

วิกฤตการณ์การเมืองไทยปี 2556-2557 ที่สะท้อนในการ์ตูนการเมืองไทย

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THE 2013-14 THAI POLITICAL CRISIS AS REFLECTED IN THAI POLITICAL CARTOONS

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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้เป็นการวิเคราะห์ด้วยทฤษฎีการสื่อสารเพื่อศึกษาการ์ตูนการเมือง 84 ชิ้นที่ตีพิมพ์ในช่วงวิกฤตการณ์การเมืองไทยปี 2556-2557 จากหนังสือพิมพ์ 4 ฉบับ ได้แก่ บางกอกโพสต์ เดอะเนชั่น ไทยรัฐ และเดลินิวส์ โดยใช้สัญศาสตร์ ทฤษฎีการตูน ทฤษฎีอารมณ์ขัน และการวิเคราะห์วาทกรรมเชิงวิพากษ์ ผลการวิจัยพบว่าในการ์ตูนแบบหลายช่องนักเขียนการ์ตูนสร้างอารมณ์ขันโดยใช้ความไม่ลงรอยกันและละเมิดหลักการของการร่วมมือกันของคู่สนทนา ประการที่สอง ความแตกต่างระหว่างหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษ ได้แก่ 1) การ์ตูนส่วนใหญ่ในหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาไทยเป็นแบบหลายช่อง ในขณะที่การ์ตูนส่วนใหญ่ในหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นแบบช่องเดียว 2) การ์ตูนส่วนใหญ่ในหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาไทยมีอารมณ์ขัน แต่การ์ตูนทั้งหมดในหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาอังกฤษไม่มีอารมณ์ขัน 3) สัญลักษณ์ส่วนใหญ่ในการ์ตูนเกี่ยวข้องกับฝ่ายต่อต้านรัฐบาล และ 4) การ์ตูนส่วนใหญ่ในหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาไทยเน้นด้านลบของฝ่ายต่อต้านรัฐบาล แต่การ์ตูนเกือบทั้งหมดในหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาอังกฤษเน้นสิ่งที่เป็นด้านลบของฝ่ายสนับสนุนรัฐบาล โดยสรุปคือ การ์ตูนแสดงให้เห็นถึงการแบ่งฝ่ายทางการเมืองที่รุนแรงของนักเขียนการ์ตูนที่อาจสร้างความเกลียดชังและความแตกแยกทางสังคมให้แก่ผู้คนในประเทศได้

คำสำคัญ: การ์ตูน หนังสือพิมพ์ วิกฤตการณ์ทางการเมือง สัญศาสตร์ ประเทศไทย

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate 84 political cartoons published during the 2013-14 Thai political crisis from four newspapers: *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation*, *Thai Rath*, and *Daily News*, by using semiotics, theories of cartoons, theories of humor, and critical discourse analysis. According to the data, it was found that in multi-panel cartoons, the cartoonists create humor

by using incongruity and flouting maxims of Cooperative Principle. Secondly, the differences between Thai and English language newspapers include 1) most of the cartoons in the Thai language newspapers are in multi panels while most of the cartoons in the English language newspapers are in one panel, 2) most of the cartoons in the Thai language newspapers contain humor but all of the cartoons in the English language newspapers contain no humor, 3) most of the signifiers in the cartoons are related to the anti-government side, and 4) most of the cartoons in the Thai language newspapers emphasized negative things of the anti-government side but nearly all of the cartoons in the English language newspapers emphasize negative things of the pro-government side. Finally, the cartoons show strong political partisanship of the cartoonists that may create hatred and social fragmentation among people in the country.

Keywords: cartoon, newspaper, political crisis, semiotics, Thailand

Introduction

Thailand is a country which has faced a number of political protests for several decades which due to various complicated causes. Since the end of 2013, Thailand has embarked on a new phase of the political struggle between two competing forces that have destabilized the country. One force is widely known as the Yellow Shirt. Another force is commonly known as the Red Shirt (Prasirtsuk, 2015). During the political crisis, there were protests against Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra's government from November 2013 to May 2014. The protests were organized by the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC), a political pressure group set up and led by Suthep Thaugsuban, former Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary General of the Democrat Party (Tan, 2014). The protest was ended on May 22, 2014 by a coup that removed the government and placed General Prayuth Chan-ocha as acting prime minister.

News about the crisis was presented in every mass media, but newspaper is still the one which is used by a great deal of people to seek for information. Besides serious political news column in newspaper, there is political cartoon column in almost every newspaper. In Thailand, there are political cartoons in every top-selling newspaper, both published in Thai and English languages. In addition, it is known that these newspapers tend to draw cartoons which support their favorite politicians and political parties or groups, and against the others. Thus, their cartoons were totally different in terms of the political and public opinions

expressed during the 2013-14 political crisis. The cartoons in this study were published in the two top-selling English newspapers of the country: *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*, and the two top-selling Thai newspapers: *Thai Rath* and *Daily News*.

Research Objective and Research Questions

The study is a textual analysis, specifically examines political cartoons published in Thai language newspapers – *Thai Rath* and *Daily News* – and English language newspapers – *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post*. They were chosen based on their representation of the mass media that constantly scrutinizes and interprets political situations, as well as the readers they serve.

This study examined cartoons in the four newspapers with specific focus on Suthep Thaugsuban and Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, as the two main figures of the crisis, published during the rally of the PDRC from November 1, 2013 to May 22, 2014 (the day that the Royal Thai Armed Forces staged a coup). This period was chosen to reflect the beginning and subsequent development of protests organized by PDRC. The data were analyzed using semiotics, theories of cartoons, theories of humor, and the ideological square, in order to answer the following four research questions:

- 1) How do political cartoonists create humor in their cartoons?
- 2) What kinds of humor do political cartoonists use in their cartoons?
- 3) What are the differences between Thai political cartoons published in Thai and English language newspapers?
- 4) What ideologies underpin Thai political cartoons published in the four newspapers?

Literature Review

Political Cartoons

The political cartoon comprises of a very specific genre, with its own history, distinctive styles, conventions, and communicative purposes (El Refaie, 2009). Normally, it is an illustration in a single frame, published on the editorial pages of a newspaper. A current political issue or event, a social trend, or a famous personality, are commonly addressed by cartoons in a way that takes a stand or presents a specific point of view. They are not always

humorous, but they certainly contain an element of irony or at least something incongruous or surprising.

DeSousa and Medhurst (1982) state that cartoon may be a significant medium for the information of public opinion on important social or political issues and they provide subtle frameworks for examining the life and political processes. Abraham (2009) explains that cartoons are used as a tool to transform complex and obscure social or political events or situations into quick and easily understandable descriptions that promote comprehension of the nature of social or political issues or events or situations. In doing so, cartoons present the public with clear visual descriptions of deliberately exaggerated portions of reality with an aim to reveal the meaning and essence of social or political events. Moreover (Jabbar, 2009) believes that political cartoon is a visual language comprising verbal and nonverbal signs that are full of meanings.

Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs. According to Saussure, a sign is anything that signifies, or has meaning(s) within a particular code and a given context. Thus, content in all modern and contemporary media are certain data for semiotic analysis (Mazid, 2008).

According to Chandler (2013), in semiotics, denotation and connotation are the two terms used to describe the relationship between the signifier and the signified. Denotation refers to the definitional, literal, commonsense meaning of a sign which is a meaning that can probably be found in a dictionary. In contrast, connotation is defined as a type of signs (signified) relating to socio-cultural and personal associations of the person interpreting it.

Barthes uses the term ‘connotation’ to define what kind of ideology signs refer to. In addition, his theory of connotative meaning was basically influenced by the work of Saussure. However, much of Saussure’s work is primarily concerned with language system (first-order system of sign in Barthes’ terms) or denotative meaning, while Barthes’ work mainly focuses on myth (second-order system of sign in Barthes’ terms) or connotative meaning (Griffin, 2012). In this sense, the sign is involved in a three-part relationship: the signifier, the signified, and the sign. A sign is the relationship between a signifier – a sound or mark – and a signified – a concept. The concept has two orders of signification. In the second order, the sign system of the first is inserted into the value system of the culture (Barthes, 1972).

Theories of Cartoon

Hempelmann and Samson (2008) explain that cartoons are understood as a humor-carrying visual/visual-verbal picture, containing at least one incongruity that is playfully resolvable in order to understand their punch line. The style of cartoons is most often characterized by simple lines, exaggerated features, as well as sketch-like and simplified figures.

In addition, there is a functional approach of political cartoons proposed by DeSousa and Medhurst (1982). They identify four main functions of political cartoons as follows:

- 1) An entertainment function derives from the ability of cartoons to make people laugh at individuals or situations.
- 2) An aggression-reduction function derives from the nature of cartoons to provide a symbolic channel for the public to express its frustrations against government, social leaders, politicians, and so on.
- 3) An agenda-setting function provides readers with a sense of the most notable topics or issues in society.
- 4) A framing function is the product of its spatial limitation and therefore its need to present complex social issues in a single frame that captures the essence of an issue.

Furthermore, semiotics can be applied to understanding how images work. It is essential to see that communication through icons, indexes, and symbols involves several kinds of inference. Peirce identifies three main kinds of inference (Oller & Giardetti, 1999) as follows:

The first inference is abduction which is the most basic form of inference that any icon resembles a particular object. Thus, abduction is mainly based on resemblances, and they are always grounded in the inspection of sensory signs. (Oller & Giardetti, 1999 p, 95). An example of an icon is a photograph of a person.

The second inference is induction. Inductive inferences take the material form of one or more abductions and apply it to subsequent abductions. Thus, they involve associating a number of abductions (Oller & Giardetti, 1999, p, 96). Since associations require indexes to make the connections, inductive inferences are considered indexical in nature. For example, smoke is an index of fire.

The third inference is deductions which are based on fully abstracted meanings found in conventional symbols and in their associated conceptualizations. As long as the meaning

or the definition of the symbol is understood correctly, inferences that are based strictly on that definition will have all the validity of the symbol to support it. For example, traffic lights and flags are symbols. Thus, pictures that contain printed symbols or iconic forms of symbols may help identify their meaning and enable higher levels of analytical communication. This may account for the predominant use of visual symbols that act figuratively and metaphorically in cartoons.

Theories of Humor

Ross (2005) states that, for humor, the context is essential for determining whether a person finds something is funny or not. Furthermore, the features of language that have the potential to make people laugh can be examined. The incongruity theory focuses on the element of surprise. It is believed that humor is created out of a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke. Thus, much humor is composed of an ambiguity, or double meaning, which intentionally misleads the audience, followed by a punch line.

Ross (2005) argues that unintentional humor may be caused by some lapse in expression while deliberate humor is carefully planned, often to the exact wording and timing. Moreover, David Crystal comments in the Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language (1987) that ‘variations in self-expression are most noticeable in those areas of language use where great care is being taken, such as literature and humor.’

In addition, Ross (2005) identifies elements of humor as follows:

- There is a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke.
- The conflict is caused by an ambiguity at some level of language.
- The punch line is surprising, as it is not the expected interpretation, but it resolves the conflict.

The Cooperative Principle and Humor Theory

Grice (1975) believes that conversation is guided by what he calls the Cooperative Principle. He explains that the principle instructs a speaker to make his/her conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which he/she is engaged. Grice suggests that his principle comprises the following four maxims:

- 1) The Maxim of *Quantity*: give the right amount of information; make it as informative as is required; and do not give more information than is required.
- 2) The Maxim of *Quality*: try to make it true; do not say what you believe to be false; and do not say something for which you do not have enough evidence.
- 3) The Maxim of *Relation*: be relevant.
- 4) The Maxim of *Manner*: be clear; avoid obscurity of expression; avoid ambiguity; be brief; and be orderly.

In order to create humor in conversation, one of the maxims needs to be flouted by one speaker. According to Grice (1975), there are several ways of flouting a maxim. Violation is a delicately covert breach of a maxim, where the speaker hides the breach from the hearer.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a proclaimed transdisciplinary approach aiming to tackle unequal power relations and providing a framework capable of indicating traces of the society in the text itself. Discourse can be defined as a multidimensional social phenomenon. In this study, the term discourse refers to the spoken and written language presented in the cartoons. Specifically, this study is premised on the assumption that the language used in the cartoons 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, 2011).

Fairclough (1995) suggests a framework that helps in indicating the impact of discourse in society and vice versa, in order to unravel the discrete process of discourse manipulation. The framework is comprised of three components: text, text production/consumption, and sociocultural practice. Text can be written or oral, and oral texts can be just spoken or spoken and visual; text production and text consumption is the processes of discourse practice; and sociocultural practice is the social and cultural goings-on, which the communicative event is a part of (Fairclough, 1995: 57).

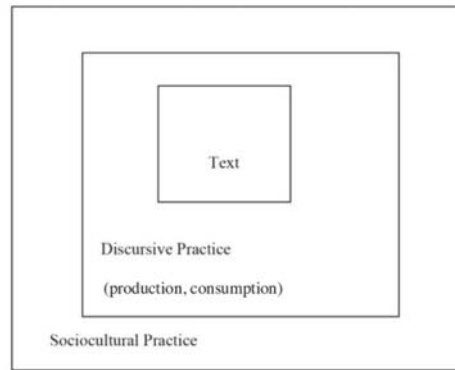


Figure 1: Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model for Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995: 59)

According to the framework, discourse practice mediates between the textual and sociocultural practices. Fairclough (1995: 60) explains that sociocultural practice indirectly shapes text by way of shaping the discourse practice. So, the three main categories of meta-function of text – ideational, interpersonal, and textual are the direct product of the sociocultural practice.

In order to avoid an arbitrary analysis of a great amount of ideologically variable structures of data in forms of text and talk, Van Dijk (2006) suggests a systematic and theory-driven tool called 'ideological square'.

According to Van Dijk (2006: 734), conflicting or competing group membership, and categorization in in-groups and out-groups are reflected in ideologies which often have a polarized structure. These structures can be found in political attitudes and in the biased personal mental models of group members. In addition, the contents of discourse are controlled by these mental models. It is likely that discourse will also show various types of polarization if the models are polarized. A great deal of studies has revealed that ideological discourse often uses the following overall strategies of what Van Dijk calls the 'ideological square' (Figure 2), which can be summarized as 1) emphasizing Our good things, 2) emphasizing Their bad things, 3) de-emphasizing Our bad things, and de-emphasizing Their good things.

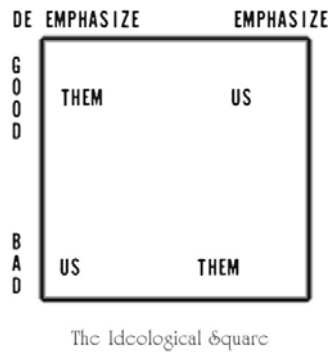


Figure 2: Van Dijk's ideological square

Although there are many western and Thai scholars who have done studies on political cartoons in various aspects and by using various approaches, none of them have studied the four newspapers (both published in Thai and English languages) at the same time or focused on the issue of the 2013-14 political crisis by using the concepts and theories mentioned above. Thus, this study will shed light on the study of political cartoons in the context of Thai politics by using semiotics, theories of cartoons, theories of humor, and critical discourse analysis.

Methodology

Steps in the Study

The study followed the following process:

- 1) The data were collected from the four newspapers: *Thai Rath*, *Daily News*, *The Nation*, and *Bangkok Post*, as their cartoonists tend to draw cartoons to support either the government or the PDRC.
- 2) The data were collected during the period of November 1, 2013 to May 22, 2014. This period was chosen to reflect the beginning and subsequent development of protests organized by PDRC.
- 3) The collected data were classified into two main groups: political cartoons published in Thai language – *Thai Rath* and *Daily News* – and the ones published in English language – *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post*.
- 4) The data from Thai language newspapers were analyzed first. After that the data from English language newspapers were analyzed.

5) The cartoons of each cartoonist of each newspaper were analyzed separately in the following order: 1) Sia of *Thai Rath*, 2) Chai Rachawat of *Thai Rath*, 3) Khuaid of *Daily News*, 4) Stephane Peray of *The Nation*, 5) Dinhin of *Bangkok Post*, 6) Mor of *Bangkok Post*, and 7) Yoot of *Bangkok Post*.

6) Cartoon in each panel was analyzed from left to right and from top to bottom.

7) Signs were identified using Barth's semiotics and Peirce's 3 types of signs.

8) Humor in each cartoon was analyzed using Grice's cooperative principles.

9) The interpretation of each cartoon used CDA as the main tool to find ideology.

10) Ideology was analyzed using Van Dijk's ideological square.

11) After the data were analyzed, the interpretation was drawn in order to answer the research questions.

Data

The total number of cartoons found in the four newspapers was 932; however, 149 were excluded because they were not related to the political crisis. Thus, there are 783 cartoons remaining. The numbers of cartoons found in the newspapers are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Numbers of political cartoons found in the four newspapers

Newspaper (cartoonist)	Thai Rath		Daily News	Bangkok Post			The Nation
	Sia	Chai Rachawat	Khuaid	Dinhin	Mor	Yoot	Stephane Peray
Numbers of cartoons	168	205	179	43	74	56	58
	373			173			
Total	783						

The data were divided into two main groups: cartoons published in Thai language and the ones published in English language. Since the amount of data is relatively large (783 cartoons), the cartoons from three periods – November 1-7, 2013; February 1-7, 2014; and May 16-22, 2014 – were chosen to be analyzed. Thus, there are 84 cartoons remaining. The table below shows the numbers of data collected from the three periods.

Table 2: Numbers of data for analysis

Newspapers	Cartoonists	November 1-7, 2013	February 1- 7, 2014	May 16-22, 2014	Total
<i>Thai Rath</i>	Sia	6	5	6	17
	Chai Rachawat	7	7	7	21
<i>Daily News</i>	Khuaid	6	6	6	18
<i>Bangkok Post</i>	Dinhin	1	2	2	5
	Mor	2	3	3	8
	Yoot	3	2	2	7
<i>The Nation</i>	Stephane Peray	4	3	1	8
TOTAL		29	28	27	84

Data Analysis

The following are randomly selected examples of analysis of cartoons published in the newspapers. The analysis started with the cartoons drawn by Sia and Chai Rachawat (*Thai Rath*); Khuaid (*Daily News*); Stephane Peray (*The Nation*); and Dinhin, Mor, and Yoot (*Bangkok Post*), respectively.

Sia (Thai Rath)

**Figure 3:** Cartoon drawn by Sia

The cartoonist uses a large traffic cone which is nearly collapse as an index to signify that the demonstrations of the PDRC were nearly over. The tank is iconic, indexical, and symbolic, because it can be viewed as a military vehicle and something indicating the army;

however, in Thailand, it also signifies the coup. The traffic cone is also iconic, indexical, and symbolic, since it is an object for road blocking and during the political crisis, it became another symbol of the PDRC, beside the whistle. The ladder is iconic, indexical, and symbolic, because it is used as a symbol for help (to get Suthep down from the traffic cone or the PDRC's demonstrations) and an index that the army is trying to help Suthep.

In this image, Suthep is sitting on a large traffic cone which seems to collapse soon. Furthermore, he is reaching out to the ladder from the tank. There is a text above says, "Ambulance for Kamnan (the Thai word for "sub-district headman", the named that PDRC supporters called Suthep)". The text means the army is the only way to make Suthep stop the demonstrations. Thus, this cartoon suggests that Suthep could not find a way to stop what he had started with the PDRC because he wanted to get rid of Thaksin's influences on Thai politics and demand a political reform, even though Yingluck had dissolved parliament. So, the only way to solve this problem was that the army had to make a coup.

In terms of the ideological square, the cartoonists attempted to emphasize the bad things of Suthep that he kept leading the protests until he does not know how to stop. Thus, the only way for Suthep to get out of this situation is the help from the army that they have to make a coup.

Chai Rachawat (Thai Rath)



Figure 4: Cartoon drawn by Chai Rachawat

The dialogue can be translated as follows:

Police officer: Good new, Kam. Your grandson is going to be released from jail.

Old man: How come? He has to be in jail for many years, doesn't he?

Police officer: Now Thailand has democracy... If you want to be free from any charge, you can vote in the parliament. No court involves.

The cartoonist uses a police officer to signify law enforcement or the authority, while the old man signifies people in the country. The signification of this sign is that the parliament has power to do anything.

In terms of humor, when the police officer said ‘Your grandson is going to be released from jail’, it is flouting the maxim of quality. He gives faulty information to the old man, because the old man’s grandson is not really going to be released from jail but only some politicians and people who involve with political conflicts. What the police officer says is actually ironic. Furthermore, the cartoonist used incongruity to make the readers surprised when they read the punch line in the last panel. The cartoonist created ambiguity to mislead the readers and then made a surprise by the explanation in the third panel.

In terms of the ideological square, the cartoonist emphasized negative things of Yingluck’s government and member of the House of Representatives from Pheu Thai party who have voted in the parliament to pass the blanket amnesty so as to free various politicians from charges, especially Thaksin who has fled abroad.

Khuaid (Daily News)



Figure 5: Cartoon drawn by Khuaid

The dialogue can be translated as follows:

- Man on the left: Pheu Thai and the Democrats are both retreating.
- Man on the right: Pheu Thai is pushing the blanket amnesty while the Democrats is calling a rally against it. How are they retreating?
- Man on the left: Both parties are retreating towards an abyss.

The cartoonist used the two office workers as iconic and indexical to signify general Thai people, especially in Bangkok (most office workers work in Bangkok and the surrounding areas), who talk about current political issues.

In terms of humor, when the man on the right said “Pheu Thai and Democrat are both retreating”, it flouts the maxim of quantity, because he gives too little information to the man on the left to understand the true meaning. Later, the man on the right says the latter part of the sentence so that the man on the left is able to understand what he really thinks about both parties. Furthermore, the cartoonist created incongruity by making the readers wonder how the two parties are retreating. When they read the punch line, they would be surprised.

In terms of the ideological square, the cartoonist emphasized bad things of both Pheu Thai and the Democrats, because both parties are the cause of conflicts in the country.

Stephane Peray (The Nation)



Figure 6: Cartoon drawn by Stephane Peray

In this image, a monitor lizard is used as an icon and a symbol, since it is considered as a bad thing for Thai people. The lizard is holding the amnesty bill in one hand while another hand is holding a torch; however, instead of a fire in the torch, there are feces. Moreover, the feces are surrounded by flies indicating that they are stinky. The flies in the image are used as an index for bad smelling because it is commonly known that flies like swarming around things with bad smelling. In addition, there is a circle with a crossing line around the monitor lizard. It is generally used as a sign of prohibition.

Thus, this cartoon suggests that passing the amnesty bill seems to be a good act of the government in the name of freedom and democracy because the monitor lizard is posing like the Statue of Liberty. However, the bill is hated and disgusted by the people.

In terms of the ideological square, the cartoonist emphasized bad things of Yingluck's government and Pheu Thai party that passed the blanket amnesty even though it was opposed by a lot of people.

Dinhin (Bangkok Post)



Figure 7: Cartoon drawn by Dinhin

In this cartoon, the cartoonist compares a cornered dog in a dead-end alley with the amnesty bill which is opposed by many people. In terms of semiotics, the dog is iconic and symbolic, since it signifies the amnesty bill. In addition, the strong big arm with a wood stick in the hand signifies many people who strongly oppose the amnesty bill.

This image takes place in a dead-end alley. It shows a desperate dog facing a man with a wood stick in his hand. This image derived from Thai proverb ‘sunak chon trok’ which can be roughly translated into English as “a cornered dog”. The proverb means when you corner a dog in a dead-end alley, it will turn and bite. It suggests that the situation might lead to political violence later.

In terms of the ideological square, the cartoonist emphasized bad things of Yingluck's government and Pheu Thai Party that proposed the blanket amnesty causing strong opposition, as well as fragmentation among people in the country.

Mor (Bangkok Post)**Figure 8:** Cartoon drawn by Mor

In this cartoon, the exit sign pointing both ways is an index and a symbol which signifies Thai political crisis. In addition, the two men are symbolic which signify the two groups of protesters – the PDRC and the Red Shirts.

This image shows two men painting an exit sign. The whistle-head man on the left is painting an exit sign indicating to the left; however, the foot-head man on the right is painting the same exit sign indicating to the right. The cartoonist compares the situation during the protest of the PDRC and the Red Shirts that they want different things, so that there is no solution for the crisis. The whistle-head man represents the PDRC because whistle is their symbol during the protest. On the other hand, the foot-head man represents the Red Shirts because they use a foot shaped clapper as their symbol while protesting.

In terms of the ideological square, the cartoon contains no value judgment, but the cartoonist wanted to point out that both sides of the political crisis have different way and ideas for getting out of the situation.

Yoot (Bangkok Post)**Figure 9:** Cartoon drawn by Yoot

In the cartoon, the barbed wire is a symbol used as a sign of charges of Thaksin. In addition, the red carpet is a symbol of the amnesty bill. Thus, the signification of the carpet is the privilege while the barbed wires represent the difficulty. So they mean Thaksin would be able to come back home if the bill is passed.

The man on the left represents Thaksin who is waiting happily for the woman on the right, Yingluck, to throw the red carpet with the word, “AMNESTY”, over the barbed wire. There is also a man holding a board with the words, “come home” besides Yingluck. He represents the Red Shirt supporters. In this cartoon, the cartoonist compares the amnesty bill as a way for bringing Thaksin back to Thailand.

In terms of the ideological square, the cartoonist emphasized bad things of Yingluck’s government and Pheu Thai Party that passed the amnesty bill to help Thaksin.

Discussion

It was found that the cartoons can convey meanings and opinions of the cartoonists well. Furthermore, cartoons contain icon, index, and symbol used by cartoonists to communicate with readers more effectively. The readers know that cartoon is not a realistic representation. It has a firm root in imaginary world – the combination of the partial fact and cartoonist’s fantasy. With such nature, the cartoonists can slip in their political stance and ideology in their drawings. In other words, cartoons by its nature allow the ‘author’ to depart from reality. However, being a political cartoon, readers are automatically reminded to choose among the possible meanings offered the real political sense hidden. However, in order to find these hidden meanings, the readers need to know a lot of background on Thai politics, especially the ones published in Thai language newspapers, as they sometimes involve with beliefs, rituals, and traditions, like the one with a monitor lizard drawn by Stephane Peray. As both *Thai Rath* and *Daily News*, are similar in style and their political stance is moderate populist, they need to serve general population, especially the majority rural market (Holloaway, 2010).

In contrast, the political cartoons published in the English language newspapers are not as complex as the ones which are published in the Thai language newspapers. The readers need only some background knowledge on Thai politics, cultures, beliefs, and know who the main political figures are, as their main readers are Thai upper class who are well educated and can read English well enough (Fedrickson, 2009).

In terms of signs, each item in a political cartoon usually has more than one meaning. The possible meanings are classified into three levels: iconic, indexical, and symbolic. Icon and index are considered as a sign in the first-order system of signification, so it is not difficult for readers to understand these signs. On the other hand, a symbol is in the second-order system of signification, which means readers need a lot of background knowledge to interpret the real meaning of an image. However, sometimes an icon can function as an index or a symbol as well.

Furthermore, some of the cartoons do not contain humor as they were drawn in one panel that contains no incongruity to create ambiguity or a surprise. However, the ones that contain humor were drawn in multi panels that contain incongruity that create ambiguity or double meaning, which intentionally misleads the readers, followed by a punch line.

In terms of ideology, it was found that all of the cartoonists tend to draw cartoons with emphasis on bad things of the political groups they oppose. They rarely draw cartoons that contain emphasis on bad things of both sides or contain no value judgment. Thus, it is obvious that partisanship is very important for the cartoonists, as they present the negative characteristics or bad things of the opponent of the side they support and do not present positive characteristics or good things of the one they support. By doing this, the cartoons they draw are likely to create hatred and fragmentation among people in the country.

Conclusion

According to the findings, the four research questions can be answered as follows. First of all, it was found that in multi-panel cartoons, the cartoonists create humor by using incongruity which makes an ambiguity or double meaning, which intentionally misleads the audience, followed by a punch line so as to make readers feel surprised or laugh. Moreover, in the cartoons that contain dialogue, flouting maxims of Cooperative Principle is also used to create humor. However, there are more cartoons that contain no humor than the ones with humor. In this study, humor refers to a multi-panel cartoon that presents incongruity in panel 1 and/or panel 2, and then presents a punch line or surprising element in the last panel. It is obvious that cartoons in Thai language newspapers contain more humor than cartoons in the English language newspapers. As most of the cartoons in English language newspapers are in one panel, they do not have incongruity to create ambiguity that is usually followed by a punch line or a surprise in the last panel. Between the two Thai language newspapers, the

number of cartoons in Daily News drawn by Khuaid that contain humor and the ones that do not contain humor are very close. However, the cartoons drawn by Sia and Chai Rachawat in Thai Rath are completely different from each other. Sia always draw cartoons that contain no humor as most of his cartoons are in one panel. In contrast, Chai Rachawat usually draws cartoons in three panels which have incongruity in panel 1 and 2, and then have a punch line in panel 3.

Secondly, there are two kinds of humor found in the cartoons – the ones that contain incongruity and the ones that flout one of the maxims of Cooperative Principle. The first one is found in the cartoons that contain dialogues between two cartoon characters that one of them uses incongruity to create ambiguity that followed by a punch. The latter one is also found in dialogues that one of the cartoon characters flout the maxim of quality or maxim of quantity so as to mislead another cartoon character to misunderstand the true meaning.

Thirdly, the major differences between the Thai language newspapers and the English language newspapers include 1) most of the cartoons in Thai language newspapers are in multi panels containing dialogues while most of the cartoons in the English language newspapers are in one panel without dialogues, 2) most of the cartoons in the Thai language newspapers contain humor but all of the cartoons in the English language newspapers do not contain humor at all, 3) most of the signs are related to the anti-government side, while most of the signs related to the pro-government side are about the amnesty bill and the rice pledging scheme, as well as the 2014 election which related to both sides, and 4) most of the cartoons in the Thai language newspapers criticize and emphasize bad things of the anti-government groups but nearly all of the cartoons in the English language newspapers criticize or emphasize bad things of the pro-government groups with more emphasis on bad things related to politics than emphasis on bad things on personality of a person.

Finally, after the cartoons were analyzed by using the ideological square to find ideologies underpinned the cartoons, it can be concluded that each cartoonist has strong opinions on political issues. They always emphasize bad things of the persons or the political groups that they oppose. They never draw cartoons to emphasize good things of the others, de-emphasize good or bad things of the others or the ones they support or agree with. However, they hardly ever draw neutral cartoons with no value judgment. Furthermore, they also rarely draw cartoons that criticize or emphasize bad things of both sides at the same time. These clearly show political partisanship of the cartoonists that may create hatred and

social fragmentation among people in the country. As argues, the Thai press has largely secured the right to say what it likes. In Thailand, relationships between the media and power-holders are vastly more ambiguous, and the issues involved more complex and subtle. Thus, neutrality among Thai newspapers, as well as the political cartoonists of these newspapers is sometimes questioned. Furthermore, Thai politics is about attacking others like a combat which political comments are pointing out the others. Thus, in newspapers, political cartoons are used by the cartoonists to express their anger without sanction as cartoons are symbolic, they can deny what they actually mean.

In conclusion, even though the cartoons of each newspaper and each cartoonist are completely different in terms of characteristics, humor, signs, and opinions, they help readers to understand the political events and situations more easily, in ways that cannot be found in political news column or any other columns of newspaper.

Limitations

1) Sometimes, it is difficult to analyze the cartoons drawn by each cartoonist, since the researcher did not know or understand what the cartoonist really wanted to convey in the image.

2) The amount of data is relatively large as the selected period is almost seven months long. Thus it is difficult to decide how many and which cartoons should be selected for the analysis so as to see the development from the beginning to the end of the political crisis.

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