

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

This chapter deals with the analysis of data collected from the comments on political news from the Bangkok Post Online in descriptive analysis. The data analysis and its interpretation fall into two main parts. The first part addresses the type of word choices and covers nine types: denotation and connotation, concrete and abstract, specific and general, jargon, slang, and register. The second part addresses types of meaning, where the semantic meaning of word choice is concerned with four types of meaning: referential meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, and unseen meaning.

#### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis and interpretation are presented in words lists, frequency tables and descriptive analysis format. The data are analyzed according to the commentators' choice of words. Since choice of words is based on nine aspects as mentioned above, the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary, Longdo Dictionary Online, and Google Search Engine will be used to assist with the interpretation of the words' meaning and definition of the data.

## Word Choice

In this study, word choices from the commentators' comments on political news are selected to be analyzed in order to know types of words and their meaning defined in a dictionary. The type of meaning is also important, reflecting the commentators' word choice; therefore, the co-text surrounding them is considered for the interpretation in order to know the intended meaning of the commentator.

### *Denotation Words*

Denotation words refer to words that denote explicit or direct meaning or a set of meanings of words. The denotation of a word is its dictionary definition. Denotative meaning is conveyed in an exact and straightforward manner. Hence, there is no need for the readers to look for any other suggested meanings. Denotative words are found frequently in comments on political news observed in this study. Here are some interesting examples of denotative words found in the comments observed:

<i>People</i>	<i>police</i>	<i>soldier</i>
<i>Protester</i>	<i>The red shirt</i>	<i>The Prime Minister</i>
<i>the demonstration</i>	<i>the government</i>	<i>the urban</i>
<i>the military</i>	<i>lawbreakers</i>	<i>the Thai PM</i>
<i>the police</i>	<i>wrongdoers</i>	<i>the democrats</i>
<i>the defense- minister</i>	<i>the red mob</i>	<i>terrorists</i>
<i>a PAD leader</i>	<i>fatalities</i>	<i>aliens</i>

To interpret the commentators' intended meaning, whether they intend to convey the denotative meanings of the words or not, the readers have to look for the context in which the words are situated. The context or the context, in which the denotative words are situated, however, allows the readers to determine whether the commentators intend to convey denotative meanings of individual words or not. Some examples of the denotative words situated in a specific context are shown in the quoted sentences below.

*The government seems unable to comprehend that women and elderly people might actually want to demonstrate against the government. And these people want to continue to rule the country!! Time for a reality check Mr Abhist!*

(From Appendix D, Topic 16, Discussion 33)

According to the meaning in the dictionary, the denotation of the words *the government, women and, elderly people* are, respectively, the group of people who are responsible for controlling a country or a state, a female human in general and people who are old. With the context given, it can be interpreted that the commentator wants to inform the readers directly without the intention to convey any other suggested meanings further from the information referred (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Further example of denotation words can be found in the quoted sentence below.

*Reds are NOT a majority, a short sighted, violent minority, and the saddest thing is that with the police refusing to protect citizens, or even patients in a hospital, where do people turn to for protection against these thugs? Poor farmers are scapegoats, Reds leadership is not poor, nor farmers, just power hungry demagogues.* (From Appendix D, Topic 25, Discussion 39)



With the context given, the readers can easily understand the meanings of the words *the police*, *citizens*, *patients*, *hospital*, *people*, *thugs*, and *farmers* without an attempt to look for any other further suggested meanings apart from their meanings in a dictionary. It can be interpreted that the commentator, when talking about *the police*, *citizens*, *patients*, *hospital*, *people*, *thugs*, and *farmers*, he or she intends to refer, respectively, to an official organization whose job is to make people obey the law and to prevent and solve crimes, or the people who work for this organization; a person who has the legal right to belong to a particular country; a person who is receiving medical treatment especially in a hospital; a large building where people who are ill/sick or injured are given medical treatment and care; persons; men, women and children; a violent person, especially a criminal; and a person who owns or manages a farm (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). Further example of denotation words can be found in the quoted sentence below.

*Never forget...these red shirts attacked the ambulances taking seriously injured people to hospital. That is the sickest thing i have ever heard. People died because they could not get to hospital in time. These people are animals*  
(From Appendix D, Topic 19, Discussion 53)

The readers' background knowledge, together with the context given, enables the readers to interpret the commentator's intended meaning. The readers definitely understand that when the commentator is talking about *ambulances*, *injured people*, and *hospital*, he or she refers to a vehicle with special equipment, used for taking sick or injured people to a hospital; the

people injured in an accident, a battle, etc; and a large building where people who are ill/sick or injured are given medical treatment and care, respectively (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). Further example of denotation words can be found in the quoted sentence below.

*Let the military control the red mob, coup or not it doesn't matter. PT complained use of excessive force by government, didn't the mob threw pipes, stones and fire bomb at the soldiers. When the military intervened decisively, the mob would surely disperse. It is good to have the military watching over them.* (From Appendix D, Topic 9, Discussion 47)

According to the meaning in the dictionary, the denotation of the words *the military*, *mob*, *coup*, and *the government* are, respectively, connected with soldiers or the armed forces, a large crowd of people-especially one that may become violent or cause trouble, a sudden change of government that is illegal and often violent, the group of people who are responsible for controlling a country or a state. With the context given, it can be interpreted that the commentator wants to inform the readers directly without the intention to convey any other suggested meanings further from the information referred (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). The last example of denotation words can be found in the quoted sentence below.

*Oh right, it's different some may argue, because Thaksin has a populist policy that benefits the poor, but i remind you that those policies are and will never be the solution to a sustaining change for the people.* (From Appendix D, Topic 7, Discussion 41)

There is no need for the readers to look for any suggested meanings of the word *populist policy*. The co-text here is the following sentences. The commentator talks about the *policies as the solution*, which is closely related to the dictionary meaning of the word *policy* as a plan of action agreed or chosen by a political party, a business, etc. So the commentator, when talking about populist policy, he or she then refers to a plan of action agreed or chosen by a political party, a business, etc. of a type of politics that claims to represent the opinions and wishes of ordinary people.

In conclusion, denotation words may be used when the commentators want to convey their feelings and attitudes towards the political situation; therefore, a denotation word is used with a referential meaning in its literal sense, the direct and precise meaning of what the word stands for in a particular situation, which also allows readers to understand the referent of each word. However, to interpret the commentators' intention through word choice they used in the comment, it is necessary to gather meaning from the surrounding context.

### ***Connotation Words***

Unlike denotation words that can be defined by dictionary with a literal, precise and direct meaning to convey the exact sense of the commentator has in mind, connotation words are different. A connotation in a context is a suggested idea or term, an implication made by the user which cannot be directly interpreted by its literal meaning or definition in a dictionary.

It is noticeable that the commentators mostly choose words that have a connotative meaning to convey their intended meanings, which sometime are recognized in general, or sometimes are not recognized by the majority of the readers but by the commentator only. As a result, connotation words can be divided into two types: personal and general connotation. Here are some interesting examples of connotative words found in the comments observed:

<i>immature children</i>	<i>Pinocchio</i>	<i>Boo Yai</i>
<i>a puppet</i>	<i>Amazing Thailand</i>	<i>enemies</i>
<i>tyranny</i>	<i>a puppet</i>	<i>a playground</i>
<i>a fireman</i>	<i>the reds</i>	<i>brainwashed</i>
<i>game</i>	<i>cartoon</i>	<i>crooked court</i>
<i>unwashed</i>	<i>uneducated rabble</i>	<i>Burma II</i>
<i>the last minute</i>	<i>last drop</i>	<i>a broken record</i>
<i>storm the land of delusion</i>	<i>a short sight</i>	<i>innocent civilians</i>
<i>a crying wolf</i>	<i>shield</i>	<i>double standard</i>
<i>the clown</i>	<i>clownish</i>	<i>hunger power</i>
<i>puppet government</i>	<i>trouble maker</i>	<i>invisible hand</i>

The context or the co-text in which the connotative words are situated, however, should be identified, as the connotative words cannot be interpreted independently without the help of the co-text where the words are found. Examples of some of personal connotation words situated in a context are shown in the quoted sentences below.

*Eliminate double standards, biased reporting, involvement of the military. Let people's vote decide and all should stick to the results of the elections.*

(From Appendix D, Topic 7, Discussion 46)

The words *double standards* consist of both denotative and connotative meaning. The connotative meaning is a rule or moral principle that is unfair because it is used in one situation, but not in another, or because it treats one group of people in way that is different from the treatment of another (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Further example of connotation words can be found in the quoted sentence below.

*Funny to hear the innocent and 1000 percent perfect Thaksin Shinawatra talk about justice and human rights, press freedom. All of that was not part of the time he was PM.* (From Appendix D, Topic 45, Discussion 43)

By definition, the words *innocent* refer to not being guilty of a crime, etc. or not having done something wrong (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). From the context given it can be interpreted that the commentator intends to convey the idea that *Thaksin Shinawatra*, pretends not to be involved with any illegal activity. Similarly, when the commentator talks about *1000 percent perfect*, the commentator conveys sarcasm. Further example of connotation words can be found in the quoted sentence below.

*Reds!!! sorry to break your bubbles but have to let you guys know that you might have meant well and your theories might sound good, but you guys are not good enough to lead the countries nor have the abilities to decide in whose hand the country should be in..* (From Appendix D, Topic 11, Discussion 48)

By definition, the words *bubbles* refers a ball of air or gas in a liquid, or a ball of air inside a solid substance such as gas (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). From the context given, it can be interpreted that the commentator intends to convey that bubble is the imaginary world of the protester. It can be concluded that the word *bubbles* is a personal connotative word.

Commentators' sometimes use connotative words favorably in an enthusiastic and admiring tone. The uses of positive, favorable, or inoffensive connotations are rarely found in the comments selected for this study. Some examples of positive connotative words are as follows:

*Those who support the Govt action is nothing but a murderer using deadly war weapon on the unarmed protester.* (From Appendix D, Topic 12, Discussion 1)

From the context surrounding the words *unarmed protester* it can be interpreted that the commentator intends to convey that the protester has no weapons in an attempt to side with the protesters. Similarly positive connotations are rarely found. Here is one example that was found:

*This is not going to help the red cause. Mr. Jatuporn, Mr. Weng and other leaders allowed the barricades to be rebuilt along Chulalongkorn Hospital fences in spite of their promises. Their loudspeakers and the grenades thrown at innocent civilians have frightened patients including children (some of whom are fighting for their life). And Mr. Jatuporn claims the hospital overreacts...* (From Appendix D, Topic 24, Discussion 4)

From the context given the words *innocent civilians* can be interpreted to signify that the commentator intends to convey that *innocent civilians* have been drawn into harm's way by the leaders' actions. The commentator conveys sympathy towards the innocent civilian by choosing the favorable words and thus places the blame on the leaders.

Further example of connotation words can be found in the quoted sentence below.

*Wish Thaksin could be like Chuvith years ago, when he confessed his involvement in 'bath tub' business and told the public he was sorry. Instead of smashing a bath tub, he could publicly burn his money?* (From Appendix D, Topic 2, Discussion 44)

By definition the words '*bath tub*' is a large, long container in which people put water in and then get into to wash their whole body (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). The personal connotation and the surrounding context '*bath tub*' reflected the affective meaning and social meaning that: the commentator's feeling or attitude towards Mr. Chuvit's business; this shows that the commentator is familiar with Mr. Chuvit's story.

Unlike personal connotation, general connotations are recognized by the majority of readers. Noticeably, almost all of the general connotative words found in this study are somewhat neutral. This is because such general connotative words are not influenced by the commentators' personal attitudes and bias the commentators may have. Examples of some of general connotation words situated in a context are shown in the quoted sentences below.

*You must be depraved if you think anything justifies trying to instigate a war in a nation of 65 million souls.* (From Appendix D, Topic 9, Discussion 24)

The commentator uses the words *65 million souls* connotatively. From the context given, the reader is able to understand that the commentator intends to specify the entire Thai population in a general connotation construct recognized by the majority of readers. Further example of connotation words can be found in the quoted sentence below.

*Hahaaa .... great story. All this does is shows, if more proof is needed, that the PT is complicit with the UDD and the DAAD in bringing about this whole mess.* (From Appendix D, Topic 9, Discussion 18)

By definition, the word *mess* refers to a dirty or untidy state (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). From the context given, it can be interpreted that the commentator intends to convey that *whole mess* is the demonstration, protest, and constitutional crisis which is recognized by the majority of the readers because of its general connotative meaning.

*If you made the time to do a bit of research you will find many examples of gunmen amongst the red shirts firing on the troops.* (From Appendix D, Topic 8, Discussion 48)

By the definition *the troops* are soldiers, especially in large groups (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). By this general connotation word, it can be interpreted that the commentator is trying to convey that the red shirts also attacked the soldiers with gun fire in an attempt to convince through implied facts that the red shirts were also aggressors.



*Regardless of color, this government who does not thing according to the law that they hold dear to the ones that broke it for 2 years, that why the red does not care about the government's excuse about the law. (From Appendix D, Topic 10, Discussion 14)*

By the definition, the words *color* is the appearance that things have that results from the way in which they reflect light. Red, orange and green are colors. The commentator's attitude towards the words *color* consists of denotative and connotative meaning. As for the general connotative meaning, the readers need to interpret the connotative meaning of color as a group of people on one side of the argument or the other.

*PM is duty-bound to keep the laws. The only problem he has is how he came to power. Somchai and other law enforcement officers were sentenced for exercising their duties to keep the laws against the mob which resulted in 2 deaths.... (From Appendix D, Topic 3, Discussion 1)*

The word *mob* is defined as a large crowd of people, especially one that may become violent or cause trouble; a group of people who are similar in some way (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). Even though the word *mob* has a general connotation, it may be interpreted by people with different definitions. As stated in the context given, it can be interpreted as a group of protesters, but in another setting, as in a concert or other.

In conclusion, there are two special types of connotation words: personal connotation is the result of the experience of the individual person, and a general connotation word is one to which society generally shares a similar reaction. Both personal and general connotation words may be

interpreted by the surrounding context, which may reflect the commentators' feelings and attitudes and experiences, as the affective meaning the commentators have towards the content in a particular time and situation.

### *Abstract Words*

Abstract words are used in almost all of the comments selected in this study, but the number of occurrences is less than connotative words. It can be seen that most commentators share the same abstract words in political news, which are generally recognized by the majority of readers and general news audiences. Most of the abstract words used by the commentators in this study of political news are timeless and applicable at any time in history, probably because there are neither significant changes in words nor an emergence of a wealth of new vocabulary in news reporting, with which politics shares the same vocabulary. Here are some examples of abstract words found in the comments:

<i>Idealism</i>	<i>dictatorships</i>	<i>elites</i>
<i>Policies</i>	<i>freedom</i>	<i>human rights</i>
<i>the rich</i>	<i>the poor in equality</i>	<i>poverty</i>
<i>peaceful,</i>	<i>human rights</i>	<i>dirty game</i>
<i>innocent</i>	<i>Democracy</i>	<i>corrupts</i>
<i>terrorists</i>	<i>a civilized manner</i>	<i>revolution</i>
<i>human right</i>	<i>peaceful</i>	<i>overreact</i>
<i>the rumors</i>	<i>gracious losers</i>	<i>moral</i>
<i>barbarians</i>	<i>dictatorship</i>	<i>economical problems</i>

<i>unity</i>	<i>democratic</i>	<i>corruption ethnics</i>
<i>constitutional</i>	<i>moral</i>	<i>power</i>
<i>triumph</i>	<i>rights</i>	<i>justice</i>
<i>stability</i>	<i>communist</i>	<i>terrorizing</i>
<i>terrorist storm</i>	<i>commonsense</i>	<i>stability</i>

Here are the examples of abstract words can be found in the quoted sentences below.

*If in the event they do have an election and lose they immediately move to a coup to regain power. This is often called a dictatorship rather than a democrat.* (From Appendix D, Topic 26, Discussion 5)

The commentator uses the words *a dictatorship* and *a democrat*, which are both countable nouns with respective meanings: a country that is ruled by a dictator; a person who believes in or supports democracy (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). The readers' background knowledge together with the context given enables the reader to interpret the commentator intended to compare the differences between *a dictatorship* and *a democrat*. *If Isaan and northern provinces vote for communism they can go ahead but not Majority of Thai's here. We will not give our vote to these type of peoples who ruined our country and Nations. Stop Dreaming... Maybe next life...* (From Appendix D, Topic 31, Discussion 22)

The word *communism* is defined as a political movement that believes in an economic system in which the state controls the means of producing everything on behalf of the people. It aims to create a society in which everyone is treated equally (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary).

From the context given, it can be interpreted that the commentator intends to convey that they those outside of Isaan and Northern provinces will not vote for communism and by inference implores the reader similarly not to vote for communism. Further example of abstract words can be found in the quoted sentence below.

*Discussion 41.....You just don't get it!*

*Freedom and liberty doesn't mean you can do whatever you want, especially when your actions affect others .You have your freedom and liberty because you have laws which the majority of Thais respect, if you take away the rule of law you have anarchy! How much freedom and liberty do you think you will have if this country falls into anarchism? (From Appendix D, Topic 36, Discussion 56)*

The commentator's implied meaning of the words *freedom*, *liberty*, *anarchism*, and *anarchy* rely on abstract meaning. The words are defined respectively as the right to do or say what you want without anyone stopping you; freedom to live as you choose without too many restrictions from government or authority; and the political belief that laws and governments are not necessary or a situation in a country, an organization, etc. in which there is no government, order or control (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). From the context given, the readers can interpret that the commentator is in favor of Thai law which the commentator believes breeds freedom and liberty, and without law anarchy will ensue.

In conclusion, the commentators choose the abstract words that best indicate their meaning, or they combine different terms to convey their

feelings and attitudes by the abstract terms that enable a majority of the readers to understand how the abstract words reflect affective and social meaning, in the same way that connotation words reflect similar meanings. Both abstract and connotation words are the types of words that cannot be fully interpreted by their literal meaning.

### ***Concrete Words***

Concrete words are more precise and vigorous than abstract words. To convey the meaning in a straightforward way, the commentators can choose to use concrete words in their comments. Concrete words occur less than the abstract words and are similarly timeless probably because there are neither significant changes in words nor an emergence of a wealth of new vocabulary in news reporting with which political news shares the same vocabulary within the community. Here are some examples of concrete words found in the comments:

<i>The red shirt</i>	<i>the protesters</i>	<i>the defense minister</i>
<i>The prime minister</i>	<i>the military</i>	<i>the red mob</i>
<i>The demonstration</i>	<i>lawbreakers</i>	<i>coup supporters</i>
<i>the government</i>	<i>the Thai PM</i>	<i>the protester</i>
<i>the urban</i>	<i>the police</i>	<i>terrorists</i>
<i>corrupt politicians</i>	<i>wrongdoers</i>	<i>a PAD leader</i>
<i>the red T-Shirt</i>	<i>the democrats</i>	<i>fatalities</i>

Here are the examples of concrete words can be found in the quoted sentences below.

*If they cracked down the yellow protests some years ago, they will have the full right to crack down the red protests at this moment. Instead of that several yellow shirt leaders are enjoying privileges with the democrats and until now no leader is sentenced for blocking the airport or other damages. Although I don't agree with the red's, I can understand their feeling of injustice.* (From Appendix D, Topic 18, Discussion 71)

The commentator uses the words *yellow shirt leaders* and *the reds* as concrete words. From the context given it can be interpreted that the commentator intends to convey that they are the two different groups of people who exist in the real situation, at a particular time.

The use of concrete words for the readers removes complexity, so understanding is more easily and quickly reached. By using concrete words, the commentators are able to convey their intention directly, precisely, and vigorously, because concrete word presents referential meaning.

### ***Specific Words***

The commentators use specific words to convey a precise idea. However, different degrees of specificity are found in the various comments. By using specific words rather than general words, the commentators want to increase precision and vigor in their message. Most of the specific words are found when the commentators use the exact name of the item being discussed. The commentators' uses of specific words in this study often reflect the

commentators' intended meaning and attitudes toward the individual persons or the political affairs. Some distinct examples of such specific words are as follows:

<i>Northern Thai</i>	<i>Upcountry Thai</i>	<i>Southern Thai</i>
<i>Foreign minister</i>	<i>Khmer Rouge</i>	<i>UN</i>
<i>Al Qaeda</i>	<i>EU</i>	<i>Southeast Asia</i>
<i>CNN</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>New France</i>
<i>Herald Tribune</i>	<i>fireworks bamboo</i>	<i>sling shots</i>
<i>war zone</i>	<i>the teaching of Buddha</i>	<i>M79</i>
<i>molotov-cocktails</i>	<i>bamboo spears</i>	<i>army rifle</i>
<i>army bullet</i>	<i>Thai GDP</i>	<i>Thai economy</i>
<i>America</i>	<i>WW2</i>	<i>Tsunami</i>
<i>ASEAN</i>	<i>Black May</i>	<i>DSI</i>

Most of those words above have specific meaning. Some distinct examples of specific words are quoted in the sentences as follows:

*PAD co-leader Chamlong Srimuang said the UDD were divided into three groups-the MPs who work in the House of Representatives, the demonstrators and the insurgents.* (From Appendix D, Topic 15, Discussion 2)

From the context given, it can be interpreted that the commentator intends to state that *PAD co-leader Chamlong Srimuang* is the person who goes by that particular name in the particular situation and the particular political issue being discussed. Further examples of specific words can be found in the quoted sentences below.

*Keep Americans out of your internal affairs. Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam...etc...etc...Thailand doesn't want to follow that route.* (From Appendix D, Topic 39, Discussion 33)

The words listed--*Americans, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand*--denote specific people or countries that exist. From the context given, it can be interpreted that the commentator intends to convey that *Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand* are the independent countries distinct from *America*. *The whole world indeed sees now how peaceful these red-shirt protesters are, how bare-handed with their molotov-cocktails, bamboo spears, stolen weapons, M79's.* (From Appendix D, Topic 47, Discussion 5)

The words *molotov-cocktails, bamboo spears, M79's* are specific nouns and specific types of weapons. From the context given, it can be interpreted the commentator intended to reveal that the bare-handed protester status does not hold true.

Furthermore, it is found that some commentators substitute some specific words with acronyms, such as *UN, EU, WW2, DSI* and *Thai GDP*, which make up the name of something specific. *UN* is the abbreviation of United Nations (an association of many countries that aims to help economic and social conditions improve and to solve political problems in the world in a peaceful way), *EU* is abbreviation of European Union, *WW2* is the abbreviation of World War 2 (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary), *DSI* is the abbreviation of Department of Special Investigation-- a Thai organization (Longdo Dictionary Online), and *GDP* is the abbreviation for "gross domestic product" (the total value of all the goods and services

produced by a country in one year) (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary).

In conclusion, specific words are used for referential meanings, which are narrower in sense than connotative words and abstract words, and in comparison with the next group of words: general words.

### ***General Words***

The commentators use general words to make the sense of what they are trying to convey less precise. By using general words rather than specific words, the commentators want to cover broader concepts and groups and use more varied choice of words. Most of the general words are found when the commentators use the general name, group of objects, or notion of things. The commentators' use of general words in this study often reflect the commentators' intended meaning and attitudes toward the general nouns and objects involved in the political affairs. Some distinct examples of such general words are as follows:

<i>Asian Countries</i>	<i>East Asia</i>	<i>the world media</i>
<i>the world newspapers</i>	<i>Thai countrymen</i>	<i>media</i>
<i>weapons</i>	<i>ordinary people</i>	<i>press</i>
<i>the international-l media</i>	<i>Muslim country</i>	<i>Western way</i>
<i>poorest province</i>	<i>Western countries</i>	<i>other countries</i>
<i>neighboring countries</i>	<i>pedestrians areas</i>	<i>third world country</i>

Following are some of general words and examples quoted in the sentences:

*The US army takes orders and never ask questions. Right - that's why the world is becoming a worst place to live in with more invasions of other countries under the so called civilized western countries. (From Appendix D, Topic 39, Discussion 41)*

*The PM has proved that he will finally cave into every demand of the reds if the reds just hold firmly to their ground. The PM would have already started the process of talking to Thaksin since the reds will not close their protest. He has no guts to start the protest of checking for weapons in the protest site. Actually NO government official or personnel have ever entered in the heart of the protest area or near the stage. The police and soldiers need to get trained by the red guards on issues related to security. It is time that we all started finding ways to adjust our lives to what is happening. (From Appendix D, Topic 38, Discussion 29)*

From the context given, it can be interpreted that the commentator intends to convey that the words *other countries* can be any country in this world who has suffered in invasion or colonization; and *western countries* can be any country in the West, particularly America and Europe, apart from Asia or the rest of the world. The word *weapons* can be any kind of weapon, such as guns, rifles, swords and more.

In conclusion, by using the general words, the commentators want to convey their intention towards the information given by the surrounding



context. It is also interpreted by its referential meaning, and the unseen meaning is the way the commentators try to persuade the readers.

### ***Jargon***

Jargon is the word used in a particular profession or by a specific group of people, which may be difficult for the outsiders to understand. The jargons found in comments studied here are used primarily in political and military environments, since these comments are from the internet with a wide variety of readers participating; we have also found the jargon of technical computer language as well. Some of the jargon words found are shown in the list below:

<i>coalition government</i>	<i>financial gain</i>	<i>payday</i>
<i>House of representatives</i>	<i>think tank</i>	<i>bargaining</i>
<i>reconciliation program</i>	<i>Btw</i>	<i>Gov.</i>
<i>the parliament house</i>	<i>election</i>	<i>landslide</i>
<i>the seat</i>	<i>commander-in-Chief</i>	<i>national security</i>
<i>supreme court</i>	<i>voter</i>	<i>martial law</i>
<i>bail</i>	<i>crime</i>	<i>tear gas</i>
<i>a coup</i>	<i>mob</i>	<i>dissolve the house</i>
<i>dissolution of the-parliament</i>	<i>civil chaos</i>	<i>vote</i>
<i>a roadmap</i>	<i>poll</i>	<i>dissolve the parliament</i>
<i>Parliament</i>	<i>election</i>	<i>hijacked</i>

The types of jargon found above can be classified into four main groups: (1) political jargon: *coalition government, house of representative, reconciliation program, election, landslide, voter, vote, poll, dissolve the*

*parliament, bail, martial law, crime*; (2) military jargon: *commander-in-chief*; (3) legal jargon: *supreme court*; and (4) internet jargon: *Btw* as the example. There are also words that do not fit into clear-cut groups, such as *bargaining, think thank* and *hijacked, tear gas*. Below are some sentences found in the comments with jargon in them:

*You say there is no sense in talking to the yellow shirts and still you leave a comment!!! I like how you use the same sort of logic as all the red shirt leaders. Btw. how is it helping the poor people that tourism will go down because of all your protest? Do you have a logic answer for that as well?*

(From Appendix D, Topic 24, Discussion 42)

By definition the words *Btw* which is used in writing to mean “by the way” is computer writing, otherwise known as the lingo of instant messaging (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Online Dictionary). It is also considered slang (Longdo Dictionary Online). Further example of jargon can be found in the quoted sentences below.

*Nexus--> This would never be allowed in US. I have been a member of A National Guard Unit and have first hand knowledge of Riots. FYI in Chicago Mayor Daley gave an order of Shoot to Kill and protests were kept low key.*

(From Appendix D, Topic 29, Discussion 31)

The abbreviation *FYI* is used in writing to mean *for your information* which is the computer jargon (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Online Dictionary). It is also considered slang (Longdo Dictionary Online).

*Landslide victory...dream on! People are sick of them, even some of the reds. PT and the reds have no leaders, no vision, no professional people, no policy,*

*no contribution to benefit the country, no nothing.* (From Appendix D, Topic 31, Discussion 10)

In political jargon the words *landslide* is used to mean an election in which one person or party gets very many more votes than the other people or parties (Oxford Learner's Online Dictionary).

*"We [the UDD] demand that the army cease-fire and withdraw the troops immediately to prevent more losses. Then we can consider the political demands." Here's a thought... how about you, UDD protesters, stop your rally so that Bangkok can return to STATUS QUO and then resume negotiations!! Or are you, UDD leaders, incapable of acting in a civilized manner!!* (From Appendix D, Topic 49, Discussion 21)

The last passage shows the phrase *STATUS QUO*, which refers to the situation as it is now, or as it was before a recent change (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary).

In some jargon words, they are unclear meaning or definition whether they can be classified into political, legal, internet, military or in the other group or not such as in the following sentences.

*Using force may ignite a civil war and if you look at your neighbor countries, you can see this isn't great. Let them sit there, start with things that matter like free and good education for everyone, raise the minimum wages.....*

(From Appendix D, Topic 27, Discussion 32)

The phrase *the minimum wages* means the lowest wage that an employer is allowed to pay by law (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). The other use and definition of the minimum wages are in

political and legal jargon (Longdo Dictionary Online). However, there is an overlap of its definition between political and legal jargon, so the majority of the readers are able to understand its literal meaning as it quite well known and familiar to general people.

*He originally offered December, now Nov, what's the difference? It's like bargaining between 300 and 295....* (From Appendix D, Topic 28, Discussion 8)

By definition, the word *bargaining* means discussion of prices, conditions, etc. with the aim of reaching an agreement that is acceptable (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). For general people, the word *bargaining* is used in business jargon, buying things and source of asking for discount, but from the surrounding context it seems to be used as a political jargon.

In conclusion, the commentators used four main types of jargon: political, military, legal and internet jargon, which may reflect the background of the commentators as specific groups of people interested in politics. The commentators' background knowledge is apparently involved with military, internet, and legal jargon, as well as political jargon. Their backgrounds are reflected the affective meaning and social meaning; therefore, the commentators' backgrounds emphasize that they are from different occupations and educational backgrounds, making them a heterogeneous audience; this conclusion can be drawn from the jargon they use.

*Slang*

The slang found here includes popular words of a certain time or period. It is notable that most of slang words used by the commentators are those derived from language used in unofficial manner. The emergence of these slang words originates from the political or social phenomenon. Here are some samples of slang found in the comments:

<i>Bangkokcracy</i>	<i>a laughing stock</i>	<i>Mr. Convicted,</i>
<i>Seekers</i>	<i>Bangkokizens</i>	<i>XPATS</i>
<i>pinkyellowbluenoco-lours</i>	<i>Thaksis</i>	<i>young lad Abisit</i>
<i>a free-fair-honest-clean</i>	<i>mai pen rai</i>	<i>dtam sabai</i>
<i>Bangkokkians</i>	<i>Islamburi</i>	<i>Laoburi</i>
<i>Khrungthepburi</i>	<i>picky</i>	<i>a bloke</i>
<i>watermelon cops</i>	<i>easy money</i>	<i>the big boss</i>
<i>stooge</i>	<i>plan B,C</i>	<i>red-map</i>
<i>Bangkokkian</i>	<i>kid's game</i>	<i>kids</i>
<i>crook</i>	<i>red-map</i>	<i>hothead</i>

Some interesting examples of slang situated in a specific context are shown in the quoted sentences below.

*Jatupon Prompan and Natawut Saikue are true "Prai" Sandan prai, these two do not deserve to be member of parliament. They speak like prai, they act like prai, their parents don't want to associate with them, go figure that one out. The Isaan people were fool by these three southerners "Veera, Jatupon, and Natawut". Sad sad and very sad. Can anyone name one person that can do*

*better job than the young lad Abhisit???* (From Appendix D, Topic 15, Discussion 49)

The words "*Prai*" and *Sandan Prai* are Thai words defined, respectively, as common people and an inborn trait (Longdo Dictionary Online). The phrase *the young lad Abhisit* refers to Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. From the context given, it can be interpreted the commentator admires and supports the current Prime Minister.

*Instead, he has chosen to serve the interests of a man [Thaksin] who was well on his way to becoming a dictator similar to his buddies Hun Sen in Cambodia and the generals in Burma.* (From Appendix D, Topic 35, Discussion 40)

*The PM should fire the police chief & all the "watermelon" cops if he has the courage & power to do so.* (From Appendix D, Topic 37, Discussion 42)

The phrase "*watermelon*" *cops* cannot be interpreted with any literal meaning because it does not exist in any dictionary. By the use of the collocation of words like *watermelon* and *cops*, the commentator means to imply a toothless and ineffective police force, from the word *cop*, which is defined as a slang word for *police*, used in informal speech, and the word *watermelon* which is defined as a type of large melon with hard, dark green skin, red flesh and black seeds (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). From the context given by events in this period of time, the phrase *watermelon cops* refers to the Thai police who wear a green uniform with a red shirt inside, a division of the police not known for their efficiency.

The commentator wants to convey the slang word with its meanings, which may vary with changes in uniform, police training, or a number of factors.

More slang found in the comments is quoted in the sentence below:

*Welcome to Thailand Bally (Discussion #11) - the land of mai pen rai and dtam sabai!!* (From Appendix D, Topic 22, Discussion 40)

The context given shows the emergent slang by region in Thai words; *mai pen rai* can be translated in English as Don't mention it!; Never mind; It doesn't matter; That's all right; Don't worry about it; You're welcome; There's no need to worry about it; It does not really matter; It is not a problem. The phrase *dtam sabai* can be translated as “do as one please” (Longdo Dictionary Online). The emergence of Thai words used as slang is well known and popular among foreigners or Thais, regarding to local situation in a particular time. It reflects the social meaning of the commentators' background, whether they are Thai or foreigner. Apart from the emergence of Thai, another slang term that reflects social meaning is found also in this sentence quoted below:

*Y'all who believe a house dissolution and a new election are the answers, please explain why (please make it detailed)? I'm lost for answers. Need help.* (From Appendix D, Topic 22, Discussion 26)

The contraction *y'all* is indicative of a particular regional dialect of southern American English. This use of words may reflect social meaning of the commentator's background.

In conclusion, the commentators use slang in their comments to give the impression of an unofficial setting, in order to convey their intention, ideas

and action reflecting referential meaning by specific slang terms such as *watermelon cops* and *buddies*. Some slang words are defined in dictionaries; furthermore, some new slang created by the commentators in relation to a particular situation can be interpreted by its surrounding context.

### ***Register***

Formal register in the political comments is rare because the level and style of writing of speech applied to the political issues in its short form does not seem concerned with a more formal style. However, there are some register words found in the comments as in the example quoted below:

*Dear Prime Minister Abhisit:*

*You are the best choice to lead modern Thailand right now. We, majority of Thai people give you our full support.* (From Appendix D, Topic 1, Discussion 8)

The word *dear* is defined as a word that is used at the beginning of a letter before the name or title of the person that one is writing to (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary). It is a typical pattern employed in a letter format.

In conclusion, formal register is rarely found in this study, since the comments were all posted on the internet in an informal setting, by commentators who have different backgrounds within the specific field of their interests. Most of the commentators chose the words suitable for an informal context between each other and to the readers on political issues.

In addition to the words listed, some words that do not exist in Standard English are found throughout the comments, as in the list below:

<i>Prai</i>	<i>Sandan Prai</i>	<i>Boo Yai</i>
<i>mai pen rai</i>	<i>dtam sabai</i>	<i>Tsunami</i>

The definition of the words list above are not found in standard English but the commentator uses them often; the reason they are not in found in standard English is that their basic meaning is based on Thai and used by the local people within Thailand (except *tsunami*, which is Japanese). Since the English language is a global language and plays an important role across the world, an English version of these words has emerged from the region.

The words *Prai*, *Sandan Prai*, *Boo Yai*, *mai pen rai*, *dtam sabai*, and *tsunami* are defined, respectively, as common people, inborn trait, executive people, never mind, as you please (Longdo Dictionary Online), and an extremely large wave in the sea caused, for example, by an earthquake (Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary).

In conclusion, the emergent English version of local Thai should be indicated here, and it should be noted that it has resulted from this particular, local situation. The emergence of word choices that do not exist in Standard English reflects the social meaning that some of the commentators and the readers are both Thai and foreigners who are living in, observing, and taking an interest in Thailand's situation at a particular time.

From the examples and all the details above, the word choices may be presented in numbers and percentages in Table 3, which also examines word choice and types of meaning:

**Table 3***Frequency of Occurrences of Various Types of Words*

Type of Word	Number of Occurrences	Percentage
Denotation Word	29	4.42
Connotation Word	134	20.43
Abstract Word	131	19.97
Concrete Word	89	13.57
Specific Word	89	13.57
General Word	29	4.42
Slang	51	7.77
Jargon	102	15.55
Register	2	0.30
Total	656	100

Judging from the data shown in Table 3, it can be concluded, first, that the connotative words are found more frequently in the comments than concrete, specific, and general words. Register words are rarely found throughout the comments. There is an overlap between denotation and connotation. Furthermore, the use of slang words is higher than register words, so it can be inferred that most of the comments are made in an informal context; the wide variety of jargon that is used can be interpreted as showing that the commentator are from a heterogeneous audience, comprising different professions and social backgrounds.

Second are the types of meaning: regarding the occurrence of types of words shown above, the four types of meaning--referential meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, and unseen meaning--are related, as explained in the next paragraph:

The types of words (general, specific, denotation, concrete, jargon slang and register) convey social and referential meaning; besides, connotation and abstract reflect affective meaning. As for the unseen meaning, it is necessary to gather the whole context, in order to interpret the commentators' attitudes, feelings, and expressions, which can be interpreted separately from their literal meanings.

### **Summary**

This chapter presents findings of the analysis of the commentators' choice of words. The findings reveal that nine types of words--denotative words, connotative words, abstract words, concrete words, specific words, general words, slang, jargon and register--are found throughout the 2,797 comments from 50 news topics of this study. It is found that most of the commentators use personal connotative words, preferably negative or unfavorable connotative words, to convey their intended meanings and attitudes toward things being discussed. Moreover, the significant uses of specific or concrete words to increase the precision and vigor in their messages are intended purposefully. Jargon, slang and the creation of a new slang are reflected the commentator' educational and occupational backgrounds.

It is also found that the four main types of meaning revealed by the use of various types of words in each comment are designed by the commentator to convey their intentions, attitudes, and feelings through the words that are chosen.