A Corpus-Based Analysis and Appraisal of News Reports on Protesters from Political Conflicts in Thailand by Foreign News Agencies

Wimonwan Aungsuwan, Thammasat University, Thailand

Abstract

Appraisal has been employed in previous foreign studies. They have focused on corpus-based analysis and comparison of news reports. However, the previous work in Thailand has inadequately focus on appraisal of news report comparison among news agencies, and corpus analysis. Thus, this paper aims to use corpus data to analyse and compare appraisal of news reports on protesters as the appraiser and appraised from political conflicts in Thailand between two foreign news agencies.

Thai political news from two English online newspapers: *BBC* and *CNN* published from 31 October, to 31 December 2013 were compiled. The term "protester/s" which played key role in these conflicts was selected. Concordance lines of "protester/s" were employed to analysed connotations and collocations of appraising items. Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) were employed in focusing on attitudinal positioning: affect, judgement, and appreciation.

In *BBC*, protesters expressed affect: happiness, undesired, insecurity, and dissatisfaction. Appraised items included government, political activities, violence, and political activity product. In judgement including propriety, impropriety, capacity, and incapacity, protesters were appraised by antigovernment, and news reporters. In *CNN*, protesters expressed affect: happiness, undesire, security, and dissatisfaction. Appraised items were government, and anti-government. In judgement containing tenacity, propriety, and impropriety, protesters were appraised by government, and news reporters.

The similarities and differences were appraising, appraised and appraiser items. Appraising items were expressed positively from adjectives and verbs and negatively from adjectives and verbs + political activities in negative meaning.

Introduction

After investigating the previous studies, Appraisal framework has been found in many text types including news (Birot 2008; White, 1998), email discussion (Don, 2007), wine tasting notes (Hommerberg, 2011), the student texts, and published research papers (Hood, 2004), and legal texts (Körner, 2000; Miller, 2002). In addition, the previous work has dealt with the comparison of news reports among various news agencies (Birot, 2008)

In addition, corpus-based approach has been employed in some previous studies including computer based data compilation, tagged data, and the use of concordancing tool, (Don, 2007; Hommerberg, 2011).

The previous research has focused on attitudinal positioning including affect, judgement, and appreciation (Birot (2008; Hommerberg, 2011; Hood, 2004; White, 1998). In addition, the previous studies have been concerned with dialogistic positioning including engagement, and negotiation such as persuasion, argumentation, and expository (Don, 2007; Hommerberg, 2011; Körner, 2000; Miller, 2002; White, 1998). Besides, the previous work has involved intertextual positioning including reported speech (White, 1998).

However, the previous work in Thailand has been inadequately concerned with appraisal of news report comparison among news agencies and little attention has been paid to corpus analysis, and Appraisal framework. Thus, this paper aims to use corpus data to analyse and compare appraisal of news reports on protesters as the appraiser and appraised from political conflicts in Thailand between two foreign news agencies. This paper has implication in providing guidance for using corpus –based analysis of evaluation in text.

The concept of Appraisal framework

The Appraisal framework conducted by Professor James Martin means a particular approach to exploring, describing and explaining the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personals and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships. (White, 2012)

According to Martin (2003), Martin and White (2005), and White (2012), the appraisal contains two main positioning including attitudinal positioning, and dialogistic positioning. However, this paper focuses only on attitudinal positioning mentioned as follows:

Attitudinal positioning means that writers/speakers indicate either a positive or negative assessment of people, places, things, happenings and states of affairs (White, 2012). Attitudinal positioning can be divided into three main types including affect, judgement, and appreciation.

1. Affect

Martin (2003), and Martin et al. (2005) cite that affect contains many characteristics. It can be expressed by using Verbs of emotion such as laugh, and cry, and adjective of emotion: happy, and sad. In addition, it includes Positive and negative affect such as happy, and angry. In some cases, it contains A scale intensity of feeling such as like (low), love (medium), and adore (high).

Affect can be classified as four main types:

1.1 (Un)Happiness includes happy, sad, love, and hate.

1.2 (Un)Desire contains suggest, request, and demand.

1.3 (In)Security involves anxiety, confident, trust, and surprised.

1.4 (Dis)Satisfaction includes ennui, displeasure, curiosity, and respect.

2. Judgement

Martin (2003) and White (2012) explain that judgement is normative assessments or evaluation matrix for human behavior typically making reference to rules or conventions of behaviour. It focuses on a view to controlling what people do. According to White (2012), judgement involves language which criticises or praises, condemns or applauds the behaviour, actions, deeds, sayings, beliefs, and motivations of human individuals and groups. Besides, they involve in assessments by reference to systems of legality/illegality, morality/immorality or politeness/impoliteness. Judgement can be divided into five main types:

2.1 Normality

Normality involves how special containing positive and negative terms. Positive terms include lucky, fortunate, charmed, normal, natural, familiar, cool, stable, predictable, fashionable, celebrated, and unsung. Negative terms contain unlucky, hapless, star-crossed, odd, peculiar, eccentric, erratic, unpredictable, dated, retrograde, obscure, and also-ran.

2.2 Capacity

Capacity focuses on positive and negative terms. Positive terms are found from powerful, vigorous, robust, sound, healthy, fit, adult, mature, experienced, witty, humorous, droll, insightful, clever, gifted, balanced, together, sane, sensible, expert, shrewd, literate, educated, learned, competent, accomplished, successful, and productive. Negative terms are concerned with mild, weak, whimpy, unsound, sick, crippled, immature, childish, helpless, grave, slow, stupid, thick, flaky, neurotic, insane, naive, inexpert, foolish, illiterate, uneducated, ignorant, incompetent, unaccomplished, unsuccessful, and unproductive.

2.3 Tenacity

Tenacity focuses on how dependable containing positive and negative terms. Positive terms include plucky, brave, heroic, cautious, wary, patient, careful, thorough, meticulous tireless, persevering, resolute, reliable, dependable, faithful, loyal, constant, flexible, adaptable, and accommodating. Negative terms involve timid, cowardly, gutless, rash, impatient, impetuous, hasty, capricious, reckless, weak, distracted, despondent, unreliable, undependable, unfaithful, disloyal, inconstant, stubborn, obstinate, and willful.

2.4 Veracity

Veracity is concerned with truth and how honest. Positive terms are shown from truthful, honest, credible, frank, candid, direct, discrete, and tactful. Negative terms are found from dishonest, deceitful, lying, deceptive, manipulative, devious, blunt, and blabbermouth.

2.5 Propriety

Propriety relates to ethics. Positive terms involve good, moral, ethical, law abiding, fair, sensitive, kind, caring, unassuming, modest, humble, polite, respectful, reverent, altruistic, generous, and charitable. Negative terms are concerned with bad, immoral, evil, corrupt, unfair, unjust, insensitive, mean, cruel, vain, snobby, arrogant, rude, discourteous, irreverent, selfish, greedy, and avaricious.

3. Appreciation

White (2012) cites that appreciation is assessments of the form, appearance, composition, impact, significance etc of human artefacts, natural objects as well as human individuals (but not of human behaviour) by reference to aesthetics and other systems of social value.

Martin (2003, pp. 160-161) and Martin et al. (2005) mention that appreciation can be divided into three main types as discussed below.

3.1 Reaction

Positive terms involve impact: arresting, captivating, engaging, fascinating, exciting, and moving, and quality: lovely, beautiful, splendid, appealing, enchanting, and welcome. In addition, negative terms deal with impact such as dull, boring, tedious, staid, dry, ascetic, and uninviting, and reaction: quality such as plain, ugly, repulsive, and revolting.

3.2 Composition

Positive terms are concerned with balance such as balanced, harmonious, unified, symmetrical, and proportional, and complexity including simple, elegant, intricate, rich, detailed, and precise. Besides, negative terms relate to balance such as unbalanced, discordant, contorted, and distorted, and complexity such as ornamental, extravagant, monolithic, and simplistic.

3.3 Valuation

Positive terms contain challenging, profound, deep, innovative, original, and unique. Negative terms include shallow, insignificant, conservative, and reactionary.

Research methodology

This paper is a part of pilot study of my dissertation so the data has been collected for two months from 31st October to 31st December 2013. This period was the beginning of political conflicts in Thailand between Yingluck's government and the opponent. In terms of participants, protesters were selected in this study because they played key role in these conflicts and got high frequency of wordlist. In addition, *BBC* and *CNN* were selected due to popular foreign news agencies. Besides, the data were compiled from political news from online newspapers then these news were saved into text files. In *BBC*, it contained 85 files, and 391 tokens of protester/s. In *CNN*, it included 39 files, and 178 tokens of protester/s.

In terms of analysis parts, they contained many steps: Firstly, conduct corpus analysis and study co-texts of the key words such as collocation to explore connotations and structures of the appraising items of the protesters in the political conflicts in Thailand. Secondly, categorize words or phrases that carry evaluation meanings using the Appraisal framework. Thirdly, compare similarities and differences between *BBC* and *CNN*.

Results of the study

This section was concerned with the results from *BBC*, the results from *CNN*, and the comparison between *BBC* and *CNN* mentioned as follows:

1. BBC

This section involved types of affect and judgement in *BBC* discussed as follows:

1.1 Types of affect

The results revealed many types of affect including 3 tokens of happiness in positive meaning (%3.66), 9 tokens of desire in negative meaning (%10.98), 1 token of security in negative meaning (%1.22), and 69 tokens of satisfaction in negative meaning (%84.15). (See table 1)

Table 1

Frequency of protesters as the appraiser focusing on affect found in BBC

Affect	Tokens	Percentage
Happiness (positive meaning)	3	3.66
Desire (negative meaning)	9	10.98
Security (negative meaning)	1	1.22
Satisfaction (negative meaning)	69	84.15
Total	82	100.00

1.1.1 Happiness

(1) On Tuesday, police cut away wire and opened barricades to avoid further confrontation with anti-government protesters. An anti-government *__protester kisses__* a riot police officer on the cheek during a rally outside the Government House in Bangkok on 3 December 2013. (BBC November 26, 2013-1.txt)

(2) *__Protesters shook hands__* with police officers, *__hugged__* them, and *__offered__* them *__roses__*. (BBC December 3, 2013-3.txt)

As in example one and two, these political incident occurred before The King's anniversary so the confrontations between protesters and the government officers were less tense. They made protesters happier. Protesters expressed these feelings to the police by kissing found in example one, shaking hands, hugging, and offering the roses found in example two.

1.1.2 Desire

(3) The *__protesters want Yingluck Shinawatra's government to resign__*, saying it is controlled by her brother - ousted former PM Thaksin Shinawatra. (BBC November 26, 2013-2.txt)

(4) Anti-government *__protesters want Ms Yingluck to resign and for her government to be replaced with an unelected "People's Council"__*. (BBC December 12, 2013-2.txt)

Protesters expressed desire which had negative effects to Yingluck's government. The results showed that want collocated with political activities in negative meaning. The result from example three showed that they wanted Yingluck govt to resign because it was controlled by Thaksin. In example 4, they wanted Yingluck to resign and government to be replaced with an unelected People's Council.

1.1.3 Security

(5) "I was sleeping and then I heard several gunshots. I *__was surprised__*," one 18-year-old *__protester__*, who identified himself by his nickname "Boy", told Reuters news agency. (BBC December 28, 2013-1.txt)

It was found in example five that protester expressed insecurity by using surprised. Several gunshots were unexpected political incident.

1.1.4 Satisfaction

(6) ***Anti-government protesters*** take part in a rally outside the Government Complex on 28 November 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. (BBC November 28, 2013-2.txt)

(7) Thai military officials look up towards ***opposition protesters*** in Bangkok on 25 November 2013. (BBC November 25, 2013-1.txt)

(8) Tens of thousands of ***protesters marched against the bill***, which was rejected by the Senate on 12 November. (BBC November 20, 2013-1.txt)

(9) ***Protesters gathered in Bangkok to disrupt registration for February's election***. (BBC December 26, 2013-3.txt)

In example six and seven, protesters expressed dissatisfaction with the government shown by "antigovernment" (example six), and "opposition" (example seven). In addition, dissatisfaction was expressed by action verbs involving political activities. The result from example eight showed that protesters expressed dissatisfaction of the bill by marching and the result from example nine revealed that they expressed dissatisfaction of the election by gathering in Bangkok.

1.2 Types of judgement

Judgement contained 1 token of capacity in positive meaning (%8.33), 3 tokens of capacity in negative meaning (%25), 4 tokens of propriety in positive meaning (%33.33), and 4 tokens of propriety in negative meaning (%33.33) as shown in table 2.

Table 2

Frequency of protesters as the appraised focusing on judgement found in BBC

Types of judgement	Tokens	Percentage
Capacity (positive meaning)	1	8.33
Capacity (negative meaning)	3	25.00
Propriety (positive meaning)	4	33.33
Propriety (negative meaning)	4	33.33
Total	12	100.00

1.2.1 Capacity

(10) The BBC's Lucy Williamson in Bangkok says the mood of the protesters is very ***friendly***, as they and the government side shadow-box around each other. (BBC November 27, 2013-1.txt)

(11) The ***protesters were unable to*** take the prime minister's office and the government were unwilling to use the level of force necessary to disperse them. (BBC December 2, 2013-2.txt)

(12) The protesters had declared Sunday the decisive "V-Day" of what they termed a "people's coup". However, despite clashing with security forces, they ***failed*** to seize more government buildings or unseat Ms Yingluck. (BBC December 1, 2013-2.txt)

Protesters were appraised by news reporter focusing on capacity found in "friendly" (example 10). In terms of imcapacity, the protesters were appraised by news reporter involving "were unable to take the prime minister's office" in example eleven, and "fail" in example twelve.

1.2.2 Propriety

(13) Akanat Promphan, a ***protest spokesman***, said: "We are occupying the finance ministry in a ***non-violent*** and ***peaceful way***, so our supporters around the country can do the same and occupy all government offices." (BBC November 26, 2013-3.txt)

(14) Anti-government ***protesters*** have left ***peacefully*** after they forced their way into the army headquarters in Bangkok and held a demonstration there. (BBC November 29, 2013-1.txt)

(15) ***Hard-core protesters*** had camped out all night at the stadium in central Bangkok where candidate registration was due to take place. (BBC December 23, 2013-1.txt)

(16) The BBC's Jonathan Head says these ***protesters*** are a ***hardcore*** group determined to use everything they can to stop the election. (BBC December 26, 2013-1.txt)

Protesters were appraised by protest spokesmen in example thirteen and news reporter in example fourteen involving propriety shown by "nonviolent" and "peaceful" found in example thirteen and "peacefully" in example fourteen. In terms of impropriety, protesters were appraised by news reporter expressed by "hard-core" in example fifteen and sixteen.

2. CNN

This section was concerned with types of affect and judgement in *CNN* mentioned as follows:

2.1 Types of affect

The results from *CNN* showed many types of affect including 2 tokens of happiness in positive meaning (%7.69), 3 tokens of desire in negative meaning (%11.54), 1 token of security in positive meaning (%3.85), and 20 tokens of satisfaction in negative meaning (%76.92) as illustrated in table 3.

Table 3

Frequency of protesters as the appraiser focusing on affect found in CNN

Affect	Tokens	Percentage
Happiness (positive meaning)	2	7.69
Desire (negative meaning)	3	11.54
Security (positive meaning)	1	3.85
Satisfaction (negative meaning)	20	76.92
Total	26	100.00

2.1.1 Happiness

(17) ***Protesters*** responded with cheers and applause, claiming victory. Some of them ***hugged*** police officers and took photos with them. (CNN December 4, 2013-2.txt)

As illustrated in example seventeen, these political incident occurred before The King's anniversary so the confrontations between protesters and the government officers were less tense. They made protesters happier. They expressed these feelings to the police officers by hugging and taking photo with them.

2.1.2 Desire

(18) Thai ***protesters want PM to quit***. (CNN December 9, 2013-1.txt)

Protesters expressed desire which had negative effects to Yingluck's government. The results revealed that want collocated with political activities in negative meaning. The result in example eighteen showed that protesters expressed desire which had negative effect to Yingluck because they wanted pm to quit.

2.1.3 Security

(19) Akanat said the ***protesters believe*** their current numbers to be in the tens of thousands, perhaps as many as 50,000. (CNN November 26, 2013-1.txt)

In example nineteen, protesters expressed security by using "believe". They believed that there were a lot of supporters in the protest.

2.1.4 Satisfaction

(20) An ***anti-government protester*** blows a whistle in front of Thai flags during a rally at Bangkok's Democracy Monument on Friday, one day after the embattled Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra survived a no-confidence vote in parliament. (CNN December 9, 2013-2.txt)

(21) Thai ***protesters march to oust government***. (CNN November 26, 2013-2.txt)

(22) ***Protesters had gathered*** in the government district of Bangkok this week ***to demand the ouster of the country's prime minister*** and threatened to shut the city down for a month in January. (CNN December 28, 2013-1.txt)

It was found from example twenty that protester expressed dissatisfaction with the government shown by "antigovernment". Besides, dissatisfaction was expressed by action verbs involving political activities. As illustrated in example twenty-one, protesters expressed dissatisfaction with the government by marching. In addition, the result from example twenty-two revealed that protesters expressed dissatisfaction with PM by gathering in the government district.

2.2 Types of judgement

The results from *CNN* revealed many types of judgement involving 1 token of tenacity in positive meaning (%33.33), and 2 tokens of propriety in negative meaning (%66.67) as shown in table 4.

Table 4

Frequency of protesters as the appraised focusing on judgement found in CNN

Types of judgement	Tokens	Percentage
Tenacity (Positive meaning)	1	33.33
Propriety (negative meaning)	2	66.67
Total	3	100.00

2.2.1 Tenacity

(23) ***Undeterred***, ***protesters*** -- with handkerchiefs covering their noses and mouths to ward off the sting of tear gas -- threw rocks across the fence that rings Government House toward the phalanx of riot police on the other side. (CNN December 1, 2013-2.txt)

As shown in example twenty-three involving tenacity, the protesters were appraised by news reporters expressed by "undeterred".

2.2.2 Propriety

(24) "The proposals of the ***protesters*** are ***undemocratic*** and ***unconstitutional***," said Suranand Vejjajiva, a top aide to Yingluck, in an interview with CNN. (CNN December 4, 2013-1.txt)

In example twenty-four focusing on impropriety, The proposals of the protester was appraised by Suranand Vejjajiva who's the government party shown by "undemocratic" and "unconstitutional".

3. Comparison between BBC and CNN

This section dealt with the comparison between BBC and CNN in terms of affect and judgement discussed as follows:

3.1 Types of affect

The results showed similarities and differences between *BBC* and *CNN*. Both *BBC* and *CNN* contained happiness in positive meaning, and desire and satisfaction in negative meaning. In terms of differences, security in negative meaning was found only in *BBC*, and security in positive meaning was found only in *CNN*. (See table 5)

Table 5

Frequency comparison of protesters as the appraiser focusing on affect between BBC and CNN

Affect found in BBC	Tokens	Percentage	Affect found in CNN	Tokens	Percentage
Happiness (positive meaning)	3	3.66	Happiness (positive meaning)	2	7.69
Desire (negative meaning)	9	10.98	Desire (negative meaning)	3	11.54
Security (positive meaning)	1	1.22	Security (positive meaning)	0	0.00
Security (negative meaning)	0	0.00	Security (negative meaning)	1	3.85
Satisfaction (negative meaning)	69	84.15	Satisfaction (negative meaning)	20	76.92

3.2 Types of judgement

The results of this study showed similarities and differences between *BBC* and *CNN*. Propriety in negative meaning was found in *BBC,* and *CNN. In terms of differences,* capacity in positive and negative meaning, and propriety in positive meaning were found only in *BBC*. In addition, tenacity in negative meaning was found only in *CNN*. (See table 6)

Table 6

Frequency comparison of protesters as the appraised focusing on judgement between BBC and CNN

Types of judgement found in BBC	Tokens	Percentage	Types of judgement found in CNN	Tokens	Percentage
Capacity (positive meaning)	1	8.33	Capacity (positive meaning)	0	0.00
Capacity (negative meaning)	3	25.00	Capacity (negative meaning)	0	0.00
Tenacity (Positive meaning)	0	0.00	Tenacity (Positive meaning)	1	33.33
Propriety (positive meaning)	4	33.33	Propriety (positive meaning)	0	0.00
Propriety (negative meaning)	4	33.33	Propriety (negative meaning)	2	66.67

Conclusion and discussion

The purpose of this paper is to use corpus data to analyse and compare appraisal of news reports on protesters as the appraiser and appraised from political conflicts in Thailand between two foreign news agencies. The data has been collected for two months from 31st October to 31st December 2013. In terms of participants, protesters were selected because they played key role in these conflicts and got high frequency of wordlist. The data were compiled from political news from two foreign online newspapers: BBC and CNN. Analysis parts contained many steps: conduct corpus analysis and study co-texts of the key words such as collocation to explore connotations and structures of the appraising items of the protesters in the political conflicts in Thailand. Then, categorize words or phrases that carry evaluation meanings using the Appraisal framework. After that, compare similarities and differences between *BBC* and *CNN*.

In *BBC*, protesters express many types of affect including happiness in positive meaning, desire, security, and satisfaction in negative meaning. Judgement contained capacity in positive and negative meaning, and propriety in positive and negative meaning. In *CNN*, protesters expressed many types of affect: happiness in positive meaning, desire in negative meaning, security in positive meaning, and satisfaction in negative meaning. Besides, judgement was concerned with tenacity in positive meaning, and propriety in negative meaning.

In terms of the comparison between BBC and CNN, The results showed similarities and differences *involving types of affect*. Both *BBC* and *CNN* contained happiness in positive meaning, and desire and satisfaction in negative meaning. However, security in negative meaning was found only in *BBC*, and security in positive meaning was found only in *CNN*. In terms of judgment, Propriety in negative meaning was found in *BBC,* and *CNN*. However, capacity in positive and negative meaning, and propriety in positive meaning were found only in *BBC*. Additionally, tenacity in negative meaning was found only in *CNN*.

The results of this study revealed similar types of attitudinal positioning to those described in Martin (2003), and Martin et al. (2005) including affect and judgement. In addition, affect can be expressed by using verbs and adjectives of emotion. However, appreciation is not found in this study. It may be because the key participant in this work deals with human so the attitudinal positioning may focus on affect and judgement more than appreciation. Besides, the results show that affect can be expressed by action verbs concerned with political activities which differs from those described in Martin (2003), and Martin et al. (2005).

The results support the previous studies that corpus analysis has implication for evaluation in text because corpus-based approach is beneficial in terms of systematic observation of naturally occurring data and decreasing bias, linguistic intuitions and chancy due to a large collection of texts (Baker, 2006, pp. 10-12, 2011, p. 24; Channell, 2003, pp. 39-55).

Further studies can be conducted to explore appraisal of news reports on other key participants as the appraiser and appraised such as government members including Yingluck, Shinawatra, Thaksin Shinawatra, Red-Shirts and Pheu Thai Party, and anti-

government members: Suthep Thaugsuban, Abhisit Vejjajiva, and Democrat Party. In addition, the data are collected from Thai news agencies including *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation to explore the similarities and differences of* appraisal of news reports and methodologically could adopt both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Besides, the future studies are concerned with identity representation of key participants.

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Contact email: aungsuwan1@gmail.com