

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Statement of Problem

Newspapers are printed publications that are distributed to the general public. Newspapers are also one of the oldest and most basic forms of mass communication. Despite the advancement of information technology, newspapers have not lost their charm or relevance. Furthermore, newspapers are very useful in many ways. They provide information on various matters at various levels that are not available elsewhere. Accordingly, reading newspapers provides sources of information in such fields as economics, business, environment, geography, history, religion, education, culture, population, entertainment, sports, and politics (Tantanapornchai 6). Therefore, newspapers play an important role in the information consumption of their readers and of the general public. Results of a 2013 survey by the National Statistical Office of Thailand revealed that newspapers were the most popular media in Thailand because of their easy accessibility.

In addition, people of all professions still require newspapers to monitor the day-to-day developments in their careers and other events in the society. Normally, newspapers present a variety of information in both of the traditional categories of “hard” and “soft news”. Hard news generally refers to up-to-the minute news and events that are reported immediately, while soft news is background information or human-interest stories. For instance, politics, war, economics, and crime used to be considered “hard news”, while arts, entertainment, and lifestyles were considered “soft news” (wordpress.com).

At present, newspapers offer various types of news. A 2012 survey results of newspaper reading behavior of Thai people conducted by Bangkok University

(Bangkok Poll) found that political news is the most popular news for the general public. This is due to the fact that politics covers the important structures in society such as government, politicians, political policies, and rules and regulations. The public fundamentally believes that all these structures affect their ways of lives both directly and indirectly. In addition, Surasit Wittayarat has stated that political news is always selected as the most prominent on the front page in Thai daily newspapers (65). He also pointed out that politics shows the image of the country, the stability of the government, and the impact on the economy and lifestyle of the general people in the country. There are many political newspapers in Thailand, such as *Siamrat*, *Manager*, *Naew Nar* and *Matichon*. These newspapers are high quality newspapers with their focus on political reporting. *Matichon* has been one of the most influential newspapers in Thailand for the past 38 years, since 1978. The newspaper started its career as a political newspaper because of the situation resulting from the pro-establishment attack on Thammasart University, which killed scores of student activists. With its heavy focus on political reporting, the serious tone, and the dominant techniques of the language used, *Matichon* has become the best known political newspaper in Thailand (khaosodenglish.com).

In general, newspapers use a different writing technique from formal language. As a result, meaning changes in common words can occur when used in political news. Yaowaluck Tantanapornchai has stated that the use of language in newspapers is relatively simple, informal, and short rather than elaborate, complicated, and long when compared with the use of language in normal conversation and in other written texts. The use of abbreviations, informal words or phrases, action verbs, metaphors, and idiomatic spoken language appears in newspaper's headlines, leads-in, and in the content of the news (189-193). One type of political discourse the mass media often use to communicate ideas and make political news more interesting is the use of metaphors. A metaphor is a type of figure of speech that is used to compare two things which share some perceptible similarity. Metaphors are used within styles of writing or speaking to enhance the transfer of messages and meanings from the writers or speakers to the readers or listeners. Therefore, metaphors are considered vivid figurative language with an important role in vigorously producing a point of view by using words which explain concretely feelings or abstract concepts grounded in similar concepts (Niyomthong and Tayasanant, 138).

In the Thai language, similar words to talk about war are also found in Thai daily newspapers. Many military terms are applied to non-military situations in everyday speech and writing. Political news in Thai daily newspapers employs many war terms to describe politics in the Thai language. Accordingly, it can be said that political news reporting in Thai newspapers uses similar terms about politics as we do in war, or that ‘politics’ can be compared or equated with ‘war,’ as shown in the following examples:

Example 1:

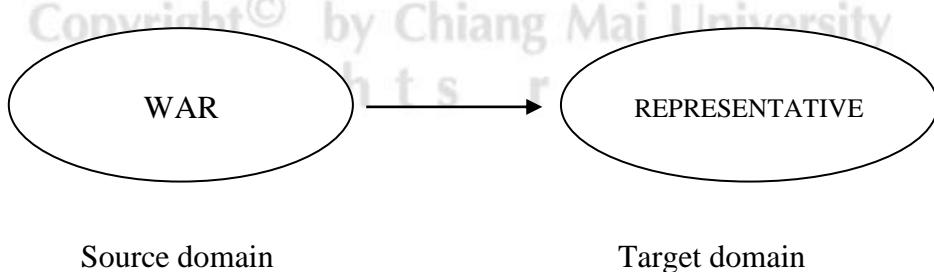
“พรรคราษฎร์เพื่อไทย เปิดตัว นักรบ เลือกตั้ง ภาคอีสาน อย่างเป็นทางการ วันนี้”

(มติชน, ฉบับวันที่ 17 ธันวาคม 2556, หน้า 2)

“Phue Thai Party officially reveals the *warriors* for the northeastern region election today”

(*Matichon*, issued 17 December 2013, P.2)

In the above expression, the word นักรบ, *nákróp* is defined as ‘a warrior’ whose meaning associated with war is used as a metaphor in the political context referring to a (political) representative. The word นักรบ, *nákróp* derives from the link or connection of the target domain, which is related to the representative of the Phue Thai Party to the source domain, which is related to war. The following domain mapping shows the relationship between the source domain and the target domain in the expression: WAR IS REPRESENTATIVE.



Example 2:

“อภิสิทธิ์ รับบท แม่ทัพ ในการอภิปรายไม่ไว้วางใจรัฐบาล ชัด นัยก บริหารงานล้มเหลว”

(มติชน, ฉบับวันที่ 26 พฤศจิกายน 2556, หน้า 12)

“Aphisit acts as *a leader of a military force* in the no-confidence debate, pointing out the failure of the prime minister’s administration”.

(*Matichon*, issued 26 November 2013, P.12)

In the above expression, the word *แม่ทัพ, mæ:tháp* is defined as ‘a leader of military force’, whose meaning associated with war is used as a metaphor in the political context, referring to a (political) leader. The word *แม่ทัพ, mæ:tháp* derives from the link or connection of the target domain, which is related to the leader of the opposition party to the source domain, which is related to war. The following domain mapping shows the relationship between the source domain and the target domain in the expression: WAR IS LEADER.



The above examples illustrate the concept of the metaphor of war in Thai political words in the *Matichon* daily newspaper. Since war terms are so pervasively used in political news in Thai daily newspapers, it is therefore important to describe how such war metaphors are used in comparing politics to war and how the two domains of information called source domain and target domain are connected when they are used in political news. It is interesting to investigate this phenomenon in newspapers, particularly words used to refer to political struggle, as used in the popular and long-established *Matichon* daily newspaper.

## **1.2 Purpose of the study**

To study the use of metaphors of war in the political news in the *Matichon* daily newspaper.

## **1.3 Application and Educational Advantages**

To create an understanding of the metaphors of war in Thai political words used in the *Matichon* daily newspaper.



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