

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the data sampling, the data collection, and the data analysis procedures, as well as the reasons for selecting data to be studied. The Bangkok Post online pages were selected for the study, in particular the comments from the “Share your thoughts” section. The population and the topics table are also presented.

Sampling Text

The population selected in this study comes from the comments in the Bangkok Post Online-Political news section. The Bangkok Post provides a section called “Share your thoughts” under the political news stories, which allows the readers to post their comments on the web page.

The data of this study is chosen from the “Share your thoughts” section, and the samples will be selected by using the random sampling technique. The population is searched for the following types of word choice: denotation, connotation, abstract, concrete, specific, general, jargon; slang, and register. The raw data consists of word lists presented in three columns in each topic.

Location of the Data

The data of this study are from comments on politics news on Bangkok Post Online's comment section, "Share your thoughts". The reason for selecting this comment section is that it is a popular space for the online readers to post their comments freely and instantly. Furthermore, it is accessible via the Internet, so the researcher can have access to the data anytime. The researcher found that there are a great number of comments posted on political news, many more than comments on other topics. Since political issues are subjects usually associated with heated opinion, there are more comments each day in the political section, and the language used in the comments are very interesting.

Data Collection

Samples of the data were selected from comments made between April 10-May15, 2010. The samples in this study consist of 50 political news articles, with a minimum of 40 comments for each story. The total number of comments is 2,797; individual commentators are allowed to post more than one comment. The samples were chosen using random sampling techniques.

Table 1

Posting Date, Title Number, Title, and Number of Comments in the Bangkok Post Online “Share Your Thoughts” in April, Included in the samples

Date	Topic No.	Topic	No. of Comments
10/04/2010	1	Abhisit vows to defy reds	49
11/04/2010	2	Sad Thaksin: Let the reds decide	44
11/04/2010	3	House dissolution: ‘Only option’	59
12/04/2010	4	PM: Terrorists caused Saturday violence	46
12/04/2010	5	Democrat Party faces dissolution	65
12/04/2010	6	Govt weighs earlier dissolution	69
13/04/2010	7	Red shirts reject latest offer for a dissolution	73
14/04/2010	8	Govt faces difficult task locating killers	61
14/04/2010	9	Puea Thai: Gen ‘P’ planning a coup	49
15/04/2010	10	Military admits firing at reds	68
15/04/2010	11	Red shirts consolidate forces	67
15/04/2010	12	Poll: 51% support government’s action	41
17/04/2010	13	‘No colours’ rally against red shirts at army base	80
18/04/2010	14	Red shirt march on Silom to be blocked	77
18/04/2010	15	Yellows may show up in 15 days	58
19/04/2010	16	Reds ‘use women, children as shields’	40
24/04/2010	17	‘Multi-colours’ pledge to gather every day	45
24/04/2010	18	PM rejects softened red-shirt demands	100
24/04/2010	19	UDD says army attack likely	92
25/04/2010	20	PM rejects dissolution offer	70
26/04/2010	21	UDD takes battle to provinces	50
26/04/2010	22	PAD to govt: Get tough with UDD	41
30/04/2010	23	PM reaches out to police	61
Total	23		1405

Table 2

Posting Date, Title Number, Title, and Number of Comments in the Bangkok Post Online “Share Your Thoughts” in May, Included in the Samples

Date	Topic No.	Topic	No. of Comments
01/05/2010	24	Reds criticise hospital evacuation	56
01/05/2010	25	Red-shirts to fight till the last minute	47
02/05/2010	26	Cabinet holds emergency meeting on crisis	43
03/05/2010	27	Armoured cars, plus a roadmap	53
04/05/2010	28	PM proposes Nov 14 poll date	61
05/05/2010	29	Army chief’s tactics force election offer	64
05/05/2010	30	Reds call for clarity on dissolution date	69
05/05/2010	31	Weng: Reds must back Puea Thai	43
06/05/2010	32	PAD condemns PM’s roadmap	51
07/05/2010	33	PAD rejects road map	43
07/05/2010	34	PAD calls for martial law	40
08/05/2010	35	‘Guilty’ Seh Daeng faces dismissal, stripping of rank	47
09/05/2010	36	Thousands of red shirts arrive in city	63
09/05/2010	37	Thai PM demands clear answer on end of protests	69
09/05/2010	38	PM urged to take action against UDD	42
11/05/2010	39	US official’s ‘meddling’ angers Kasit	41
12/05/2010	40	Irked PM says ‘rally ends today’	84
13/05/2010	41	Govt revokes election offer	58
13/05/2010	42	Stay out of our affairs, says Kasit	53
14/05/2010	43	Seh Daeng shot	50
14/05/2010	44	UDD leadership in disarray as Veera is said to have quit	42
14/05/2010	45	Thaksin calls for talks, reconciliation	44
15/05/2010	46	Parties deny role in hit on Seh Daeng	49
15/05/2010	47	War Zone	57
15/05/2010	48	UDD: Govt pays money to army	40
15/05/2010	49	UDD demands army cease-fire	42
15/05/2010	50	Poll: 51% support government’s action	41
Total	50		2797

Data Analysis

This research uses descriptive analysis format. Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 180) wrote that descriptive research involves either identifying the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or exploring possible correlations between two or more phenomena; therefore, descriptive research examines a situation as it is. To carry out this study, the data, namely comments on political news, will be analyzed in terms of choice of words the commentator uses and categorized into the following types of word choice: denotation, connotation, concrete, specific, general, jargon; slang, and register. The researcher will interpret meanings conveyed through the choice of words from the commentators. The interpretation will be based on the following criteria, which fall into four types of meaning: referential meaning, social meaning, affective meaning and unseen meaning. The analysis covers the above aspects and types of meaning, as a way of answering the research question mentioned in Chapter 1:

RQ1: What are the types of words found in online comments on political news?

RQ2: What is the trend of word choices used by the commentator?

RQ3: How does the choice of words convey the intended meaning?

RQ4: How does the choice of words, reflected by the types of meaning, express the commentators' intentions regarding political news?

Summary

This chapter discusses the choice of sample text, location of the data, data collection, and the research methodology. The analysis of the data will be presented in a descriptive analysis format. The data will be analyzed in terms of choice of words the comment writers use, which fall into the following types: denotation, connotation, concrete, specific, general, jargon, slang, and register. The data will also be analyzed into the following types of meaning: referential meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, and unseen meaning. The researcher also provided information about data collection using random sampling techniques.