

THE USE OF APPRAISAL THEORY TO ANALYZE THAI NEWSPAPER COMMENTARIES¹

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Abstract

This study explores Thai newspaper commentaries focused on the disruption of the ASEAN Summit on April 11, 2009. The objective of the present study is to examine lexical strategies employed by appraisal theory, a tool to analyze the attitudes expressed in newspaper commentaries in greater depth. The data of this study was obtained from thirty-two newspaper commentaries retrieved from nine online newspapers: Banmuang, Dailynews, Khaosod, Komchadluek, Manager, Matichon, Naewna, Posttoday and Thaipost. The results reveal that the commentators made use of both positive and negative emotional responses through either adjectives, noun phrases or verb phrases in terms of affect, which deals with the expression of emotion. Under judgement, which deals with moral assessments of behavior, the commentators judged people's behavior either positively or negatively through either adjectives, adverbs, noun phrases, verb phrases or metaphors as well as appreciation which deals with aesthetic assessments. With respect to attitude, a resource of language that enables commentators to express their attitude, the Thai newspaper commentaries

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examined contained predominantly negative evaluative lexis. Negative lexical items make the commentaries more intense and emotional for readers because of the news value of negativity, which focuses on political conflict in the Thai context. In the graduation category of appraisal, which is concerned with gradability, the explicit attitudes occurred with grading up rather than grading down. In the force sub-category, which relates to adjusting the degree of an evaluation, the commentators achieved intensification through isolation, infusion, repetition and metaphor, and achieved quantification through quantity, which is encoded as number and extent in time and space in order to enhance readers' agreement with the commentators' attitudes. Under focus, which relates to adjusting the boundaries of a categorical meaning, most stances represent a sharpening of the attitudinal entity rather a softening one.

1. Introduction

In an increasingly globalised world, mass media has a huge impact on people's perceptions of the world around them. What is written in newspapers and on the internet, broadcast on television and radio is, for the majority of the populace, the main source of information on newsworthy events. It is said that when the general public does not have first hand information on developing news stories, what they read and hear in the media influences their judgment.

This paper uses *Appraisal theory*, a theory focusing on the semantic system that expands Halliday's interpersonal metafunction by representing in greater detail the ways in which commentators seek to negotiate attitudes with their readers, to explore the way in which Thai commentators use lexical items to express and negotiate

attitudes with their readers. As Van Dijk (1996) indicated, opinions can be recognized by specific grammatical, lexical and stylistic choices. This current discussion aims to explore newspaper commentary as an example of newspaper opinion discourse widely found in Thailand according to Iedema, Feez and White (1994) texts which present arguments are often called 'commentaries' or 'comments' because they offer opinions. Commentary in this study, thus, refers to all opinion articles (except editorials) written by commentators in Thai online newspapers which focus on the selected news topic, namely the political unrest in 2009. The institutional voice of each publisher will not be involved in this analysis.

In the Thai context, newspaper commentary plays a crucial role in the mass media. Firstly, newspaper commentaries, not only report the news but also interpret it for readers. It allows a newspaper to address its readers directly by commenting on the news (Reah 2002). It also interprets the news for the reader who, according to MacDougall (1973) and Hulteng (1973), are unable to give much time to reading newspapers and prefer to skim through commentaries to find out interesting information of the day. Secondly, newspaper commentaries express commentators' opinions, which play an important role in changing and sustaining existing ideologies. As Van Dijk (1996) determined, newspaper opinion discourses, including commentaries, play an important role in the formation and shifting of public opinion, in setting the political agenda, and in influencing social debate, decision making and other forms of social and political action.

2. Methodology

This study focuses on newspaper commentary related to the political unrest in 2009, particularly on the disruption at the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit venue in Pattaya on April 11, 2009. On that day, thousands of Red-shirts, supporters of ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra, stormed inside the venue of a major Asian Summit which gathered leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand, forcing the Abhisit government to cancel the event. The reason for the Red-shirts' dissatisfaction was their belief that Abhisit Vejjajiva's government had taken power illegitimately with the backing of the Thai Army and the judiciary. They demanded the dissolution of the Thai Parliament followed by a new general election. In this study information was collected to scrutinize how Thai newspaper commentaries portrayed a political crisis that had impact on the reputation of Thailand as a nation, on national security issues and on the national economy, especially on the tourism sector.

In order to analyse the negotiation of attitudes between commentators and the readers in Thai newspaper commentaries, several criteria were set for the data collection. Firstly, the data acquired for this study were collected from the electronic version of newspaper commentaries posted between April 11 and April 24, 2009, the two weeks following the disruption of the Asean Summit venue in Pattaya, in order to capture the immediate response to that event. Secondly, the commentaries collected were only those which responded to the events of April 11. Consequently, thirty-two newspaper commentaries were retrieved from nine online newspapers: five articles

from the *Matichon* newspaper website, five from the *Posttoday* website, four from the *Khaosod* website, four from the *Komchadluek* website, four articles from the *Thaipost* website, three from the *Banmuang* website, three from the *Manager* website, two from the *Dailynews* website and two from the *Naewna* website. Surprisingly, *Thairath*, the most popular newspaper in Thailand, published no commentaries on the event. It presented only facts, instead.

These commentaries were collected with two goals in mind: 1) to examine how language reflects the attitudes of the commentators, and 2) to investigate how the commentators negotiate attitude with their readers. In order to study the evaluative meanings expressed in the text, the researcher chose *appraisal theory* as a functional model of language at the level of discourse semantics, in particular the works of Martin (1997, 2000, 2004), Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White (2005), to gain insight into negotiation of attitudes in the commentaries. As Martin and Rose (2003: 22) stated, *appraisal* is used for “negotiating our social relationships, by telling our listeners or readers how we feel about things and people.” In the following section, a brief summary of *appraisal* theory, supplemented with giving examples from the data used in the current study, is given.

Appraisal is “concerned with evaluation: the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned” (Martin and Rose 2003:22). The resources of *appraisal* consist of three aspects of analysis. There are three sub-systems to an *appraisal* analysis: *attitude*, *graduation* and *engagement*. Each of these sub-systems

has its own set of sub-systems. This paper will focus exclusively on the systems of *attitude* and *graduation* (circled in Figure 1).

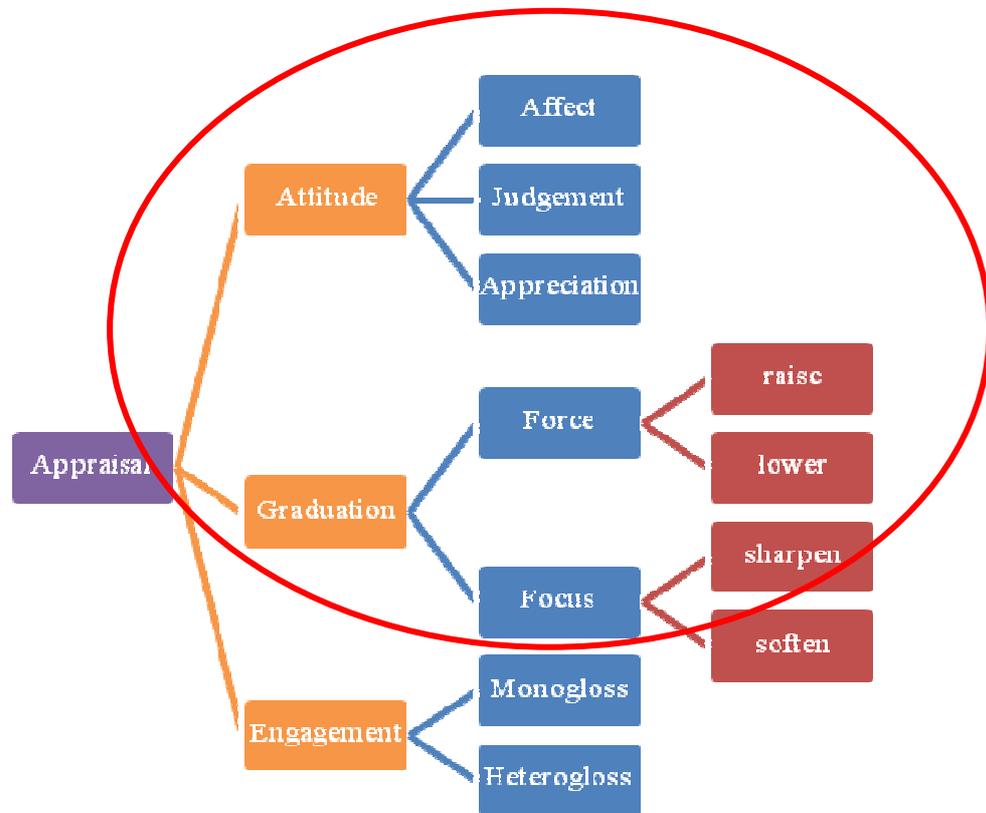


Figure 1 The system of *appraisal* (adapted from Martin & White 2005)

Within Attitude, Affect refers to expressing emotions and feelings. As Martin and White (2005) mentioned, Attitude is analysed according to a type of emotion: dis/inclination, un/happiness, in/security and dis/satisfaction. In (1), it is the unhappiness of the Thai government as a result of the shame experienced following the Summit debacle. In this case *ʔapʔa:jkʰǎ:jnâ:* ‘humiliate’ expresses the negative attitude of Abhisit government toward the Thai government’s incapability to expel the Red-shirts protesters, causing huge damage to the country (Attitude and their subcategories are coded in the square brackets; the expression in bold is interpreted as instantiation of inscribed Attitude; ‘-’ means negative. ‘+’ means positive)

(1) ฝ่าย ไทย ต้อง [Graduation:Upscaling]
fâ:j tʰaj tɔ̀:ɯ
side Thai must
 อับอายขายหน้า [Affect: -Happiness]
ʔapʔa:jkʰǎ:jnâ:
humiliate
 เป็นอย่างมาก [Graduation:Upscaling] ใน
pe:njâ:ɯ mâ:k *naj*
extremely *in*
 ฐานะ เจ้าภาพ [Naewna: Text23]...
tʰǎ:na tɕʰâwpʰâ:p
status host
 ‘This ASEAN Summit was an
 embarrassment for the Thai
 government as the host country’

Judgment is used to evaluate “what people do, say or believe according to institutionalized values” (Droga and Humphrey 2002: 79). It is divided into two categories: social esteem and social sanction. According to Martin and White (2005), Judgments of esteem have to be made according to ‘Normality’ (how unusual someone is), ‘Capacity’ (how capable they are) and ‘Tenacity’ (how resolute they are); judgments of sanction have to be made according to ‘Veracity’ (how truthful someone is) and ‘Propriety’ (how ethical someone is). In (2), the Red-shirts are judged as having negative social esteem in terms of their incapacity through the term *hùntɕʰɿ:t* ‘a remote control puppet’. This reveals how the Red-shirts were used by Thaksin to carry out his orders during the turmoil. The commentator also points out the ignorance of the Red-shirts through the term *kʰwa:mrú:tʰâwmâjʰuŋka:n* ‘ignorance’, which reflects a lack of knowledge. Consequently, they are easily manipulated’.

- (2) เสื้อแดง เป็น เพียง
súaʔdɛ:ŋ pe:n pʰiaŋ
 Red-shirts is only
 หุ่นเชิด [**Judgement: -capacity**]
hùntɕʰɿ:t
puppet
 ให้ พ.ต.ท.
hâj pʰontamrù:attʰo:
 give Police Lieutenant Colonel
 ทักษิณ ชักใย-สั่งเดิน
tʰâksɿn tɕâkjaŋ-sàŋdɿ:n
 Thaksin control behind the scene
 ใน รูปแบบ สงคราม
naj rú:pbè:p sǎŋkʰra:m
 in type war
 ตัวแทน [*Banmuang: Text1*].....
tuawtɛ:n
 representative

‘The Red-shirts were only Thaksin’s puppets to manipulate in a proxy war’

Appreciation deals with feelings towards “objects, processes and states of affairs” (Droga and Humphrey 2002: 82). Appreciation can be divided into three types: Reaction (do they catch our attention; do they please us?), Composition (balance and complexity) and Valuation (how innovative, authentic, timely, etc). In (3), the event is presented, to a certain degree, in terms of recognition of the valuable lesson learned from the embarrassment of the Thai government caused by the disruption of the ASEAN Summit.

- (3) จึง เป็น บทเรียน ที่
tɕuŋ pe:n bǔtɿan tʰi:
 then to be lesson that
 ไม่อาจประเมินค่าได้ [**Appreciation:**
+valuation]
mâj ʔà:t pramɿ:n kʰâ: dâj
unmeasurable
 และ จำเป็น อย่างยิ่ง ที่
lê tɕampe:n ja:ŋjŋ tʰi:
 and essential extremely that
 จะ ต้อง มี ผู้รับผิดชอบ
tɕa tɔ:ŋ mi: pʰu:râppʰittɕʰɿ:p
 will must have one who is
 responsible
 [*Komchadluek: Text13*]
 ‘It’s an immeasurable lesson for
 Thailand and someone must be
 responsible for the event’

Graduation is concerned with up-scaling and down-scaling. This extends to *attitude* by grading the feelings, judgments and assessments made (Droga & Humphrey, 2002). In (4), the commentator uses the word *ja:ŋjŋ* ‘very’ to intensify his attitude toward the ASEAN Summit postponement (the underlined terms are interpreted as

graduation and the expressions in bold are interpreted as instances of inscribed Attitude)

- (4) ผม **เสียใจ**[Affect: -happiness]
p^hǒm sǎjtɕaj
first person sorry
 อย่างยิ่ง ที่ การประชุม
já:ŋjŋ t^hí: ka:npratɕ^hum
very that meeting
 อาเซียน ต้อง
ʔa:sían tɔ̀:ŋ
 ASEAN **must**
 เลื่อนออกไป [Appreciation: -valuation]
lúanʔɔ̀:kpaɰ
postpone
 'I was very sorry that the ASEAN Summit had to be postponed'

In this instance, *já:ŋjŋ* 'very' amplifies the commentator's feeling towards the postponement of the ASEAN Summit. In addition, the degree of intensity can be conveyed by modality. As Ravelli (2000) mentioned, modality is realized through modal auxiliaries. Therefore, the strength of attitude is evident from the modal *tɔ̀:ŋ* 'had to' used to enable the commentators to grade their opinions. Example (4) also shows that attitude may be either 'inscribed' or 'evoked'. The commentator expresses his feeling through the explicit verb of emotion *sǎjtɕaj* 'sorry'. Attitude in terms of *appreciation* can be implicit through the verb phrase *lúanʔɔ̀:kpaɰ* 'to be postponed'. This term indicates implicit negative *appreciation* because it presents the degree of negativity attributed to the ASEAN Summit in the term 'unsuccessful'. Evaluative meanings can also be sharpened to indicate prototypicality, or softened to signify marginal membership in the category. They illustrate that a sharp focus presents

a strengthening of meaning, and a soft focus presents a weakening of meaning, as in (5), where *te:mrú:pbè:p* 'full' represents a sharpening of a categorical boundary. It evokes *Appreciation: valuation*. This focusing of the meaning evokes negative value. In this case, *p^hâphǎ:jjanâ* 'the picture of disaster' is interpreted negatively in terms of the image of Thailand because the cancellation of the ASEAN Summit affected millions of Thais, the national economy, the tourist industry and the country's international reputation.

- (5) ขณะที่ นาง กัทธิยา
k^hana: tî: na:ŋ p^hâth^hari:ja:
when Mrs. Patariya
 เบลูจพลชัย กรรมการ และ
be:njap^hontɕ^haj kammaka:n lê:
Benjaphonchai committee and
 ผู้จัดการ ตลาด หลักทรัพย์ แห่ง
p^hû:tɕàtkɑ:n talà:t làksâp hè:ŋ
manager market stock of
 ประเทศไทย ให้ ภาพ หายนะ
prat^hê:t^haj hâ:j p^hâp hǎ:jjanâ
Thailand give picture disaster
 เต็ม รูปแบบ ว่า การล้มเลิก
te:m rú:pbè:p wâ: ka:nlómlɕ:k
full type that cancellation
 การประชุม อาเซียน ชัมมิต
ka:npratɕ^hum ʔa:sían sammüt
meeting ASEAN Summit
 ได้ ส่งผลกระทบ ต่อ
dâj sòŋp^hǎnkraht^hòp tò:
get impact with
 ภาพ รวม ทั้งหมด
p^hâp ru:am t^háymòt
picture overall whole
 [Posttoday: Text25]
 'when Mrs.Patariya Benjaphonchai, a director and manager of Thailand's stock market, gave a full picture of this disaster that the cancellation of the

ASEAN summit had affected the overall image of Thailand as a nation’.

3. Result

The results of this research reveal many instances of evaluative lexis. These occur scattered throughout the newspaper commentaries.

In the analysis of Attitude, the commentators express their attitude in terms of *affect*, *judgment* and *appreciation*. Attitudes are expressed in two different ways: both explicitly and implicitly. In terms of *affect*, the commentators use positive and negative emotional responses through either adjectives, noun phrases or verb phrases. Based on the data, the kind of *affect* used the most was *dissatisfaction* followed by *unhappiness* and *insecurity*. The commentators mostly highlighted the dissatisfaction of the Red-shirts in terms of explicit Affect through mental processes and implicit Affect through material processes. The Red-shirts believed that the present government of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva was illegitimate because it came to power after disputed court rulings dissolved two elected pro-Thaksin governments, following the 2006 military coup. They were dissatisfied and wanted the current parliament dissolved and new elections held. Then there were brief riots following the Red-shirts’ attempt to storm the ASEAN Summit. The Thai government and Thai people were predominantly evaluated as having feelings of unhappiness and the ASEAN leaders were also predominantly evaluated as having feelings of insecurity due to the disruption of the ASEAN Summit by the Red-shirts. Feelings of insecurity were predictable since ASEAN leaders were immediately evacuated by helicopter as it was a serious

situation that threatened their safety and raised new fears about Thailand’s political stability. Table 1 lists the resources of Affect found in this study.

Table 1 The resources of Affect found in the present study

Affect	Positive	Negation
dis/inclination	<i>k^hâ:twǎj</i> ‘expect’, <i>tô:ŋka:n</i> ‘want’,	<i>hu:aj</i> ‘worry’, <i>kluaw</i> ‘afraid’, <i>wànkre:ŋ</i> ‘fearful’
un/happiness	<i>prakà:t tɕ^hajtɕ^hânâ</i> ‘declare victory’	<i>ʔapʔa:jk^hǎ:jnâ:</i> ‘humiliate’, <i>k^hwa:mjɛ:ppù:at</i> ‘pain’, <i>ró:ŋhâj</i> ‘cry’,
in/security		<i>mâ:j mântɕaj</i> ‘unconvinced’, <i>nɿ:hũawsûkhũawsun</i> ‘a headlong escape’, <i>ʔopp^hajôp</i> ‘evacuate’
dis/satisfaction	<i>sa tɕaj</i> ‘very satisfied’, <i>k^hwa:mprat^hâptɕaj</i> ‘impression’	<i>ka:nlûkhuu:ʔ</i> ‘resistance’, <i>dà:k^hrôm</i> <i>tɕ^hê:ŋtɕ^hâkhàkradu:k</i> ‘scold and curse’, <i>dà:k^hrôm</i> ‘scold’,

Under Judgment, the commentators are concerned with language which criticises or praises, which condemns or applauds the behavior through either adjectives, adverbs, noun phrases, verb phrases or metaphors. The kind of Judgment used most was Propriety followed by Capacity. The behavior of the Red-shirts, Thaksin, the Thai government and Abhisit were judged mainly negatively. Their behavior could be judged mostly in terms of Propriety, Capacity and Veracity rather than Normality and Tenacity.

The commentators highlighted the Red-shirts’ behavior as having negative social sanction and emphasized the inability of the Thai government to stop the Red-shirts from storming the ASEAN Summit. The Red-shirts were evaluated as immoral and unethical as they caused the fiasco at the ASEAN Summit in Pattaya in contrast to the moral behavior of ordinary Thai people who are innocent. The Thai government was judged as incapable of solving problems caused by the Red-shirt movement. The commentators expressed

their attitudes towards the failure of the Thai government to safeguard the 14th

ASEAN Summit which caused huge damage to Thailand’s reputation and image and it would be very difficult for the government to host major international events again. The commentators indicated that the police force, the army and the government officials of Thailand were capable neither of controlling the situation nor performing their duties legally because some units did not respond to Abhisit’s call for help in Pattaya. Abhisit, as prime minister, was evaluated as incapable of preventing the disruption of the ASEAN Summit. The commentators also judged the behavior of Thaksin along the lines of negative social esteem and social sanction because Thaksin was found guilty in a Thai court of corruption and sentenced in absentia to two years imprisonment. Otherwise, he was judged as a powerful leader able to control the Red-shirts. Table 2 lists the resources of *judgment* found in this study.

Table 2 The resources of Judgement found in the present study

SOCIAL ESTEEM	Positive (admire)	Negative (criticise)
normality 'how special?'		<i>p^hê:ʔrâpbâ:p</i> 'scapegoat', <i>lõŋtuaʔe:ŋ</i> 'proud of oneself', <i>tɕ^háj wa:tɕa: ʔuátʔâ:ŋ</i> 'brag',
Capacity 'how capable?'	<i>mi: sati</i> 'have consciousness', <i>kè:ŋ</i> 'good',	<i>hùntɕɕ:t</i> 'puppet', <i>ru:mâ:jt^hâwt^han</i> 'be silly', <i>k^hwa:mnò:mné:m</i> 'inability', <i>ʔò:nʔe: puàkpiak</i> 'weak', <i>rájprasittip^hâ:p</i> 'ineficiency', <i>tɕ^hákjaj-sàŋ dɕ:t</i> 'manipulate behind the scene', <i>ják</i> <i>t^hî: mâ:j mi: krabɔ:ŋ</i> 'the giant with no mace', <i>pe:t ŋô:j</i> 'the paralyzed duck',
tenacity 'how dependable?'	<i>k^hwa:mʔòt^honʔòtklân</i> 'patience'	<i>duúʔp^hê:ŋ</i> 'disobedient', <i>tɕajrew</i> <i>tɕajrɔ:n</i> 'quick and hot tempered'
SOCIAL SANCTION 'mortal'	Positive (praise)	Negative (condemn)
veracity [truth] 'how honest?'		<i>sâ:ŋ ma:ja:p^hâp</i> 'create the illusion', <i>lê:nsɔ:ŋnâ:</i> 'engaged in double-dealing', <i>ka:nlò:k</i> 'deceiving',
propriety [ethics] 'how far beyond reproach?'		<i>sàtdiajratɕ^hǎn</i> 'animal', <i>n i: t^hòt</i> 'flee', <i>k^hwa:mle:wrajam</i> 'badness', <i>mu:ʔ puân lúat</i> 'the hands to soak with blood', <i>t^hɔ:j</i> 'bad', <i>sadɛ:ŋ</i> <i>k^hwa:mhěnkè:tuaw</i> 'being selfish', <i>tɕajdamʔammahit</i> 'narrow- mindedness and cold blooded'

Similarly, Appreciation is expressed through adjectives, adverbs, noun phrases,

verb phrases and metaphors. The kind of Appreciation used the most was Valuation

followed by Reaction. Interestingly, Appreciation was the most frequently used attitudinal expression in Thai newspaper commentaries. The commentators mostly highlighted the ASEAN Summit and Thailand's economy, tourist industry and reputation in terms of emotional reaction and social significance. Table 3 lists the resources of Appreciation found in this study.

Table 3 The resources of Appreciation found in the present study

	Positive	Negative
Reaction	<i>títtra:truuj tɛaj</i> 'impressive'	<i>hǎ:jjana</i> 'disastrous', <i>mâ:j ʔopʔùn</i> 'not warm', <i>satɛaj</i> 'very satisfy', <i>nâkajwon</i> 'be worried', <i>prɔ̀ʔba:ɲ</i> 'delicate'
Composition		<i>sô:m</i> 'special', <i>ʔɛ:pfěɲ</i> 'covert'
Valuation	<i>ka:nfúnfu:</i> 'regeneration', <i>sajǎ:mmuajjím</i> 'land of smile'	<i>pʰõnkratʰõp</i> 'effect', <i>mâ:jmi: satʰi</i> : <i>anrapʰâp mâ:jmi:kʰùʔmâ:jmi:pʰɛ:</i> 'instability and lawless', <i>tɛʰi phǎ:j wa:jpuaj</i> 'damage', <i>kʰwa:mʔɔ̀:nʔɛ:</i> 'weakness', <i>ɲɔ̀:jpliajs iakʰǎ:</i> 'be disabled',

According to the overall picture of the use of *attitude* in the newspaper commentaries, *appreciation* was found in the texts most often followed by *judgment* and *affect* respectively. 53.06 percent (1058 of 1994) are interpreted as Appreciation. 23.52 percent (469 of 1994) are interpreted as *judgment*, and 23.42 percent (467 of 1994) are interpreted as Affect. Table 4 illustrates the resources of Attitude found in the data.

Table 4 The resources of Attitude found in the data

No.	Appraiser	Example		Appraised
1	Commentator	negative inscribed <i>attitude</i> (happiness)	ขายหน้า <i>k^hǎ:ǰnâ:</i> 'lose face'	Thai people
2	Commentator	negative invoked <i>attitude</i> (security)	หนีหัวซุกหัวซุน <i>nī:hǔawsûk hǔawsun</i> 'escape in the headlong rush'	ASEAN leaders
3	Commentator	negative invoked <i>attitude</i> (satisfaction)	ประท้วง <i>prat^húaj</i> 'protest'	The Red-shirts
4	Commentator	negative inscribed <i>judgment</i> (propriety)	สัตว์เดียดฉาน <i>sàtdiajrat^hǎ:n</i> 'beast'	The Red-shirts
5	Commentator	negative inscribed <i>judgment</i> (capacity)	หุ่นเชิด <i>hùnt^hç^h:t</i> 'puppet'	The Red-shirts
6	Commentator	negative inscribed <i>judgment</i> (propriety)	นักโทษ <i>nakt^hô:t</i> 'the prisoner'	Thaksin
7	Commentator	positive inscribed <i>judgment</i> (capacity)	หัวหน้า <i>hǔawk^habu:an</i> 'the leader'	Thaksin
8	Commentator	negative inscribed <i>judgment</i> (capacity)	ไร้ประสิทธิภาพ <i>wáiprasitt^hip^hâ:p</i> 'inefficient'	Thai government
9	Commentator	negative inscribed <i>judgment</i> (capacity)	เป็ดงอ <i>pè:tjô:j</i> 'the paralyzed duck'	Abhisit
10	Commentator	negative inscribed <i>appreciation</i> (reaction)	ความวิปโยค <i>k^hwa:mwǐppajô:k</i> 'tragedy'	Thai- ASEAN relationship
11	Commentator	negative inscribed <i>appreciation</i> (reaction)	อับอาย <i>ǰanǰappajô:t</i> 'ashamed'	Victory of the Red-shirts
12	Commentator	positive inscribed <i>appreciation</i> (valuation)	ไม่อาจประเมินค่าได้ <i>mâj ǰà:t pramç:n k^hâ: dâj</i> 'unmeasurable'	Lesson for Thailand from the ASEAN Summit disruption

Table 1 shows a number of consistent patterns of Attitude in the newspaper commentaries. The number of negative feelings outweighs the number of positive feelings. With respect to Affect, the number of negative emotions far outweighs the number of positive emotions. 66.74 percent (311 of 466) of all evaluative lexis refer to negative emotions, whereas 33.26 percent (155 of 466) refer to positive emotions. Similarly, 72.72 percent (320 of 436) of all evaluative lexis in terms of *judgment* are judged negatively, whereas 26.61 percent are judged positively. Regarding *appreciation*, 66.16 percent of all feelings towards things or events in these commentaries are clearly negative and 33.84 percent are clearly positive. As a result, the use of negative *attitude* is one of the characteristic features of newspaper commentary, helping commentators in their attempts to negotiate positioning of the readers' attitudes caused by the news value of negativity which focuses on political conflict news in the Thai context. Moreover, *appreciation*, which reveals feeling towards thing or events, is a dominant motif in the commentaries. This indicates that the commentators tried to avoid expressing their feelings towards people and their behavior in that event. Consequently, the commentators drew attention to the impact of the disruption to the ASEAN Summit on Thailand so as to evoke feelings of sympathy and pity from the readers.

In the analysis of *graduation*, the commentators used *graduation* resources which function to enhance reader solidarity with the commentator's attitudes. Firstly, amplification of a quality as isolation is achieved through the addition of post-modifying intensifiers. As such, the degree can be graded in intensity.

For example, in *nò:mné:m t^hísùt* 'the most ineffective', the Thai government was judged negatively in terms of its capacity, and the negative image of Thailand is reinforced by the use of the superlative 't^hísùt 'the most'. Secondly, intensification through infusion, which amplifies the core value, was used for amplification through the process and the abstraction. For example, the quality *satcaj* 'very satisfied' can be deconstructed as 'very + satisfied'. This refers to the Red-shirts' satisfaction at their successful interruption of the ASEAN Summit. Thirdly, intensification through repetition can also be graded in order to stress the emotional reaction to the events. Three repetitive patterns were found in this study. Firstly, the repetition of the same word in adjacent phrases or clauses is used in these data. See the following example. The commentator repeatedly used the term *màj* 'new' as an intensifier. The expressions in bold can be interpreted as *graduation*.

(6) *mé: tça mi: ráttaba:n*
even though will have government
 ใหม่ ที่นำ โดย นายกรัฐมนตรี
màj t^hi:nam do:j najókráttamontri:
new that lead by prime minister
 คน ใหม่ จาก พรรคการเมือง
k^hon màj tça:k p^hákka:nmu:aj
person new from political party
 ใหม่ ก็ตามที่ [Matichon: Text18]
màj kǎ:ta:m t^hi:
new whatever
 'Although we have a new government led by a new prime minister who is from a new political party'

Secondly, repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive clauses is

found in the data as in the following example. The commentator repeatedly used the term *k^hwa:mnâ:ʔapʔa:j* ‘humiliating’ at the beginning of successive clauses to express his negative attitude toward the incompetence of the Thai government, the cancellation of the ASEAN Summit, the disunity of the Thai people and the Red-shirt violence which caused damage to the country. The expressions in bold can be interpreted as *graduation*.

(7) เป็น ความน่าอับอาย ใน
pe:n k^hwa:mnâ:ʔapʔa:j naj
 is **shamefulness** in
 ฐานะ ประเทศไทย เป็น เจ้าภาพ
t^hǎná prat^hê:t^haj pe:n tɕ^hâwp^hâp
 status Thailand is host
 การประชุม ที่ มี 3 ประเทศ
ka:npratɕ^hum t^hî: mi: sǎ:m prat^hê:t
 meeting that have three country
 ยักษ์ใหญ่ อย่าง จีน ญี่ปุ่น
ják jàj jà:ŋ tɕ^hi:n jî:pùn
 giant like China Japan

 เกาหลี เข้าร่วม ประชุม
kawlǐ: k^hâwrû:am pratɕ^hum
 Korea participate meeting
 เป็น ความน่าอับอาย ที่
pe:n k^hwa:mnâ:ʔapʔa:j t^hî:
 is **shamefulness** that
 ไทย ใน ฐานะ เจ้าภาพ
t^haj naj t^hǎná tɕ^hâwp^hâp
 Thailand in status host
 ต้อง ล้มเลิก การประชุม
tô:ŋ lómlɕ:k ka:npratɕ^hum
 must cancel meeting
 กลางคืน ทั้งที่ เป็น
kla:ŋk^han t^háŋtî: pe:n
 halfway in spite of is
 ผลประโยชน์ โดยรวม ของ
p^hǎnp^hrajo:t do:jru:am kǎ:ŋ

advantage overall of
 ประเทศชาติ เป็น ประโยชน์
prat^hê:tɕ^hâ:t pe:n prajo:t
 country is advantage
 โดยรวม ของ ชาติอาเซียน
do:jru:am kǎ:ŋ tɕ^hâ:t ʔa:sî:an...
 overall of ASEAN
 ...เป็น ความน่าอับอาย กับ
...pe:n k^hwa:mnâ:ʔapʔa:j kàp
 ... is **shamefulness** with
 อำนาจ รัฐ ใน ยุค
ʔamnâ:t rá:t naj júk
 power government in era
 ที่ มี นาย อภิสิทธิ์
t^hî: mi: na:j ʔap^hisít
 that have Mr. Abhisit
 เวชชาชีวะ เป็น นายกรัฐมนตรี
we:ttɕ^hatɕ^hi:wá pe:n najókráttamontri:
 Vejjajiva is prime minister
 มี พลตำรวจเอก พัชรวาท
mi: p^hontamru:atʔè:k. p^háttɕ^hârawâ:t
 have Police general Patcharavat
 วงษ์สุวรรณ เป็น
woŋsuwan pe:n
 Wongsuwan is
 ผบ.ตร.
p^hǎ:bw:tɔ:rɔ:
 commissioner general Royal Thai police
 มี พลอากาศเอก อนุพงษ์
mi: p^honʔakà:tʔè:k ʔanup^hoŋ
 have general Anupong
 เต่าจินดา เป็น
p^hâwtɕinda: pe:n
 Paochinda is
 ผบ.ทบ [Banmuang: Text1]
p^hǎ:bw:t^hɔ:bw:
 commander of the Royal Thai army
 ‘It is humiliating for Thailand, as the host
 country of the ASEAN Summit where
 delegates from three powerful countries—
 China, Japan and South Korea—also

participated that the Summit which could have brought benefits to Thailand and other Asean countries had to be postponed. It is humiliating that Thai people unveiled national disunity to the world. It is humiliating that the conflict between the Red-shirts and the Blue-shirts left many people injured. It is humiliating that the Thai government failed to restore peace and order in their country. It is humiliating that the Abhisit-era government when Abhisit Vejjajiva was prime minister, general Patcharavat Wongsuwan was the commissioner general of the Royal Thai Police and General Anupong Paochinda was the commander of the Royal Thai Army altogether were unable to restore national unity and stability.

Thirdly, repetition of lists of terms which are closely related semantically were also found in selected texts. The following is a good example of this type of Graduation. Again, the expressions in bold can be interpreted as Graduation.

- (8) ประเทศ นี้ ยังคง
prathê:t ní: jaŋ kʰoŋ
country this still
 ุ่นวาย ไร้ระเบียบ
wúnwa:j rájrabìap
chaos turmoil
 ไม่มีเสถียรภาพ
mâjmi:satʰianrapʰâp
unstable
 และ ไร้ข้อแก้
lê rájkʰù̀pɛ:
and lawless
 [Matichon: Text18]

‘This country is still in chaos and turmoil; it is, unstable and lawless.’

The commentator repeatedly used the term *wúnwa:j* ‘chaos’, *rájrabìap* ‘turmoil’,

mâjmi: satʰi:anrapʰâp ‘unstable’ and *rájkʰù̀pɛ* ‘lawless’, which refer to the chaos and instability in Thailand. This seeks to engage the readers and to appeal for action to bring peace and stability to the country.

Fourthly, metaphor in this study refers to figurative expressions in general, including proverbs, metaphors, similes and idioms. It is also used in intensification. In (9), a proverb is used to refer to the hesitation of the Thai government to declare a state of emergency.

- (9) การประกาศ สถานการณ์ฉุกเฉิน
ka:nprakà:t satʰá:nnaka:n tɕʰùktɕʰá:n
declaration the stage of emergency
 ช้าเกินไป เข้าข่าย
tɕʰá: kɕ:npa:j kʰâwkʰá:j
late too like
 กว่าดีจะสุก งาก็ไหม้
kwà:tʰù̀awtɕasùkɕa:kô:mâj
over-cooked sesame beans will burn
 [Komchadluek: Text13]
 ‘The declaration of an emergency situation is too late, just as advice after mischief is like medicine after death’

Furthermore, the metaphor *phêràpbà:p* ‘the scapegoat’ is used to refer to the Thai police. During the protests, when protesters were injured or killed, police were blamed as scapegoats for harming them. The term *sàjkia:wâ:ŋ* ‘to put a car into neutral gear’ has become a euphemism for the Thai police’s

³ This metaphor literally means ‘by the time the peanuts are cooked, the sesame seeds are burned’. The meaning of this metaphor is ‘a characteristic of a process whereby hesitation creates an inability to solve problems. While one goal is met, another fails’.

dereliction of duty for failing to stop the Red-Shirts, thus forcing the cancellation of the ASEAN Summit. Also, the terms *jákmâjmi:krabɔ:ŋ* ‘giant with no mace’ and *petŋɔ:j* ‘a paralyzed duck’ refer to Abhisit who had little ministerial experience by the supporting argument that the ASEAN fiasco showed that Thailand’s deep and complex political division was still beyond Abhisit’s ability to resolve it.

Additionally, the commentators used the metaphors *nɔ:n bɔ:n sâj* ‘a mole’ and *kluɔ:pe:nnɔ:n* ‘a traitor’ as negative judgments because they suggest that there must have been a traitor within the Thai government who caused the disruption at the ASEAN Summit in Pattaya. Moreover, the metaphor *sap^hâpnám^hû:ampà:k* ‘inarticulate’ is used by a commentator who passes an implicit negative judgment on the Thai government in its capacity. The commentator inscribes a judgment value of negative capacity by accusing the government of incompetence. In 2008, the Yellow-shirts seized Suvarnabhumi Airport as part of a bid to oust the government of then-prime minister Somchai Wongsawat. The Yellow-shirts achieved their goal with direct support from the government and some members of the Democrat party. Now, the Red-shirts staged even stronger protests but the government had to keep quiet to avoid being accused of double standards.

Furthermore, resources of quantification are used to emphasize both the negative and positive evaluation of Attitude. They are drawn upon to add or detract value. Based on the data, degrees of value could be achieved through either number or the adjectival form which refers to size. In (10), the commentators amplify the degree

of value by using an adjective of magnitude *luá?k^hana:nâp* ‘immeasurable’ to add to the degree of damage caused by the ASEAN Summit disruption.

- (10) เรา พัง บ้าน ตัวเอง
raw p^hay bâ:n tuaw?e:ŋ
we damage house our
 ซึ่ง สูญเสีย
sûŋ sũ:nsi:a:
which lose
 เหลือคณานับ [Matichon: Text19]
luá?k^hana:nâp
immeasurable
 ‘we destroy our own country which causes immeasurable damage’

Interestingly, to emphasize the degree of evaluation, the commentator use historical events to make a comparison with the current situation leading to the cancellation of the ASEAN Summit in Pattaya. The commentator makes reference to the ASEAN Summit held in the Philippines in 2006, which was cancelled due to a powerful typhoon, implying that the natural disaster was beyond human control but a disaster caused by people can be controlled. This commentary passes a negative judgement on the capacity of the Thai government to prevent the chaos that took place at the ASEAN Summit, as in (11).

- (11) หลังจาก ที่ เมื่อ กลาง
lǎŋtɕa:k t^hî: mu:á? kla:ŋ
after that when middle
 ปี 2006 ฟิลิปปีนส์
pi: sɔ:ŋ sũ:n sũ:n hòk p^hilipp^hin
year 2006 Philippines
 ต้อง ประกาศ การประชุม
tɔ:ŋ prakà:t ka:npratɕ^hum
must announce meeting
 เลื่อน ออกไป เพราะ พายุ

lû:an ʔò:kpaj p^hrɔʔ p^ha:jú
postpone because storm
 ไล่ฝุ่น ที่ไอคอรื
tâifun t^hi:ʔo:dɔ
typhoon Teodor
 ถล่ม แต่ ถือว่า เป็น
talòm t^hɛ: tuʔwâ: pe:n
hit but regard to be
 ครั้งแรก ของ ประวัติศาสตร์
k^hráʔrɛ:k kɔ:ŋ prawàttisà:t
first time possessive history
 อาเซียน ที่ ต้อง
ʔa:sí:an t^hi: tɔ:ŋ
Asean that must
 ล้ม ไป เพราะ ถูก
lôm paj p^hrɔʔ t^hùk
cancel because adverb-auxillary
 ผู้ประท้วง บุค
p^hú:prat^hú:aj bùk
protester attack
 เวที ประชุม [Posttoday: Text24]
we:ti: prat^hum
stage meeting
 ‘In mid-year 2006, the government of the
 Philippines had to postpone the ASEAN
 Summit due to typhoon Teodor. This
 was the first time in ASEAN history that
 an ASEAN Summit had to be postponed
 because of the Red-shirts protest’

In addition, the commentator also makes a comparison between the fall of Ayudhya, the old capital city of Thailand, and the rampage of the Red-shirts as a way of referencing readers’ knowledge of history. Unlike the defeat of Ayudhya, Thailand today has not lost its sovereignty. But just like in the Ayudhya era, Thailand today is not united and there are spies who betray their own country, as in (12).

(12) จาก พุทธศักราช ณ
tɔ̀: k p^hut^hàsàkkàrà:t ná

from Buddhist era when
 กรุง ศรีอยุธยา แดก
kruŋ sri:ʔàjút^haja: tɛ:k
city Ayudhya wreck
 ๒๑๑๒ และ
sɔ̀:ŋpannujɔ̀:jsipsɔ̀:ŋ lé
1569 and
 ๒๓๑๐ จาก
sɔ̀:ŋpansá:mrɔ̀:jsip tɔ̀:k
1767 from
 วัน นั้น ถึง วัน นี้
wan nán t^húŋ wan ní:
day that to day this
 ที่ ๔๔๐
kô sɔ̀: rɔ̀:j sɔ̀: sɔ̀p
particle four hundred and forty
 และ ๒๔๒
lé sɔ̀:ŋrɔ̀:jsi:sipsɔ̀:ŋ
and two hundred and forty-two
 ปี มาแล้ว แต่
pi: malɛ:w tɛ:
year ago but
 วันนี้ ๑๑
wanní sɔ̀pʔè:t
today eleven
 เมษายน ๒๕๕๒
me:sá: jo:n sɔ̀:ŋpanhâ: rɔ̀:j hâ:sɔ̀p sɔ̀:ŋ
April 2009
 กรุง รัตนโกสินทร์
kruŋ ráttanáko: sɔ̀n
city Rattanakosin
 “ไม่ แดก” เหมือน
mâ:j tɛ:k muán
not wreck like
 กรุง ศรีอยุธยา และ จะ
kruŋ sri:ʔajút^haja: lé tɔ̀
city Ayudhya and will
 ไม่มี วัน แดก
mâj mi: wan tɛ:k
not day wreck

เด็ดขาด

dè:t kʰà:t

absolutely

'From B.E. 2112 and 2310 to the present, it has been 440 and 242 years since the fall of Ayudhya. Unlike the defeat of Ayudhya, Rattanakosin today will absolutely not lose its sovereignty'

The comparison of what happened in Bangkok with what happened to the Ayudhya Kingdom may help raise the awareness of the readers about the fall of the kingdom in the past. However, it seems to encourage the Thais that the present Kingdom of Thailand will be spared from the total destruction.

The concept of grading in terms of *focus* is used for strengthening or softening evaluative meanings. This study found that most stances are used to strengthen the categorical meanings rather than to soften them. 90.85 percent (298 of 328) of Focus are used for strengthening the evaluative meanings, whereas 9.15 percent (30 of 328) of *focus* are used for softening the evaluative meanings.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Newspaper commentaries are (according to Jaworski and Galasinski (2002) regarded as articles that not only interpret the news but also construct reality from a particular worldview for the reader. Regarding the resources of Appraisal, all newspaper commentaries from nine different newspapers used evaluative lexis to reflect the commentators' attitudes. That is, the commentators can encourage the readers to feel various emotions and control the emotional attitudes of the readers through the evaluative lexis. This finding appears to support the study of Bednarek (2006). She partially explains

her findings that "Evaluations in newspapers can be used to express emotive values in order to attract a certain implied readership" (2006, p. 203). An analysis of Appraisal through Thai newspaper commentaries, in line with Martin and White's (2005) theory, reveals that commentators use the resources of Affect in terms of (dis)inclination, (un)happiness, (in)security and (dis) satisfaction that appeal to the emotions of the readers. These refer to expressions of emotion and feelings positive or negative, as well as directly or indirectly implied. Judgment is used to evaluate the behaviour of the people relevant to the political unrest in 2009, according to social esteem and social sanction characteristics. The commentators evaluate their behaviour either positively or negatively. The events, things and objects are evaluated in terms of their emotional reaction and their social significance in line with Martin's theory of Appreciation. The appraisal of Appreciation is expressed from two perspectives, resulting in a positive appraisal and a negative appraisal.

Within Attitude, the commentators use negative lexical items to make their commentaries more intense and emotional for their readers. This is consistent with Bednarek's (2006) finding. She found that "the number of negative emotions by far outweighs the number of positive emotions. This predominance of negative emotions is once again caused by the news value of negativity, which decides that it is the negative that is reported rather than the positive" (2006, p. 179).

Force and *focus* of the evaluation are intensified through the use of Graduation resources in order to enhance the reader's accord with the commentator's attitudes. Intensification through repetition and metaphor occurs widely in Thai newspaper

commentaries and is used to add force to the feelings, judgments and assessments made by commentators. As the Thai language is rich in metaphor, Thai commentators prefer to use metaphors in various ways to create solidarity with the readers. According to Thai custom, writers prefer to use metaphor instead of direct words in criticising other people and they tend to use euphemisms to avoid embarrassment. It is obvious then, that metaphors are used by writers of newspaper commentaries as one type of writing strategy to persuade readers to accept new opinions. This is in line with Martin and White (2005), who mentioned that the metaphor is a way of transforming the commentator's subjective voice into the objective voice of the reporter.

Furthermore, the evaluative strategy also includes the use of comparative intertextuality. The commentaries rely on comparative intertextuality to evaluate these political events through a comparison with historical events. Intertextual references to history help to raise awareness in the Thai reader of the political issues and interpret these events. This parallels the study of Achugar (2004), who states that this strategy "is used as a form of argumentation and as a way of guiding the reader on how to interpret the events by connecting them to his/her available social mental models. This form of intertextuality helps to establish an ideal reader position" (Achugar, 2004, p. 312).

This current study was designed to contribute an effective means of supporting Thai media consumers, especially in terms of practical methods of analysis when reading varying opinions and standpoints in newspapers. Thai readers need to possess a deeper awareness of how language is used to represent and evaluate the world, and this can be provided through a descriptive analysis of the formal features in the structural

properties of Thai newspaper commentaries. Nowadays it is generally accepted that the mass media, especially in newspaper commentaries, is one of the most powerful tools of persuasion and that reports about events and affair, expose a mass audience to issues of right and wrong. Even though the media attempts to report the intensity and magnitude of events in order to provide a clearer picture of the situation, it often expresses opinions as fact, thus leading the audience to believe that all that is presented as news is fact and not opinion. Often, they may be unaware of the ways by which they consume news, and the distinction between factual news stories and opinionated news commentary, an objective ability which is necessary to enable them to obtain the real facts. It is necessary, according to Fairclough (1989:1) "to help increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation". Indeed, teachers should teach their students linguistic and theoretical skills so as to provide them with a critical approach to reading, which would free them from being dominated by others.

This study will contribute to the overall body of knowledge in the area of Systemic Functional Grammar, including the resources of *appraisal*. It enables the researcher to shed light on how Thai commentaries are used to express and negotiate opinions with Thai readers within this framework. Since the *appraisal* perspective focuses on the relationship between the textual choices and the social context, it is an important tool to enable the audiences to perceive the ways in which Thai commentators express and seek to negotiate attitudes with their readers in Thai commentaries. Unlike other frameworks within Systemic functional grammar, there is no need to

divide up the text into clauses in the analysis of Appraisal. The stances of Appraisal can be either words, phrases, clauses or the entire paragraph. However, I found it problematic that the analysis of *appraisal* is essentially interpretive. Different people may interpret the same text differently. This stance is considered positive in Thailand while it may be considered negative in other cultures. It seems to me that Appraisal tends to be a social construct rather than universalist. Therefore, an analysis of this framework together with systematic quantitative studies will make it more practical and interesting.

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