CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is about the methodology used in this study. There are three sections to be discussed. The first section describes the Data Collection and Procedure, the second the Data Analysis and the third part the Reliability Assurance.

4.1 Data Collection and Procedure

Cluster sampling method has been used to sample data for this study. They are all pieces of writing on Thaksin, photos and cartoons depicting him published on *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* in seven weeks around seven most important periods throughout Thaksin's five-and-a-half-years ruling time:

• The first general election when Thai Rak Thai won in a landslide: January 6-13, 2001.

• The Constitution Court ruled 8-7 in favour of Thaksin on a charge of having concealed assets: August 3-10, 2001.

• Thailand hosted APEC Leader's Summit: October 6-13, 2003.

• Tak Bai insurgent: October 24-31, 2004.

• The second general election when Thai Rak Thai won in another landslide: February 6-13, 2005.

• Temasek bought Shin Corp: January 23-30, 2006.

• Coup d'etat ousted Thaksin: September 20-27, 2006.

At first, the relevant publications gathered. They were then skimmed and all pieces of writing, photos and cartoons dealing with Thaksin were sampled. The process of data analysing will be described in the next part in this chapter.

In-depth interviews have also been conducted with a cartoonist, a journalist, an editor working for the two newspapers and a researcher from Chulalongkorn University, who used to work for *The Nation* and presently contributes to *Bangkok Post*.

4.2 Data Analysis

The study utilised both quantitative and qualitative research methods apart from unstructured in-depth interviews.

The attribution approach in images analysis was used. Each sample unit was studied carefully to find out whether it reflected positive, neutral or negative image of Thaksin. The pieces of writing were divided into three categories:

• news: pieces of writing that introduce facts or opinions by the public or people outside the newspapers.

• comment: pieces of writing that introduce opinions by editors, journalists or academic researchers representing the newspapers' point of view. [1] Under this category, comment includes commentary, opinion, analysis and editorial.

• letters to the editors: pieces of opinion by the readers published in the newspapers.

The news and comment covering Thaksin are always in three themes: politics, business and society.

• politics involves parties, politicians, political crisis, government system, election, independent institutions, rules, principles, laws, arm forces...

• business involves banks, tax, investment, budget, economic policies, economic problems, economic sectors...

• society involves culture, environment, children, women, PR, social evils, social welfare/services, family...

The pieces of writing, photos and cartoons are considered:

• positive: if each offers good image of Thaksin.

• neutral: if each offers neither good nor bad image or both good and bad image of Thaksin in one piece.

• negative: if each offers totally bad image of Thaksin.

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[1] The way of categorising pieces of writing in newspapers into two kinds: news and comment has been introduced by Duncan McCargo, Politics and the Press in Thailand: Media Machinations, (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 3.

The percentage of positive, neutral and negative images of each period was figured out, from which the researcher find out the trend in reflecting Thaksin. A table as follows was designed to record number and percentage of the items in each period:

Level	News				Comment				Letter	Photo	Cartoon
	Politics	Business	Society	Total	Politics	Business	Society	Total			
Positive											
Neutral											
Negative											
Total											

Table 4.1 Model table for recording number and percentage of Thaksin's images of different levels depicted in one week coverage.

Based on the results of the content analysis, researcher can figure out whether there was any trend in covering Thaksin, whether the two newspapers featured the same images of Thaksin. From the interview findings, the researcher can answer the question why the trend happen and whether it reflects anything about press freedom under Thaksin. The pieces of writing were then read more carefully, from which the researcher could systematically list characteristics of Thaksin reflected in the sample collection.

4.3 Reliability Assurance

To assure the reliability of the whole research, a reliability test has been conducted. A research assistant was asked to work on the same amount of samples with

the researcher in the test. As many as 20 items of pieces of writing, photos and cartoons were chosen randomly among the sample for the test. The researcher and the assistant works separately to categorise the items according to themes, then put them in different image levels: positive, neutral, and negative. They have exactly the same decisions on 16 items.

According to the formula:

$$\text{Result} = \frac{n\,(C1\ C2...Cn)}{C1 + C2\,...+ Cn}$$

In which: n = number of analysts

C1 C2 ...Cn = total number of items that all analysts have the same comments

C1 + C2 + Cn = total number of items that all analysts work on

Result should not be smaller than 0.75. Then the research is reliable. [2]

The result came out from the test is:

$$\text{Result} = \frac{2.16}{(20+20)} = \frac{32}{40} = 0.8 \ (>0.75)$$

So the research is reliable.

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[2] Ole R Holsti, Content Analysis for Social Science and Humanities, (Mass: Westley Publishing Co, 1969) as introduced in Toungporn Jampasri, The Image of Thaksin Shinawatra in Thai Newspapers, thesis, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2004).