Un as successor of Kim dynasty. In one hand, Kim Jong-Il has no other choice except Kim Jong-Un, regardless his young age, and Kim Jong-Un is his preferred son.

The sense of kingdom is also being expressed in Bloomberg News (20 December 2012). Through a point of view of an expert, the media depicts Kim Jong-Un's succession as the continuation of Kim's dynasty. North Korea official name is Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). There is no such a "dynastic" or kingdom in its name, however, it seems that western media is keen on scrutinizing NK as monarchy rather than democratic.

The discourse of monarch of Kim's family is strengthened by other expressions in the data analyzed. The lexical choice "hail" for instance. Lexical item "hail" is repeated three times in the data analysis. The choice could be alternated to other verbal groups such as "name", "attribute", "nominate", "identify", "greet", etc. The dependent clause "the man being lined up as the power behind the throne" tends to expose the highest position in a kingdom, not in a modern-state.

BBC employs *Juche* as religion rather than as ideology. It is said in the data that "deification of Kim family is at the heart of its grip on power". This is relational process where "deification of the Kim family" is identified while "at the heart of its grip on power" is identifier. The participant of the clause, obviously, is "deification of the Kim Family". Deification plays role as the head for the noun group. Deification is more than political status; it is an act of deifying or to make a God of. Here, BBC expresses that Kim' family as God-like dynasty. Thus, the emergence of Kim Jong-Un's succession as NK leader is the continuation of Kim's regime, Kim Jong-Il, and Kim Il-Sung before him.

Furthermore, BBC projects Kim Jong-Un becomes the leader because his resemblance to North Korea's founder, Kim Il-Sung. BBC employs the speculation that Kim Jong-Un may have had plastic surgery to enhance his resemblance to his elder. BBC in this case, attempts to bolster the representation of Kim Jong-Un's succession. The speculation portrays Kim Jong-Un's succession as merely because his resemblance to his elder. The resemblance of Kim Jong-Un to North Korean founding father is also transpired in BBC history coverage. A historian, Andrew Salmon, writes: "He is only 27 or 28 years old, and lacks any apparent revolutionary credentials beyond a physical resemblance to his grandfather, the revered national founder Kim Il-sung." Time Magazine is in the same boat with BBC. It inscribes Kim Jong-Un's succession as: "Of late, Kim Jong Un has gained prominence in North Korea, putting on weight and bearing an unmistakable resemblance to his beefy grandfather Kim Il Sung." Apparently, KNCA, as state-propaganda-machine, utilizes this resemblance in gaining support for Kim Jong-Un's succession. The lexical item "identical" reveals several times in KNCA reports.

There are four repetitions of lexical item "identical" in the reports. This identical issue is likely to enhance Kim jong-Un's succession, even though KNCA does not mention about "Kim's family regime" or "Kim's dynasty". North Korea seems to uphold the same strategy to deify Kim Jong-Un as Kim's dynasty inheritor. BBC represents Kim Jong-Un as the chief of North Korean Army several times through relational process and circumstance of role illustrated in figure 3.2 and 3.3. It appears BBC like to emphasize the position instead other

positions maintain by Kim Jong-Un as the Great Successor of NK. BBC also represents North Korean Army with several modifiers such as “vast”, “powerful”, “1.2 million-strong”, world’s fifth largest” and “nuclear-armed”. *San Francisco Times* expresses similar representation on the support of military forces toward Kim Jong-Un’s succession.

The representation of Kim Jong-Un’s succession, finally, is brought by BBC to depict the burden of Kim Jong-Un. As the young leader, he must be able to control North Korean army. The modifier of North Korean army seems to be “a warning” for BBC readers that North Korea now has a young, inexperienced, and still under guidance, and yet he controls a huge numbers of armed-forces, as depicted by BBC in circumstance of matter “fearful power struggle” in data 30. Moreover, the modifier “nuclear-armed pariah state” indicates the other Kim Jong-Un task in international scope.

1.4 Conclusion and Suggestion

From the textual analysis, the present writer draws conclusion on the discursive practice of Kim Jong-Un’s succession in BBC News. BBC represents Kim Jong-Un’s succession as premature process where Kim Jong-Un is portrayed as a young and inexperienced leader. BBC also conveys that military senior official is backing up Kim Jong-Un during transition. The military back up, in this case, strengthens the representation of Kim Jong-Un’s as premature. Besides the prematurity of the succession, the present writer finds that BBC represents Kim Jong-Un’s succession as continuity of Kim’s family dynasty. Thus, the succession

is based on his resemblance to Kim Il-Sung, the founder of Democratic People's Republic of Korea, rather than Kim Jong-Un ability and competency. The other findings is BBC uses rumor that Kim Jong-Un had plastic surgery to enhance the resemblance. The present writer did not find similar coverage in any media. It is only BBC that uses the rumor.

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