

## Research Article

Jonathan Rante Carreon, Chavalin Svetanant\*

# What Lies Underneath a Political Speech?: Critical Discourse Analysis of Thai PM's Political Speeches Aired on the TV Programme *Returning Happiness to the People*

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**Abstract:** The main goal of the study is to critically investigate the major elements of the political speeches of the Thai Prime Minister, Gen Prayuth Chan-ocha. Informed by van Dijk's (1997) concept of Political Discourse Analysis, a corpus, composed of 10,672 word types and 325,398 word tokens, was examined for keywords related to the addressor, the addressee, and the political speech itself. The words with the highest relative frequencies were iteratively categorised into themes and a dialogic investigation was conducted on a portion of the original Thai version. The findings reveal that keywords relating to information conveyed by the addressor accounted for 62.86% (N=154) followed by keywords relating to functions of language at 22.04% (N=54). The high frequencies of these words shed light on the justification of the political, economic and social agenda, which were conveyed by the junta government using deontically modalised language. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis also indicate that the English and Thai speeches target different audiences. This discrepancy implicitly reflects an awkward situation where the military government attempts to present a good image to the international community while imposing actual military governance in the country.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis; deontic modality; keyword analysis; dialogic positioning; political speech

## 1 Introduction: Relationship between language, discourse and society

Discourse is a form of social practice (Fairclough 2001). It refers to every kind of verbal and written communication, ranging from a personal letter to a newspaper report, or a family talk to a political speech. It forms a part of a communicative event (van Dijk 1997), where thoughts and feelings are conveyed or exchanged through the use of language. Discourse mediates ideology as well as facilitates the circulation of power in a variety of social institutions. In conventional ways, it helps to maintain and reproduce social relationships, social identities, and existing systems of knowledge and belief, and in creative ways it helps to transform them (Svetanant 2009).

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\*Corresponding author: Dr Chavalin Svetanant, Department of International Studies, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, E-mail: chavalin@gmail.com

Jonathan Rante Carreon, Department of English, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Huachiew Chalermprakiet University, Samutprakarn, Thailand

One kind of discourse where power may be displayed is political communication (e.g. Chilton 2004; Chilton, Tian & Wodak 2012; Wodak 2015). One way to examine political communication commonly employed in polity is to look at the political speeches of the political actors. A political speech is mainly defined as

*an argument of some kind: an attempt to provide others with reasons for thinking, feeling or acting in some particular way; to motivate them; to invite them to trust one in uncertain conditions; to get them to see situations in a certain light. ... [also] in some measure, adapt to audiences, confirming their expectations and respecting their boundaries, even as it tries to transform them* (Finlayson & Martin 2008, 450; see also Jamieson 1988).

Put another way, a political speech can be considered as the primary means of influencing others, using rhetoric to persuade, excite, and claim leadership (Klebanov et al. 2008; see also Niedrich 2011). Political speeches function in various ways and these functions are reflected partly in the language used in conveying these speeches. Moreover, political speech can provide an overview into how ideas and beliefs are revealed in argumentative contexts and instrumental in presenting what is distinctive about political ideas and beliefs. In particular, through the use of techniques such as explanation and analysis, political speeches are mainly used to convince the receivers of the message to support the speaker's point of view, on the one hand and may disguise, transform and deepen a particular phenomenon, on the other hand (Al-Majali 2015).

Seidel (1985) argues that a political speech may constitute a genre, a domain, or a field. It has three major elements: the addressor (the speaker who produces the speech), the addressee (the hearer who is the recipient of the speech), and the political speech itself. Using data obtained from the political speech scripts of Thai PM Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha in the TV programme *Returning Happiness to the People* or in Thai Khuen Khwamsook Hai Prachachon, these three major elements are investigated in this paper.

## 2 Background

Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha is a former Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army (2010-2014). During his tenure, he launched a military coup against the caretaker government of Yingluck Shinawatra in May 2014. Three months later, he was appointed as the 29<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of Thailand by the unanimous vote of the national parliament, whose members were carefully handpicked by him.

The TV programme *Returning Happiness to the People* became widely known among Thai audience suddenly after it was launched in May 2014 possibly for two reasons. Firstly, it is the only TV programme choice for everybody who lives in the country as it is broadcast across all national televisions and radio stations on every Friday night. Secondly, Gen Prayuth, the key speaker of the TV programme, has a special type of character – easily annoyed and frustrated. With this character, he often makes remarks that spark off controversies across the country and sometimes notoriously overseas like when he sarcastically warned the media that he would ‘execute’ them if they didn’t tell the truth (Murdoch 2015).

In one of his speeches on September 19, 2014 (@15.52 min~16.27 min), he obviously threatened certain Thai media, who often criticise his junta government, that he has the power to shut them down. Interestingly, the program director deleted this sensitive part (see the highlighted text) in the video clip broadcasted through the official YouTube channel.

*...Certain newspapers and news agencies have yet to improve themselves.*

*There continues to be false information reported in the news. Let me reiterate what has happened before and expand on what is important and what had given rise to all the divisions in society, whether it is through newspapers, magazines, cable TV, social media, or local radio. Some of them have tried to justify their position by saying that they have done was patriotic and based on fairness, for democracy and other reasons. However, if another confrontation were to happen again because of this misleading news reporting, we cannot reform the country. You have to join us in being responsible and accountable because these conflicts stem from false / corrupted information. I ask for your cooperation, please do not force us to use more laws as there will be inconveniences to journalists, the press, radio channel, and television channels. In the past, we have all suffered as the press violated the rules that were agreed upon, including an agreement with the controlling agency.*

(Chan-o-cha 2014)

The TV programme is aired on television prime time on Friday nights reporting governmental policies, and how the government has effectively brought ‘happiness’ back to Thai people. In the TV programme, it is quite common to hear Gen. Prayuth’s personal sentiments regarding Thai people ignoring his ‘requests’ for unity, and ‘orders’ to stop criticising destructively his government. The scenario resembles a boss with powers over his subordinates. This is not unusual since he came to power through a coup. In other words, he may resemble the characteristic features of a dictator.

The nature of political leaders in non-democratic countries may significantly make their political discourse different from those of democratic countries. Rather than trying to capture people’s heart, their speeches may inject dominant ideology, to order, justify and legalize their policies, which may have been articulated as a discursive practice to convince a target audience (Maalej 2012). As a result, certain lexical structures and linguistic strategies may have been embedded in their speeches to justify the necessity of their commands and simultaneously establish a good image among common people.

For these reasons, critical approaches to discourse are particularly significant in relation to the study of politics. While plausible, investigating ideological discourse such as political speeches is quite complicated since political speeches are meant to address issues within the period the speech was written and delivered. This means that timeframes within which data is acquired need to be specified and generalizations across time need to be downplayed (Carreon & Watson Todd 2013a). It was also noted that while scripts for political speeches are prepared, some of these scripts were not read, partially read and in some, the spoken contradicts the written version. As such, addressors need to observe their addressees, modify their speech in an acceptable way and monitor addressees’ reaction minute by minute (Al-Majali 2015; see also Brown & Yule 1983).

Moreover, the investigation of political speeches may be dubious since the actual delivery of a political speech combines language with tone, volume, facial expressions, eye contact, pausing, body language, posture and many others making political speeches essentially multimodal (e.g. Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996; Jewitt 2009; Machin 2013; Van Leeuwen 2008). Multimodal expressions further complicate the investigation since these non-linguistic features vary from time to time and cannot be deciphered by simply looking at the written speeches. Carreon & Todd (2013b) posit that most multimodal investigations require high levels of inference, so claims may not be supported by evidence. High inference investigations are heavily criticised in Critical Discourse Analysis (e.g. Widdowson 1995; see also O’Halloran 2007) since findings may not be supported by available evidence. Thus, in this paper, the critical investigation of political speech is limited to investigating the political speech script using low-inference approaches such as corpus-based studies (e.g. Baker & McEnery 2005; Baker & McEnery 2015; Biber, Conrad, Reppen 1994; Biber, Conrad, Reppen 1998; Hunston 2010; Jabeen et al. 2011).

### 3 Investigating Political Discourse

Political discourse has been extensively examined employing the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (e.g. Fairclough 2000; Fairclough 2002; Jones & Collins 2006; Jones & Collins 2006; Mulderrig 2003; Weiss & Wodak 2007; Wodak & Chilton. 2005; Wodak & Meyer 2009). In these investigations, CDA treats discourse as a social practice and analyses the influences of social, political and cultural contexts on discourse. CDA uncovers essential linguistic characteristics of social relationships and social structures (Fairclough 1995). From similar token, Van Dijk (1993) posits that CDA should investigate the way in which powerful gatekeepers in society influence social beliefs and values, through the standards they set for what is and is not acceptable in a society. Looking at the agent as the main actor, this study employs van Dijk’s concept of Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) as theoretical framework. He argues that to conduct a critical analysis of political discourse such as political speeches, the analyst has to take into consideration three main components: (1) political actors or authors, (2) the assumed recipients of the political speech, and (3) political speech itself (van Dijk 1997; see also Siedel 1985). Briefly, the political actors or authors are the addressors of political speeches of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the

local, national and international levels. Moreover, van Dijk (1997) posits that politicians are not the only participants in the domain of politics. From the interactional point of view of discourse analysis, recipients in political communicative events, such as the public, the people, citizens, the ‘masses’, and other groups or categories should also be included. The first two components are the participants in the political process. The last component focuses on the nature of the activities or practices being accomplished by political text and talk rather than only on the nature of its participants. The forms of text and talk in such cases have political functions and implications (Dylgjeri 2014).

In this paper, the political speech of the Thai PM, Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha, in the TV programme *Returning Happiness to the People* are examined to uncover any covert information to shed light on linguistic features that characterize (1) the addressor, (2) the addressee, (3) the information conveyed in the political speech script, and (4) functions of language employed by the addressor for imparting message.

## 4 Research Methodology

### 4.1 Data

The corpus of the study is taken from the speeches of Gen Prayuth in the TV programme *Returning Happiness to the People* collected from 30 May 2014 to 30 May 2015. The translated English corpus which is used for a quantitative analysis is composed of 10,672 word types and 325,398 word tokens. The English translations are provided by Royal Thai Government at <http://www.thaigov.go.th/en/speech-2.html>. It is worth noting that the lack of accuracy in these professional translations is possibly deliberate, due to the fact that the messages are intended to address different groups of audiences.

### 4.2 Analysis

#### 4.2.1 Investigating linguistic keywords

Some critiques argued that most CDA are filled with the researchers’ personal biases because a typical CDA enterprise commences with a description of the context rather than the investigation of the data or text. With the context as the starting point, the researcher is predisposed to find whatever he wants to find, cherry-picks and may even over-interpret findings with only sparse evidence from the data (see for example the several occasional [Hammersley 1997, Stubbs 1997] and persistent [Jones 2004, Collins & Jones 2006, Jones & Collins 2006, Jones 2007, Widdowson 1995, Widdowson 1998] critiques). To address these critical insights, investigating political speech is limited to the analysis of the political speech scripts of Gen Prayuth using low-inference approaches such as corpus-based studies (e.g. Jabeen et al. 2011). One of these is the identification of linguistic keywords. Linguistic keywords convey the main information contained in a particular text (Scott 1997, Scott 2000) through their high relative frequency. To run a linguistic keyword analysis, a word frequency count is done on the political speech scripts to find the absolute frequencies of all words using Antconc developed by Lawrence Anthony (<http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc>). While absolute frequencies can provide some useful information about the concerns of a text, in many cases, the words with the highest absolute frequencies will be similar across different texts simply because these words are most commonly used in English (such as articles and prepositions). Therefore, relative frequencies of words compared to a benchmark of general English use are more insightful, and it is the words with high relative frequency that are considered keywords.

The frequencies of all words (including British and American spelling variants together) in the data with a minimum absolute frequency of 100 were compared against their frequencies in the British National Corpus (BNC) using log-likelihood (see Rayson & Garside 2000 for details of log-likelihood uses). Any words with a log-likelihood of greater than 100 were considered keywords. These keywords within their local co-text were then categorised using an iterative process of identifying themes. Four themes were identified:

- Word relating to the addressor and related political institutions
- Word relating to assumed recipients of the political speech
- Word relating to information conveyed by the addressor and related political institutions
- Words relating to production of language (Biber, Conrad and Reppen 1998)

These categories shed light on the purposes of this study: words relating to the addressor and political institutions are associated with the conveyor of the political speech either by the addressor or through various government agencies, words relating to assumed recipients are associated with the receivers of the political message such as the citizens, groups of people both local and international, words relating to information conveyed by the addressor are associated with the content of the political speech, words relating to production of language are linked to the complementary dimensions of language posited by Biber et al. (1998). According to them, the production of language has two main dimensions: (1) involved and (2) informational. The former is defined as the language used to build and maintain relationships, to create a positive atmosphere, and to create a comfort zone between people who might be total strangers (Biber et al. 1998, 23). The latter is defined as the “language used for transferring information” (Biber et al. 1998, 150). The two researchers then independently categorised the keywords into these four themes, and the categorisations were compared for reliability using Cohen’s kappa. Cohen’s kappa is statistical measure of inter-rater agreement for qualitative (categorical) items, which is more robust when compared to simple percentage calculations as it takes into account agreements occurring by chance (Zaiontz 2016).

#### 4.2.2 Dialogic investigation of political speeches

The addressor’s intersubjective dialogical position with the putative audiences is also investigated. Informed by Bakhtin (1981) and Voloshinov (1995), Martin and White (2005) developed the Engagement framework under the Appraisal System to explore the rhetorical effects associated with stance-taking or how the authorial voice positions itself in order to engage with other voices and alternative viewpoints. The Engagement framework begins with the distinction between monoglossic and heteroglossic discourse. The monoglossic refers to single-voiced discourse that has “no reference to other voices and viewpoints”, and the heteroglossic refers to multi-voiced discourse that “invoke or allow for dialogistic alternatives” (Martin & White 2005: 100). The taxonomy of engagement meanings includes four main categories: *Disclaim*, *Proclaim*, *Probablise*, and *Attribute* (White 2015). For a full account of all dialogic resources, see Martin & White (2005, Ch. 3). This dialogistic investigation may reveal whether speakers/writers present themselves as standing with or standing against, as undecided or as neutral with respect to other value positions.

#### 4.2.3 Justifying the British National Corpus (BNC) as benchmark corpus

To understand why the BNC was chosen as the benchmark corpus, a brief description will be given first followed by the main reasons for choosing the BNC. The BNC is a 100-million word collection of samples of written and spoken language collected from a wide range of sources. Thus, in terms of size, it is relatively much larger (more than 307 times) than the size of the research data (Gen Prayuth’s political speeches), which makes it appropriate as a benchmark with respect to size. In Aston & Burnard’s (1998, 5) words, the BNC is “a *balanced* rather than a *register-specific* or *dialect-specific* one; it is also a mixed corpus, containing both written and spoken language – transcriptions of naturally occurring speech”. The written part (90%) consists of, but is not limited to, extracts from specialist periodicals and journals for all ages and interests, regional and national newspapers, academic books and popular fiction, school and university essays, published and unpublished letters and memoranda, and others. The spoken part, which consists of orthographic transcriptions of unscripted informal conversations and spoken language collected in different contexts, ranging from formal business or government meetings to radio shows and phone-ins, comprises 10%.

Probably the best, albeit somewhat prosaic, reason for using the BNC is that it is the most commonly used benchmark corpus. This suggests that any investigation done is comparable to other analyses that have been done against the BNC. Secondly, while it can be conveniently assumed that the research data is one kind of political discourse since it is taken from the script prepared for the speech of a political addressor, it can also be argued that it may contain information other than those related to political discourse (e.g. dictator discourse) since political addressors may have other purposes aside from what was written in the script. Thus, comparing the Gen Prayuth's corpus against the BNC may help in categorising the contents of the Gen Prayuth's speeches as to those that relates to political discourse, general language, dictator discourse or a combination of any or all of them.

#### 4.2.4 Political speeches of former US President Barack Obama as benchmark corpus

Aside from the BNC, the weekly speeches of the former US President Barack Obama taken from 31 May 2014 to 30 May 2015 and composed of 27,587 words were also used as a benchmark corpus. There are several reasons for choosing the speeches of for Mr. Obama as benchmark. First, as a former US President, he has similar status with General Prayuth of Thailand, i.e. the highest political position in the country. Second, like Mr. Obama, Gen. Prayuth also delivered his speeches in a weekly basis. Finally, research studies examining Mr. Obama's speeches are widely available, which can be used to compare findings. The findings of the comparison are examined for similarities and differences based on the objectives of this paper.

## 5 Results and Discussion

### 5.1 Linguistic keywords (Gen. Prayuth vs the BNC)

Linguistic keywords can be identified based on frequency. The first stage is to conduct a basic word frequency count to give absolute frequencies of words on the political speeches. Table 1 shows the five most frequent words for all the scripts collected.

**Table 1.** Five most frequent words in Gen Prayuth's political speeches

No.	Top 5 Words	Absolute Frequency	Examples
1	the	19961	<i>The</i> NCPO; <i>The</i> military; <i>the</i> second phase; <i>the</i> forming of a government; <i>the</i> reform council; <i>the</i> legislative council; the principles; <i>the</i> people
2	to	12702	<i>to</i> the Thai people; <i>to</i> the law; <i>to</i> ensure minimal effects; <i>to</i> avoid human rights violation; <i>to</i> return happiness
3	and	10576	wind, solar power, <i>and</i> biomass; central <i>and</i> rural reforms; villages, sub-districts, districts <i>and</i> provinces; peace <i>and</i> security; rules <i>and</i> regulations
4	of	9110	performance <i>of</i> the concerned individuals; disbursement <i>of</i> the national budget; control <i>of</i> the situation; stability <i>of</i> the country; some <i>of</i> the media
5	in	5997	<i>in</i> Thailand; <i>in</i> preventing violent conflicts; <i>in</i> tourist areas; <i>in</i> a society; <i>in</i> the reconciliation effort

Initial findings can be drawn from Table frequency of the article *the* in the form of noun phrases (e.g. *the* people; *The* military; *the* reform council; *the* legislative council), which reflects the general nature of English language writing. The article *the* is also commonly found in written texts at sentence or higher level to

enhance cohesion. The high frequency of *to* reflects its common use in English as a preposition (e.g. *to* the Thai people; *to* the law) and as an infinitive marker (e.g. *to* ensure minimal effects; *to* avoid human rights violation; *to* return happiness). The frequent use of *and* reflects the use of short and long parallel structures in sentences (e.g. wind, solar power, *and* biomass; villages, sub-districts, districts *and* provinces; central *and* rural reforms; rules *and* regulations). The high frequency of the preposition *of* reflects phrases that indicate association between two entities (e.g. performance *of* the concerned individuals; disbursement *of* the national budget; control *of* the situation; stability *of* the country). The high frequency of *in* reflects something is an as an integral part of an activity (e.g. *in* preventing violent conflicts; *in* the reconciliation effort) and expresses the situation of something that appears to be enclosed or surrounded by something else (e.g. *in* Thailand; *in* tourist areas; *in* a society). Similar findings were obtained by Carreon & Todd (2013a) in their investigation of private hospital websites in Thailand.

While these findings shed some light on the data under investigation, stronger conclusions cannot be drawn since absolute frequencies reflect general language use but not the specific linguistic features of a text. Thus, to examine the specific language features that characterise a text, relative frequencies were calculated by comparing absolute frequencies against the frequencies in the BNC using the statistical measure log-likelihood (LL).

Following Carreon & Todd (2013b), the keywords with log-likelihood value of at least 100 are iteratively categorised (see Krippendorff 2012) into five themes: (1) word relating to the addressor and political institutions, (2) word relating to assumed recipients of the political speech, (3) word relating to information conveyed by the addressor, and (4) word relating to production of language (Biber et al. 1998). There are 245 keywords with log-likelihood values of 100 and above. Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of keywords categorised in each theme.

**Table 2.** Frequencies and percentages of keywords categorised in each theme

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Words relating to information conveyed by the addressor	154	62.86%
Words relating to language production (Biber et al. 1998)	54	22.04%
Words relating to the addressor and related political institutions	22	8.98%
Words relating to assumed recipients of the political speech	15	6.12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>100%</b>

The most frequently found keywords are words relating to information conveyed by the addressor for 62.86% (N=154). Words relating to involved language production (Biber et al. 1998) came second at 22.04% (N=54). The third most frequent keywords are words relating to the addressor and related political institutions at 8.98% (N=22). Words relating to assumed recipients of the political speech came fourth at 6.12% (N=15).

The first theme reflects the information being communicated by the addressor to the assumed recipients. The high frequencies of these kinds of keywords may indicate the bulk of particular information being communicated by the addressor to the recipients. The second theme reflects the linguistic devices employed by the addressor to communicate his messages either by creating relationships and interacting with his recipients or by simply providing information. The high frequencies of these keywords reflect the rich and varied use of linguistic devices to deliver the addressor's message to his recipients. The third theme reflects the addressor and the agencies under his government. The fourth theme indicates the recipients of the addressor's messages. The reliability of the categorisation was rated almost perfect (Cohen's kappa = 0.859), based on Landis & Koch's (1977) strength of kappa coefficients, where 0.01-0.20 is slight; 0.21-0.40 is fair; 0.41-0.60 is moderate; 0.61-0.80 is substantial; and 0.81-1.00 is almost perfect. Table 3 shows the top 50 keywords or about 20% of all the keywords with log-likelihood values of at least 100, with their frequencies, log-likelihood values, categories and examples, where *f* is the absolute frequency and *LL* is the log-likelihood. These top 50 keywords will be examined further below.

Table 3. Top 50 keywords with the highest log-likelihood values

No.	Keyword	f	Relative Frequency (LL)	Category (Word relating to...)	Examples
1	Thailand	1133	10232.07	information conveyed	investment with <i>Thailand</i> ; <i>Thailand</i> needs to find labour
2	Thai	736	6764.15	assumed recipients	<i>Thai</i> nationals; the <i>Thai</i> people
3	will	3710	5408.28	language production	curfew period <i>will</i> depend on; <i>will</i> help promote tourism
4	cannot	365	4158.90	involved production	NCPO <i>cannot</i> allow; <i>cannot</i> be achieved
5	we	3929	4116.70	language production	<i>we</i> are planning; <i>we</i> think differently
6	how	489	3613.94	language production	<i>how</i> the water problem; <i>how</i> to go about
7	government	1516	3459.45	addressor and related political institutions	<i>government</i> agencies; <i>government</i> officials
8	rice	469	3145.87	information conveyed	quantity of <i>rice</i> , <i>rice</i> -pledging scheme
9	baht	270	2918.85	information conveyed	stable Thai <i>baht</i> , 90 <i>baht</i> per lottery
10	was	531	2878.08	language production	<i>was</i> necessary, curfew <i>was</i> lifted
11	ministry	551	2776.18	addressor and related political institutions	<i>Ministry</i> of Defense; <i>Ministry</i> of Agriculture
12	country	980	2651.36	information conveyed	move the <i>country</i> ; benefit of our <i>country</i>
13	a	3208	2633.30	language production	<i>a</i> working committee; <i>a</i> democratic solution
14	ASEAN	259	2292.54	addressor and related political institutions	ASEAN Economic Community; ASEAN Caucus
15	farmers	450	2087.17	information conveyed	rice <i>farmers</i> ; rubber <i>farmers</i>
16	need	145	7.24	information conveyed (N=145)	<i>need</i> peace and order; <i>need</i> immediate action
	need to	928	3031.80	language production (N=928)	<i>need to</i> cooperate; <i>need to</i> prepare
17	cooperation	310	1988.94	information conveyed	international <i>cooperation</i> ; <i>cooperation</i> of everyone
18	agencies	395	1968.97	addressor and related political institutions	governmental <i>agencies</i> ; relevant <i>agencies</i>
19	to	12702	1848.55	language production	<i>to</i> return happiness; <i>to</i> respect the law and order
20	be	4388	1820.06	language production	<i>be</i> stopped; <i>be</i> prioritized
21	must	1117	1762.64	language production	<i>must</i> cooperate; <i>must</i> be fair
22	rubber	288	1714.95	information conveyed	<i>rubber</i> plantations; <i>rubber</i> prices
23	reform	398	1637.43	information conveyed	<i>Reform</i> Council; <i>reform</i> process
24	Thais	159	1636.19	assumed recipients	fellow <i>Thais</i> ; underprivileged <i>Thais</i>
25	people	1421	1572.42	assumed recipients	local <i>people</i> ; Thai <i>people</i>
26	public	781	1522.72	assumed recipients	general <i>public</i> , Thai <i>public</i>
27	problems	666	1520.82	information conveyed	urgent <i>problems</i> ; security <i>problems</i>
28	sector	406	1391.41	addressor and related political institutions	tourism <i>sector</i> ; energy <i>sector</i>
29	centers	138	1377.93	addressor and related political institutions	One Stop Service <i>Centers</i> ; Damrongtham <i>Centers</i>
30	his	236	1370.96	language production	<i>his</i> capacity; <i>his</i> contribution
31	had	215	1506.64	language production (N=215)	<i>had</i> democracy, <i>had</i> improved
	had to	39	21.75	language production (N=39)	<i>had to</i> work, <i>had to</i> make inspections
32	it	1517	1349.92	language production	<i>it</i> is important; <i>it</i> must be fairgbu-['S
33	have	2706	804.34	language production	<i>have</i> economic ties; <i>have</i> a policy
	have to	459	454.76	language production	<i>have to</i> compete, <i>have to</i> come together



No.	Keyword	f	Relative Frequency (LL)	Category (Word relating to...)	Examples
34	countries	499	1316.33	information conveyed	neighbouring <i>countries</i> ; developed <i>countries</i>
35	projects	330	1263.17	information conveyed	infrastructure <i>projects</i> ; mega <i>projects</i>
36	corruption	219	1229.97	information conveyed	suppression of <i>corruption</i> ; penalties for <i>corruption</i>
37	trafficking	153	1199.20	information conveyed	drug <i>trafficking</i> ; human <i>trafficking</i>
38	our	1074	1167.05	language production	<i>our</i> country; <i>our</i> priority
39	budget	343	1099.71	information conveyed	national <i>budget</i> ; <i>budget</i> management
40	issues	393	1084.80	information conveyed	urgent <i>issues</i> ; social <i>issues</i>
41	don't	210	1073.68	language production	<i>don't</i> force us; <i>don't</i> steal
42	tourism	198	1060.22	information conveyed	promote <i>tourism</i> ; health <i>tourism</i>
43	sustainable	162	1037.94	information conveyed	<i>sustainable</i> solutions; <i>sustainable</i> peace
44	majesty	179	1033.70	information conveyed	His <i>Majesty</i>
45	measures	296	971.31	information conveyed	legal <i>measures</i> ; retaliatory <i>measures</i>
46	are	2873	962.82	language production	<i>are</i> concerned; <i>are</i> careful
47	agricultural	246	962.00	information conveyed	<i>agricultural</i> products; <i>agricultural</i> areas
48	provinces	170	951.93	information conveyed	southern <i>provinces</i> ; inner <i>provinces</i>
49	sectors	203	935.27	addressor and related political institutions	public <i>sectors</i> ; concerned <i>sectors</i>
50	areas	473	932.31	information conveyed	tourist <i>areas</i> ; border <i>areas</i>

Table 3 shows that the top 50 keywords are dominated by keywords relating to information conveyed by the addressor and keywords relating to involved production of language (see Biber et al. 1998), followed by words relating to the addressor and political institutions, and words relating to assumed recipients have five each.

The information conveyed by the addressor in the speeches are *Thailand*, *rice*, *baht*, *country*, *farmers*, *need*, *cooperation*, *rubber*, *reform*, *problems*, *countries*, *projects*, *corruption*, *trafficking*, *budget*, *issues*, *tourism*, *sustainable*, *measures*, *agricultural*, *provinces*, and *areas*. Since keywords are usually associated with 'aboutness', combining the top keywords relating to the information conveyed by the speeches tell us about the overall information conveyed by the speeches of Gen Prayuth's. Doing this, we find that *Thailand* has various *problems* such as *corruption*, *trafficking* and *issues* such as *tourism*, *rice*, *farmers* and *rubber* in *agricultural areas* and *provinces*, so the *country* is in *need of reform*, *budget (baht)* and *sustainable measures* and *projects* and *cooperation* with other *countries*. With this message, Gen Prayuth is able to justify his government's current policies.

It is also interesting to further examine the production of language. Table 4 shows the 15 keywords relating language production from the top 50 keywords and categorised as involved or informational production (Biber et al 1998: 148-153).

As mentioned earlier, "involved production is related to a primarily interactive or affective purpose for the expression of feelings and concerns and with little or no informational focus such as the use of second person pronouns, *wh*-questions, emphatics, amplifiers and sentences relatives" (p. 150). Conversely, informational production refers to non-interactive expression with the main goal of providing information that is usually carefully chosen instead of interacting such as the use of nouns in expository and written registers. The findings show that 66.67% (N=10) of the items used for language production (Biber et al 1998) were informational in nature, which suggests that PM Prayuth was interested in conveying information rather than interactively communicating with his audience. The production of language will be examined in depth below using deontic and epistemic modality.

Table 4. Involved versus Informational production of language

No.	Keyword	f	LL	Function of language	Examples
1	will	3710	5408.28	informational	curfew period <i>will</i> depend on; <i>will</i> help promote tourism
2	cannot	365	4158.90	involved	NCPO <i>cannot</i> allow; <i>cannot</i> be achieved
3	we	3929	4116.70	involved	<i>we</i> are planning; <i>we</i> think differently
4	how	489	3613.94	informational	<i>how</i> the water problem; <i>how</i> to go about
5	was	531	2878.08	informational	<i>was</i> necessary, curfew <i>was</i> lifted
6	a	3208	2633.30	informational	<i>a</i> working committee; <i>a</i> democratic solution
7	to	12702	1848.55	informational	<i>to</i> return happiness; <i>to</i> respect the law and order
8	be	4388	1820.06	informational	<i>be</i> stopped; <i>be</i> prioritized
9	must	1117	1762.64	involved	<i>must</i> cooperate; <i>must</i> be fair
10	had	254	1369.22	informational	<i>had</i> to work; <i>had</i> democracy
11	it	1517	1349.92	informational	<i>it</i> is important; <i>it</i> must be fair
12	have	3131	1341.25	informational	<i>have</i> economic ties; <i>have</i> to respect the law
13	our	1074	1167.05	involved	<i>our</i> country; <i>our</i> priority
14	don't	210	1073.68	involved	<i>Don't</i> just watch; <i>Don't</i> make up lies
15	are	2873	962.82	informational	<i>are</i> concerned; <i>are</i> careful

## 5.2 Linguistic keywords (Gen. Prayuth vs. Mr. Obama's Speeches)

The speeches of Gen Prayuth were also compared with the speeches of Mr. Barack Obama. The absolute frequencies and relative frequencies expressed as log-likelihood values are shown in Table 5, where *f* is the absolute frequency and *LL* is the log-likelihood.

The cut-off log-likelihood value that will be interpreted is 100. While the Mr Obama vs Gen Prayuth comparison yielded 29 keywords with log-likelihood values of 100 and above, only eight keywords were produced by the reversed comparison, so up eight keywords in both comparisons will be discussed in detail.

In the Mr Obama vs Gen Prayuth comparison, the top eight keywords include *our*, *america*, *american*, *americans*, *congress*, *class*, *jobs*, and *a*. The items *our* and *a* are words relating to language production. The use of first person possessive adjective *our* (*f*=423, *LL*=548.81) is indicative of the way Mr Obama communicates with his audience in his speeches, i.e. strong involvement of his audience to whatever content he is delivering (see De Fina 1995; Obeng 1997;

Wilson 1991; Zupnik 1994 for detailed examples). The use of the article *a* (*f*=586, *LL*=244.07) indicates that information is presented from a general perspective. The items *jobs* (*f*=81, *LL*=246.89), *America* (*f*=114, *LL*=523.44), and *congress* (*f*=59, *LL*=300.79) and refers to the information being conveyed by the addressor and related political institutions. The items *American* (*f*=78, *LL*=397.66), *Americans* (*f*=78, *LL*=397.66), and *class* (in particular the middle class; *f*=63, *LL*=257.19) are words relating to assumed recipients of the Mr Obama's weekly speeches. Overall, it can be argued that Mr Obama's weekly speeches pivoted on communicating jobs to the America's middle class using "unifying and involving" yet broad or generalized language.

The reverse comparison (Gen Chan-ocha vs Mr Obama), the top eight keywords include *be*, *the*, *Thailand*, *government*, *must*, *will*, *thai*, and *ncpo*, with the last one being the acronym for National Council for Peace and Order. Since the acronym is more commonly used in Thailand than the name itself, the acronym is taken as a word in this paper. The items *be*, *the*, *will*, and *must* are words relating to language production. More than two-thirds of the usage of *be* are in the form of passive constructions (to *be* + passive verb and *be* + passive verb), where the sentences are agentless or the doer of the action is implied or deleted.

**Table 5.** Keywords from Gen Prayuth and Mr Obama speeches' comparison and vice-versa

No.	Mr Obama vs Gen Prayuth Keywords	f	LL	Gen Prayuth vs Mr Obama Keywords	f	LL
1.	our	423	548.81	be	4388	227.64
2.	america	114	523.44	the	19961	185.97
3.	american	89	427.79	thailand	1133	184.40
4.	americans	78	397.66	government	1516	177.22
5.	congress	59	300.79	must	1117	155.56
6.	class	63	257.19	will	3710	142.83
7.	jobs	81	246.89	thai	736	119.79
8.	a	586	244.07	ncpo	691	112.46
9.	families	82	237.54	such	658	97.21
10.	middle	70	235.18	problems	666	91.35
11.	thanks	58	212.74	ministry	551	89.68
12.	hi	42	204.79	of	9110	81.67
13.	college	43	197.53	public	781	78.52
14.	new	125	184.57	rice	469	76.33
15.	weekend	41	163.35	not	2239	73.13
16.	hard	64	158.04	development	458	65.38
17.	women	50	157.62	agencies	395	64.29
18.	world	76	153.76	which	935	62.60
19.	got	34	148.42	order	466	60.23
20.	everybody	71	147.97	please	355	57.78
21.	that	481	131.09	farmers	450	57.76
22.	states	39	130.66	issues	393	55.11
23.	kids	27	129.19	projects	330	53.71
24.	more	190	129.07	other	930	51.87
25.	their	208	117.13	areas	473	51.16
26.	republicans	22	112.16	cooperation	310	50.45
27.	than	94	111.78	water	435	50.21
28.	sure	56	111.59	need	1073	50.05
29.	iraq	21	107.06	society	298	48.50

The modals *will* and *must* were used to show either deontic or epistemic modality (see Bybee and Fleischman 1999). On the one hand, epistemic modality is concerned with the theoretical possibility or necessity of propositions being true or not true (including likelihood and certainty). On the other hand, deontic modality is concerned with permission and obligation according to some system of rules (Nuyts et al. 2010). In PM Prayuth's weekly speeches, more than two-thirds of both modals, *will* and *must*, were used to express deontic modality. This means that most of the information was presented in varying degrees of possibility and necessity (e.g. *will* assist, *will* approve, *will* sustain, *will* push ahead, *will* provide; *must* cooperate, *must* rehabilitate, *must* come first, *must* produce, *must* mobilize) instead of presenting them in epistemic mood as either true or untrue (e.g. *will* be shortened, *will* be transparent, *will* be established, *will* be ready, *will* be dealt with, *will* be good; *must* be developed, *must* be legal, *must* be dealt with, *must* be expedited, *must* be strengthened, *must* be true). Gen Prayuth's common use of deontic modality in his speeches may have repercussions on the way his audience perceive his message.

The use of *the*, aside from presenting specific information, may trigger existential presuppositions (e.g. *the* basic needs of the people, *the* reduction of monopolies), which assumes the existence of the nouns it triggers. In other words, it can be said that the speaker maybe assuming that “there are basic needs (of the people)” and “there are (reduction of) monopolies. The items *Thailand*, *government* and *NCPO* refers to the information being conveyed by the addressor and related political institutions. Finally, the item *Thai* refers to the assumed audience.

Overall, it can be said that the weekly speeches of Gen Prayuth revolved around providing information to Thais about Thailand, the government and the ruling council NCPO characterized by definitiveness, passive constructions and deontic modality. Put another way, agentless definite information about Thailand, the Thai government and the ruling council NCPO was presented to Thais with varying degrees of possibility and necessity. The findings also show that Gen Prayuth’s common use of deontic modality indicates a general strengthening of his commitment to the truth of his message containing the modals.

### 5.3 Keyword analysis of the Thai script

Having examined the English translation of the speeches, there remains the question of the accuracy of the translations. While this constitutes another research enterprise, it is interesting to look at a few Thai original speeches to shed some light, albeit less empirically, on the issue. Three original Thai speeches from the same period of time the English versions were written, ranging from the very first speech right after the coup on 30 May 2014, followed by the speech in the middle of the year on 28 Nov 2014, and ended by the last speech of the first year on 29 May 2015 were examined. Thai speeches scripts are available at <http://www.thaigov.go.th/index.php/th/program1>.

To check if the analysis of the original Thai speeches would generate similar results, three randomly selected scripts composed of 3363 words were compared against HSE Thai Corpus which can be found at <http://web-corpora.net/ThaiCorpus/search/>. HSE Thai corpus is a “corpus of modern texts written in Thai language, containing 50 million words, which were collected from various Thai websites (mostly news websites)”. The Thai keywords are shown in Table 6, with *f* denoting absolute frequency and *LL* for relative frequency.

While the comparison is quite limited in terms of the number of words, the finding show 15 Thai keywords that are similar to the findings when the English version was compared with Mr Obama’s speeches. Like in that comparison, the items *จะ* cha (will), *ต้อง* tong (must), and *จำเป็น* champen (necessary, need to) were used in the deontic modality mood. However, unlike in Mr Obama’s speeches, there was an increased use of *เรา* rao (we), which calls for unification and togetherness. Words relating to the addressor and related political institutions include *คสช* korsorcho (the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), and *รัฐ* rat (government, state, kingdom). This result is also similar to the findings with the comparison against Mr. Obama’s speeches. Information conveyed includes *กฎ* kot (rule, law), *แก้* kae (solve, rectify), *ปัญหา* punha (problem), *อำนาจ* amnat (authority, power), *ปฏิรูป* patirup (reform), and *ประเทศ* prathet (country). These findings were all different from the findings obtained in the comparison against Mr Obama’s speeches except one (the information about *problems*). The new items are indicative of the marked difference between the English and the Thai version. In the Thai version serious issues such as *กฎ* kot (rule, law), *แก้* kae (solve, rectify), *ปัญหา* punha (problem), *อำนาจ* amnat (authority, power), and *ปฏิรูป* patirup (reform) were introduced. These serious issues may have an impact on the way Thai people have perceived the meaning of these items while listening to the speeches. Overall, employing deontic modality, Gen Prayuth delivered his weekly speeches containing serious topics to Thais presented – the delivery, of which, was emphasized by strong pulls of possibility and necessity in terms of freedom to act.

Overall, the comparison of the two versions demonstrates an interesting discrepancy. While the Thai version depicts a direct and authoritarian discourse, the English version was pleasantly toned down by the less imposing use of language. This discrepancy implicitly reflects an awkward situation where the military government attempts to present a good image to the world opposed to the actual military suppression in the country.

Table 6. Top 15 most frequent Thai keywords and their English translations

Thai keywords	f	LL	Examples
1. จะ <i>cha</i> (will)	372	1697.16	จะได้พิจารณา <i>cha dai phicharana</i> (will consider) ; จะถูกเชิญตัวมา <i>cha thuk choen tua ma</i> (will be invited to)
2. ต้อง <i>tong</i> (must)	261	1583.36	ประชาชนต้องเข้าใจเรา <i>prachachon tong khaochai rao</i> (people must understand us); ต้องช่วยกัน <i>tong chuai kan</i> (must help together)
3. ประเทศ <i>prathet</i> (country)	209	1282.10	คนส่วนใหญ่ทั้งประเทศไม่มีความสุข <i>khon suanyai thang prathet mai mi khwam suk</i> (the majority of the people in the country are unhappy); เพื่อให้ประเทศชาติเดินหน้าต่อไปได้ <i>phuea hai prathetchat doenna topai dai</i> (so that the country can keep moving forward)
4. เรา <i>rao</i> (we)	199	1248.33	เราจำเป็นต้องเดินหน้าต่อไป <i>rao champen tong doenna topai</i> (we have to keep moving forward); ขอให้เวลาเรา <i>kho hai wela rao</i> (please give us time)
5. รัฐ <i>rat</i> (government, state, 128 kingdom)		1100.95	การพิจารณาดำเนินการของรัฐบาล <i>kan phicharana damnoenkan khong rathaban</i> (the government's consideration to act on sth); เพื่อลดการลงทุนของรัฐ <i>phuea lot kanlongthun khong rat</i> (in order to reduce the state investment)
6. กฎ <i>kot</i> (rule, law)	74	793.45	มีความจำเป็นต้องดำเนินการตามกฎหมาย <i>mi khwam champen tong damnoenkan tam kotmai</i> (it is necessary to execute in accordance with the law); เคารพกฎกติกา <i>khaorop kot katika</i> (respect rules and regulations)
7. คสช <i>korsorcho</i> (the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO))	35	672.49	คสช.ต้องการให้เกิดความสงบสุขและปลอดภัยอย่างแท้จริงโดยทันที <i>khosocho tongkan hai koet khwam sa-ngop suk lae plotphai yang thaeching doi thanthi</i> (NCPO wants to restore the absolute peace and safety immediately); คสช. มีความจำเป็นต้องดำเนินการตามกฎหมาย <i>khosocho mi khwam champen tong damnoenkan tam kotmai</i> (NCPO needs to act according to law)
8. ประชาชน <i>prachachon</i> (people, citizen)	84	534.05	ประชาชนชาวไทย <i>prachachon chao thai</i> (Thai people); บรรเทาความเดือดร้อนพี่น้องประชาชน <i>banthao khwam dueatron phinong prachachon</i> (relieve the distress of Thai people)
9. แก้ <i>kae</i> (solve, rectify)	61	480.13	แก้ไขปัญหาคความเดือดร้อนเร่งด่วนเฉพาะหน้า <i>kae khai panha khwam dueatron rengduan chaphona</i> (urgently solve the burning issues); แก้ปัญหาทั้งระบบ <i>kae panha thang rabop</i> (rectify the whole system)
10. ปัญหา <i>punha</i> (problem)	73	453.29	ปัญหาก็มากมาย <i>panha ko makmai</i> (there are many problems); ทำให้ไม่สามารถยุติปัญหาหลังได้ด้วยวิธีทางของประชาธิปไตย <i>thamhai mai samat yuti panha long dai duai withithang khong prachathippatai</i> (making it impossible to solve the problems through democracy)
11. ไทย <i>thai</i> (Thailand, Thai)	79	354.01	ในประเทศไทย <i>nai prathet thai</i> (in Thailand); ทั้งไทยและต่างประเทศ <i>thang thai lae tangprathet</i> (both Thai and foreigners)
12. อำนาจ <i>amnat</i> (authority, 39 power)		263.80	เจ้าหน้าที่จะพยายามใช้อำนาจเท่าที่จำเป็น <i>chaonathi cha phayayam chai amnat thao thi champen</i> (officials will attempt to exercise power as much as necessary); พ.ร.บ.กฏอัยการศึกมีอำนาจควบคุมตัวได้ 7 วัน <i>phorobo kot-aiyakansuek mi amnat khuapkhum tua dai chet wan</i> (Martial Law has authority to detain people for up to seven days without charge)
13. ไม่ได้ <i>mai dai</i> (cannot)	85	206.60	ถ้าคิดตามใจชอบก็ไปไม่ได้ <i>tha khit tamchai chop ko pai mai dai</i> (we cannot move forward without conformity); การบังคับใช้กฎหมายปกติทำไม่ได้ <i>kan bangkhap chai kotmai pokkati tham mai dai</i> (law enforcement under normal circumstances cannot be done)
14. ปฏิรูป <i>patirup</i> (reform)	29	202.97	คณะทำงานเตรียมการปฏิรูป <i>khana thamngan triam kan patirup</i> (reform working group); สถาปนาปฏิรูปแห่งชาติ <i>sapha patirup haeng chat</i> (the National Reform Council (NRC))
15. จำเป็น <i>champen</i> (necessary, need to)	24	164.17	สำหรับการเชิญบุคคลมารายงานตัวนั้นมีความจำเป็น <i>samrap kan choen bukkhon ma rai-ngan tua nan mi khwam champen</i> (the process to summon individuals to report is necessary); เจ้าหน้าที่จะพยายามใช้อำนาจเท่าที่จำเป็น <i>chaonathi cha phayayam chai amnat thao thi champen</i> (officials will attempt to exercise power as much as necessary)

## 5.4 Dialogic investigation of political speeches

Based on Martin & White (2005) Engagement framework, Gen Prayuth has a high tendency to be dialogistically engaged, or in other words acknowledging alternative viewpoints and positions to his own (*heteroglossic*). However, the most frequently found engagement resources in his utterances are positioned to shut down or contract the scope for dialogistic divergence (*dialogistic contraction*), rather than to allow for alternative viewpoints (*dialogistic expansion*). The audience with such divergence are, therefore, suppressed or left with limited space for questioning or rejecting his propositions.

White (2015) categorises Engagement resources which contract the space for dialogistic divergence into five groups: 1) Disclaim - Denial, 2) Disclaim - Counter-Expect, 3) Proclaim - Expect, 4) Proclaim - Pronounce, and 5) Extra-vocalise - authorially-endorsed. He argues that the resources grouped together under Disclaim - Denial are the most contracting since the contrary position is directly rejected, or given minimal dialogistic space for negotiation of alternative positions.

The following examples illustrate Gen Prayuth's utterances which are categorised by White (2015) Engagement resources. The qualitative analysis of the original Thai speeches and the translated English versions presents Disclaim – Denial as the most common resource employed in the PM speeches, with the higher degree of dialogistic contraction in the original Thai speeches when compared to the official English translated version. In the following examples, the authors provide word-for-word translation of the original text in the brackets for such comparison. It is also worth noting that the lack of fluency in the word-for-word translation is deliberate, in order to keep the speaker's intention of the text as faithfully as possible

### 1) Disclaim – Denial:

Original speech:

"เพราะฉะนั้น สื่อทุกช่อง ทุกสื่อ อะไรที่เป็นสิ่งที่ดีอย่าเอาไปถกทำให้เกิดการต่อต้านขึ้นมาเลย ไม่เกิดประโยชน์อะไรเลย เพราะเหนื่อยกันเปล่า ๆ ผมไม่เห็นประโยชน์เลย แล้วบอกว่าให้เขาคิดดูว่าจะเกิดประโยชน์หรือไม่เกิดประโยชน์ เรื่องเหล่านี้ไม่ใช่เรื่องที่ต้องไปถกแบบนั้น"

(Every channel, every media should, therefore, stop provoking further disputes against what is good (authors' note: i.e. 'our policies'). It just gets us all exhausted. There's no use doing it. I don't see any benefit at all. Then you tell them to think whether it'll be beneficial or not. This kind of things is not to be questioned like that.)

Official translation:

"It does not do any good to try and create or provoke further disputes amongst us."

(23 January 2015)

### 2) Disclaim - Counter-Expect:

Original speech:

"เพราะฉะนั้นเป็นหน้าที่ของพวกเราที่จะต้องทำให้ทุกคนมีความสุข ถึงแม้ว่าสิ่งที่เราทำอยู่ ความทุกข์กลับมามีอยู่ ศสช. เราก็ยินดีและเต็มใจที่จะทำให้กับพวกท่าน"

(It's, therefore, our duty to make everybody happy. Even though what we are currently doing causes the suffering to NCPO (authors' note: i.e. 'us'), we're pleased and willing to do it for all of you.)

Official translation:

"The NCPO has a duty to bring happiness to all even though the burden is on us but we are willing to work hard for everyone."

(27 June 2014)

## 3) Proclaim – Expect:

## Original speech:

"สิ่งต่าง ๆ ที่กล่าวมาทั้งหมดนั้นจะไม่สำเร็จโดยเร็วอย่างที่ทุกคนต้องการได้เลย หากยังไม่มีความสงบเกิดขึ้น การประท้วงด้วยความไม่เข้าใจในระบอบประชาธิปไตยอย่างแท้จริง และไม่เข้าใจในเหตุผลการควบคุมอำนาจในครั้งนี้ว่าทำเพื่อประเทศไทยและคนไทยทุกคน"

*(All that I have said above can't be achieved as quickly as everybody wants, if there is still no peace. The protests are done without a true understanding of democracy, demonstrating the lack of understanding of the reasons for this power control - which I did for Thailand and for all Thai people.)*

## Official translation:

"All that I have said above cannot be achieved in time without peace and security. It will not happen if there are still protests without a true understanding of democracy and the realization that we are doing this for the country and the Thai people"

(30 May 2014)

## 4) Proclaim – Pronounce:

## Original speech:

"ผมบอกแล้วไงว่า คสช. หรือใครก็แล้วแต่จะไม่ไปยุ่งกับท่าน เรื่องปฏิรูป ท่านต้องมาทำกันเอง มีประธานสภาประชุมและก็หาข้อสรุปมาให้ได้นี่ ผมอธิบายอย่างละเอียดแล้ว เดียวจะบอกว่าไม่รู้เรื่องอีก"

*(I've said that neither NCPO nor anyone will interfere with you. You have to do the reform by yourself. You'll have a chairperson of the National Reform Council, then you'll work for a conclusion. I already explained it thoroughly so don't ever say again that I'm ignorant.)*

## Official translation:

Official translation is not presented for the above statements due to the editing.

(22 August 2014)

## 5) Extra-vocalise - authorially-endorsed:

## Original speech:

"อดีตผู้นำประเทศของไทยท่านหนึ่งที่เป็นนักประชาธิปไตย นักสิทธิมนุษยชน ผมขออนุญาตไม่เอ่ยชื่อท่าน ก็เคยพูดไว้ว่าไม่มีใครสนับสนุนรัฐประหารอยู่แล้ว แต่ก็เห็นด้วยในการเสริมสร้างประชาธิปไตยใหม่ของไทยใหม่ (Authors' note: 'ประชาธิปไตยใหม่ของไทย') ให้ยั่งยืน"

*(While I'll reserve the right not to say the name, a former leader of Thailand who is a democracy and human rights advocate has once said that no one supports a coup but agrees to the reinforcement of Thailand's new democracy in Thailand in a sustainable manner.)*

## Official translation:

"A former leader of our country, who is a democracy and human rights advocate, has remarked that no one supports a coup but understand that democracy in Thailand must be strengthened in a sustainable manner."

(22 August 2014)

The utterances that are dialogically contractive are typically seen as taking a more authoritative stance than those that are dialogically expansive. The PM speeches reveal that he positioned himself as 'a boss' who takes the authority to control what is right and what is wrong, what to include in the agenda and what not to, with less consideration to recognize the alternative stances of his audience. In fact, the rhetorical effects associated with his stance-taking are found more in the traditional way of educating discourse such as a preacher's or a parent's talk, rather than political discourse.

## 6 Conclusion

Gen Prayuth's ability to govern Thailand is not in question in this research. In fact, as the Prime Minister, Thailand and the world saw that he is a man of action. Through his pet project *Returning Happiness to Thai People*, it is evident that his government initiated policies and spearheaded activities to promote peace and order, poverty alleviation, economic agenda and many more. Through his speeches, he is evaluated both by the locals and the international community for his display of interpersonal competence through choices he makes in the use of language. From the perspective of listeners, especially those who have attended and witnessed charismatic speakers, interpersonal competence such as communication skills are crucial indicators of trust since most people have difficulty in directly evaluating a person's technical and educational competence (Roberts & Aruguete 2000, Cook 2001, Hall et al. 2001).

He is, however, heavily criticised locally for being an 'authoritarian' speaker as shown by the informational, deontically modalised and dialogically contractive speeches he delivers to communicate his government's policies and report on actions done. Unlike the catchy and snappy speeches of the well-known democratic world leaders such as former US President Barack Obama (see Kazemian & Hashemi 2014), there were not a lot of rhetoric strategies or persuasive linguistic techniques such as Parallelism, Antithesis and Expletive, Unification and Cohesivation found in Gen Prayuth's speeches.

Apparently, while the messages in his speeches are not subtle, they are always loud and clear. This may be because he is so honest that he wants to remain truthful to himself, or simply because he does not care. However, given his role as the leader of a democratic government, which is for the people, of the people and by the people, he may consider 'involved communications' (Biber et al. 1998) when conveying his message to the locals, which may positively enhance his political image.

Future studies should examine in-depth qualitative examinations of the concordances of the keywords as well as investigations of existential presuppositions to shed light on the assumptions of the addressor are interesting to undertake. Moreover, a metaphor analysis (e.g. Charteris-Black 2004; Charteris-Black 2011; Lakoff 1991; Mio 1997; Musolff 2004; see also O'Halloran 2007 precautions in interpreting metaphors) may shed some light on the perceptions, ideologies and beliefs of the addressor. We hope that this corpus-based investigation of political speech scripts can provide a tool to support descriptive analysis of data for understanding political discourses.

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