



An Ecolinguistic Analysis of Metaphorical Representation of Tropical Storm Megi in Philippine News Discourse: A Corpus-Based Study

Research Article

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Abstract

This study examines the range of metaphors employed by Philippine news channels to represent Tropical Storm Agaton in news discourse. It explores how these metaphors frame the storm as friendly, destructive, or neutral in relation to the ecology and ecosystems upon which life depends. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study draws data from two major Philippine news networks, GMA Network and ABS-CBN. News reports on Tropical Storm Agaton were collected from these channels, and a corpus of 40,786 words was compiled for analysis. The data were analysed using AntConc 3.5.9 (Anthony, 2020). The study is theoretically grounded in Stibbe's (2015) Stories Framework and Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The findings reveal that Tropical Storm Agaton is constructed through a variety of metaphors, including Agaton as a killer, a relentless destroyer, a rampaging beast, a burying force, a reluctant traveller, and a haphazard painter. These metaphorical representations personify the storm as a violent and antagonistic entity, foregrounding its destructive potential and capacity to cause death and damage. The study demonstrates that such metaphors largely promote a destructive environmental narrative, reinforcing the portrayal of nature as a hostile force while marginalising



broader systemic factors, particularly climate change, that contribute to extreme weather events. The study concludes that the dominant use of these metaphors risks obscuring the underlying causes of natural disasters and highlights the need for alternative conceptualisations that encourage more sustainable and resilient responses to climate change.

Keywords: Tropical Storm Agaton, metaphors, ecolinguistics, media discourse, representation

1. Introduction

Tropical cyclones are among the most frequent and destructive natural hazards worldwide, particularly in regions located along the Pacific typhoon belt, such as the Philippines (Owens, 2000). The consequences of these events extend far beyond immediate loss of life, affecting long-term and interconnected environmental, economic, and social systems (Whitehead et al., 2000). In countries repeatedly exposed to such disasters, sustained encounters with cyclonic activity become an endogenous factor shaping not only material conditions but also public understandings of nature, environmental risk, resilience, and vulnerability.

One such event, Tropical Storm Megi—locally known as Agaton—caused widespread devastation across several regions of the Philippines in 2022, resulting in large-scale displacement, severe flooding, and deadly landslides (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2022). Public interpretations of disasters like Agaton are largely mediated through news discourse, which plays a central role in making sense of environmental crises and in shaping societal responses to them (Glik, 2007). Media narratives influence whether disasters are perceived as inevitable natural occurrences or as crises intensified by human activity and climate change, thereby shaping public tolerance, responsibility, and policy orientations.

Within the field of disaster communication, metaphors serve as powerful linguistic resources for explaining complex environmental phenomena. They structure cognition, guide judgment, and shape collective meaning. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) posits that metaphors are deeply embedded in human cognition and are fundamental to understanding abstract or unfamiliar experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Accordingly, the metaphorical framing of disasters in the media can significantly influence public perceptions of environmental risk, accountability, and the urgency of response (Thibodeaux et al., 2017). Previous research demonstrates that dominant metaphorical frames—such as war metaphors in environmental and climate discourse—often construct nature as an adversary, reinforcing narratives of conflict and emergency (Flusberg et al., 2017; Hauser & Schwarz, 2015). While such framings may heighten a sense of urgency, they can also shape policy preferences in problematic ways by obscuring systemic drivers of environmental crises (Matlock et al., 2017).

Despite the growing body of research on metaphors in disaster and climate communication, much of this scholarship remains Western-centric (Thibodeaux & Boroditsky, 2015). Media discourse in Southeast Asia has received comparatively little scholarly attention, despite the region's acute vulnerability to climate-related hazards. In the Philippines, where tropical cyclones are recurrent and deeply intertwined with everyday social and ecological structures (Eisenman et al., 2007),

systematic analyses of disaster metaphors—particularly from an ecolinguistic perspective—remain limited.

Ecolinguistics provides a critical framework for examining how language shapes perceptions of the environment by uncovering the underlying stories that influence human–nature relationships (Gibbs, 1994; Steffensen & Fill, 2014). From this perspective, metaphors can either normalise environmental degradation or promote more sustainable interpretations of ecological interdependence. In the context of tropical cyclones, metaphorical framings may portray storms as uncontrollable natural forces, or alternatively, highlight the role of human activity and climate change in intensifying their impacts (Morris et al., 2007; Robins & Mayer, 2000).

Despite the relevance of this perspective, empirical research examining the metaphorical representation of tropical cyclones in Philippine news media through an ecolinguistic lens remains scarce. This gap is particularly significant given the country’s ongoing challenges in climate adaptation and the limited public awareness of climate-related risks. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the metaphors used in Philippine news coverage of Tropical Storm Agaton and evaluates whether these figurative constructions carry positive, negative, or neutral ecological implications.

2. Literature Review

Metaphor has long been recognised as a central cognitive and linguistic resource for interpreting and communicating complex environmental phenomena. In the context of natural disasters, metaphorical language plays a crucial role in shaping how such events are perceived, understood, and responded to by the public. This literature review surveys existing scholarship on the use of metaphors in environmental and disaster discourse, with particular attention to media representations of natural hazards. Drawing on insights from cognitive linguistics, ecolinguistics, and disaster communication, it establishes the theoretical foundation for analysing the metaphorical constructions surrounding Tropical Storm Agaton in Philippine news media.

Environmental discourse frequently relies on metaphorical constructions that articulate narratives of destruction, resilience, exploitation, or protection. From an ecolinguistic perspective, metaphors are embedded within broader “stories” that influence how societies implicitly conceptualise their relationships with the natural world. Steffensen and Fill (2014) emphasise that ecolinguistics, situated at the intersection of linguistics and ecology, offers valuable tools for uncovering how environmental issues are framed and understood through metaphor. These metaphorical stories can either legitimise environmentally destructive practices or promote more sustainable and harmonious relationships between humans and nature.

Empirical research demonstrates that metaphors depicting tropical storms as uncontrollable forces of nature may foster perceptions of human helplessness, thereby encouraging reactive or interventionist approaches to disaster management (Morris et al., 2007). In contrast, metaphors that link storms to climate change can heighten awareness of human responsibility and stimulate collective action towards environmental stewardship. Flusberg et al. (2017), for example, argue that

metaphors in climate discourse do not merely describe environmental threats but actively shape attitudes related to responsibility, agency, and ecological care.

The theoretical grounding for much of this research is provided by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). CMT challenges the view of metaphor as a purely stylistic device, positing instead that metaphor is fundamental to human cognition. According to this framework, metaphors structure experience, guide reasoning, and influence how individuals interact with the world. Within disaster discourse, metaphors enable audiences to comprehend abstract and large-scale phenomena—such as storms or climate-related hazards—by mapping them onto more concrete and familiar domains.

Such metaphorical mappings can frame disasters either as natural occurrences beyond human control or as phenomena shaped and intensified by human activity, including anthropogenic climate change. Empirical studies by Thibodeaux and Boroditsky (2011) demonstrate that metaphor choice has a substantial impact on public perceptions of responsibility, urgency, and appropriate responses to environmental threats. Consequently, metaphorical framing can influence public attitudes towards preparedness, mitigation, and adaptation strategies.

Further research highlights the emotional and behavioural effects of metaphorical framing. Hauser and Schwarz (2015) show that metaphors evoke emotional responses that shape decision-making processes: framing disasters as battles between humans and nature may prompt urgency and mobilisation, whereas portraying them as routine natural events may lead to resignation or apathy. These findings underscore the importance of critically examining metaphor use in media coverage of disasters such as Tropical Storm Megi.

Ecolinguistics provides a robust analytical framework for exploring the dynamic relationship between language, environment, and human agency. Recent work by Assiddiq et al. (2025) illustrates the value of ecolinguistic analysis in examining ecological metaphors in traditional folklore, demonstrating how culturally embedded narratives influence ecological thinking and perceptions of environmental phenomena. Although their focus is on folklore, the insights are transferable to news discourse, where metaphorical patterns similarly shape public understanding of natural disasters. Related studies further confirm that media discourse plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of environmental risk through metaphorical framing. Thibodeaux and Boroditsky (2015) show that metaphors significantly influence public decision-making, including responses related to emergency preparedness and disaster management, while Kaal et al. (2019) argue that metaphors are central to risk communication and strongly affect perception and behaviour.

Despite this growing body of research, significant gaps remain in studies focusing on Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines. While foundational theories (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and empirical work (Thibodeaux & Boroditsky, 2011) have established the importance of metaphor in framing environmental problems, their application to Philippine media representations of tropical storms remains limited. Addressing this gap, the present study analyses metaphorical representations in Philippine news coverage of Tropical Storm Megi using Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Stibbe's Stories Framework. By doing so, it contributes to a broader understanding of

how metaphorical framing shapes environmental risk discourse and policy-related narratives, offering insights relevant to disaster communication and climate change adaptation in disaster-prone regions.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is grounded in the pragmatic research paradigm, which is particularly well suited to investigations employing mixed-methods approaches. Pragmatism allows methodological flexibility and emphasises the use of multiple data sources and analytical procedures to address research questions in a practical and problem-oriented manner (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In line with this paradigm, the study adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods to develop a comprehensive understanding of metaphor use in Philippine news discourse on Tropical Storm Agaton. This mixed-methods design facilitates a holistic ecolinguistic analysis of metaphorical representations in disaster reporting.

The data were collected from two major Philippine news organisations—ABS-CBN News and GMA Network—selected due to their prominence and significant influence on public discourse in the Philippines. News articles published over a one-month period following the onset of Tropical Storm Megi in 2022 were retrieved. During this period, relevant reports focusing on the environmental dimensions of the storm were identified and compiled. The collected texts were organised into a specialised corpus named COPSA (Corpus of Philippine Storm Agaton), designed to provide a structured dataset for systematic linguistic analysis. Table 1 presents the composition of the corpus.

Table 1: Composition of the Corpus of Philippine Storm Agaton (COPSA)

News Source	No. of Articles	Word Count
GMA Network	75	22,694
ABS-CBN News	66	18,092
Total	141	40,786

Corpus analysis was conducted using AntConc 3.5.9 (Anthony, 2020), a widely used corpus analysis tool for examining lexical patterns through concordance analysis. Two key lexical items closely associated with the disaster—*Agaton* and *storm*—were selected as the primary search terms, as they function as central referents to Tropical Storm Agaton in Philippine news discourse. The analysis focused primarily on concordance lines using the Keywords in Context (KWIC) function to examine how these terms were used within their immediate textual environments. Through this contextual analysis, the study identified the metaphorical patterns employed to represent the storm and examined whether these representations construct the event as environmentally friendly, destructive, or neutral.

The analytical framework of the study is informed by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and Stibbe's Stories Framework (2021). CMT provides a cognitive foundation for understanding how abstract phenomena such as natural disasters are conceptualised through metaphorical mappings. Stibbe's Stories Framework, rooted in ecolinguistics, offers insights into

how language constructs underlying narratives about disasters and shapes human–environment relationships. The combined application of these frameworks enables an in-depth examination of both the linguistic forms of metaphor and their broader ecological and social implications within disaster discourse.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

As explained in the preceding section, a specialised corpus—COPSA—was developed for this study and analysed using the corpus linguistics software AntConc 3.5.9 (Anthony, 2020). The concordance lines generated for the selected keywords were examined in light of the study’s theoretical framework. A close analysis of these concordance lines reveals that Philippine news media employed a wide range of metaphors to represent Tropical Storm Agaton in their 2022 disaster coverage. On the basis of this systematic analysis, several dominant metaphorical patterns were identified. The following sections discuss these metaphors in detail.

4.1 Agaton as a Killer

Analysis of the concordance lines indicates that Agaton is frequently represented as a killer—a metaphor that portrays the storm as an active agent responsible for human fatalities. This metaphor constructs the storm not as an impersonal natural phenomenon but as a conscious, malevolent entity that deliberately inflicts destruction, similar to a human or animal murderer. Within media discourse, Agaton is repeatedly associated with death, with linguistic choices implying intentionality and aggression. This construction is evident in multiple instances within COPSA, as illustrated by the following example:

- (1) “*The death toll from Tropical Depression Agaton has climbed to 133, according to regional police....*” (GMA News)

In this example, the explicit reference to the rising death toll foregrounds the escalating lethality of the storm. The verb *climbed*, typically used to describe gradual but relentless increase, suggests an ongoing and uncontrollable process of destruction. This lexical choice reinforces the metaphor of Agaton as a killer by depicting the storm as actively “taking” lives, framing the event as a conflict between humans and a hostile natural force.

A similar pattern can be observed in the following example:

- (2) “*The reported death toll due to the onslaught of Agaton rose to 212, as of Sunday morning, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management...*” (GMA News)

Here, the noun *onslaught* intensifies the image of Agaton as a violent aggressor. The term connotes a fierce and sustained attack, further distancing the storm from its scientific identity as a meteorological phenomenon and recasting it as a destructive agent. The increasing number of casualties strengthens the portrayal of Agaton as a ruthless killer, amplifying fear and emotional response.

From an ecolinguistic perspective, representing Agaton as a killer has negative implications for environmental perception. Such metaphors frame nature as inherently dangerous and malevolent, diverting attention away from structural and anthropogenic factors—particularly climate change and human environmental interference—that contribute to the intensification of storms. By positioning nature as an enemy to be feared, this metaphor risks discouraging proactive engagement with climate adaptation and environmental sustainability, instead reinforcing the notion of the environment as an uncontrollable and incomprehensible force.

4.2 Agaton as a Relentless Destroyer

In addition to the killer metaphor, Agaton is frequently depicted as a relentless and unfeeling destroyer in news discourse. This representation highlights the storm's capacity to cause large-scale damage without mercy or restraint. Expressions describing widespread displacement, destruction of property, and repeated landfall construct Agaton as an entity driven by an unstoppable impulse to devastate its surroundings.

(3) *“Agaton has displaced more than 323,000 people, as over 9,000 houses were damaged while 570 others were destroyed, the NDRRMC said in its 8 a.m. report.”* (ABS-CBN News)

Although the sentence is informational, the accumulation of numerical data emphasises the magnitude and persistence of destruction. The storm is implicitly framed as an agent that continues its destructive course until maximum damage has been inflicted. Such framing aligns with the metaphor of Agaton as a merciless destroyer, indifferent to human suffering.

This image is further reinforced by references to landfall:

(4) *“Tropical Storm Agaton first made landfall in Calicoan Island, Guiuan, Eastern Samar last Sunday.”* (ABS-CBN News)

The expression *made landfall* signals the beginning of the storm's destructive trajectory. It carries connotations of inevitability and force, suggesting that once Agaton arrives, its impact is unavoidable. The continuity implied in such phrasing strengthens the metaphor of the storm as an irresistible force whose destructive mission unfolds systematically across space and time.

From an ecolinguistic standpoint, the metaphor of Agaton as a ruthless destroyer is problematic because it promotes a view of nature as inherently uncontrollable and antagonistic. This framing can foster feelings of helplessness and fatalism, discouraging critical engagement with the underlying causes of disasters. Moreover, it risks marginalising discussions of climate change, human agency, and disaster preparedness by presenting destruction as inevitable rather than preventable through sustainable environmental practices.

4.3 Agaton as a Rampaging Beast

Another prominent metaphor in the corpus is Agaton as a rampaging beast. This metaphor constructs the storm as wild, untamed, and violently destructive, likening its movement and impact

to the uncontrolled aggression of a ferocious animal. Media descriptions frequently invoke imagery associated with animalistic behaviour and chaos, as illustrated below:

(5) *“Towns were flooded and rivers overflowed in the Visayas and Mindanao as a result of the onslaught of Tropical Depression Agaton.”* (GMA News)

Here, lexical items such as *flooded*, *overflowed*, and *onslaught* attribute animal-like agency to the storm. These terms suggest an entity that attacks and overwhelms its environment, reinforcing the portrayal of Agaton as a predatory force rather than a natural process governed by climatic conditions. The metaphor foregrounds violence and unpredictability, further intensifying the image of the storm as a savage creature.

This metaphor is reiterated in economic loss narratives:

(6) *“The losses sustained by the crop sector after Tropical Depression Agaton ravaged the Visayas and Mindanao reached P3 billion, the latest tally released Friday by the Department of Agriculture (DA) showed.”* (ABS-CBN News)

The verb *ravaged* conveys extreme and indiscriminate violence, strengthening the image of Agaton as an uncontrollable monster. Such language associates the storm with instinctive brutality commonly attributed to wild beasts, thereby reinforcing its depiction as a marauding entity that wreaks havoc wherever it moves.

4.4 Agaton as a Burying Force

The metaphor of Agaton as a burying force highlights the collective and overwhelming power of the storm to engulf, conceal, and obliterate its surroundings. Expressions such as *“Agaton caused landslides and flooding”* and *“landslides induced by Agaton buried homes”* construct the storm as a force that completely covers and suffocates whatever lies in its path. Through the repeated use of the verb *bury*, Agaton is represented not merely as destructive, but as an all-consuming entity whose impact leaves no space for survival or recovery. This metaphor foregrounds the totality and finality of the storm’s effects, as illustrated in the following concordance lines:

(7) *“Landslides triggered by heavy rains brought by Tropical Storm Agaton buried a mountainous village in Baybay City, Leyte, Mayor Jose Carlos Cari said Tuesday.”* (ABS-CBN News)

(8) *“...latest situation report from the disaster council showed that majority or 156 of the reported deaths came from Eastern Visayas, where rains dumped by the storm triggered landslides that buried almost entire communities.”* (ABS-CBN News)

In these examples, the verb *buried* elevates Agaton from a destructive natural phenomenon to an engulfing force that encases and swallows entire communities. The lexical choice implies total domination and erasure, emphasising that nothing remains untouched by the storm’s impact. From an ecolinguistic perspective, the metaphor of Agaton as a burying force contributes to the construction of nature as inherently hostile and uncontrollable. Such representations risk obscuring

the anthropogenic dimensions of climate change by concentrating solely on destruction. Consequently, they may foster feelings of helplessness and despair, rather than encouraging discourse on prevention, resilience, and sustainable environmental practices necessary for mitigating future disasters.

4.5 Agaton as a Deadly Force

Agaton is also recurrently framed as a deadly force, with frequent references to death, casualties, and large-scale devastation. Concordance lines such as “*Agaton caused massive destruction and loss of life*” and “*Agaton caused deaths and loss of property*” position the storm as an active agent of mortality, emphasising its lethal capacity. This construction is evident in the following examples:

(9) “*The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Center (NDRRMC) said more than 136,000 people have been affected by Agaton’s onslaught.*” (ABS-CBN News)

(10) “*A total of 113 fatalities were reported in Eastern Visayas alone due to the onslaught of tropical cyclone Agaton, the regional police said on Thursday.*” (GMA News)

The recurrent use of the term *onslaught* frames Agaton as a violent and aggressive entity directly responsible for human deaths. The escalating number of fatalities reinforces the metaphor of the storm as a lethal power capable of indiscriminate killing. This framing is further consolidated by the following instance from the corpus:

(11) “*Agaton caused widespread devastation and fatalities.*”

Here, Agaton is explicitly associated with catastrophe and death, strengthening its representation as a destructive force of immense magnitude. From an ecolinguistic standpoint, portraying Agaton as a deadly force reinforces a worldview in which nature is perceived as hostile and threatening. Such framing diverts attention away from anthropogenic contributions to climate change and may constrain discourse on sustainability, adaptation, and long-term mitigation strategies by focusing primarily on immediate destruction rather than systemic causes.

4.6 Agaton as a Reluctant Traveller

In contrast to overtly violent metaphors, news discourse also employs the metaphor of Agaton as a reluctant traveller to describe the storm’s slow movement and uncertain trajectory. Phrases such as “*Agaton is expected to remain almost stationary*” and “*Agaton is forecast to meander around the Samar–Leyte area*” personify the storm as hesitant or unwilling to move forward. This metaphor compares the storm’s actual movement with anticipated trajectories, highlighting delay rather than aggression.

(12) “*The weather bureau PAGASA placed eight areas under Signal No. 1 late Tuesday afternoon as Agaton remained almost stationary over Llorente, Eastern Samar.*” (GMA News)

(13) “*Agaton is forecast to remain almost stationary or move slowly as it meanders over the waters east of Eastern Visayas.*” (ABS-CBN News)

The phrase *almost stationary* presents Agaton as immobilised or reluctant to proceed, while *meander* further reinforces the image of a wandering traveller lacking clear direction. This metaphor is exemplified in the following instance:

(14) “*Agaton is forecast to meander around the Samar-Leyte area, within the next 6 to 12 hours before heading east to the Philippine Sea...*” (ABS-CBN News)

Unlike metaphors that emphasise destruction, the reluctant traveller framing foregrounds unpredictability and uncertainty. From an ecolinguistic perspective, this metaphor is relatively neutral, as it neither explicitly demonises nature nor promotes ecological awareness. However, by focusing on movement and hesitation rather than impact and causality, it may inadvertently downplay the severity of the storm and weaken the urgency of discussions surrounding climate change and environmental vulnerability.

4.7 Agaton as a Haphazard Painter

Another notable metaphor in the corpus is Agaton as a haphazard painter, where the storm is portrayed as an unorganised agent dispersing rain and destruction indiscriminately across geographical regions. Expressions such as “*Agaton dumped heavy rains*” and “*Agaton caused flooding*” depict the storm’s actions as chaotic and directionless, resulting in widespread disorder.

(15) “*Floods hit around 100 barangays in Leyte province after tropical depression Agaton dumped heavy rains over parts of the Visayas and Mindanao, Governor Leopoldo Petilla said on Monday.*” (ABS-CBN News)

The verb *dumped* evokes the image of an artist carelessly flinging paint across a canvas, suggesting randomness and lack of control. This metaphor presents Agaton as an agent whose actions produce destructive outcomes without intention or coherence. A similar framing is evident in the following example:

(16) “*Heavy rains brought by Agaton triggered flooding in 195 areas in the Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, Soccsksargen, Caraga, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.*” (ABS-CBN News)

Here, flooding is portrayed as an unintended consequence of the storm’s erratic behaviour, reinforcing the image of Agaton as a chaotic painter leaving disorder in its wake. From an ecolinguistic perspective, this metaphor emphasises indeterminacy and uncertainty during natural disasters. However, it also risks obscuring the systematic and human-induced dimensions of climate change by framing destruction as random and inevitable. As a result, such representations may weaken critical engagement with human responsibility and structural causes, shifting focus away from long-term mitigation and sustainable environmental planning.

4.8 Agaton as an Erratic Player

The metaphor of Agaton as an erratic player foregrounds the storm's unpredictability and irregular movement. Descriptions such as "*Agaton is forecast to meander*" and "*Agaton is expected to remain almost stationary*" construct the storm as a capricious agent that deviates from conventional meteorological patterns, thereby disrupting expectations and generating uncertainty about its trajectory.

(17) "*Agaton is forecast to meander around the Samar–Leyte area.*"

The verb *meander* characterises Agaton as an erratic entity whose movement lacks coherence and predictability. This framing highlights the challenges faced by forecasters and affected communities, as the storm's behaviour resists stable projection. The metaphor reinforces a sense of frustration and anxiety arising from Agaton's irregularity.

A similar conceptualisation is evident in the following example:

(18) "*Agaton is expected to remain almost stationary.*"

Here, the description of the storm as *almost stationary* intensifies perceptions of unpredictability. The contrast between movement and stasis creates a sense of suspension and uncertainty, complicating preparedness and response efforts. Communities are left unable to anticipate the duration or progression of the storm, which undermines confidence in disaster planning.

From an ecolinguistic perspective, the metaphor of Agaton as an erratic player is largely neutral. While it effectively captures the storm's capricious behaviour, it does not explicitly engage with the environmental or anthropogenic conditions that contribute to the increasing frequency and intensity of such events. As a result, this framing limits public understanding of underlying causes and may constrain discussions related to climate change adaptation and long-term resilience strategies.

4.9 Agaton as a Destructive Artist

Another metaphor identified in the corpus presents Agaton as a destructive artist, wherein natural elements such as rain and wind are framed as creative forces producing chaotic and harmful outcomes. In this metaphorical construction, the storm reshapes landscapes through its "creations," which are neither deliberate nor admirable, but instead disorderly and damaging.

(19) "*A total of 3,347 individuals have evacuated in Cagayan de Oro and Bukidnon province due to rain-induced landslides and flooding caused by Agaton.*" (GMA News)

Although the verb *caused* appears neutral, the broader context assigns Agaton an active role in transforming the physical environment through destruction. Landslides and flooding are presented as outcomes of the storm's actions, positioning Agaton as an artist whose work manifests in

devastation rather than beauty. This metaphor underscores the storm's agency in altering landscapes in harmful ways.

A similar pattern is evident in the following example:

(20) “NDRRMC recorded 16,382 houses damaged due to Agaton—14,124 were partially and 2,258 were totally damaged.” (GMA News)

The repeated use of *damaged* reinforces the notion that Agaton does not merely affect the environment incidentally but actively produces destruction. The destructive artist metaphor thus foregrounds the storm's capacity to reshape human and natural environments through harm, presenting destruction as a defining outcome of its “creative” force.

From an ecolinguistic standpoint, framing Agaton as a destructive artist reinforces narratives of environmental harm while marginalising broader ecological and climatic factors that intensify such storms. By focusing on the visible outcomes of destruction, this metaphor risks diverting attention away from systemic issues such as climate change and environmental degradation. Consequently, it may limit advocacy for sustainable and preventative responses, instead reinforcing a reactive discourse centred on damage and loss.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the range of metaphors used to represent the 2022 Philippine Tropical Storm Agaton in Philippine news discourse. To this end, a specialised corpus—COPSA—was developed from news reports published by two major Philippine news outlets, ABS-CBN News and GMA Network News, focusing specifically on coverage of Tropical Storm Agaton. The corpus was analysed using AntConc 3.5.9 (Anthony, 2020) to generate concordance lines for the keywords *Agaton* and *storm*, which were subsequently interpreted in light of the study's theoretical framework. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Stibbe's (2021) stories framework served as the principal analytical lenses. By foregrounding metaphorical constructions in media reporting, the study explored how these linguistic choices shape public perceptions of the storm as a natural disaster and contribute more broadly to patterns of ecological cognition.

Analysis of the news corpus revealed that Tropical Storm Agaton is predominantly portrayed through destructive and personifying metaphors, such as a killer, merciless destroyer, rampaging beast, or burying force. These metaphorical representations construct Agaton as an uncontrollable and aggressive agent, reinforcing a narrative of nature as hostile and threatening. From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, such framings conceptualise the storm as an entity capable of intention, violence, and devastation, thereby intensifying feelings of fear, vulnerability, and helplessness among audiences.

Other metaphorical framings, including Agaton as a haphazard painter, reluctant traveller, or erratic player, further emphasise the storm's unpredictability and irregular movement. Although these metaphors are less overtly destructive, they still contribute to a discourse that foregrounds disorder and uncertainty, often without engaging more critically with the systemic and

anthropogenic factors that exacerbate extreme weather events. As a result, attention is diverted away from deeper structural explanations of climatic instability.

From an ecolinguistic perspective, the findings suggest that the repeated use of destructive metaphors has significant implications for environmental understanding. Such metaphors participate in constructing narratives that distance human actors from the natural world by depicting nature as an adversary. The demonisation of the storm as a murderer or violent beast encourages fear-driven responses rather than fostering resilience, responsibility, and sustainable forms of engagement with the environment. This framing risks narrowing public discourse on climate change, environmental degradation, and human accountability by privileging short-term mitigation and emergency responses over long-term ecological reflection and action.

The application of Stibbe's (2021) stories framework further demonstrates how media discourse surrounding Tropical Storm Agaton presents the event as overwhelming and inescapable, generating feelings of powerlessness and emotional detachment within affected communities. Media narratives largely concentrate on immediate catastrophe and short-term response measures, while marginalising broader discussions of climate resilience, ecological balance, and preventative environmental strategies.

In conclusion, this study underscores the crucial role of metaphorical framing in shaping public understandings of natural disasters and their environmental implications. The dominant metaphors used to describe Tropical Storm Agaton construct a troubling image of nature as inherently hostile, which may hinder efforts to address the deeper ecological and climatic causes underlying such events. The findings highlight the need for more reflective and ecologically informed metaphor use in disaster reporting—one that situates extreme weather within wider climatic and environmental contexts and supports more sustainable, informed, and resilient responses to climate change and future environmental crises.

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