

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Summary of overall findings

This thesis presents a semantic analysis of Thai proverbs and metaphors focused on women. The research question is how does meaning arise from proverbs and metaphors in Thai? The hypothesis is that meaning is processed by invoking certain domains of experience, which are based on specific cultural models, and projecting them into temporary mental spaces established for reasoning and understanding.

Chapter two, which is the review of literature, presents summaries of various theories used in the analysis such as Mental Space Theory, Conceptual Blending Theory, Image-Schema, Reference Point Constructions, Force Dynamics, and Conceptual Metaphor. These theories were applied as the frameworks for analyzing the meanings of proverbs and metaphors. The conceptual blending is developed from Mental Space Theory, which sets up mental spaces as domains of referential structure in a speaker's mental representations. In Blending Theory, it comprises of at least two input mental spaces, a generic space, and a blended space which is usually its own emergent structure integrated together. Other theories, image-schema, reference point constructions, force dynamics and conceptual metaphor, were applied to analyze the generic space that contains structure common in all input spaces. These theories can help us to answer the research question and support the hypothesis, by showing how two discrete domains can come together to formulate new meaning.

Before going into an actual analysis, it was essential to investigate the Thai world view from both the traditional and the present ideas of Thai people towards

women. This knowledge forms important background concepts used in processing meaning from proverbs and metaphors. Chapter three, therefore, helps to establish the background cognition necessary for the Mental Space and Conceptual Blending Theories.

In chapter three, discusses the statuses, roles of women, and the two distinctive social classes in the Thai society of the past: noble and lower class. In addition, the traditional view that women are physically and mentally weak and thus need protection from men was presented. When they are young, they depend on their parents. A woman who is old enough for marriage is expected to marry someone. If they are too old to marry, they become spinsters and are judged to have some defects, such that no man wants them. Thai tradition does not agree with divorce because women are expected to be honest to their husbands. If someone divorces their husband or the husband dies, they are widows who are often looked at with negative feelings from society. Virginity is very important for women in the traditional idea. Any single woman has to keep herself a virgin until she marries, otherwise she is blamed by society and judged as defiled. The concept of *rák nuan sañǎan tua* ‘keep oneself, keep virgin’ is currently not as important as it was in the past. People can accept involvement in a sexual relationship before marriage. However, this concept still retains importance for Thai people as a quality that a good woman should determine to possess.

The semantic analysis of the proverbs about women in chapter four applied many theoretical frameworks such as Conceptual Metaphor, Reference Point Constructions, Force Dynamics, Image Schema, and Conceptual Blending. The proverbs were grouped into five major categories that were usually used to compare women. Those things included moon/ star, flower, animals, and objects. These five kinds of things presented various concepts that express the Thai world view on women discussed in chapter three. The concepts mentioned social status, softness, beauty, desirability, delicacy, weakness, vulnerability, untrustworthiness,

unrefinedness, auspiciousness, follower, freshness, and condition. These concepts expressed the Thai world view on woman and they were the cultural models underlying the proverbs and metaphors that helped us to interpret the meaning. Behind these concepts of women, there is the Blending Space Theory operating for processing the meanings of these proverbs. The contents in the generic spaces give the general assumptions about Thai thinking that represent the Thai world view. These traditional and present views on women were applied as the cultural background needed in the conceptual integration network on the blended processes, composition, completion and elaboration. The analysis in chapter four confirmed the hypothesis and answered the question of the thesis by stating that meaning is processed in Thai proverbs and metaphors by invoking certain domains of experience based on cultural knowledge and projecting them into mental spaces and integrating this information into a single blended space which expresses the meaning and its own emergent structure.

## **5.1 Implications of findings**

There are two implications deriving from the findings of this thesis. The first one concerns theories. The second one concerns understanding the Thai world view.

### ***5.1.1 Implication for theory***

This analysis is mainly based on a cognitive linguistics approach to meaning. This is the first descriptive study that I am aware of that incorporates into one analysis the necessity of sub-theories in the field of cognitive semantics. Within the overall model of conceptual blending, this analysis shows that Image Schema, Reference Point Construction, Force Dynamics, and Conceptual Metaphor are necessary models in processing meaning.

This study also utilizes an anthropological linguistic model of world view to describe the cultural background (again used in the conceptual blending theory).

When our scope includes anthropological linguistics, we can understand Thai world view from the semantic study of Thai proverbs.

### ***5.1.2 Implication for understanding Thai world view***

The first finding of this analysis in chapter four is that Thai people (especially in traditional thinking) assume the characteristics of women are weakness, attractiveness, delicacy, vulnerability, untrustworthiness, and follower. These concepts are derived from the world view that perceives women as being comparable to moon/ star, flower, animals and objects.

The second finding of the Thai world view from chapter four is that Thai people perceive social status in terms of a hierarchy. There are higher and lower statuses/classes. From this world view, people created a social value that prohibits love across the social classes, especially in the case where the woman is of a higher class and the man is of a lower class, as shown in the proverb 'rabbit desires the moon'.

The third finding of world view is about the relationship of men and women found in chapters three and four. Distance should be maintained because women are attractive, and men and women are born to be paired and thus attract each other. So, they should be careful about their relationship.

The fourth one is based on the third finding above that men and women are destined to be paired. Being a single is not satisfactory in society, especially for women who need protection. Being alone or going anywhere alone is dangerous because women are vulnerable to bad people.

Thai world view provides the background in which to infer meaning from proverbs and metaphors. However, linguistic phenomena like proverbs reinforce world view by allowing elaborations to express extensions of meaning. This process

is one of a loop. World view is used to interpret proverbs and metaphors which are used to reinforce and extend world view.

## ***5.2 Suggestions for further research***

The study of metaphor helps us in analyzing and grouping the data. Metonymy is one sub-theory that was not developed enough in the thesis because the data were specific on metaphors and proverbs (most of them are presented in term of metaphor). For further research, we can extend data to other kinds of language expression such as personification, metonymy, and other topic of metaphors or proverbs.

Prototype and Categorization Theories can be applied to this kind of research to discover how people categorize things and how they relate them together.

There are other domains of Thai proverbs and metaphors, such as Thai men's behavior, characteristics, and social expectations. These can be analyzed in a similar way to answer what information is integrated to convey the meaning of the proverbs and metaphors.