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Travel Blogs as a Reflection of Thai Perspectives on Myanmar

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze perspectives on Myanmar in the discourse of travel blogs. The researchers consider linguistic strategies used by the bloggers under the framework proposed by van Dijk (2006, 2009). The data were drawn from travel blogs in the blue planet section of Pantip.com posted during January 2014 - December 2015. Four linguistic strategies were found: lexicon, expressions, rhetorical figures, and indirect speech. The linguistic strategies used in travel blogs on Myanmar reveal both positive and negative points of view from the bloggers. Those points of view deal with issues of way of life, occupation, geography, religion, food, accommodations and buildings, transportation, fashion, security, technology, and sanitation. Since ancient times, Myanmar has been portrayed as an enemy of Thailand by the media (textbooks, films, and TV plays). However, this study reveals that Thai travelers to Myanmar have opened their minds and changed their points of view towards their neighbor. Myanmar is no longer our enemy but a beautiful country with deep roots of Buddhism and many beautiful tourist attractions.

Keyword: Myanmar, Travel blogs, Points of view, Discourse analysis.

Introduction

Myanmar is a country that has gradually become an area of interest for Thai travellers. In the past Myanmar closed their country to visitors due to the political unrest (Tourism News Team, 2013). After the isolation, when Myanmar opened the country, many ancient sites remained exquisite. This caused many travelers from all over the world, including Thailand, want to travel to Myanmar. After visiting the country, many Thai travelers write down their experiences on travel blogs. On such blogs, we see both positive and negative points of view on Myanmar by Thai travelers.

This research aims to analyze the linguistic strategies used in travel blogs written by Thai travelers visiting Myanmar and to analyze Thai perspectives on Myanmar. The researchers believe that these linguistic strategies can reveal the points of view of Thai travelers through Myanmar. The analysis is based on a framework of linguistic strategies proposed by van Dijk (2006, 2009).

Previous researches have studied language in tourism discourse (Jørgenson, 2004; Ip, 2008; Rázusová, 2009). Most research has revealed hyperbole, superlative adjective, metaphor, antonym, key words and keying, ego targeting, and otherness to be key linguistics strategies for expressing points of view in the discourse of tourism. Some studies analyze the content and language techniques used in travelogues which revealed the writer's points of view (Phongsuk, 2010; Ugglá, 2011; Rizzato, 2014). However, authors of this paper have not previously found any research on Thai travelers' points of view through Myanmar by analyzing language use in travel blogs.

Method

The data were collected from the Blue Planet section on Pantip.com between January 2014 - December 2015. 92 travel blogs were used in the research. The researchers analyzed the data into various perspectives according to content and classified the perspectives along positive points of view and negative points of view. The researchers then analyzed the linguistic strategies used by the travelers, under the framework of van Dijk (2006, 2009).

The limitation of the study was that the travel blogs selected were those which have details about travelers' experiences on the tourist attractions, suggestions for other travelers who plan to visit Myanmar and stories of Myanmar people. The travel blogs asking for help on traveling plans, and the blogs which only showed photos of travelers were excluded.

Results

The results showed that there are four linguistic strategies used in travel blogs: lexicon, expressions, rhetorical figures, and indirect speech. The first three linguistic strategies are under the framework proposed by van Dijk (2006, 2009). These four linguistics strategies reveal both positive and negative points of view of Thai travelers regarding various contents: way of life, occupation, geography, religion, food, accommodations and buildings, transportation, fashion, security, technology, and sanitation.

Thai Perspectives on Myanmar

The perspectives of Thai travelers on Myanmar can be classified into (i) perspectives with both positive and negative views, (ii) perspectives with only positive view and (iii) perspectives with only negative views as follows.

The perspectives with both positive and negative views

Way of life. Way of life refers to the behaviour of individual persons or society. Myanmar's way of life was portrayed in the travel blogs with a simplicity of life, a warmth of family, a kindness, and sincerity of people, a difficulty of living, a commotion in town, and a congestion of traffic in town. These elements were classified into both positive and negative views as shown in examples 1 and 2.

Example 1: A positive point of view through way of life

“...แต่สำหรับคนที่นี้ ...เวลาของเค้าเหมือนกับหยุดนิ่ง ชีวิตทุกอย่างก็นิ่งๆ ไม่หวือหวา แต่ก็อยู่กับด้วยความรู้สึกที่มีคุณค่ากันทั้งนั้น เราโชคดีแค่ไหนแล้ว ที่มีทุกอย่างเพียบพร้อมให้ได้ใช้ ให้ได้สัมผัส”

tèe sǎm ràp khon thîi nîi weylaa khǎŋ khǎw mǎn yùt nîŋ chii wít thúk wan kǎw nîŋ nîŋ mâi wǎn wǎa tèe kǎw yùu dûay khan khwam rúu sùk thîi mii khun khàa kan thǎn nán raw chòk dii khêe nǎy léaw thîi mii thúk yàŋ phîapphróm hây dâi chǎy hây dâi sǎm phàt

“... But for these people... The time seems to be paused. Their everyday life is calm and not exciting. They live with the precious feelings. How lucky we are to have many convenient things to use.”

Seven days in Myanmar with 15,000 Baht: A wonderful of Bagan and a beautiful of Inlay. (2015, March 19). Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/33357960>

From example 1, it is apparent that the underlined words and sentences are the linguistic strategies used to portray the way of life in Myanmar in a positive view. The lexical items which are used are *paused*, *calm*, *not exciting*, and *precious*. These portray the Myanmar way of life as simple, unrushed, and pleasant.

Example 2: A negative point of view through way of life

“...หลังจาก 2 ชม. ผ่านไปเราก็ถึงเมืองหงสาวดีแล้วครับ สัมผัสแรกที่เรามาถึงบอกได้เลยว่าเมืองนี้โคตรวุ่นวาย!! คือทั้งเสียงแตรรถ ทั้งการจราจรที่คับคั่ง บอกได้เลยว่าในตัวเมืองหงสาวดีแล้วไม่น่าอยู่เลยครับ...”

lăṅ càak sǎwṅ chûa moṅ phàn pay raw kôw thǎṅ muaṅ hōṅsăwádii léew khráp sāmphát rēek thii raw maa thǎṅ bók dāay ləoy wāa muaṅ ní khôt wūnwaay khuu thǎṅ sǎṅ tree rôt thǎṅ kaan caracoon thii khápkhǎṅ bók dāay ləoy wāa nay tua muaṅ hōṅsăwádii léew mâ y nâ yūu ləoy khráp

“...After 2 hours, we arrived Hongsawadee. Once I got in this town I could say that the town was messy!! The honk and traffic jam were all around. I can say that Hongsawasee is not the place for living.”

17 Days in Myanmar of mine. (2015, January 20). Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/33130663>

From example 2, the negative points of view about way of life are conveyed by negative lexical items: *messy*, *traffic jam* and *not a place for living*. These indicate that the life of Myanmar people in Hongsawadee is too crowded, and should not be the place for one who loves peace to live.

Occupation. The occupations mentioned in the travel blogs include: a tourist guide, a waiter, a taxi driver, a hotel receptionist, a vendor. Opinion on these occupations were divided into both positive and negative views as shown in examples 3 and 4.

Example 3: A positive point of view through occupation

“...และที่น่าประทับใจอีกอย่างคือผู้คนครับ อย่างแม่ค้าขายมาลัยครับ เค้าอัธยาศัยดีมาก ๆ ไม่ซื้อก็ไม่วุ่นวาย ไม่ยัดเยียดให้...”

lé thii nâ práthápcay ṽiik yàṅ khuu phūu khon kráp yàṅ mēe kháa khǎy maalay khráp kháw ṽáttthayaasǎy dii mâak mâak mâ y sūu khǎw mâ y wūnwaay mâ y yát yiat hâ y

“...Another impressive thing is people such as a garland seller. She was nice. If we don't want to buy any stuff, she did not urge us to do so.”

Mandaley: A pretty town of Myanmar. (2014, January 29). Retrieved from <http://m.pantip.com/topic/31583608>

From example 3, it is apparent that the underlined lexical items are the linguistic strategies used to represent the occupation in Myanmar in a positive view. These lexical choices refer to the good behaviour of vendor that she does not annoy travelers by selling them things they do not want.

Example 4: A negative point of view through occupation

“โจรมุมสวน สองสาวน้อยพายเรือมาเกาะเรือเราพร้อมกับดอกบัวเล็กๆพอเราเรียกขอเงิน ให้ขนมก็ไม่ยอม ปล้นกันซะดๆ”

coon mum sŭan sŭng sŭaw nŏoy phaay rua maa kŏ rua raw phrŏm kàp dòk bua lék lék
phoo raw rŏp kŏw khŏw ñhŏn hŏy khanŏm kŏw mâ ywŏm plŏn kan chátchát

“A thief in a corner. Two little girls sailed to our boat and handed us some lotuses. Once we took the lotuses, she asked for money. We preferred to give them a snack but they said no. We were robbed.”

Mingalaba: Myanmar is so beautiful. (2014, November 3). Retrieved from <http://m.pantip.com/topic/32803968>

From example 4, the lexical items which are used in travel blog refer to negative views of occupation in Myanmar such as *a thief, robbed*. This linguistic strategy is talking about the way how these kids earning money.

Geography. The Geography of Myanmar was described with lexical choices like beauty, attractiveness, aridity, and backcountry. The views on geography of Myanmar were classified into both positive and negative views as shown in examples 5 and 6.

Example 5: A positive point of view through geography

“... นี่ผมไม่ได้ฝันไปซะมั๊ย เพราะมันสวยจริงๆครับ ผมถึงกับหยุดหนึ่ง วางกล้องลงแล้วซึมซับกับภาพที่อยู่ตรงนั้น กับคงเจดีย์ที่กว้างไปสุดลูกหูลูกตา”

nŭi phŏm mâ y dŏay fŏn pay chà y má y phrŏ man sŭay ciŋ ciŋ khráp phŏm thŭŋ kàp yùt
nŭŋ waŋ klŏŋ loŋ léew sŭmsáp phŏp thŭi yùu troŋ nán kàp doŋ ceydii thŭi kwŏaŋ pay
sùt lôuk hŭu lôuk taa

“...Am I dreaming? It was beautiful, I was stunned and put down the camera to appreciate the endless view of pagodas.”

Seven days in Myanmar with 15,000 Baht: A wonderful of Bagan and a beautiful of Inlay. (2015, March 19). Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/33357960>

From example 5, the use of rhetorical question and lexical items portray a positive view of Myanmar’s geography, such as *Am I dreaming?*, *beautiful*, *stunned*. These linguistic strategies are used to talk about beautiful scenes of nature which made the traveler very impressed.

Example 6: A negative point of view through geography

“...ถึงเคยไปพม่าก่อนหน้าี่มาสองครั้งแล้วก็ตาม แต่สองครั้งนั้นไปลงที่ย่างกุ้ง ครั้งนี้เป็นครั้งแรกที่ไปลงมัณฑะเลย์คะ พอเครื่องจอดตกใจเล็กน้อย...พม่ามีทะเลทรายด้วยหรือ?!?!? ความรู้สึกแห้งแล้งเหมือนเครื่องจอดลงกลางทะเลทรายเลย...”

thŭŋ khŏy pay phamâa kŏon nŏa nŭi maa sŭwŋ khráp léew kŏw taam tŕe sŭwŋ khráp nán
pay loŋ thŭi yâŋkŭŋ khráp nŭi pen khráp rêk thŭi pay loŋ mandaley khà phoo khrŏn

còt tòk cay lék nóy phamàa mii thaleysaay dūay r̃m̃ khwaam rúu sùk h̃ẽñlé̃ẽñ
m̃h̃añ khr̃ũãñ còt lõñ klaãñ thaleysaay lə̃y

“...Even though I have visited Myanmar in Rangoon this is my first time visiting Mandalay. Once the plane landed, I was shocked. Does Myanmar have a desert? It was arid as if the plane had landed in a desert.”

“Monyua: A new destination of Mandalay”. (2014, March 9). Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/31758546>

From example 6, the underlined linguistic strategies are rhetorical figure (rhetorical question and simile) which is used to indicate a negative point of view about geography. The linguistic strategies are used to talk about the arid area which traveler did not expect to see it.

Food. There are many descriptions of Myanmar food by the travelers in the travel blogs such as taste, appetising, cleanliness, smell, oil. The views on Myanmar food were classified into both positive and negative views as shown in examples 7 and 8.

Example 7: A positive point of view through food

“อาหารเช้าวันนี้ เป็นอาหารมือที่อร่อยที่สุดตั้งแต่มาเที่ยวทวีปนี้เลย ที่เด็ดคือปาท่องโก๋ หรือที่เรียกว่าอิวจากวายเป็นปาท่องโก๋จีนใหญ่มาก แต่เนื้อเหนียวนุ่มกำลังดี ไม่กรอบไม่แข็ง”

ʔaahãan cháaw wan nīi pen ʔaahãan múu thīi ʔaròy thīi sùt tẫñt̃ẽẽ maa thīaw th̃r̃p̃ nīi
leey thīi d̃et̃ kh̃ũũ path̃w̃ñk̃õ r̃ũũ thīi r̃ĩak̃ w̃ãã ʔiwcakuay pen path̃w̃ñk̃õ ch̃iñ ỹà̃
m̃ãak̃ t̃ẽẽ ñũã ñĩaw̃ ñũum̃ kamãñ dii mà̃ỹ kròp̃ mà̃ỹ k̃ẽ̃ñ

“This breakfast was the most delicious in the trip. The special was a deep-fried dough stick (Eiw ja kuay). It was a big deep-fried dough stick but the texture is soft and chewy, not crispy and not hard.”

Rainy on the way to Mingalabar again Mandalay - Pyin Oo Lwin – Inlay.
(2014, November 15). Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/31758546>

From example 7, it is apparent that positive views of food are identified by the underlined lexical items. These lexical items are used by the traveller to convey the good taste of Myanmar food.

Example 8: A negative point of view through food

“อาหารพื้นเมืองรสชาติมันแปลกๆ เริ่มจากซูปถั่วลิสงเหลืองตรงกลาง มันเหมือนกินถั่วเหลืองปั่นหยาบๆ ออกเค็มๆมันๆ
ติดตรงมีกลิ่นหืนของถั่วนี้แหละ ส่วนข้าวก็แข็งๆ ผักดองรสชาติมันชวนพะอืดพะอมมากกลิ่นแรง”

ʔahãan ph̃ũñ mũãñ r̃ót̃ ch̃ãat̃ mañ pl̃ẽk̃ pl̃ẽk̃ r̃ôm̃ cà̃ak̃ súp̃ th̃ũã s̃ĩĩ l̃ũãñ trõñ klaãñ
mañ m̃h̃añ kiñ th̃ũãl̃ũãñ p̃àñ ỹà̃p̃ ỹà̃p̃ ʔw̃òk̃ kem̃ kem̃ mañ mañ th̃ũã t̃it̃ trõñ m̃ĩĩ kliñ
h̃h̃ũñ kh̃w̃õñ th̃ũã ñĩĩ l̃è̃ s̃ũañ kh̃ãw̃ k̃w̃ò̃ kh̃ẽ̃ñ kh̃ẽ̃ñ ph̃àk̃ d̃õõñ r̃ót̃ch̃ãat̃ mañ chuañ
phãʔũt̃phãʔom̃ mà̃ak̃ kliñ r̃ẽẽñ

“A taste of local foods was strange. Start with a yellow bean soup in the middle was like a rough blended soybean. The taste was and chewy. It was smelly. Streamed rice was too hard. Pickles were astringent and nauseated.”

An alone trip in Myanmar of strong women [Day 2] By Aim & Ang.
(2014, March 9). Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/31758546>

From example 8, it is apparent that negative points of view about food in Myanmar are conveyed by the lexical items like *strange*, *smelly*, *astringent* and *nauseated*. These lexical items explain many details of Myanmar food which the traveler was not satisfied with.

Accommodations & buildings. Accommodations and buildings of Myanmar in the travel blogs were portrayed with many aspects such as cleanliness, comfort, tidiness, beauty, dirtiness, expensiveness, and unfashionableness. These aspects were classified into both positive and negative views as shown in examples 9 and 10.

Example 9: A positive point of view through accommodations & buildings

“Mandalay Hill โรงแรมระดับ 4 ดาวของที่นี่ ... สะดวกสบายดีไม่ต่างกับโรงแรมเกรดเดียวกันที่เมืองไทยนะครับ
ห้องน้ำ ห้องทำสะอาดสะอาด... ล็อบบี้ของโรงแรมกว้างขวางตกแต่งสวยงาม
แม้จะไม่ใหญ่โตเท่าโรงแรมบ้านเราแต่ก็ถือว่าใช้ได้เลยครับ”

mandaley hıw roonreem rádàp sii daaw khwǎŋ thii nıi sàduaksabaay dii mây tàan kàp
roonreem krèet diaw kan thii muan thay ná khráp hǎwŋnám hǎwŋtháa sà?àatsà?aan
lǎpbıi khwǎŋ roonreem kwáan khwǎan tòk tēŋ sūay ŋaam mée cà mây yáy too tháw
roonreem bāan raw tē kǎw thǎm wāa cháy dāy leey khráp

“Mandalay Hill was a 4 star hotel. It was comfortable like a hotel with the same level in Thailand. The restroom was clean. The lobby was large and well decorated. It might not be as large as the lobbies in our country but they are ok.”

Mandaley: A pretty town of Myanmar. (2014, January 29).
Retrieved from <http://m.pantip.com/topic/31583608>

From example 9, the underlined lexical items convey a positive view of accommodation and buildings, in Myanmar. These lexical items are talking about the atmosphere of Mandalay Hill hotel which impressed the traveler.

Example 10: A negative point of view through accommodations & buildings

“...ราคาที่เราคิดเราคือ ห้องละ 80 usd แต่ขอให้เตรียมใจ ว่าโรงแรมที่พมานี้ ราคาแพงกว่าคุณภาพที่ได้มากนัก...”

raakhaa thii gáy kít raw khun hǎwŋ lá pèetsip yuu?étdu tē khwǎ hây triam cay wāa
roonreem thii phamāa nıi raakhaa phēŋ kwāa khunnaphāap thii dāy mâak nák

“...The tourist guide asked 80 usd from us for a hotel. Please remind yourself that the hotel room price in Myanmar is more expensive than the quality we gain.”

Rainy on the way to Myanmar Yangon Bago Bagan. (2014, March 15).
Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/31783442>

From example 10, the negative points of view about accommodations and buildings are conveyed by lexical items like *expensive*. This linguistic strategy used to portray that a hotel quality is not good enough for the price.

Transportation. Issues of transportation mentioned in the travel blogs include vehicles, public transportation, and traffic. These issues were portrayed into many aspects such as convenience, being on time, traffic jam, and hot weather. These aspects were classified into positive and negative views as shown in examples 11 and 12.

Example 11: A positive point of view through transportation

“สถานีรถไฟย่างกุ้งอยู่ในเมืองนะสะดวกต่อการเดินทางออกไปนอกเมืองมากๆและที่สำคัญรถไฟที่นี่เป็นระบบรางคู่
ตรงเวลาไม่มีดีเลย์ค่ะ บอกเวลาเป็นนาทีมาถึงเฝ้าตามกำหนด เซอร์ไพรส์มาก 555”

sàthãanii rófay yãṅkūṅ yùu nay muaṅ ná ká sàduak tòw kaan dõnthaaṅ ʔòok pay nõw
muaṅ mâak mâak léé thii sãmkhan rófay thii nîi pen rábop raṅ khúu tronṅ weylaa
mây mii diiley khà bòok weylaa pen naathii maa thũṅ pé taam kamnòt sãphráy mâak
hã hã hã

“Rangoon train station is located in downtown. It was convenient to travel outbound.
The railway here is a double track system. It was on time and made me so surprised
ha ha ha.”

Backpack to Yangon, Hongsawadee and Siriam. (2014, March 27).
Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/31809037>

From example 11, it is apparent that the underlying lexical items and expressions are the linguistic strategies used to describe the transportation system of Myanmar in a positive light such as *convenient*, *on time*, *surprised* and *hahaha* (laughing). These lexical items and expressions which imitated a sound of laugh are used to describe the effective train station system in Rangoon.

Example 12: A negative point of view through transportation

“...รถมินิบัสที่ว่านี่ ก็อารมณ์ประมาณรถเมล์ ไมโครบัส นะ นั่งกันไปสองสามชั่วโมง เห็นจะได้ ไซ้คไม่ตีอย่างแรงงง
หรือถนนไม่ดีก็ไม่รู้ แค่นั่งก็เหนื่อยแล้วค่ะ”

rót miníbat thii wãa nii kòw ʔaarom prãmaan rót mey maykhrobát ná nãṅ kan pay sãwṅ
sãam chũa moonṅ hẽn cà dâu chòok mâu dii yãṅ r̃ẽṅ r̃ũ thanõn mâu dii kòw mâu rúu
khẽ nãṅ kòw ñuay léew khà

“...A mini bus was like a micro bus in our country. It took 2-3 hours. The shock
absorber of the bus was extremely terrible. Just sitting on the bus made me tired.”

Rainy on the way to Myanmar Yangon Bago Bagan. (2014, March 15).
Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/31783442>

From example 12, it is apparent that the negative points of view about transportation in Myanmar are constructed by the linguistic strategy which is the lexical items such as *extremely terrible* and *made me tired*. These lexicons refer to a bad condition of the bus which is not impressed the traveler.

Technology. Topics in technology such as the speed of internet and electrical systems were classified according to both positive and negative views as shown in examples 13 and 14.

Example 13: A positive point of view through technology

“...แม้จะอ่านมาบ้างว่าเน็ตพม่าแย่มากๆ แต่ก็อยากจะลอง ...ความเร็วเน็ตในพม่า ดีกว่าที่คิดนะคะ ถือว่าพอใช้ได้ค่ะ”

mée cà ʔaan maa baaŋ waa nèt phamâa yêe mâak mâak tèt kôw yàak cà loŋ kwam
rew nèt nay phamâa dii kwàa thii khít ná khá thây waa phòw cháw dâay khà

“...Even though I knew that the speed of internet in Myanmar was terrible, I wanted to try. It was better than I thought. The internet was just right.”

Mingalaba: Myanmar is so beautiful. (2014, November 3).
Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/32803968>

From example 13, it is apparent that positive view of technology is identified by the underlined lexical items. These lexical items refer to the service of internet in Myanmar which made traveler pleasant.

Example 14: A negative point of view through technology

“...สัญญาณ 3G 4G อะไรนั่น อย่าไปหวังว่าจะได้เจอในประเทศนี้ WIFI ก็หาได้แสนยากเย็นเหลือเกิน
สิ่งเดียวที่พอจะหาได้คือสัญญาณโทรศัพท์”

sãanyaan sãamcii siicii ʔaray nân yàa pay wăŋ cà dâay cəw nay pràthèt níi waayfaay
kôw hãa dâay sɛen yâakyen lăa kəon siŋ diaw thii phòw cà hãa dâay khuu sãanyaan
thorasàp

“...Do not expect to find 3G and 4G in Myanmar. Even Wifi was too hard to find.
The only thing you can find is a phone signal.”

Myanmar a uniquely impressed destination. (2014, July16).
Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/32332722>

From example 14, it is apparent that the underlined lexical items are the linguistic strategy which use to represent the technology in Myanmar in negative views. These linguistic strategies refer to bad internet service in Myanmar which upset the traveler.

The perspectives with only positive view

Religion. Topics in religion include to faith, respect, and peace of Buddhism in Myanmar as shown in the following example.

“... ผมรู้สึกได้เลยว่าเค้าเคารพและศรัทธาในพุทธศาสนามากๆ แม้แต่ของค้าของขายเนื่องจากผมแวะซื้อกับนี่คนนี่ แล้วทำพวงมาลัยตกพื้น จังหวะที่ผมจะหยิบขึ้นมาเค้ายื่นยื่นที่จะให้ผมทิ้งไปเลยไม่ต้องใช้แล้วหยิบพวงใหม่ให้เลยทันทีไม่คิดตังใดๆ ประทับใจมากๆ ครับ”

phǒm rúusùuk dâay læy wâa kháw khawróp léε sàtthaa nay phútthasàtsanãa mâak mâak mée tèε khǒwŋkhâa khǒwŋkhăay nuaŋ càak phǒm wé sùu kàp nóŋ khon níi léεw tham phuanmaalay tòk phún caŋwà thii phǒm cà yìp khùn maa kháw yuanyan thii cà hây phǒm tíŋ pay læy mây tǒwŋ cháy léεw yìp phuan mà y hây læy thantii mây kít taŋ day day pràháp cay mâak mâak khráp

“...I felt that Myanmar people have strong faith and respect to Buddhism. At the temple I dropped my garland on the floor. When I was picking it up, the vendor offered a new one without any charge. It made me very impressed.”

Mandaley: A pretty town of Myanmar. (2014, January 29). Retrieved from <http://m.pantip.com/topic/31583608>

From the above example, it is apparent that the positive points of view about religion in Myanmar are conveyed by the linguistic strategy of choosing lexical items such as *faith* and *respect*. This linguistic strategy refers to a strong faith in Buddhism of Myanmar people that made traveler deeply impressed with their behaviour.

Fashion. On the topic of fashion, the national costumes of Myanmar were described with terms like “neatness” and “simplicity” as shown in the following example.

“การแต่งตัว ผู้ชายใส่โสร่ง ผู้หญิงใส่ผ้าถุง ดูแล้วสบายตาดี ไม่เหมือนเมืองไทยเดี๋ยวนี้ ขนาดเข้าวัดใส่กันซะปลิ้น”

kan tèŋtua phûuchaay sày sàròŋ phûuyŋ sày phâathŋ duu léεw sàbaay taa dii mây mñan muaŋ thay dǎw níi khànàat khâw wát sày kan sá plîn

“For dressing style, men and women usually wear Sarong. It is worth seeing. It is not like Thailand nowadays. People wear tight dress to go to temple.”

Seven days in Myanmar. (2014, March 3). Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/33313991>

From the example, it is apparent that a positive view about religion in Myanmar is identified by the underlined lexical items. This linguistic strategy refers to a good dress up of nation costume of men and women which was admired by traveler.

The perspectives with only negative view

Security. Topic regarding security included insecurity and cheating as shown in the following example.

“สรุปโดยรวมสำหรับเมืองบาหลีที่เราไม่ค่อยประทับใจเท่าไรทั้งด้วยสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวผู้คน บรรยากาศ ดูไม่ค่อยปลอดภัยนักสำหรับสาวๆที่จะมาเที่ยวกันเอง”

sàrup dooy ruam sãamràp muaṅ baakoo nîi raw mây khôoy pràthápcay thâwrày thán dūay sathãan thîi thônṅthîaw phûu khon banyaakat duu mây khôoy plòtphay sãmràap sãaw sãaw thîi cà maa thîaw kan ṅeṅ

“It can be concluded that I was not impressed with Bago people, the tourist attractions, and atmosphere were not quite safe for ladies who want to visit.”

Backpack in Myanmar. (2014, April 19). Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/33529977>

From the example, the use of underlined lexical items describe the negative views of Myanmar’s security. This linguistic strategy refers to an atmosphere in Bago which scared the traveler.

Sanitation. Discussion of sanitation referred to a dirtiness of restrooms and streets in Myanmar as shown in the following example.

“อ้อ อีกอย่างหนึ่งที่ผมแนะนำคือ ห้องน้ำพม่าไม่ค่อยสะอาดเท่าไหร่นะครับ และยังเป็นส้วมซึมอยู่มาก แนะนำให้เข้าไปเรียบร้อยตั้งแต่อยู่โรงแรมหรือร้านอาหารนะครับ เพราะห้องน้ำข้างนอกไม่ค่อยโอเค ยิ่งห้องน้ำตามวัดยิ่งแล้วใหญ่ (ยกเว้นชเวดากองที่ห้องน้ำดีมาก) เราต้องถอดรองเท้าเข้าครับ ซึ่งอ้อหือออออออออออออออออออออออออออออ ต่างคนต่างพูดไม่ออกได้แต่มองตาเท่านั้นนนน 55555 ห้องน้ำสนามบินก็ไม่ค่อยดีครับ คหสค. นะครับ”

ṅwò ṅiik yàṅ nṅṅ thîi phõm nénam khuu hõwṅnãam phamãa mây khôoy sàṅaat thâwrày ná khráp lé yaṅ pen sũamsũm yùu mãak nénam hây khâw hây riapróy tânṅèe yùu rooṅṅeem rṅṅ rãan ṅaahãan ná khráp phró hõwṅnãam khãaṅṅwòk mây khôoy ṅookey yîṅ taam hõwṅnãam wát yîṅ líaw yày yók wén chawaydakwṅ hõwṅnãam dii mãak raw tṅwṅ thṅwòt roṅṅthãaw khâw khráp sṅṅ ṅũmhuu tàṅṅ kon tàṅṅ phũut mây ṅwòk dâay tèe moṅṅ taa thâw nán hã hã hã hã hã hõwṅnãam sãnãambin kṅwò mây khôoy dii khráp kwam hẽn sũan tua ná khráp

“I would recommend that the restroom in Myanmar was not quite clean. Most are squat toilets. I suggest you to use the restroom in the hotel or restaurant. The restrooms in the temples were so bad (except those in Shwedagon). We have to take off our shoes to get into the restroom. That was Awww... We are speechless. Just look at each other’s eyes (a Thai popular song) ha ha ha ha ha. The restrooms at the airport were also not quite clean. That is my personal opinion.”

Mingalaba Yangon. (2014, July 23). Retrieved from <http://pantip.com/topic/32363877>

From the example, it is apparent that the underlined linguistic strategies which include lexical choice, indirect speech, and expression indicate a negative point of view about sanitation in Myanmar. These linguistic strategies refer to a dirtiness of public restrooms in Myanmar which were not good as in the hotel or restaurant.

Conclusion

The findings show that Thai travelers have perspectives on Myanmar regarding their way of life, occupations, geography, religion, food, accommodations and buildings,

transportation, fashion, security, technology, and sanitation. The topics with both positive and negative views are way of life, occupation, geography, food, accommodations and buildings, transportation, and technology. The topics with only positive view are religion and fashion. The topics with only negative view are security and sanitation. The positive or negative perspectives on these topics are revealed by the linguistic strategies the blogger used. None of the perspectives mentioned Myanmar as Thailand's enemy as it used to be portrayed by media like textbooks, films, and TV plays (Chititaranont. 2014). In the discourse of travel blogs, Myanmar is a beautiful country with a unique culture, a deep root of Buddhism and many beautiful tourist attractions. It is still relatively untouched by globalization.

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