

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the research findings in the previous chapter. The findings of this research emphasized four significant choice of words used in the comments section “*Share your thoughts*”, and four types of meaning, all drawn from the political news section of the Bangkok Post Online, which answer the research questions. The discussion and recommendations for further research are also provided in this chapter.

#### **Responses to the Research Questions**

To respond to the research questions mentioned in Chapter 1, the researcher listed of the findings found from this study besides with the providing the examples in each response to the research questions for a clear picture of this study. The responses to the four research questions are as follows:

***Response to Research Question 1: What are the types of words found in online comments on political news?***

The findings in Chapter 4 reveal that nine types of word choices--denotative word, connotative words, abstract word, concrete word, specific word, general word, slang, jargon and register--are found throughout the comments on political news selected in this study. Because there are nine major types in this study, the findings of the analysis can be categorized into seven levels.

First, the finding of the analysis shows that two types of connotation, personal connotations and general connotations, are frequently used (20.43% of the time), with a stronger tendency to personal connotations, which are used very noticeable in negative or unfavorable connotations. A few connotations found in this study are *immature children*, *double standard* and *innocent civilians*, as examples.

Second, abstract words are frequently used (19.97%); most of the abstract words used by the commentator are the general abstract terms that are quite familiar to the majority of people, even without the aid of interpretation from its surrounding context, such as *freedom*, *human rights*, *peaceful*, *moral*, *democracy*, *power* and so on.

Third, jargon was found in 15.55% of the samples; there are four main types: politics, military, computer, and legal jargon. The type of jargon that was found most often in the comments was the political jargon, such as *election*, *bail*, and *poll*; military jargon included *tear gas* and *troops*; computer jargon included *Btw* and *FIY*; and legal jargon included *crime* and *Supreme Court*.

Forth, concrete and specific words were used equally, 13.57% of the time. Some of the concrete words found are *the red shirt*, *the yellow shirt*, and *the police*. As for the specific words, it was found that many of specific words used by the commentator are acronyms, such as *UN* (United Nations), *BBC* (British Broadcasting Corporation), and *EU* (European Union), as the examples.

Fifth, 7.77% of the sample words found in the comments were slang. There are two types of slang considered: one belongs the already existing slang, defined in dictionaries and familiar most people, such as *kids*, *a bloke*, and *the big boss*; the other type that was noticed did not exist before, such as *watermelon cops*, which is one of the new slang created in a particular situation

Sixth, denotation and general words were equally used, at 4.42% of the samples. Regarding denotation, which is as the normal meaning of the words as they are defined in the dictionary, many of the words had a direct or explicit meaning and could also be interpreted by the surrounding context such as *people*, *soldier*, and *wrongdoers*. As for the general words found, they are mixed, such as *weapons*, *Western countries*, and *East Asia*.

Finally, words in a formal register were rarely found in this study, only 0.30%, such as the word *Dear* in a letter salutation, and *Mr*. Aside from the nine types of word choices found, some emerging words common to Thailand that may become part of regional English were used by the commentators such as *prai*, *boo yai*; other new terms, such as *a PAD leader*, and *the red*

*mob*, were also found in this study, since this study was undertaken in a local situation.

***Response to Research Question 2: What is the trend of word choices used by the commentators?***

Significant trends in the commentators' choice of words are suggested by the findings of the study. It can be said that most of the commentators tend to use connotative words to express their feelings or convey their attitudes toward personal or political affairs. The findings also suggest that the commentators often use specific words or concrete words purposefully. Moreover, it was also found that most of the commentators prefer using intellectually challenging words or using jargon and slang when they write their comments on political news. However, the commentators tend to choose words or terms that best explain their ideas in order to achieve their purpose of persuasion and express their ideas, opinions, and feelings on the political situation within the community and to the readers in general.

In addition, a few other trends in the semantics of word choices found in this study are as follows: the commentators used words with opposite meanings from connotation words, such as the word *commoners*, which is opposite *elite*; some abstract words are used similarly, such as *the rich* and *the poor*. The choices also reveal the relations of a lexical set of words in general to specific words, such as *hamburger*, *fried chicken*, *fizzy drink*, which are the lexical set of *food*; *fireworks*, *bamboo spear*, *sling shorts*, *M79*, *Molotov-cocktails*, *small pistol army rifle*, *grenade*, and *handgun* are specific words in

the lexical set of *weapons*; *Northern Thai*, *Upcountry Thai* and *Southern Thai* are a lexical set of *The Kingdom of Thailand*; *CNN*, *BBC*, *NYT*, *New France* and *Herald Tribune* are part of the lexical set *the international media*.

***Response to Research Question 3: How does the choice of words convey the intended meaning?***

The analysis has shown that personal connotations and abstract are used as an effective device to convey the commentator's intended meanings and attitudes toward the ideas or things being discussed. Moreover, the commentators' use of specific words and concrete words to increase the precision and vigor in their messages also contribute to revealing their intended meaning and attitudes.

The word choices convey the writers' intended meaning, in combination with the surrounding context, all based on the commentators' experiences; therefore, each comment has an intended meaning beyond its literal meaning, such as the phrase *double standard*--it is defined in the Oxford Online Dictionary as 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 a way that is different from the treatment of another. Apart from its literal meaning, the commentator's intended meaning is that one side expects equal treatment in a particular situation.



***Response to Research Question 4: How does the choice of words, reflected by the types of meaning, express the commentators' intentions regarding political news?***

The analysis has shown that choice of words reflect the referential, social, affective, and unseen meanings. The commentators used denotation, concrete, specific, general, slang, jargon, and register words to express their feelings and attitudes in a straightforward meaning and to inform the readers which words they choose reflect social and referential meanings; the abstract and connotation words reflect social and affective meaning and unseen meaning, giving the information to the readers both inside and outside the community. There are many words such as *moral, freedom, justice, peace, unity* and *inequality* the commentators used which reflect the unseen meaning that commentators are worrying about and expecting to have in Thai society in a particular situation: the words *invisible hand, Boo Yai* and *immature children* also reflect social meaning of seniority in Thai society.

## **Conclusion**

Types of word choice found in the online comments are connotative, denotative, abstract, concrete, specific, general, slang, jargon, and register. Aside from these words, other types are the emergence of new English slang from the region, since all of the comments posted by the commentators convey their attitude, feeling and intended meaning towards Thailand's

political situation. As for the trend of word choices found in the comments, connotation, abstract, and jargon words are used by the commentators most; the least-used type is register. The commentators used types of words as an effective device to convey their intended meaning, and to be precise and vigorous in their message. As for the four types of meaning--referential, social, affective and unseen meanings--the unseen meanings show most of all that, aside from interpreting words by their literal meaning, the surrounding context is also important to reflect the commentator's background attitude and feeling toward Thailand's political situation in a particular time.

## **Discussion**

The findings found in this study are based on the delimitations of the study mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, which falls into nine types of choice of words: connotative, denotative, abstract, concrete, specific, general, slang, jargon, and register; and there are types of meaning: affective meaning, referential meaning, and social meaning. The commentators choose words to express their feelings, attitudes, and intended meanings. In addition, there are three main types of meaning and "unseen" meaning; to interpret the commentator expression, it is necessary to consider the surrounding context.

From the previous studies mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (Miss Naowarat Salaenoi, *A study of English word choice in newspaper service advertisements*; Miss Nantiya Phermkwarmprsert, *Comparative Analysis of English Style in the Editorials of the Bangkok Post and The Nation*; and Miss

Yodpornpin Wiratkasem, *The written language of opinion: An examination of "Postbag"*), it can be concluded that English newspapers are a good resource for English learners studying the semantics of word choices and other English fields; they are also a powerful medium for presenting the news, in both the printed and the online version.

Since all of the comments were from local situation and made through the online comments page, it reflected the commentator's background, i.e., they were the observers who were both Thai and foreigners in a large number. Their word choices reflect their interest towards politics, and their comments revealed a semantic variety of word choices in order to communicate with the readers of the Bangkok Post Online at a particular time.

Aside from word choice and types of meanings, there are three additional findings found on word choice in this research, discussed hereunder.

First, the overlapping of denotation words and connotation words are found. Some denotation words consist of both denotative and connotative meanings. To interpret a word's meaning, the co-text in the comments, where the denotations are situated, is brought up to help in the interpretation.

Second, some of the slang words that are found throughout the comments have occurred before. This shows that some of the slang words emerged from the region, since the Bangkok Post presents both international news and local news. The new words emerging from the region are defined in English, based on their local meaning. As a result, more words are added to the list, which vary by the region and by specific groups of users, and they arise from a particular situation that sets them apart from standard English.

Third, the images which are portrayed from four types of meanings reveal that a large number of commentators in Bangkok Post Online convey their feeling through their choice of words towards the political situation in Thailand at that time to the readers. Thus, the varieties of words choice on jargon words that are found arise from the differences in the commentators' educational and occupational backgrounds.

Aside from the findings related to word choice, it should be pointed out here that the analysis did not cover some comments that are highly sensitive since it may lead to some misunderstanding regarding the researcher and the research itself. In addition, impolite or inappropriate words are not analyzed in this study. As stated in Chapter 1, the data of this study is obtained from the online comment section of the Bangkok Post Online, where the anonymous commentators are allowed to post their comments anonymously or pseudonymously. Most of the grammatical errors in the comments were corrected by the researcher, to prevent too many variations and to get efficient results of this study. Therefore, the data gathered in this study might be the first inventory of resourceful English word samples from an online newspaper, which previous researchers were unable to make because of the changes in technology.

## **Recommendations**

The findings of this study could be of benefit for those who would like to conduct research in both writers' choice of words or any other related field

in different time periods, as it may reveal some significant changes in writers' choice of words and types of meaning. In addition, further research should cover more of commentator's styles of writing: sentence type, figurative language, tone, or a lexical set, for example. For English language learners or non-native speakers of English who are interested in reading public opinions or posting their own opinion, this study might provide some guidelines as to how the commentators choose the terms that best explain their ideas, attitudes, and intentions. The benefits of the online system make it an excellent resource for data gathering in future research: the freshness and variety of the data, and the large numbers of the study group.

## Summary

The final chapter summarizes all findings from the analysis, which responds to all four research questions and the additional findings found in this study, which could be beneficial for future researchers. Recommended resources for sampling are able to expand in a wide range with the alternative choices from the online technology. The chapter also describes the benefits for the further research in communicative English, in which choice of words and types of meaning are included.