



Discursive Strategies Used in Thai Daily Newspapers: A Case of the Government's Water Management News

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Abstract

Drawing upon Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study investigates the discursive strategies used by Thai daily newspapers to present news about the government's water management. The purpose is to identify discursive strategies employed in the presentation of the government's endeavor to manage the water crisis in 2011 and to investigate the functions of these strategies in constructing the public's image of the government. In all, 30 pieces of the government's water management news are gathered from the 3 Thai daily newspapers, Thairath, Daily News and Khaosod from November 1, 2011 to February 29, 2012.

The present study is conducted on 2 levels. At the macro level, it adopts Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to reveal the dialectical relationship between the discourse of the news and society.

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At the micro level, the text is analyzed by using approaches in Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to identify discursive strategies employed. The finding indicates that 10 discursive strategies are used, namely 1) naming, 2) transitivity, 3) impersonalization, 4) exclusion, 5) assimilation, 6) metaphor, 7) choice of backgrounding action, 8) verb creating government's credibility, 9) negative lexicalization and 10) choice of representing others voice. These strategies have different communicative functions to help text producers achieve their aims in influencing and shaping audiences' perceptions regarding the government's water management scheme.

Keywords: Discursive Strategies, Critical Discourse Analysis, Thai Daily Newspapers, Government's Water Management News

กลวิธีทางวากกรรมที่ใช้ในหนังสือพิมพ์ไทยรายวัน: กรณีข่าวการบริหารจัดการน้ำของรัฐบาล

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยเรื่องนี้ใช้แนวคิดทางวากกรรมวิเคราะห์เชิงวิพากษ์ (Critical Discourse Analysis หรือ CDA) เพื่อศึกษากลวิธีทางวากกรรมที่ใช้ในหนังสือพิมพ์ไทยรายวันในการนำเสนอข่าวการบริหารจัดการน้ำของรัฐบาล วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัย คือ เพื่อศึกษากลวิธีทางวากกรรมที่หนังสือพิมพ์ใช้ในการนำเสนอความพยายามของรัฐบาลในการแก้ไขวิกฤติน้ำปี 2555 และเพื่อศึกษาหน้าที่ของกลวิธีดังกล่าวที่ใช้ในการประกอบสร้างภาพลักษณ์ของรัฐบาล ต่อประชาชน ข้อมูลที่ใช้ในการศึกษา ได้แก่ หนังสือพิมพ์ไทยรัฐ เดลินิวส์ และข่าวสดระหว่างวันที่ 1 พฤษภาคม 2555 ถึง 29 กุมภาพันธ์ 2556

การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลประกอบด้วย 2 ระดับ ได้แก่ ระดับมหัพภาค (Macro Level) และ ระดับจุลภาค (Micro Level) ระดับมหัพภาคใช้แนวคิดทางวากกรรมวิเคราะห์เชิงวิพากษ์ของ นอร์เเมน แฟร์คลอฟ (Norman Fairclough) เพื่อแสดงให้เห็นถึงความสัมพันธ์แบบวิภาควิธี (Dialectical Relationship) ระหว่างวากกรรมข่าวและสังคม ในระดับจุลภาคใช้แนวคิดทางภาษาศาสตร์ คือ ระบบไวยากรณ์เชิงหน้าที่ (Systematic Functional Linguistics หรือ SFL) เพื่อค้นหากลวิธีทางวากกรรมที่ใช้ในการนำเสนอข่าวการบริหารจัดการน้ำของรัฐบาล ผลการศึกษา พบว่า มีการใช้กลวิธีทางวากกรรมทั้งหมด 10 กลวิธี ได้แก่ 1) การเรียก ชื่อ 2) การนำเสนอตัวผู้กระทำและการกระทำ 3) การใช้บุคคลอิชชูาน 4) การลงทะเบียน

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5) การรวมกลุ่ม 6) การใช้อุบลักษณ์ 7) การปกปิดการกระทำ 8) การใช้คำกริยาเพื่อสร้างความน่าเชื่อให้กับรัฐบาล 9) การใช้ถ้อยคำเชิงลบ และ 10) การนำเสนอความคิดเห็นของบุคคล เมื่อศึกษาหน้าที่ในการสื่อสารของกลวิธีทางวาระทั้ง 10 กลวิธี พบว่า กลวิธีเหล่านี้สามารถชี้นำทัศนคติให้ผู้อ่านเกิดภาพลักษณ์ทั้งในด้านบวกและด้านลบต่อการทำงานของรัฐบาล

คำสำคัญ: กลวิธีทางวาระ วาระรวมวิเคราะห์เชิงวิพากษ์ หนังสือพิมพ์ไทยรายวัน นำการบริหารจัดการน้ำของรัฐบาล

Introduction

At present, the world is experiencing an environmental transformation, as seen in the phenomena of global warming and climate change. Climate change ultimately produces increases in rainfall volume, stream flow and sea level. These changes will certainly lead to more flooding (START, 2011). Thailand is one such country experiencing this phenomenon. From August through December 2011, a change in climate arising from global warming, together with a typical monsoon season, such as tropical storm *Haima*, *Nock-Ten*, *Haitang*, *Nesat* and *Nagae* caused abnormal falls of rains in many areas. The prevalence of these tropical storms then accelerated the severity of the rainfalls which brought an inundation across the Northern, Northeastern and Central portions of Thailand (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Pollution Control Department, 2012). In addition to the heavy rainfall, the water management of the current government was one of the factors causing the 2011 inundation (Ziegler et al., 2012). Similarly, according to Apiprachyasakul (2012), from January to October 2011, rainfall in the Northern and Northeastern provinces and provinces located in the Chao Phraya river basin did not bring on the 2011 Thailand flooding crisis rather, it was the government's inability in water management caused this crisis (Apiprachyasakul, 2012). This severe disaster was reported continuously through the mass media, including newspapers. Thus, during this time, newspaper reporting has played an essential role as it could be a medium of communication between the government and the people in order to deal with the problems caused by the flooding. Nonetheless, the newspaper coverage may not be based only on facts but also on journalism's perspectives (Bennett, 2007). That is, in some cases, the press turned vehemently critical, highlighting personal scandals and focusing on biased attraction and politicians' failures. Therefore, the people's perceptions of the flooding issue are not only shaped by their direct experience and the impressions received from other individuals but also by the newspapers.

Accordingly, the investigation of newspapers' discursive strategies is challenged as readers may not know whether their minds and perceptions are manipulated by linguistic patterns or whether people who will be interviewed, quoted or described in the news reported are systematically organized. In this

context, the issue of water management under the Yingluck government is worth exploring, especially, concerning the flooding disaster in 2011. Specifically, this study will examine headline, subhead and body of the news in order to find out the strategies employed discursively to manipulate people's perceptions and investigate the functions these strategies serve in such communicative event. The study will pursue the following 2 major research questions:

- 1) What are the discursive strategies used in the presentation of the news of the government's water management?
- 2) What functions do the strategies serve in such communicative events?

Theoretical Framework

This study focuses on newspaper's use of language. It employs the Critical Discourse Analysis framework to investigate the dialectical relationship between discourse and society.

Taking a hypothesis of Critical Discourse Analysis as its point of departure, the research argues that discourse has the potential to assign meaning to social entity. With this argument, the study proposes that the analysis of newspaper discourse has the potential to construct the identity of the government.

Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis are new perspective of language study. They aim to investigate the function of actual language use in social context. The goal of the 2 approaches is not only to have insight in the system of language. Rather they aspire to explain the "dialectical" relationship between language and society. With this objective in mind, the 2 see discourse as one of social practices. This section will give an introduction to the rationale of these approaches which form the basis of this research project.

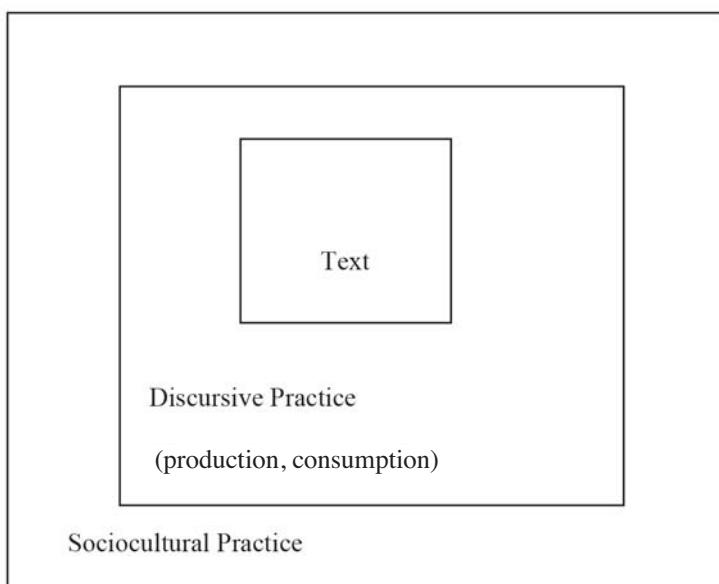
Discourse is a term which has been widely defined. Discourse is the language above a sentence or anything above the sentence (Cook, 2004). Discourse is "language above the sentence or clause, language use or a wider range of social practice dealing with language and/or communication" (Schiffrin et al., 2001). Moreover, discourse can be a constitution of all dimensions of social structure which directly or indirectly shapes and constrains its own norms and convention

as well as the relations, identities and institutions which lie behind them (Fairclough, 1995). Thus, discourse is defined as a multidimensional social phenomenon. In this study, the term discourse refers to the spoken and written language through which a newspaper presents the government's water management news. Specifically, this study is premised on the assumption that the language used in newspapers reflects asymmetrical power in controlling people's perceptions. That is to say, the existence of newspaper power is mainly concerned with discourse domination by elite groups or institutions through exercising the power of language which basically not only has the potential to control people's minds, but indirectly their actions (van Dijk, 2008). Following van Dijk's understanding (2008), power is a property of relations between social groups, intuitions or organizations. Hence, it deals with social power not individual power. As noted by Hardy & Phillips (2002), power is not something connected to individuals or groups, but represents a complex web of relations determined by systems of knowledge constituted in discourse. More precisely, the control is exercised by one group or institution (or its members) over the actions and/or the minds of (the members of) another group, thus the freedom of others' actions is limited (van Dijk, 2008). In order to better understand how newspapers constitute the power of language and control people's minds, the study relies on the hypothesis that discourse is socio-culturally constituted and constitutive.

Discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure (Fairclough, 1992). What individuals have said, heard, seen, written, expressed, exchanged or created is based on their knowledge, value, and beliefs which are shaped by social activities. Johnstone (2008) states that discourse can be an abstract system of rules or structural relationships, such as what words should be written; what behaviors should be acted upon or what feelings should be expressed. As a result, discourse is used to constitute ways of talking, thinking, writing and expressing in social activities. Thus, discourse is a set of expressions of abstract knowledge that is socially constituted. In other words, society constructs discourse. At the same time, this type of knowledge gets produced, reproduced and transformed through social activities. That is, for instance, ways of talking or thinking which are constituted can then constitute ideologies (a set of interrelated ideas or a system

of belief), norms and conventions which serve to manipulate power in society. As a result, discourse is socially constitutive. In other words, discourse constructs society.

Therefore, in order to understand the power of discourse in shaping public perception about the government's water management, this study employs Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and employs his 3 interrelated components: text, discursive practice and social practice.



Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model for Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995: 59)

Based on the model mentioned, the study begins with the analysis of the sociocultural practice of the news about the government's water management. Sociocultural practice refers to a social or cultural context in which the event is embedded. The sociocultural practice is analyzed by examining the wide context of water management in Thailand since this dimension can be a condition which leads the way to produce the government's water management text and the interpretation of that text. Then, the study moves to discursive practice by analyzing the production of the 3 Thai newspaper texts and the consumption of these texts by the Thai readers. At the level of text, the author investigates news texts from the 3 Thai daily newspapers by selecting only the issues dealing with the

government's water management news. It analyzes the way in which the reported news presents the event (water management issue) and the social relations, as well as the ways they construct particular versions of reality, social identities and social relations. Therefore, the following selections will be analyzed in this study:

- 1) Interactional control (Fairclough, 1992: 152) - the relationship between speakers, including the question of who sets the conversation agenda;
- 2) Ethos (Fairclough, 1992: 166) - how identities are constructed through language and aspects of the text body;
- 3) Lexical choices (Fairclough, 1992: 190) - how words are used to describe and explain people's behaviors, emotions and feelings. For instance, the use of positive or negative nouns, verbs and adjectives;
- 4) Grammar (Fairclough, 1992: 152) - how events and processes are connected or not connected with the subjects and object; for instance, the use of the active and passive voice.

In addition, before analyzing the texts, the researcher will first transliterate the data as transliteration will maintain the particular Thai language features of the news discourse, such as the use of specific figures of speech. Then, the text will be translated into English.

Research Methodology

1) Data Collection

The study analyzes newspaper coverage of the government's water management of the 2011 inundation. Data to be analyzed were collected from the 3 Thai popular daily newspapers including: *Thairath*, *Daily News* and *Khaosod* from November 1, 2011 to February 29, 2012. There were 30 pieces of newspaper texts related to the government's water management news.

2) Data Analysis

The analysis employs Fairclough's CDA by dividing it into 2 levels: macro and micro levels. The macro level investigates sociocultural practice and discursive practice of the discourse on the government's water management news. Meanwhile,

the micro level analyzes texts as the texts will evidence discursive strategies employed in this news. At this level, the author uses Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL), one direction of textual analysis, to analyze the discursive strategies which result in the discursive functions of such strategies i.e. what does such strategy do in a specific communicative context. In this regard, the study combines various approaches evolving around the concept of discursive strategies. For example:

Transitivity

Transitivity describes the verbal structure of the sentence. It broadly refers to who does what to whom and how. It helps reveal who plays an important role in a particular clause (agent/participant) and who receives the consequence of the action (affected/patient). When analyzing the agency (who does what to whom) and the action (what gets done), the following 2 aspects of meaning should be taken into consideration:

- Participants consist of both the “agent” of the process as well as the “affected” who are at the receiving end of the action; participant might be people, things or abstract concepts

- Processes are represented by verbs and verbal group, such as material processes (processes of doing, such as arrest, kill and attack), mental processes (processes of sensing, such as understand, like, and see) and verbal processes (expressions through the use of verb “to say” and its many synonyms, such as explain, suggest, advise, reveal and tell).

Lexis

Lexis refers to the word used. Choice is manifested in the language of the news in terms of the vocabulary used to present stories in the media. Each newspaper has a numerous choice of words and combinations of words which might be used in order to present a story to its audiences. In order to begin to access how vocabulary may illustrate a set of priorities in the news, one needs to be aware of the difference between denotation and connotation. A literal meaning of a word is called denotation while connotation is the set of expectations and associations which are attached to a word over time within a particular culture,

and it may be positive or negative (Conboy, 2007).

Metaphor

Metaphor means the description of one phenomenon in terms of another. That is, when a speaker utters or writes metaphorically, it means what s/he means differs from what s/he says or writes. A clear understanding of metaphor can be grasped from an examination of the following *Guardian* newspaper example: "SPURS GO TO WAR OVER ARNESSEN". This headline does not mean that the football club is literally going to war, but rather they are performing in a manner that is as hostile as if they were (Conboy, 2007).

Naming

Naming is a perspective of language surrounded with social rules. In most cultures, it is possible to cause offence by adopting the wrong naming strategy toward people. The naming forms vary. For example, first name only (e.g. Elizabeth, Robert); short form of the first name only (e.g. Liz, Rob); first name + last name (e.g. Elizabeth Smart); title + first name (e.g. Ms, Mrs, Miss Elizabeth, Mr. Robert). In addition, these forms of naming also depend on context (classroom, job interview, ritual, ceremony, informal chat and trade) and relationship (formal, informal, friends, relations, strangers, superiors and inferiors). Therefore, naming, context and relationship operate together to create a complex series of meanings and very specific effects in newspaper discourse (Reah, 2002).

Position of action

In order to find out the position of the action in the news coverage, Reah (2002) suggests looking at the structure of the clause by means of a useful analytical tool--*theme*. Theme refers to the way in which the relative essential of the subject matter is mentioned. That is to say, the first main construction of a sentence is the theme of the sentence. Although there is the grammatical subject, there is no necessary relationship between the theme and the grammatical component in the aspects of the theme. The following example illustrates this pattern: "*One Friday night I go to the market*". Here, the theme of this sentence is focused on time "*One Friday night*" and "*I go to the market*" is placed in a subordinate position (Reah, 2002).

Representation of social actors

The social actors can be represented through exclusion-inclusion (representations include or exclude actors to suit the interest and purposes in relation to the readers), genericization and specification (social actors can be represented as classes, or as specific, identifiable individuals), assimilation (social actors can be referred to as groups, such as *"Australians tend to be skeptical about admitting "Muslims"*), nomination (social actors can be identified by name, such as the use of proper noun (Harris) for formal, semiformal (Jack Harris) and informal (Jack), impersonalization (social actor can be represented by abstract nouns or by concrete nouns whose meanings do not include the semantic feature "human") (Van Leeuwan, 2008).

Representation of other voices

The choice of incorporating and representing other voices refers to the incorporation of bits and pieces of other discourse, other styles and other voices (Johnstone, 2008). In other words, this choice involves the reference of others' speeches, such as the use of reported speech.

Research Findings

In order to complete the CDA framework and thereby explain the newspaper discourse usage in constructing PM Yingluck's government identity, this research analysis is divided into 2 levels: the macro level and the micro level. At the macro level, the sociocultural practice of the news on the government's water management is analyzed as this dimension could be a condition which leads to the way the 3 Thai daily newspapers produce the government's water management text and the interpretation of that text by Thai readers. Then, the analysis moves to discursive practice concerned with the production and consumption of the newspaper text. At the micro level, the analysis examines the text which is presented in the 3 Thai popular daily newspapers.

Macro Level

Sociocultural Practice

Thailand has a tropical savanna climate and basically 3 seasons: the rainy season (May-October), the dry season (November-April) and the winter season (mid-October and mid-February). Regional differences across Thailand can be given according to current differences in rainfall: from dry and highly seasonal conditions in Northeast, Northern and Central Thailand to the less strongly seasonal moist tropics of the southern peninsula. During the winter season, the Northeast brings cool and dry air across Northern and Northeastern sections of the country (Aon Benfield, 2012). Because of these seasons, Thailand has been inextricably subjected to floods and droughts. When rainfalls are unusual in timing or severity, the excess water becomes a flood. But, when there is not enough rainfall, a drought will arise. Hence, water management in Thailand is very significant as it can reduce the effects of both an inundation and a drought.

Initially, Thailand's water management involved the Royal-initiated projects; for instance, Monkey's Cheek (*Kaem-Ling*), Artificial Rainmaking (*Fon-Luang*), the Pa Sak Chonlasit Dam project and Khlong Lat Pho Floodgate project. The majority of these projects were set underway through the initiative of His Majesty the King and the Royal Irrigation Department (RID) (Apiprachyasakul, 2012). The involvement of the national or provincial governments, the business sector or even the industrial zone did not seem to be included. That is, until 2011, this year was a very remarkable one in Thailand as the country endured enormous devastation in the wake of the worst flooding in at least five decades. The main Thailand floods of 2011, which took place between late July and early December, first became widespread in Northern parts of the country as a result of the start of the typical monsoon season. However, the arrival of the leftovers of Tropical Storm Nock-ten in late July accelerated the severity of the rainfall (and floods) across the Northern, Northeastern and Central portions of Thailand (At the Mercy of Our Politicians, 2011).

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, who had meantime taken office, had to tackle this disaster. As mentioned earlier, Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, Thailand's

first female Prime Minister, has never before participated in the political realm, and is accused of being the clone or nominee of her brother, former premier Thaksin Shinawatra. She was sworn into office in early August, 2011. Consequently, the 2011 flood crisis was her first major test to prove her ability to manage this national disaster as well as dismiss the allegations of being her brother's puppet (Dam, Water Management Designed for Older Era, 2011). In handling this flood situation, the premier had set up the Flood Relief Operation Center (FROC) intended to deliver aid and to coordinate water management with other agencies, including the Royal Irrigation Department (RID) and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

However, FROC's water management seems to have been inefficient as it could not respond to the situation. Hence, the public began turning to the mass media, such as television, radio and newspaper to cope with this crisis. An additional factor worthy of mention is that the premier Yingluck Shinawatra, in charge of the central government comes from Phue Thai party while MR Sukhumbhand Paribatra, the governor of Bangkok, comes from the opposition Democrat party. Ultimately this party difference meant that the floods were no longer just a natural disaster issue. Rather, they became the focus of a ferocious political game between the government and the opposition on water management, raising the question of whether the floods were due to a natural cause or to water mismanagement. If it had been the latter, the question needing to be answered was who took responsibility for this tragedy. In this regard, this questioning was worthy of being presented through the mass media, including the newspapers.

Discursive Practice

For the discursive practice of the 3 Thai daily newspapers, the study found that the 3 Thai daily newspapers are likely to present their news by giving voice of elite people. The voices of elite people here mean the voices from Prime Minister, government agencies and member of government. The study found that journalists select to present the voices from government agencies and members of the government as these people are responsible for resolving the problem of flooding and have power to tell a story to the public. However, in most cases,

the voices that are not represented are those of people suffering from the flood. Though they are directly affected in this disaster, their voices are obviously unimportant in the news presentation. In addition, newspapers choose to present this news continuously. The presentation of news about the flood reflects the criteria of news value which is deemed most important to the 3 daily newspapers. The criteria of news value here is the threshold where the greater the impact and the more likely it is to be selected. In addition, when analyzing the overall news contents, the study found that the 3 newspapers presented the government's water management news in the same light. That is, the newspapers are likely to present the government's side, namely the opinions of the premier and water management experts who are responsible for tackling the water crisis without presenting voices from general public or flooding victim. Text producers also provide background information and tell current position of the persons whom they mention. For the news content, text producers present about how the government manages water and how to handle inundation the next time. Note that the current flood was not mentioned much in the news. Though the news about the government preventive plan creates the image of the government as being proactive, it distracts the people of the flood disaster that they currently face. This kind of presentation can be interpreted as the government attempt to cover up their current inability to solve the immediate problem.

Micro Level

Text Analysis

30 samples of in-depth analysis are presented. The examples are classified according to approaches evolving around the concept of discursive strategies. After the analysis was conducted, the findings show that 10 strategies are employed in the presentation of the government's water management news. They are 1) naming, 2) transitivity, 3) impersonalization, 4) negative lexicalization, 5) exclusion, 6) metaphor, 7) assimilation, 8) choice of representing other voices, 9) choice of backgrounding action and 10) verb creating government's credibility. Table 1 illustrates the discursive strategies found in the presentation of the government's water management news.

Table 1: Discursive Strategies Found in the Presentation of the Government's Water Management News

Discursive Strategies	Transliteration	Translation	Original Version
1. Naming	<u>Crab</u> guarantee plan management water	<u>Phu</u> guaranteed a water management plan.	บริการน้ำดีแผนการจัดการน้ำ (เดลินิวส์ 30/01/55)
2. Transitivity	Prime Minister <u>crab reveal</u> plan take hand form sustain	Prime Minister <u>Phu revealed</u> a plan to tackle sustainability.	นายกฯ <u>เมย์</u> แผนรับมือแบบยั่งยืน (ไทยรัฐ 22/01/55)
3. Impersonalization	<u>Bangkok wade</u> plan protect water form integration	<u>Bangkok forged</u> <u>ahead</u> with a plan for integrative flood prevention.	กทม. <u>ลุย</u> แผนป้องกันน้ำแบบบูรณาการ (ไทยรัฐ 12/12/54)
4. Negative lexicalization	Senator compress FROC administration plan water <u>bad</u>	Senator condemned FROC for <u>insufficient</u> water plan management	ส.ว. อัด ศปก. บริหารแผนน้ำท่วยว่า (เดลินิวส์ 22/11/54)
5. Exclusion	Drive move plan administrate water flood	A water management plan was expedited.	บริหารน้ำท่วม
6. Metaphor	<u>Slash</u> plan bad agency muddle	The plan was <u>criticized</u> as inefficient, and the agency was denounced as disorderly.	ฉะแผนท่วยหน่วยงานน้ำ (เดลินิวส์ 4/11/2554)
7. Assimilation	<u>Government</u> enumerate plan mother chapter administrate manage water pass TV Pool	<u>Government</u> explained a master plan for water management on TV Pool.	รัฐบาล แจงแผนแม่บท บริหารจัดการน้ำผ่านทีวีพูล (ไทยรัฐ 22/01/55)
8. Choice of representing other voices	<u>Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand</u> (EGAT) request conrmed that	<u>Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand</u> (EGAT) confirmed that water	กฟผ. ขออธิบายว่า การบริหารจัดการน้ำมีการดำเนินการอย่างรอบคอบ

Table 1: Discursive Strategies Found in the Presentation of the Government's Water Management News (continued)

Discursive Strategies	Transliteration	Translation	Original Version
	administration manage water has operation carefully by faculty subcommittee and faculty do work that involve	management was operated carefully by the subcommittee and working group concerned.	โดยคณะกรรมการฯ และคณะกรรมการฯ ที่เกี่ยวข้อง ^(เดลินิวส์ 28/01/55)
9. Choice of backgrounding action	<u>When time 10.30,</u> <u>date 7 Feb, at</u> <u>Government House,</u> Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, the prime minister give interview after be subject meeting cabinet that at meeting committee give consent plan walk late down area for follow plan management water (Tour Parrot) in during date 13-17 Feb already	<u>1.30 pm, on Feb 7,</u> <u>at Government</u> <u>House,</u> the premier Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra was interviewed after presiding at a cabinet meeting. The cabinet agreed upon a field trip to keep track of the government's water management plan (Flood Tour) from Feb 13-17.	<u>เมื่อเวลา 13.30 น.</u> <u>วันที่ 7 ก.พ. ที่ทำเนียบ</u> <u>รัฐบาล</u> น.ส. ยิ่งลักษณ์ ชินวัตร นายกรัฐมนตรี ให้สัมภาษณ์ภายหลัง เป็นประชานการประชุม ^{ครม.} ว่าที่ประชุม ครม. ให้ความเห็นชอบแผนการ เดินสายลงพื้นที่เพื่อติดตาม ^{แผนบริหารจัดการน้ำ} (ทัวร์นกแก้ว) ในระหว่าง ^{วันที่ 13-17 ก.พ. แล้ว} ^(เดลินิวส์ 08/02/55)
10. Verb creating the government's credibility	“Kittiratt” <u>emphasize</u> mother chapter management water near finish <u>guarantee</u> year next water no flood area economy	“Kittiratt” <u>stressed</u> that a master plan for water management was nearly complete and <u>guaranteed</u> that next year the economic zones will not be inundated.	“กิตติรัตน์” <u>ย้ำ</u> แผนแม่บท บริหารจัดการน้ำใกล้เสร็จ ^{การันตี} หน้าน้ำไม่ท่วม ^{พื้นที่ ศก.} (เดลินิวส์ 12/12/11)

Each discursive strategy noted in Table 1 will be explained as follows:

1) In naming, generally, calling a person's nickname is likely to use in an informal situation. However, this context is considered as a formal situation. As a result, presenting only nickname of Ms. Yingluck is the way to construct her image as an individual, not as the PM of the country. More importantly, choosing to call her by her nickname instead of by her first name shows that the author is restraining from giving her due respect since calling someone by a nickname is the practice that people use with equals.

2) In transitivity, the text producer uses the verbal verb (a process of saying) "reveal" in order to convey his/her message to the receiver. The authors utilize the verbal process to portray the way in which the government makes an effort in managing water. This process can appeal the audience's perception to connect the political beliefs and possibility in managing water.

3) In impersonalization, Bangkok is not used to refer to a particular province, but to the people who are prototypically associated with that division. By impersonalizing Bangkok, the author is able to conceal who the actors are. This allows the agents behind the events to be suppressed as it is not clear who is presented as responsible.

4) In negative lexicalization, words always convey feelings and emotions. They can also highlight the significance of the message and arouse emotion. Here, the word "*insufficient*" can degenerate the government's water management plan in the eyes of the majority of the public.

5) In exclusion, the author excludes the actor as she/he assumes that readers themselves can already know who is referred to from the context of the story. Generally speaking, in Thai society, the public have a common concept of the Thai government which consists of the 2 main power parties: the Democrat party and the Pheu Thai party. At present, public knows who governs the country (Pheu Thai party), and who is the opposition party (Democrat party). Therefore, in this sentence "*A water management plan was expedited.*.", although the actor is omitted, the reader can know which parties are being talked about.

6) In metaphor, the author uses a metaphor as it enables her/him to exaggerate for the sake of emphasis. The author uses the verb “*criticized*” which means “~~打~~” to convey a physical action. Though there is no a physical battle, this word gives a sense of a verbal battle.

7) In assimilation, social actors can also be referred to as groups (assimilation). The word “*government*” is simply a collectivized group. That is to say, the newspaper does not give personal details of the participants classified as the “*government*” as such details could humanize them.

8) In choice of representing other voices, the author deploys the use of the “*Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT)*” in order to confirm that the government’s work was being operated carefully. This way can enhance the public’s confidence in government’s policy used in water management.

9) In choice of backgrounding action, the author focuses on prepositional phrases. The focus on place, time and date are represented as the theme of the sentence. The author foregrounds these prepositional phrases in order to background the actions of the actor (Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra). The text producer pushes the actors to the back of the sentences into the subordinate position behind the prepositional phrases. This is one grammatical strategy for backgrounding the actions of the actors and foregrounding the location of place, time and date. Therefore, using the choice of backgrounding action of the actor can allow the text producers to give the texts a superior or inferior status of information given to readers.

10) In verb creating the government’s credibility, verbs which are used together with the main actor and theme have played an important role in strengthening the credibility for the audiences. Here, the use of the verbs “*stressed*” and “*guaranteed*” can make the public feel credibility toward what the government have done since these word presuppose the existence of a plan.

In addition, each strategy serves specific functions which can be beneficial in the context of the government’s water management news. That is to say, the total function of these strategies can construct a most effective way for the government’s water management news. For example, to avoid mentioning the actor, the text producer uses impersonalization and assimilation as these strategies can conceal the

actor. Based on the texts appearing in the government's water management news, 8 communicative functions can serve text producers' aims as follows:

1. To conceal actors, the text producers employ impersonalization and assimilation.
2. To show authors' attitudes toward persons, the text producers employ naming.
3. To create and support a government's credibility, the text producers employ verbs creating credibility and other voices.
4. To convey physical action, the text producers employ metaphor.
5. To manipulate readers' perception on the action of actors, the text producers employ transitivity highlighting the government's action.
6. To omit the actor as it is assumed readers already know the context, the text producers employ exclusion.
7. To background action, the text producers employ the choice of backgrounding action.
8. To highlight the malpractice of the government, the text producers employ negative lexicalization.

Discussion

To disclose what discursive strategies are used and what function are served in such communicative event, it is necessary to see the relationship among sociocultural practice, discursive practice and text according to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

According to the analysis of the sociocultural practice of the news on the government's water management, the year 2011 was a very remarkable one in Thailand as the country faced enormous devastation in the wake of the most severe flooding in at least five decades. Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra who had taken office in the meantime had to tackle this disaster. To do this, the primer established the Flood Relief Operation Center (FROC) to deliver aid and to coordinate with other agencies, such as the Royal Irrigation Department (RID) and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. However, FROC seemed to be incapable of managing the water because it could not react to this crisis. In

addition, as mentioned earlier, premier Yingluck came from Phue Thai party while MR Sukhumbhand Paribatra, the governor of Bangkok, come from the Democracy party. This means that water management was no longer just an issue of a natural disaster. Instead, it became a part of a political game between the government and the opposition. In this regard, the 3 Thai daily newspapers selected to focus on this situation, resulting in the discursive practice of the newspapers.

Based on the analysis of the discursive practice, the coverage tends to present the government's water management news in the same direction. That is, the 3 Thai daily newspapers are tended to present only one particular group of governmental representatives responsible for this issue, such as the premier, and water management experts without presenting the public's side, such as victims. In the presentation of the government's water management news, the text producers often present how to manage water and to cope with flooding the next time. Thus, according to the analysis of discursive practice, it can be seen that the content or structure of this news is presented in a similar manner. Nonetheless, when the author employs the notion of discourse approaches to analyze the texts of the government's water management, it was found that there is a power within the texts which is beyond the texts themselves. That is to say, news reporting has power, and the power of it does not only reside in the text on the surface level. The analysis shows that issues which get presented in the news are somewhat controlled and designed by the production of the news: i.e. selection of voice and linguistic patterns. Therefore, as the language used is constructed by the text producers, they can use only discursive strategies as one of the means to achieve their aims.

Based on textual analysis, the discourse on the government' water management is proposed not only to convey a certain kind of meaning, but also to shape public perception about the event. This is one example of discourse as a means of power abuse. It guides people to think or judge the government's water management news according to the same perspective as the newspapers do. For example, the presentation of a proactive action of the government in managing water by the use of the verbs "stressed" and "guaranteed" can make what the government has done feel credible to the public (see item 10 in Table 1). Power abuse here refers to a hidden purpose

of the newspapers to construct some realities or ideologies. According to van Dijk (2008), the existence of newspaper power is mainly concerned with certain institution's discourse domination through exercising the power of language which basically not only has the potential to control people's minds, but indirectly controls their actions. In this regard, discourse domination deals with how to dominate language in order to achieve text producers' aims. Hence, the language employed to achieve those particular aims is called discursive strategies. That is, discursive strategies are simply examples of how language can be used to achieve social purposed. They are textual evidences which testify the hypothesis of CDA.

The discursive strategies used in the discourse of the government's water management are variously employed. Each strategy has its own particular function in terms of action and power to influence the readers' perception. The text producers are likely to present this issue both through concealing the actor, expressing the authors' attitudes and at the same time increasing the credibility of the government's activities in water management. As can be seen, in order to craft positive representation or wording, the newspapers employ some words, such as "confirm" and "guarantee" which can create the public's perception of the government's credibility or the use of transitivity to place emphasis upon the government's endeavors in water management. On the other hand, to create a negative representation, the text producers use the choice of negative lexicalization in order to denigrate the government's water management in the eyes of public. However, the use of positive or negative representations or particular wording in the newspaper coverage may not lead to a similar interpretation by the readers as what they interpret also relies on their personal past experience or prior knowledge.

Recommendations

Based on the study of the discursive strategies used in Thai daily newspapers: a case of the government's water management news, the researcher would like to provide 2 aspects for further investigation. Firstly, it would be constructive to analyze texts concerning discursive strategies used in other newspapers or fields which analyze the representation of social actors, and/or actions as well as the wording employed. Secondly, it would be worthwhile to

adopt this strategic analysis process to examine a variety of editorials in order to reveal how these strategies help the editors convey their messages more successfully.

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