

A Critical Metaphor Analysis of Disability Identity and Ideology in the Thai Undergraduates' Home for Children with Disabilities Website Project

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INTRODUCTION

Identity is conveyed in a number of ways, directly, indirectly or symbolically and displayed in the form of language or symbols which function as an indicator of elements in the social context. Hence, the study of meaning-making and interpretation through the use of language and symbols or so-called indexicality can reveal how identity is enacted, communicated or negotiated in particular social encounters (De Fina, 2006). Oppositions of an 'us' versus a 'them' are examples of semiotic resources that can display conflict or explain how shared group representations are managed by members of particular groups. In other words, identity can be revealed through how self-representation is linked with group identity. Numerous studies have agreed that what defines a certain group of people or organizations can be justified in two major ways: (1) by examining how an individual's beliefs and values are put into play through the construction of certain texts and (2) investigating how linguistic resources are employed by members of the group to establish their position in particular social activities (De Fina, 2006; Schiffirin, 2006; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Benwell and Stokoe, 2006).

Bearing in mind that an individual's beliefs and linguistic resources are likely to tell us about identity construction

ABSTRACT

This study examines how the Home for Children with Disabilities and disability identities were construed by Thai undergraduates in their website project through an analysis of metaphors. Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) was the framework for analyzing the use of metaphors and the participants' enactment of identity and social representation. The critical analysis revealed four dominant themes: 'JOURNEY', 'FAMILY', 'OBJECT' and 'HOPE' all utilized to reproduce the Home for Children with Disabilities identity as a 'warm', 'effective' and 'altruistic' organization that provides their children with forms of care and compassion. The analysis, in addition, showed the participants' representation of disability identity as a non-static and changeable entity. Children with disabilities were seen as 'capable of becoming self-supporting'. Additionally, the semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants indicated that social oppression was believed to be the cause of disability-related issues and that true understanding was needed to terminate social discrimination.

and interpretation, this study attempts to embrace these two aspects in an analysis of how 13 fourth-year English-major students at a Thai university reproduced the identity of the Baan Nontapum Foundation (BNF) or the Home for Children with Disabilities, as well as disability in their website construction project through an examination of their use of metaphors. Using Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), the way in which participants shaped their world experience and values towards the BNF and disability through their metaphors, a tool providing 'guides and framings for thinking' (Kress, 2010, p. 30), was analyzed. According to Hart (2010, p. 126), metaphor is linked with our conceptual system which is utilized to make sense of our experience. The study specifically aims to examine 'what', 'how' and 'why' specific metaphors are employed in order to gain a greater insight into their cognitive operation. In addition to the critical analysis of metaphors used to construe identity on the participants' self-designed websites, the participants' perceptions elicited from the semi-structured interviews were also analyzed in order to establish the relationship between the participants' beliefs and the identity construction process.

The Baan Nontapum Foundation or the Home for Children with Disabilities, which is under the administration of the Department of Social Development and Welfare at the

Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, provides a service for children, aged between 7 and 18, with sensory disabilities such as visual, auditory and other physical impairments, including conditions affecting intellectual ability. The target children were homeless, abandoned and orphaned.

A total number of 13 undergraduates taking the *Critical Discourse Analysis* course were assigned to construct English-language websites at the BNF's request with the aim of assisting the BNF to deliver its own goals, mission statements, services and donation channels in English to reach audiences at an international level. The target viewers are both individuals and organizations from countries such as Singapore, Australia, Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, etc., which are able to offer financial assistance and help organize fund-raising activities for the BNF. Accordingly, the social identity of the BNF as well as the view of disability from the viewpoint of the participants in relation to those who are assumed to have an interest in assisting children was a very interesting subject of investigation. This investigation was expected to reveal what the participants perceived to be socially desirable qualities of such an organization and disability in the Thai context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disability Discourse

'Disability' has commonly been specified and employed to refer to any people with physical or intellectual impairment diagnosed through medical procedures. However, the definition of this term does not seem to depend on any accomplished communicative event by event through communicative practices among interactants (Renshaw, Choo and Emerald, 2014; Riddell and Weedon, 2014; Grue, 2011). The presupposition of 'disability' is, rather, fixed and deeply rooted in the minds of language users in different mainstream societies, influencing the way people treat and unconsciously react to disabled people. Riddell and Weedon (2014, p. 39) noted that the fixed and binary definition of 'disability' which differentiates distinctly 'normative people' from 'disabled ones' has been judged from the perspective of the medical model and the perspective of the general public but not from the voices of people with disability. In addition, the distinct categories of impairment (e.g. blind/partially sighted, dyslexic) have been decided in a simple manner for the benefit of institutions. Universities, for example, are able to classify groups of people and the type of support needed by students whereas challenges remain on the part of people with disabilities to struggle with their identity construction (Riddell and Weedon, 2014, p. 40).

Similarly, Renshaw, Choo and Emerald (2014) have raised concerns over the fact that society has pervasively constructed disabled children's identities from the perspective of the medical model. This is due to the view of social experiences that concludes that disabled children 'tend to be recognized and treated only in the pathological and deficient terms associated with the label' (p. 47). They have proposed that the specific identities of disabled children, such

as self-awareness, be co-constructed through communicative practices among their parents, teachers and the children themselves. This will likely assist them to accomplish their specific disability identity construction and widen others' perspectives for a better understanding of disabled children, who appear to be judged based on different types of impairment.

Clearly, the presuppositions about 'disabled persons' tend to occur from the way in which they are acted upon but not upon the way they themselves act to construe their identities. Thus, they have been viewed as lacking self-agency, being incompetent when compared with normal people and not having reasons for their own actions when they cause problems (Priestley, 1999). In mainstream society, disabled people are expected to be cared for in a specialized manner in order to live normally with normal people and if they are unable to do so it is regarded as their lack of accomplishment in spite of the fact that what little improvement they have managed to achieve, such as being able to self-regulate their emotions, can be viewed as an accomplishment. To be precise, their competency has not been viewed from a realistic perspective but rather from one that pushes them to grow up just exactly like physically and intellectually healthy children (Renshaw, Choo and Emerald, 2014, p. 57).

Interestingly, the reasons for disabled people, particularly the intellectually impaired, for acting in certain ways have never been explained much in the media and in everyday life discourse. Theirs is merely labeled 'bad behavior', 'weird', 'deviant' or 'disruptive' but why they behave in this way or why they take certain actions has never been explained by the public or the media. Occasionally, people with disabilities (not severe or visible conditions) may choose to disclose their disability to receive some form of benefits and assistance, especially when entering educational institutions and workplaces while, from time to time, they themselves and their families choose to conceal their disability in order to avoid any social discrimination and disapproval (Riddle, Tinklin and Wilson, 2005).

Shildrick (2012) considered discourses that presuppose subjectivity towards disability or 'non-normative embodiment or desire' as dangerous discourses that attempted 'disability' as otherness in society and thought that these discourses must be controlled. However, Shildrick was not solely concerned about this conventional definition but she also asked why the views of non-conventional movements who attempted to blur the rigid, binary definition that disabled and non-disabled people were alike. She explained that 'both categories share a psycho-social imaginary that disavows morphological imperfection' (p. 5). These discourses can be regarded as 'dangerous' since they constantly project on disabled people unfairly just because they have been wrongly perceived as people suffering from stigmatization and pathologization or have been identified as no different from non-disabled people. New discourses are thus needed to generate changes in the public's perspective and interaction with people with disabilities. Overall, disability discourses have been viewed as a powerful tool to generate social change.

In the Thai context, disability is specifically linked with the ideology of Buddhism in the way that it is viewed as 'a deserved failure to lead positive previous lives' (Vorapanya and Dunlap, 2014, p. 234). Disability is thus equivalent to lower status as the result of bad karma, causing most families with disabled children to feel shame and fear at their children's disability. Vorapanya and Dunlap further explain that some families end up living a life of ignorance due to the belief that they cannot change the bad karma of previous lives. In addition to this biased perception of disability, the Buddhist perspective greatly influences the role of compassion for all living beings as being the essence of most professional practitioners who work with children with disabilities. According to Vorapanya and Dunlap's interviews with principals from 10 inclusive schools in Thailand, a teacher with a good heart is more admirable than one with particular skills. They explain that the professional practitioners' sense of mercy, compassion and patience appears to be associated with 'a balance against the belief that someone with disabilities has bad karma' (p. 238). These barriers are somehow consistent with the social model's perspective in the West (Grue, 2011; Carson, 2009).

Critical Metaphor Analysis

The study of metaphors has been developed over quite a long time from different perspectives, including philosophy and linguistics. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) originally proposed the idea of considering the phenomenon of metaphors as a conceptual system of human beings and, since then, metaphors have been brought into the area of cognitive linguistics. As cognitive linguists, Lakoff and Johnson paid special attention to the construal of meaning and our embodied understanding of situation. Metaphor is thus not merely a property of language but rather a property of thought or a cognitive phenomenon. This perspective has subsequently been adopted and extended by a number of approaches (Pinker, 2007; Feldman, 2006; Fauconnier and Turner, 2002; Grady, 1997; Narayanan, 1997) into what is called 'Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT),' or sometimes 'Cognitive Metaphor Theory'. According to CMT, metaphors involve two conceptual domains: (1) the 'source' domain consisting of attributes or entities such as 'animals', 'buildings and construction', 'the human body', etc., that are linked in the mind and expressed through lexical choices, and (2) the 'target' domain which tends to be abstract and includes 'emotion', 'life and death', 'time', etc., and is basically what we are trying to understand (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). However, since CMT constitutes a theory of cognitive semantics, which explains the motivation for particular mappings as grounded in experientialist connections between domains, it leaves no room for the speaker's intention. Owing to the need to deal with the lack of CMT, the analysis of metaphor use shifts its focus on to CDA, clearly pointing out that 'metaphors are chosen by speakers to achieve particular communication goals within particular contexts rather than being predetermined by bodily experience' (Charteris-Black, 2004: 247). Metaphor in CDA is, accordingly, a product of individual and social resources; the individual ones involve cognition,

emotion, pragmatic and linguistic knowledge, whereas the social resources refer to ideological, historical, social and cultural knowledge (van Dijk, 2009; Charteris-Black, 2004).

Charteris-Black (2004, 2005) attempted to improve Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory by paying close attention to the semantic and pragmatic aspects of metaphor occurring in daily communication, instead of merely focusing on the cognitive aspects. Charteris-Black and other scholars started to integrate CDA with CMT, creating a new perspective of metaphor analysis called Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), which explores the context of metaphor and the implicit speaker intention as well as the covert power relations within the social and cultural context.

According to CMA, a similar notion can be represented through different metaphors and the same metaphor may also be used in different ways according to the speaker's ideological perspective (Charteris-Black, 2004). For example, in a developed country, the metaphor 'Society is a market' may be used to reflect the sense of competitiveness within that particular society, while in a developing country, people may view society as an organism, meaning that everyone needs to depend on each other, emphasizing the value of cooperation (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 166). It is also possible that within a particular society, people may accept these two notions of society as both competition and organism. Thus, metaphors can play a significant role in constructing social reality through the selection of similar features in the source domain and the target domain. Apart from being a critical tool to construct reality, metaphors can be persuasive, especially when used in the media or political discourses (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Charteris-Black, 2004). For example, when a Taiwanese politician used metaphors of building and construction as in 'we will complete the sacred mission both of constructing the base for our comeback and of glorifying China' (the source domain is buildings and construction and the target domain is building the country together), he simply aimed to give a strong sense of commitment and constructed unity without actually providing specific and concrete details (Lu & Ahrens, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 168). Metaphors can thus be employed to construct social society, values, ideologies and power. When certain metaphors are fully accepted by the majority of people, the power of those who use metaphors will then be accepted as well and then those metaphors will gradually turn into social values and will no longer be individual values or beliefs (Hart, 2016).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants were 13 fourth-year students taking the *Critical Discourse Analysis* course, an elective course for third and fourth-year students. Five of them were male and the remainder were female, aged approximately 22 years old. They were highly motivated students who were quite competent in English and were interested in becoming English teachers, translators or columnists after they graduated. They had taken this course for 15 weeks/45 hours in total. To

complete the website project, the participants reported that they relied on their own feelings and views as well as the information they had gathered from their interviews with the BNF's Director and staff on their two visits to the BNF.

Websites

The participants were divided into two groups, each of which constructed a website for the Baan Nontapum Foundation. Prior to working jointly on the website project, the participants were trained in how to create websites using Google Sites by logging into <https://www.sites.google.com> which is available to all Google users and contains ready-to-use website formats which the participants would not find too complicated when completing this project on their own. The website (Website A) designed and discursively constructed by the participants in Group 1 consisted of approximately 1,600 words with five main headings; 'background', 'mission statement', 'our services', 'vocational training programs' and 'ways to give'. Website B, constructed by the participants in Group 2, however, was almost half the size of the first, containing approximately 814 words. This one consisted of six major headings; 'about us', 'our responsibilities', 'our objectives', 'adoption conditions', 'donation', and 'our services'. The links to both Websites A and B are

(1) <https://sites.google.com/a/v.arts.tu.ac.th/bannontapum>.

(2) <https://sites.google.com/a/v.arts.tu.ac.th/baan-nontapum>.

Data Analysis

Critical analysis of metaphors

A specific analysis of the metaphors employed by the participants to reproduce the mental representation of the agency was carried out to learn what lay between the participants' thoughts or cognitive processes and the statements they made about the BNF and children with disabilities as a means of persuading the audience to collaborate and build trust in the BNF. The process of metaphorical construction analysis proposed by Charteris-Black (2004) in terms of 'source domain' (the concept being described through the metaphor) and 'target domain' (the concept drawn upon to construct the metaphor) was carried out to examine, critically, the participants' deployment of metaphors. The initial stage of coding the use of metaphors started with identifying the use of metaphors in each segmented instance and labelling the concept behind each use of metaphor. At the initial stage, context was also examined to determine if the identified words were metaphors and not literal words. A target and source domain analysis of metaphorical construction was then conducted prior to moving on to interpreting socially important representations of each metaphor as well as examining reasons behind the identified metaphor's use. After completing the metaphorical construction analysis in terms of target and source domain, similar kinds of metaphor such as ones that denote 'travelling', 'paths' or 'journey' were grouped together for a full detailed analysis.

Semi-structured interviews

In this study, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with 7 fourth-year English-major students after the completion of their website project. The aim of this qualitative interviewing was to elicit the participants' views on issues and values related to disability in their particular social context. Gaskell (2002) stresses that qualitative interviewing 'provides the basic data for the development of an understanding of the relations between social actors and their situation' (p. 39), or events other than those of the interviewer. In addition, it can contribute to an understanding of beliefs and values in relation to the behavior of people (p. 39). Based on these conceptual backgrounds, the goal of the interview in this research was not something related to counting or quantifying opinions but rather to explore the range of views on the values of disability.

The participants were asked to express their views on the questions '*What is your perspective of children with disabilities?*' and '*What do you think should be given to them as a means of help?*' These questions were asked to elicit the participants' responses in terms of 'their perceptions of children with disabilities and any other disability-related issues'.

The interviews were administered in Thai and an equivalent translation/transcription was produced in the process of data analysis. This transcription included all the spoken words but none of paralinguistic characteristics employed in textual or conversational analysis. The original audio-recording was checked and rechecked to ensure that the translated version was identical with the original version.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Critical Analysis of Metaphors

The metaphors were discursively employed by the participants mainly as strategies for advocating the BNF's public relations as a way to receive full support from society. The metaphors were also able to reflect hidden social values of life and ideology. In this study, the metaphors analyzed in the three main stages: identification, interpretation and explanation of conceptual metaphors (Charteris-Black, 2004), on both Websites A and B were categorized into the following dominant themes: FAMILY (11 times), JOURNEY/PATH (8 times), OBJECTS (5 times), HOPE (4 times), POSITION (3 times), WATER GLASS (2 times), SERVICE (2 times), PART OF A THING (2 times), and BUILDING (1 time). The metaphors analyzed were also mapped in the overall conceptual domain of pure love and altruism, a desirable quality and value driving the BNF to initiate actions and plans. Additionally, the metaphors were utilized to highlight the possibility that the children at the BNF can be fully developed through the different means of care and assistance provided by the BNF. Accordingly, disability in this context was not viewed as static but changeable. The metaphors examined here can prove to be devices of persuasion in terms of promoting the BNF and constructing social reality. The following section will focus on the explanation of the conceptual metaphors in the first four dominant themes as well as their use in context.

The metaphor of family

As the BNF is an organization that aims to care and offer holistic and specialized assistance to children with disabilities with no families or with families incapable of taking care of them, it seems reasonable that the BNF be mapped as one of the family members of those children to provide what they lack. The mapping reflects the traditional view of Thai people who value the parent-child relationship far more than any other, particularly if there are children or the less powerful are involved. People who work mainly with children, such as teachers, in the Thai context, are supposed to take the role of the children's second parent. When children go to school, they will be cared for by their second parent and thus schools are always referred to as the children's second home. Likewise, the best role that the BNF can adopt is the role of being those children's compassionate parents and being fully responsible for bringing them up, providing them with the best education and care, teaching them morality and the value of life and ensuring that they will have a bright future when they leave home. The BNF is also the kind of parent who cares for children's individual needs and interests, not one who tends to force children to do things they do not want to do. This choice of metaphor also reflects the participants' stance as being a parent, who, in this case, can build up a sense of 'trust' in the BNF, an organization that is taking the role of the children's compassionate parent and who can, simultaneously, create an emotional impact on readers who sympathize with the fortune of those children. The readers tend to feel positively towards the BNF, which is wholeheartedly willing to assist children and not just because it is their obligatory duty. Examples of these metaphorical expressions are provided below.

For more than 45 years, our organization has been a warm family, welcoming children with special needs from all parts of Thailand.

We, like other parents, want to ensure that our children will grow up strong, be able to take care of themselves and become people who can contribute to society in the near future.

We, as a family, have the duty to provide them with a place where they can live happily and support them to live with their strength.

The metaphor of a journey/path

The journey/path metaphors present the idea that a way to the sustainable development of children with disabilities truly exists in spite of the fact that it actually requires a number of processes and actions to lead them to that destination. Such themes as 'a stepping stone', 'a stairway' and 'the future path' signify a solid foundation and a forward move which guarantees getting consistently closer to the destination. Taking a stairway to go upwards is regarded as a highly significant step for children to make in reaching their goal in life much faster than not using a stairway. When the BNF provides the children with a stairway, it means they are being offered a helpful and useful means of assistance including medical treatment, specialized education and vocational

training. All these ensure remarkable improvement. Without a stairway, the children probably need to negotiate hills by themselves. In other words, they will definitely encounter many more obstacles in their lives and spend too much time before they reach their destination. Hence, their way to success will not be as smooth as when they are provided with the stairway. Also, several paths can ensure that the children have more than one way they can take to reach the destination or achieve their life goals.

In addition, it seems that the BNF needs to go a long way to reach the goal of assisting the children to become independent, self-supporting and have similar rights and responsibilities as non-disabled people in the society. Thus, it is required that they take a series of actions to ensure the entire process of assistance as can be seen in 'follow up on them' and 'stay by our children's side'. These two themes are tailored to the action of following up someone along the path to ensure that that person can reach his/her destination safely and soundly and of staying by someone along the way to support him or her until reaching the destination. The BNF declares some actions that they plan to take to assist the children during and after they leave their home. The use of these metaphorical expressions serves as a discursive device of persuasion convincing the general public of their effective action plan of assistance and support.

Apart from the BNF, which constructs a solid foundation, paths and a stairway that leads the children to their destination in a safe, sound and timely manner, the children themselves may face some forms of difficulty on the path to their destination and force them to overcome those obstacles as well as relying on their own efforts to develop themselves to complete the jigsaw of their success. The theme 'discovering their inner strength' is thus linked to the action of taking a long spiritual journey to search for one's own talent. This may be a time-consuming process and lead to some difficulties but it is something that children need to go through in order to reach their destination. Examples of the journey metaphors are shown below.

Through medical treatment, specialized education and vocational training based on individual need, we are providing them with a stepping stone towards great opportunities and a stairway to help them reach their full potential.

We always stay by our children's side, provide them with advice and help them solve any hard problem that they may encounter.

We follow up on them after they get jobs.

The children can live their lives comfortably in an environment which encourages them into learning and discovering their inner talent.

With our support, the children can learn to live in our society and manage to overcome any obstacles that they may face in their future paths.

The metaphor of objects

The object metaphors describe abstractions such as emotions and ideas as if they were objects that can be given and received while in fact one needs to rely on feelings to feel or sense the ideas represented in abstraction. The objects that

Specific identification of metaphors

Sentences	Examples	Metaphoric themes
A: 1	The place where 'Love' and 'Future' are being formed	Metaphor of objects and buildings 'Love' and 'future' were objectified as agents being constructed
A: 2	-	-
A: 3	-	-
A: 4	-	-
A: 5	Our organization has been a warm family	Metaphor of family Our organization is understood as 'a warm family'
A: 6	-	-
A: 7	-	-
A: 8	Our school provides educational services for children in our home	Metaphor of family Our home is a substitute for the BNF

Metaphorical construction analysis in terms of 'Target domain' and 'Source domain'

Sentence No.	Target domain	Source domain	Interpretation
A: 1	Objects e.g., buildings that are being formed	Love and future	Metaphor of objects and buildings (love and future can be actually built.)
A: 1	Hope/Good opportunities	Future	Metaphor of hope (future is being referred to hope/good opportunities and it can be built.)
A: 5	Our organization/baan nontapum	A warm family	Metaphor of family (the BNF is considered to be a parent/family member/relative of the children staying at the BNF.)
A: 8	Baan nontapum	Our home	Metaphor of family (the BNF is considered to be a parent/family member/relative of the children staying at the BNF.)
A: 14	Baan nontapum/home for children with disabilities	A big loving family	Metaphor of family (the BNF is considered to be a parent/family member/relative of the children staying at the BNF.)

can be given are allied to the target domains and include 'love' and 'future', things that the BNF can hand over to the children at their home. To love someone is regarded as a conceptual process which occurs over time and is manifested in varying degrees from one person to another. In addition, love itself cannot be concretely measured or evaluated but it is something that one simply feels. To map the abstract noun as love to an object is to reduce the complexity of the conceptual processes and to explain what actions the BNF takes that one can regard as 'love'. Thus, to give love is a simplified form of expression omitting a series of actions that are considered to be 'love'. When abstract ideas like this are linked to the objects, their own value is at the same time reduced to something that can, perhaps, be bought, offered, built or given in a very simple and fast manner. Likewise, in the sentence 'we give our children warmth and love', we as readers have not been informed in what way warmth can be given. Whether or not the children are hugged until they feel warm or they are always surrounded by the BNF staff is not clear. 'Warmth', 'love' and 'future' are reduced in terms of their own value and complex conceptual processes when they are ascribed as objects.

The simplified form of these abstract ideas and emotions as objects as discussed previously also reflects the changing

social ideologies in which we tend to value and expect an instant result without putting any effort into making things happen. 'Future', 'Love' and 'Warmth' can be simply created and given to the children by the BNF without taking any concrete action to make them happen. The other example of this ontological metaphor is when the BNF states that they give 'True Care' to all the children at their home. What exactly 'True Care' is tends to be overlooked as people seem to be satisfied with the instant results the children are experiencing. Thus, concrete actions categorized as 'True Care' have been concealed and simplified through the deployment of these object metaphors. Examples of these ontological metaphors are provided below.

This is the place where 'Love' and 'Future' are being formed

We give our children warmth and love, while protecting them and helping them with solving problems.

We have officers, who will give them true care and love.

The metaphor of hope

The hope metaphors communicate the idea that all children staying at the BNF will definitely have good opportunities in their careers and personal lives. The problems that these

children encounter prior to moving to the BNF tend to disappear because the BNF provides them with a good education, vocational training and appropriate activities as well as love. The theme of 'future', the most widely used theme, is linked to the target domain 'hope and opportunities' which are referred to by the BNF from time to time to assure the general public that the opportunities that lie ahead of these children can come from the assistance of the BNF and financial support from individuals. The theme 'future' is also represented as an object or material that can be built as shown in the sentence 'This is the place where love and future are being formed'. This subset conceptual metaphor of building serves as the foundation where the conceptual metaphor of hope operates. The building metaphor suggests that opportunities can be constructed, born from the BNF and imagined communities. Everyone can take part in constructing opportunities for children at the BNF. Opportunities do not arise simply because of the opportunities themselves but through the BNF and collaboration from all sectors in society.

The conceptual metaphor of hope is also depicted as 'new lives', signifying the end of the old life and the rebirth of another life. The former life may be a life filled with suffering, pain and difficulties, whereas the new life means life without those impediments but great opportunities. In one's present life, one can be born and reborn all the time provided that one experiences something that can be internally transformative. This suggests that a person does not have one life but can be transformed through certain experiences to be someone new. In this context, it is the BNF that can offer new lives to children by providing the most appropriate forms of assistance and care. The theme 'new lives', in addition, suggests the participants' belief in the concept of reincarnation since Buddhists believe that when someone dies, that person will be reborn in the next life in a new physical body. In this context, the same old person who has been abandoned and treated unfairly dies and the new imagined person is reborn through the assistance of the BNF and, perhaps, donations from everyone in the society.

Interestingly, the conceptual metaphor of hope is also discursively represented in the theme of the bright color. Being bright can signify opportunities and hope and thus the nominal group 'the brighter future' can intensify the conceptual metaphor of hope. To be precise, one can imagine the light when it comes to the bright color. This is particularly true when the light exists in the midst of the dark, the color that represents suffering and evil things. The Thai saying 'there is always a light at the end of the tunnel' is a good example that can illustrate a clear link between color and the concept of hope. Additionally, when the shade 'brighter' is stated, one can probably infer that the dark side also exists. In this context, the children at the BNF are no longer associated with those who are suffering due to the fact that they have been fully supported by the BNF, who can guarantee hope and greater opportunities in their life. Examples of the conceptual metaphors of hope are provided below.

This is the place where 'Love' and 'Future' are being formed.

In order to give our children an opportunity for a brighter future, we provide care and support for our children as follows:

It gives our children new lives.

Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

The participants' perception of disability

When asked what the participants thought about disabled children in the Thai context, all of them expressed negative views on Thai society which, according to them, was the real source of the disability issue. Specifically, all the participants criticized Thai society for generating an attitudinal bias that obstructs ways of improving social adjustment and assistance in terms of means of transportation and career opportunities as well as the overall quality of life. Society was considered 'cruel' since people do not only attempt to eliminate disabled people's problems but also discriminate against them in almost every aspect of their lives. Here are some excerpts from the interview transcriptions.

It might be related to Thai culture but, if we actually look at it, it has a deeper root. If we look at Bangkok, we'll see that it's not a city that is friendly towards disabled people. Take buses, for example, it's very rare to see buses with wheelchair restraints or lifts. To be honest, when compared to other provinces, other provinces might even be more comfortable for disabled people. This might be how the attitude towards people with disabilities is formed. If we provided more facilities for disabled people, we might not see them as different from us. So it might not be an issue about life-saving so much as about urban planning. Due to the lack of facilities for disabled people Thai people believe that they can't take care of themselves which in fact they can although they might require some facilities to do so... (W)

To me, culture is related to this, I'm not saying that Thais are not educated but I think most Thais are still narrow-minded. They see disabled people as people who are lacking in something when compared to ordinary people. Even though disabled people have some physical differences, it's not as if they have chosen to have less than 100% of what others have. As for what they lack, we have to help them fill this gap and this is why we are looking for donations. It's normal for Thais to make them look pitiful but this has nothing to do with the website. (K)

Three out of seven participants, in addition, elaborated more on the Thais' negative attitudes towards disabled people referring to the Buddhist ideology of 'karma', which is deeply rooted in the Thai society. These participants reported that Thai people tended to associate 'evil or bad deeds in past lives' with 'disabilities in the present life'. Thus, those who are born 'disabled' are those who have done bad deeds and lack virtue and they deserve to be born 'disabled' to pay for what they did in their past lives. According to the three participants, this type of attitude needs to be eliminated as it prevents positive and active assistance to people with disabilities in the Thai society. Excerpts from the interview

transcriptions with reference to the concept of karma are provided below.

As for karma, it depends on that life. But if we look at it in anthropological way, the concept of karma might have been created to prevent people from doing evil things. Now our society is cruel towards disabled people but the society back then was even more cruel. People back then might say something like 'do you want to be like them?' to their kids, which is very mean. But we have to admit that, not just the people but surrounding nature was also cruel so maybe they [physically challenged people] needed to create something to protect themselves. (W)

I know that in Thailand people tend to integrate the concept of karma into the way of thinking. Disability is also believed to be the result having done something bad in previous lives so it's ok for them to be born this way. I guess this might be the reason why little help has been offered to this group of people. It is deeply rooted into Thai society. I'm not sure how we can change this negative thinking. People also have little knowledge of the concept of karma and apply it in a wrong way. I think people with disabilities are strong because they have to fight against all sorts of discrimination and I know that a lot of them have a positive attitude towards life. (V)

Based on all the responses received from the participants, society appears to be the direct cause of disability issues in the Thai context, leading on to other forms of social discrimination. In addition to enduring social discrimination, almost all the participants (6 out of 7) felt that due to the fact that they live amidst different kinds of discrimination, disabled people in Thailand are strong and independent. They are considered to be normal human beings who are no different from any others in the society in terms of their rights to jobs, education and social responsibilities as stated in the following interview excerpts.

When working on the website, I actually tried not to use words that make people feel pity for people with disabilities. I think Thai people always feel that way towards them and in the worst case scenarios disabled people are considered to be incapable of doing things in society or even a burden to families and society. But the fact is that they can do things that we can, with some help. The only limitation seems to stem mainly from society not giving them opportunities to get proper jobs and to live a life that suits them. (S)

I was really impressed with the abilities of the children at Baan Nontapum when we did the fieldwork together. We went to the shop that sells products that they have actually made themselves. I think they try hard to earn a living and become independent but the fact is that we only have limited places like this in Thailand. If they are out there in society, I'm not sure what will happen to their lives. (N)

May I say something? Actually my father is a physically challenged man, though only partially. He has lost his leg but no one knows that he has lost his leg. He wears a prosthetic leg and has undergone intense physical ther-

apy so that he can walk very well. Though he can't run none of his students, who have studied with him for four years, realizes that he has only one leg. This makes me feel that physically challenged people in our country are strong because society is quite cruel towards them. It's as if society makes them feel as if they have to be like other people as much as possible. As for my father, no one notices his physical challenge. (W)

One of the participants, W, explained that, in fact, he did not want to depict disabled children's characteristics as being different from others but he felt that if they were not different from others, there might not be people who were willing to offer help. Hence, he reproduced disabled children's identities as orphaned or homeless, emphasizing the fact that these children were not different from others but simply lacked something such as opportunity and financial support.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the BNF's identities are discursively construed through the use of metaphors depicting an organization which adopts the role of compassion or the parent-child relationship as their main strategy in caring for children. As discussed previously, the BNF is depicted and mapped as the children's family member and thus acts beyond its profession by perceiving that service recipients or children are its own children or relatives and this appears to be one of the BNF's desirable qualities from the participants' viewpoint. Another metaphorical expression with the dominant theme of JOURNEY/PATH is also associated with the discursive construction of the BNF's identity as the provider of a reliable means of assistance when 'a stairway' and 'a stepping stone' are ascribed to the BNF's means of help. This theme also tends to construct a mental representation as well as reflecting the participants' thoughts highlighting that a series of processes is required even though it takes time and effort to create a change in children with disabilities. This can be seen when certain actions including 'follow up' and 'stay by a children's side' are associated with the actions the BNF takes during their journey until achieving their destination.

In addition to the themes FAMILY and JOURNEY/PATH, themes like HOPE and OBJECTS can also be matched with an ideological construction confirming that disability is a non-static condition. Children with disabilities can become independent and fulfilled in the future. They can even be transformed into new people in terms of physical, mental and spiritual change through the metaphorical theme 'new lives'. In addition, with the metaphor of OBJECTS, the BNF is represented as an organization which is likely to make the impossible possible by offering love which is considered to be the best way to end disability issues. However, when the BNF distributes abstractions such as love and warmth to the children, the concrete actions behind the process of giving love and warmth are concealed. The way to loving and truly understanding these children is not part of the participants' emphasis.

The findings discovered from the interviews appear to be in line with the participants' metaphorical constructions. None of the participants perceived disability as a physical or

mental impairment but saw it as a form of social oppression. They believed in the potential of children with disabilities to develop physically and mentally and become independent in society, providing that they are equipped with the proper support in the long run. The view that disability is not a static entity is represented through their metaphorical constructions with the themes JOURNEY/PATH and HOPE, which focus on development processes leading to successful outcomes in the end.

As all the participants criticized society and people's attitudes and lack of understanding as the sole cause of disability issues in the Thai context, love and altruism appear to be the participants' way to fight against oppression and to create communal harmony. This is represented through the metaphorical themes FAMILY and OBJECTS, which communicate that treating each other like real family members can overcome disability-related issues. However, how to give our love and warmth to children with disabilities is left unstated. The processes of generating understanding and love are overlooked in spite of the fact that these are viewed as the best way to end social oppression and discrimination.

There seems to be a clear link between the metaphorical construction of identity and the participants' views and beliefs about disability. The participants' utilization of metaphors with positive connotations to depict the BNF and children with disabilities is likely to both reflect and reproduce positive representation of disability as being changeable if love, understanding and assistance are given to people with disabilities. Metaphors are thus not simply a rhetorical device of persuasion but also a means of enacting ideologies and identities as well as reflecting social reality.

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