

Investigating Moves, Types, and Positions of Stance Adverbials Used in Each Move in Online English Newspaper Editorials Published in Thailand

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Article information	
Abstract	According to Nundy et al. (2022), editorials aiming to criticize are different from those calling for action since they focus on the problem, not the solution. Currently, there are few studies on how editorials calling for action are written, and how stance adverbials are used in them. Therefore, this paper aims to 1) explore the moves of online English editorials published in Thailand aiming to criticize, 2) study what stance adverbials are used in the editorials, and 3) identify the positions of the stance adverbials in the editorials. 70 online editorials aiming to criticize with the length of 550-700 words during the 2021-2022 period were collected from www.bangkokpost.com . The stance adverbials list, two lists of positions of stance adverbials, and the 4-move move structure proposed by Rojanaatichartasakul (2021) were used in the analysis. Surprisingly, it was found that stance adverbials showing doubt and certainty were used less than those showing the source of knowledge, imprecision, and actuality, which is contrary to previous studies. Apart from the three positions proposed by Biber et al. (1999), the stance adverbials were mainly found in six medial positions and the initial position in the present study. Moreover, most stance adverbials were found in Move 3: Criticizing and Move 2: Discussing, followed by Move 4: Giving Suggestions, and Move 1: Introducing, respectively. A future study should compare the

	positions of stance adverbials found in online editorials and those in another international newspaper.
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1. Introduction

Online English newspapers have played a vital role in reporting news stories and events for decades. People read them to get updated on what is going on in society. For those wanting to read in-depth analyses of certain events and professional opinions, they would normally turn to serious newspapers (quality or broadsheet newspapers). As the central part of a quality or serious newspaper, the editorial is where readers can get professional stances, opinions, viewpoints, advice, suggestions, and comments of the editorial board regarding a particular ongoing situation (Bal, 2014; Sinclair, 2004; Singh & Singh, 2006).

The organization of the editorial comes into play, especially when an editorial writer chooses where in the text stance adverbials should be placed. In other words, it is necessary to know the move structure of the editorial, so that the editorial writer can decide the most appropriate stance adverbials to be used in each move (Rojanaatichartasakul & Phoocharoensil, 2022; Tongsibsong, 2012; Tongsibsong, 2014).

Newspaper editorial writers need to employ stance adverbials—words or phrases functioning as adverbs, e.g. *basically* and *truly*—when expressing their viewpoints and feelings, giving suggestions, criticizing what is happening, and calling for action (Biber & Conrad, 2000; Kotrč, 2012; Rojanaatichartasakul & Phoocharoensil, 2022; Zarza, 2018). In addition, when writing an editorial, the author might need to consider where in a sentence each stance adverbial should be placed (Biber et al., 1999; Biber et al., 2002; Rojanaatichartasakul & Phoocharoensil, 2022). However, only three main positions of stance adverbials (ie. initial, medial, and final) with two sub-medial positions (before a main verb and after a main verb) were explored in past studies.

In Thailand, *The Bangkok Post* is the only broadsheet English newspaper that has both print and online versions with good archives. As part of the opinion section, the editorial is written to express the opinions, perspectives, and comments of the editorial board. Online newspaper editorials of *The Bangkok Post* are available on www.bangkokpost.com. Those on international affairs are written by international writers, while those concerned with domestic issues are written by Thai authors (Rojanaatichartasakul, 2021).

Interestingly, the most recent study on how stance adverbials are used in online English editorials published in Thailand was conducted by Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022), who examined moves and stance adverbials in editorials from *The Bangkok Post*. However, it focused on editorials with the purpose of calling for action only. Another recent study was conducted by Binharong (2018), who studied editorials from *The Bangkok Post* in terms of moves and stance adverbials but failed to classify the types of editorials in the study. Thus, as of now there are no studies on the use of stance adverbials by Thai editorial writers in online English newspaper editorials that aim to offer criticism, which is another major type of newspaper editorial commonly found in online English newspapers.

According to Nundy et al. (2022), editorials aiming to criticize persons, events, and issues are different from those calling for action. Unlike those calling for action that focus on providing a solution, editorials that aim to provide criticism bring the reader's attention to the problem, rather than the solution.

From a structural perspective, the organization of editorials aiming to criticize and what stance adverbials to be used and how to use them could be different from those calling for action. Thus, this research paper attempts to look at how Thai editorial writers utilize the moves of the editorials aiming to criticize persons, events, and issues, and how they use stance adverbials and where they put stance adverbials in each move.

Ultimately, it is hoped that this piece of research will prove useful for Thai students and other nationalities learning how to become professional English editorial writers. Also, it could be helpful to teachers and students of English in

terms of teaching and learning how to read online English newspaper editorials more effectively.

Research Questions

1. In what moves of the editorials are the positions of stance adverbials found in online English newspaper editorials published in Thailand with the aim of giving criticism?
2. What types of stance adverbials are mainly found in online English newspaper editorials published in Thailand with the aim of giving criticism?
3. In what positions are stance adverbials found in online English newspaper editorials published in Thailand with the aim of giving criticism?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Move Structures in English Newspaper Editorials

Ansary and Babaii (2005), Bhatia (1993), Bhatia (1997), Binharong (2018), Bonyadi (2010), Shokouhi and Amin (2010), Tongsibsong (2012), Tongsibsong (2014) and Sugiura (1996) have studied the move structures in English newspaper editorials. Their frameworks start with the move of introducing or presenting the event. The middle moves include discussing an issue, explaining the situation, giving opinions, and giving a solution, whereas the final move is concerned with ending the discussion and/or giving recommendations. Most recently, Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) proposed four moves for analyzing online English newspaper editorials, namely Move 1: Introducing, Move 2: Discussing, Move 3: Giving Opinions, and Move 4: Calling for Action. However, they focused on editorials with the aim of calling for action only. In addition, Binharong (2018) studied the moves based on Tongsibsong's study in 2014 and stance adverbials in *The Bangkok Post* editorials in general. Nevertheless, the researcher did not classify the editorials into different types.

2.2 Types of Editorials

Apart from calling for action, Nundy et al. (2022) notes that online English newspaper editorials have other important purposes. There are four types of editorials in terms of their purpose. The first type is editorials for explaining or interpreting. This type of editorial is used by editorial writers to explain something

new, such as a rule, a policy, a norm, or a finding. The second type is editorials of criticizing (giving criticism). As the name suggests, this type highlights the problem, instead of focusing on the solution to the problem. It aims to criticize persons, events, or issues. The third type is editorials of persuading (those calling for action). Not focusing on the problem, this type encourages the reader to take a specific, positive action or to adopt new thoughts or ideas. As for the fourth type, it aims to praise someone for doing something well. The last type is quite rare when compared to the first three types.

2.3 Recent Corpus-based Studies on Stance Adverbials in Newspaper Editorials

Corpus linguistics has been used as a research tool or methodology for studying the frequencies of words or phrases of interest appearing in concordance lines of corpora or collections of texts (Lindquist, 2009). As per studies on newspaper editorials, there have been corpus-based studies on stance adverbials in editorials by a limited number of researchers. For example, Biber et al. (1999), Biber and Conrad (2000), Biber et al. (2002), Kotrč (2012), and Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) found that the majority of stance adverbials in English newspaper editorials were epistemic stance adverbials, particularly those showing doubt and certainty (e.g. *probably* and *certainly*), followed by attitudinal stance adverbials (e.g. *unfortunately* and *surprisingly*), and style stance adverbials (*basically* and *technically speaking*). As for the positions of stance adverbials, the studies showed that medial positions (stance adverbials coming before or after verbs) were predominant in newspaper editorials. In addition, Ojo (2020) compared the use of hedges and boosters (similar to stance adverbials showing doubt and certainty) in Nigerian and American newspaper editorials. He found that both of them were prevalent in the two newspapers in his study. He also noted that hedges and boosters were crucial for a good editorial.

Most recently, Rojanaatichartasakul (2021), and Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) explored stance adverbials in online English newspaper editorials from *The Bangkok Post* and *The New York Times* using the stance adverbials framework proposed by Biber et al. (1999), and Biber et al. (2002), who classified stance adverbials into three main types: epistemic, attitudinal, and style. For the present study, the same framework was chosen because it has been used

and mentioned by a number of researchers. The details of each category and sub-category are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Examples of All Categories of Stance Adverbials and Their Sub-categories

Epistemic Stance	Attitudinal Stance	Style Stance
Doubt/Certainty: <i>no doubt, certainly, undoubtedly, probably, perhaps, maybe, arguably, definitely, likely, unlikely, surely, possibly, of course</i>	Expectation: <i>surprisingly, not surprisingly, unsurprisingly, most surprising of all</i>	<i>frankly, honestly, basically, technically, primarily, briefly, literally, seriously, confidentially, to tell you the truth, technically speaking, generally speaking, quite frankly, in short</i>
Actuality and reality: <i>in fact, really, actually, truly, in actual fact, for a fact, indeed, in effect, in practice, in reality, as a matter of fact</i>	Evaluation: <i>unfortunately, fortunately, conveniently, wisely, sensibly, slowly, fast, very fast, quickly, too quickly</i>	
Source of Knowledge: <i>evidently, apparently, clearly, reportedly, reputedly, according to</i>	Importance: <i>more importantly, importantly, significantly, crucially, especially, specifically, particularly, in particular</i>	
Limitation: <i>in most cases, typically, mainly, generally, largely, in general, usually, normally, sometimes, to some extent</i>		
Imprecision: <i>like, sort of, kind of, about, approximately, roughly, ... or so, more or less, something like</i>		

Sources: Biber et al. (1999); Biber et al. (2002)

As shown in Table 1, stance adverbials are grouped into three main categories. Epistemic stance adverbials are concerned with the writer's or speaker's judgement of a proposition in the aspects of doubt or certainty, actuality and reality, source of knowledge, limitation, and imprecision. This category of stance adverbials is the most widely used of all the categories of stance adverbials. Attitudinal stance adverbials are utilized by the writer or speaker to express his or her attitude toward the proposition in terms of expectation, evaluation, and importance. As for the style stance, it focuses on style and the way a message is conveyed.

2.4 Positions of Stance Adverbials

Stance adverbials can appear in different positions in sentences, including 1) the initial position, 2) medial positions (before or after the main verb) 3) the final position (Biber et al., 1999; Biber et al., 2002; Rojanaatichartasakul, 2021). Some examples of each position of stance adverbials are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Positions of Stance Adverbials

Position of Stance Adverbials	Examples
Initial (before the subject)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Honestly</i>, the children really need proper diets for their physical development
Medial (before the main verb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attorney <i>quickly</i> helped his client out of this mess.
Medial (after the object of the main verb/a transitive verb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John did <i>poorly</i> in his exam.
Final (the end or towards the end of the sentence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environmental issues are being solved properly.

Sources: Biber et al. (1999); Biber et al. (2002)

From one point of view, the above list of positions of stance adverbials is not comprehensive enough. Stance adverbials can also fall in other places of a sentence, such as between a helping verb and a main verb, after an intransitive verb, and after the object of a verb (Khamying, 2020; Swan & Walter, 2009; 2011). Some examples of these positions are given in Table 3.

Table 3*Additional Positions of Stance Adverbials*

Extra Positions of Stance Adverbials	Examples
Medial (after a main verb and before a phrase or a clause)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spokesman stood <i>appropriately</i> at the meeting. • The policeman ran <i>quickly</i> to the end of the alley. • The reporter asked <i>wisely</i> to get a response from the minister. • It is <i>likely</i> that the results will turn positive in the end. • The aim is <i>probably</i> to raise the awareness of the discourse community about cultural diversity.
Medial (between two auxiliary (helping) verbs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas will <i>surely</i> be elected the new governor.
Medial (between a helping verb and a main verb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jennifer will <i>definitely</i> go to talk to her manager.
Medial (between a linking verb and a complement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim is <i>truly</i> a man of his word.
Final (after an intransitive verb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the meeting, the committee member behaved <i>poorly</i>.
Final (after the object of a transitive verb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gonzola dealt with the problem <i>amazingly</i>.

Sources: Adapted from Khamying (2020); Swan & Walter (2009; 2011)

In light of the above, this study examines online newspaper editorials with the aim of giving criticism, which is a major type of editorial. They are indeed different from those calling for action and the other types of editorials in terms of will or purpose (Nundy et al., 2022). Thus, editorials with different purposes could have different organizational structures and different types of stance adverbials and their positions. This is the reason why the present study is needed for examining the newspaper editorials with the aim of giving criticism in terms of their moves, types of stance adverbials, as well as their positions in each move.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data and Data Collection Procedure

70 online English editorials with 550-700 words with the aim of criticizing were collected using the purposive sampling technique from *The Bangkok Post* published from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022 on www.bangkokpost.com. To ensure that the editorials were written by Thai authors, all the editorials were about domestic issues concerning either Thai politics or social issues in Thailand. Furthermore, titles with negative words or phrases, contents containing comments or phrases aimed at criticizing an action, a person, or an issue, and the proportion of text with critical content (greater proportion focusing on giving criticism rather than providing a solution or a recommendation) were taken into consideration when selecting editorials for the study. Only the first 70 editorials meeting the criteria were incorporated into the present study. Some examples of data collection are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Examples of the Collected Data

No.	Title	Date of Publication	Sample Sentences Giving Criticism
1	A failure to communicate	July 17, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of working to get the message across, the GPO has behaved in an autocratic manner by resorting to a lawsuit.
2	As clear as klong water	December 16, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the interest in revitalizing the city's waterways is positive, the latest scheme focusing on Klong Saen Saep has caused some concern due to the project's hefty price tag.
3	Inappropriate NACC bid	February 5, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OAG, in particular, made headlines in March last year when it formed four task forces to promote the agency's public relations campaigns, which turned out, unsurprisingly, to be a waste.

This number of editorials, totaling 40,707 words, is deemed appropriate when considering the previous studies, including Rojanaatichartasakul and

Phoocharoensil (2022), who included 60 editorials with the length of 550-700 words, totaling 35,973 words, and Tongsibsong (2012), who analyzed 60 English editorials from broadsheets and tabloid newspapers, and Tongsibsong (2014), who studied 30 English editorials from Ghanaian newspapers. In addition, a small corpus can benefit the researchers to explore the texts more thoroughly and effectively (Vaughan & Clancy, 2013).

3.2 Data Analysis and Analytical Procedure

In the current study, a move analysis was employed to explore the rhetorical moves in the editorials. In addition, a corpus-based approach was used to identify the types of stance adverbials in online English editorials and their positions as presented in the concordance.

A set of research tools was incorporated into the study to answer the research questions. First, a corpus of 70 online English newspaper editorials with the aim of giving criticism from *The Bangkok Post* was created. Secondly, a list of stance adverbials developed by Biber and his colleagues was used to identify the stance adverbials in the selected editorials (Biber et al., 1999; Biber et al., 2002). Thirdly, a proposed move structure with four rhetorical moves adjusted from Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) was utilized to identify the move patterns in the editorials. Lastly, the AntConc program for Windows (Installer) (4.2.0) was used for generating concordance lines where the tokens of each type of stance adverbial and their positions could be counted (Anthony, n.d.)

For identifying the moves in the editorials aiming to criticize, move structure model in Table 5 was employed. This model was adjusted from Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022), who studied editorials for calling for action, and was approved by a communication arts expert and university lecturer working in Bangkok, Thailand. The reason for the adjustment was that stronger and more critical opinions are likely to be found in editorials aiming to criticize than in those calling for action. In other words, less critical opinions are likely to be found in editorials calling for action, because the focus is on providing solutions and recommendations (Nundy et al., 2022). Thus, in the attributes of Move 3 in the present study, the phrase ‘giving criticism or strong opinion’ was included in lieu of ‘giving opinions and viewpoints.’

Table 5*The Proposed Move Structure of the Editorials*

Move Number	Title of the Move	Attributes
Move 1	Introducing	Providing background of the situation or issue
Move 2	Discussing	Talking about facts and more details of the situation or issue
Move 3	Criticizing	Giving criticism or a strong opinion on what has happened or what is happening about the situation or issue
Move 4	Giving suggestions	Providing a suggestion or a final remark on the situation or issue

Source: Adjusted from Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022)

To ensure the inter-rater reliability, once the 70 selected editorials had been rated by the researcher, they were then rated by a second rater—a native speaker of English with many years of teaching experience. Both the researcher and the second rater had studied and agreed upon the 4-move structure and the attributes of each move. Once all the moves had been assigned, the discrepancies between the ratings by the two persons were discussed until a consensus was reached (Armstrong et al., 1997). The percentage of agreement was 100%.

Once the AntConc program for Windows (Installer) (4.2.0) had been used to generate the concordance lines (Anthony, n.d.), each type of stance adverbial (based on Table 1) and their positions in the sentence (based on Table 2 and Table 3) were explored. After that, based on Table 5, the moves where each type of stance adverbial appear were identified.

4. Results and Discussion

To answer the three research questions, this section is divided into three main parts, namely moves, types of stance adverbials, and positions of stance adverbials found in each move. The findings were reported in terms of occurrences (for moves), tokens (for stance adverbials), and percentages (%). The details of each part are given below.

4.1 The Moves in Which the Stance Adverbials Were Found

According to Table 6, out of 364 instances of all moves, the greatest number were classified as Move 3: Criticizing (113 occurrences, 31.04 %), followed by Move 2: Discussing (94 occurrences, 25.83%), Move 4: Giving suggestions (87 occurrences, 23.9%), and Move 1: Introducing (70 occurrences, 19.23%).

Table 6

The Occurrences and Percentage of Each Move Found in The Bangkok Post Editorials Aiming to Criticize

Move	Occurrences	Percentage
Move 1: Introducing	70	19.23
Move 2: Discussing	94	25.83
Move 3: Criticizing	113	31.04
Move 4: Giving suggestions	87	23.9
Total	364	100

As shown in Table 7 below, each sub-category of stance adverbials exists in different moves.

Table 7

The Word Tokens and Percentage of Each Sub-category of Stance Adverbials Found in Each Move in The Bangkok Post Editorials Aiming to Criticize

Word Types (Sub-category of Stance Adverbials)	Tokens in Move 1	Per cen tage (%)	Tokens in Move 2	Per cen tage (%)	Tokens in Move 3	Per cen tage (%)	Tokens in Move 4	Per cen tage (%)
Epistemic (Doubt/ Certainty)	3	1.13	8	3.02	9	3.40	7	2.64
Epistemic (Actuality/ Reality)	0	0	10	3.77	15	5.66	8	3.02
Epistemic (Source of Knowledge)	0	0	25	9.44	18	6.79	1	0.38
Epistemic (Limitation)	1	0.38	10	3.77	3	1.13	1	0.38
Epistemic (Imprecision)	4	1.51	15	5.66	22	8.30	5	1.89

Attitudinal (Expectation)	0	0	3	1.13	4	1.51	0	0
Attitudinal (Evaluation)	1	0.38	10	3.77	13	4.91	6	2.26
Attitudinal (Importance)	2	0.75	9	3.40	20	7.55	14	5.29
Style	2	0.75	3	1.13	7	2.64	6	2.26
Total	13	4.90	93	35.09	111	41.89	48	18.12
Grand Total = 265 tokens (100%)								

According to Table 7, not all the sub-categories of stance adverbials were found in all four moves. The sub-categories of stance adverbials that are present in the four moves include epistemic stance adverbials showing doubt and certainty, epistemic stance adverbials showing imprecision, attitudinal stance adverbials showing evaluation, attitudinal stance adverbials showing importance, and style stance adverbials.

Regarding the tokens of the stance adverbials found in each move shown in Table 7, the most prevalent ones (with at least 5%) include epistemic adverbials showing the source of knowledge in Move 2 (25 tokens, 9.44%), epistemic adverbials showing imprecision in Move 3 (22 tokens, 8.30%), attitudinal adverbials showing importance in Move 3 (20 tokens, 7.55%), epistemic adverbials showing source of knowledge in Move 3 (18 tokens, 6.79%), epistemic adverbials showing actuality or reality in Move 3 (15 tokens, 5.66%), epistemic adverbials showing imprecision in Move 2 (15 tokens, 5.66%), and attitudinal adverbials showing importance in Move 4 (14 tokens, 5.29%). Some real examples from the present corpus are provided below.

Epistemic (Source of Knowledge) in Move 2: Discussing

Example

The fintech shenanigans made headlines after victims shared their experiences on a Facebook page. **According to** the posts, there are about 40,000 victims, with losses worth at least 10 million baht (“Bank fraud shock,” 2021).

Epistemic (Imprecision) in Move 3: Criticizing

Example

The government-led project drew more flak this week. This came after the cabinet on Tuesday approved a 10-year masterplan for developing Klong Saen Saep, one of Bangkok's main water transport routes. The project will cost an estimated 82.5 billion baht, or **about** 8 billion baht a year, to build the necessary infrastructure along a 72km stretch of the canal. **About** 45km of this is in Bangkok, with the rest in less populated communities in Chachoengsao province (“As clear as klong water,” 2021).

Attitudinal (Importance) in Move 3: Criticizing

Example

Such a soft approach is baffling, however. Indeed, the public is skeptical as to whether SPRC has any other option but to take responsibility for the damage caused to marine ecology and the impact on communities, **especially** fishermen (“Unwarranted spill optimism,” 2022).

Epistemic (Source of Knowledge) in Move 3: Criticizing

Example

It is worthy to note that the army had **reportedly** been deployed to guard these construction sites. Now the failure to restrict the movements of construction workers has led to Covid-19 transmissions in the provinces from them returning home (“Jab rollout lacks punch,” 2021).

Epistemic (Actuality and reality) in Move 3

Example

With a score of 30, Thailand now disappointingly shares the “not-free” tier with repressive regimes like Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The new ranking by Freedom House is ironic given Thailand's name that means “land of the free.” **In fact**, the country has alternated between “partly free” to “not free” for several years since the 2014 coup led by Gen Prayut (“Freedom in a perilous state,” 2021).

Epistemic (Imprecision) in Move 2

Example

The fintech shenanigans made headlines after victims shared their experiences on a Facebook page. According to the posts, there are **about** 40,000 victims, with losses worth at least 10 million baht (“Bank fraud shock,” 2021).

Attitudinal (Importance) in Move 4

Example

Equally **importantly**, the charter conundrum means that reform of independent organisations such as the Constitutional Court can no longer be put off (“Sinking of bill bodes ill,” 2021).

Interestingly, the aforementioned results are quite similar to the findings by Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022), because the present study shows that the majority of stance adverbials are utilized in Move 3: Criticizing and Move 2: Discussing, respectively. Similarly, Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) found that most of the stance adverbials appeared in Move 3: Giving Opinions and Move 2: Discussing. In addition, the fact that many stance adverbials fall in medial positions (P2-P7) in the present corpus partly agrees with the findings by Zarza (2018) and Biber et al. (2002), which asserted that most stance adverbials are normally used in medial positions. However, those past studies did not explicitly further clarify which of the possible medial positions the stance adverbials were located in. They just mentioned the medial positions where the stance adverbial comes before or after a verb.

The top three sub-categories of stance adverbials used in the present corpus are epistemic stance adverbials showing source of knowledge in Move 2: Discussing (25 tokens, 9.44%) followed by epistemic stance adverbials showing imprecision in Move 3 (22 tokens, 8.30%), and attitudinal showing importance in Move 3 (20 tokens, 7.55%). Therefore, it is possible to find the use of these three sub-categories of stance adverbials in such moves in every two to four online newspaper editorials published by *The Bangkok Post*. In contrast, in Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022), the leading sub-category was epistemic stance adverbials showing doubt or certainty in Move 3: Giving Opinions, followed by epistemic stance adverbials showing actuality and reality in Move 3:

Giving Opinions. The findings of the present study seem to be in line with Zarza (2018), who found that hedges and boosters were mainly used in Move 3: Justifying or Refuting Events in the New York Times editorials in his or her study. This is because hedges and boosters are similar to epistemic stance adverbials showing doubt or certainty. Also, Move 3: Justifying or Refuting Events is similar in nature to Move 3: Criticizing.

Clearly, the most prominent stance adverbials appearing in the four different moves in the present corpus are, respectively, epistemic adverbials showing the source of knowledge in Move 2: Discussing, epistemic adverbials showing imprecision in Move 3: Criticizing, attitudinal adverbials showing importance in Move 3: Criticizing, epistemic adverbials showing source of knowledge in Move 3: Criticizing, epistemic adverbials showing actuality or reality in Move 3: Criticizing, epistemic adverbials showing imprecision in Move 2: Discussing, and attitudinal adverbials showing importance in Move 4: Giving suggestions. Contrastingly, Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) found that the most prevalent ones included epistemic adverbials showing doubt or certainty in Move 3: Giving Opinions, epistemic adverbials showing actuality or reality in Move 3: Giving Opinions, epistemic adverbials showing source of knowledge in Move 3: Giving Opinions, epistemic adverbials showing limitation in Move 3: Giving Opinions, epistemic adverbials showing actuality in Move 4: Calling for Action, and epistemic adverbials showing doubt or certainty in Move 1: Introducing.

The discrepancies between the present study and the study by Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) seem to suggest that when writing an editorial aiming to criticize, the editorial writer needs to use many different types of stance adverbials (mainly epistemic and attitudinal), especially in Move 3: Criticizing and Move 2: Discussing. However, when it comes to writing an editorial which calls to action, the writer may need to employ quite a number of stance adverbials (primarily epistemic) in the move in which they give opinions, rather than the move where they need to call for action or the move in which they need to discuss the situation or event.

4.2 Types of Stance Adverbials

According to Table 9 below, it was found that most of the stance adverbials are epistemic, followed by attitudinal and style. Out of the 40,707 words in the

present corpus, there are 265 tokens of all types of stance adverbials, accounting for 0.65%. The tokens of the three types of stance adverbials are 165 (0.405%), 82 (0.201%), and 18 (0.044%), respectively.

Table 9

The Word Tokens and Percentage of Each Type of Stance Adverbial in the Corpus (Out of the 40,707 Words of the Corpus)

Word Types (Type of Stance Adverbial)	Word Tokens	Percentage (%)
Epistemic	165	0.405
Attitudinal	82	0.201
Style	18	0.044
Total	265	0.650

This is in accordance with the findings of Kotrč (2012), Biber et al. (1999), and Biber et al. (2002), who mentioned that epistemic stance adverbials were the most commonly found in news articles, followed by attitudinal stance adverbials, with style stance adverbials being used less frequently. Similar to Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022), the present corpus shows that the occurrences of epistemic stance adverbials are two times higher than those of attitudinal stance. However, Rojanaatichartasakul (2022) mentioned that the tokens of epistemic stance adverbials were about seven times higher than those of style stance adverbials, whereas the present study shows that they are almost ten times higher than those of style stance adverbials (Biber et al., 2002; Fengchao, 2014). This could be attributed to the differences in nature between the present corpus and the corpus in Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022). That is, the present study focuses on online newspaper editorials aiming to criticize, whilst Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) explored editorials aiming to call for action. A possible explanation for this finding is that the author of an editorial which aims to criticize an event or situation may want to focus on expressing his or her certainty or doubt and attitude or viewpoints towards a particular issue, rather than focusing on style and the manner in which a message is conveyed.

As for the sub-categories of epistemic stance adverbials, attitudinal stance adverbials, and style stance adverbials, their tokens are shown in Table 10 and Figure 1 below.

Table 10

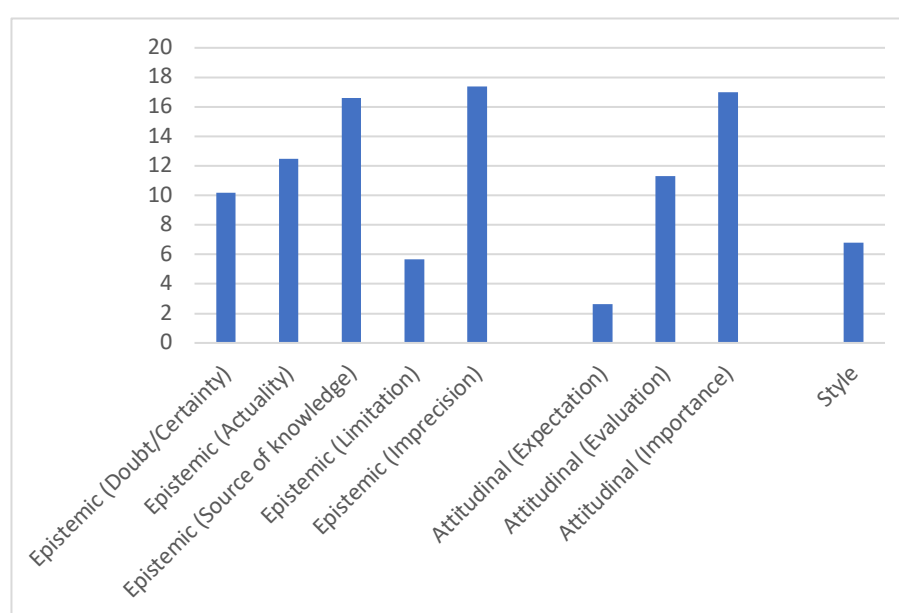
The Word Tokens and Percentage of Each Sub-category of Stance Adverbials Found in the Corpus (Out of the 40,707 Words in the Corpus)

Word Types (Sub-categories of Stance Adverbials)	Word Tokens	Percentage (%)
Epistemic (Doubt/Certainty)	27 (likely = 10, unlikely = 2, probably = 3, perhaps = 3, no doubt =1, certainly =3, unlikely = 2, possibly = 1, most likely = 1)	0.066
Epistemic (Actuality/Reality)	33 (in fact = 6, really = 8, actually =1, truly =2, indeed =12, in practice =1, in reality = 2, of course = 1)	0.081
Epistemic (Source of knowledge)	44 (apparently =6, clearly =1, reportedly = 14, according to = 23)	0.108
Epistemic (Limitation)	15 (typically = 2, mainly =3, generally = 3, largely =2, on the whole = 1, normally =3, to some extent =1)	0.036
Epistemic (Imprecision)	46 (like =26, sort of =1, kind of = 1, about = 17, ...or so = 1)	0.113
Total = 165 (0.405%)		
Attitudinal (Expectation)	7 (surprisingly = 3, unsurprisingly = 1, inevitably = 2, no surprise = 1)	0.017
Attitudinal (Evaluation)	30 (unfortunately = 3, fortunately = 2, fast = 2, quickly = 10, poorly = 2, properly = 5, promptly = 1, appropriately = 1, badly = 1, sadly = 3)	0.073
Attitudinal (Importance)	45 (more importantly = 2, surprisingly =1, especially = 23, particularly = 14, in particular = 5)	0.110
Total = 82 (0.201%)		

Style	18	0.044
(seriously = 7, primarily = 2, technically speaking =1, in short =2, So = 6)		
Total =18 (0.044%)		
Grand Total = 265 (0.65%)		

Figure 1

The Word Tokens and Percentage of Each Sub-category of Stance Adverbials Found in The Bangkok Post Editorials Aiming to Criticize (Out of the 40,707 Words in the Corpus)



Both Table 10 and Figure 1 show that out of the 40,707 words in the corpus, there are 165 tokens of epistemic stance adverbials (0.405%), 82 tokens of attitudinal stance adverbials (0.201%), and 18 tokens of style stance adverbials (0.044%). Epistemic stance adverbials showing imprecision (e.g. *like* and *about*) are the most prominent of all, with 46 tokens (0.113%). Attitudinal stance adverbials showing importance (e.g. *especially* and *particularly*) are the second highest sub-category of all, with 45 tokens (0.110%), Next, epistemic stance adverbials showing the source of knowledge (e.g. *according to* and *reportedly*) are the third highest, with 44 tokens (0.108%). Epistemic stance adverbials showing actuality or reality (e.g. *indeed*, *really*, and *in fact*) come in fourth place, with 33 tokens (0.081%). Attitudinal stance adverbials showing evaluation (e.g. *quickly* and *unfortunately*) are the fifth highest category, with 30 tokens (0.073%). Epistemic stance adverbials showing doubt and certainty (e.g. *likely*, *probably*, and *perhaps*)

are in sixth place, with 27 tokens (0.066%). This is followed by style stance adverbials (e.g. *So* and *seriously*), with 18 tokens (0.044%). As for epistemic stance adverbials showing limitation (e.g. *generally* and *normally*), 15 tokens (0.036%) were found. The sub-category of stance adverbials with the lowest number of occurrences is attitudinal stance adverbials showing expectation (e.g. *surprisingly* and *inevitably*), with only 7 tokens (0.017%).

The results of the present study above share some similarities and differences with those of previous studies. Further details are provided in the following.

The present study has revealed frequently used stance adverbials, including epistemic stance adverbials (e.g. *according to* and *particularly*), epistemic stance adverbials showing actuality and reality (e.g. *indeed* and *really*), attitudinal stance adverbials showing importance (e.g. *especially* and *particularly*) and those showing evaluation (e.g. *quickly* and *properly*), which is similar to previous studies (Biber et al., 1999; Kotrč, 2012; Rojanaatichartasakul & Phoocharoensil, 2022). At this point, it can be said that these sub-categories are the necessary components of all types of online newspaper editorials. This is because Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) identified these stance adverbials in online English editorials calling for action, whereas the present study found the same stance adverbials in editorials aiming to criticize. Meanwhile, Biber et al. (1999) and Kotrč (2012) located these stance adverbials in different types of printed media, including newspaper editorials.

However, in terms of differences, the epistemic stance adverbials showing doubt and certainty (e.g. *perhaps*, *of course*, *probably*, and *generally*) found in the present study do not have the highest number of occurrences, unlike in the studies by Biber et al. (1999), Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022), and Zarza (2018) who found that this sub-category of stance adverbials was the top one in terms of occurrences (tokens). In addition, the present findings seem to be quite contrary to those of Binharong (2018), who found that hedges (epistemic showing doubt) were the most frequently used in *The Bangkok Post* editorials in her study, but boosters (epistemic showing certainty) were the third highest among the interactional metadiscourse devices in the study. In addition, the present result is not supported by the findings of Ojo (2020), who found that hedges and boosters

(epistemic stance showing doubt and certainty) were utilized frequently in both Nigerian and American newspaper editorials and asserted that “a hallmark of a good editorial is the employment of both hedges and boosters by writers” (p. 60). Another interesting difference is that in the present study epistemic stance adverbials showing imprecision (e.g. *like* and *about*) comprise the sub-category with the highest number of occurrences of all the sub-categories of stance adverbials. Furthermore, the present findings are contrary to Biber et al. (1999), who found that *according to* (an epistemic stance adverbial showing source of knowledge) and *probably* (an epistemic stance adverbial showing doubt and certainty) were used equally in news articles. In contrast, *according to* is used almost eight times more frequently than *probably*—23 occurrences (0.056%) for the former and three occurrences (0.007%) for the latter. The present findings suggest that when writing an editorial aiming to criticize, the writer tends to frequently use epistemic stance adverbials showing imprecision (e.g. *like* or *about*) when discussing and criticizing a particular event or issue. This is probably because the writer needs to mention different things but sometimes cannot give the exact numbers (as in Example 1) or gives a rough idea (or example) instead (as in Example 2). Some examples from the corpus are provided as follows:

Example 1: The project will cost an estimated 82.5 billion baht or *about* 8 billion baht a year (“As clear as klong water,” 2021).

Example 2: It is time the government learn from its past failures; it needs more than a one-time effort - *like* the designated seven-day period - to achieve road safe (“High road toll a blow,” 2021).

4.3 The Positions of Stance Adverbials

In terms of the positions of stance adverbials, it was found that the stance adverbials fall in ten different positions. The details of each position are provided in Table 11 and Figure 2 below.

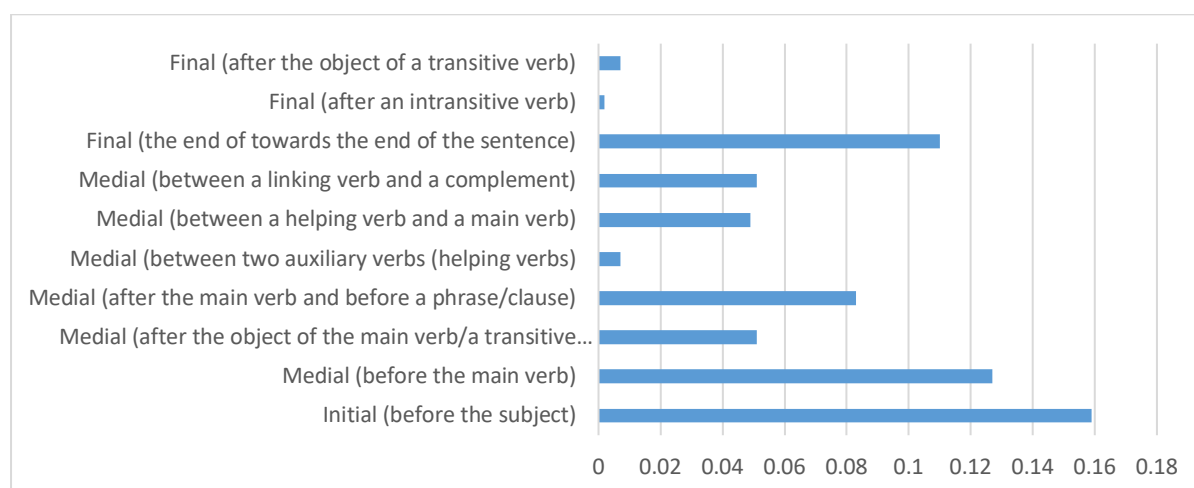
Table 11

The Word Tokens and Percentage of the Positions of Stance Adverbials Found in the Corpus (Out of the 40,707 Words in the Corpus)

Positions of Stance Adverbials	Code	Word Tokens	Percentage (%)
Initial (before the subject)	P1	65	0.159
Medial (before the main verb)	P2	52	0.127
Medial (after the object of the main verb/ a transitive verb)	P3	21	0.051
Medial (after the main verb and before a phrase/clause)	P4	34	0.083
Medial (between two auxiliary verbs (helping verbs))	P5	3	0.007
Medial (between a helping verb and a main verb)	P6	20	0.049
Medial (between a linking verb and a complement)	P7	21	0.051
Final (the end or towards the end of the sentence)	P8	45	0.110
Final (after an intransitive verb)	P9	1	0.002
Final (after the object of a transitive verb)	P10	3	0.007
Total = 265 (0.65%)			

Figure 2

The Word Tokens and Percentage of the Positions of Stance Adverbials Found in The Bangkok Post Editorials Aiming to Criticize (Out of the 40,707 Words in the Corpus)



The results in Table 11 and Figure 2 above show that out of the 40,407 words in the corpus, the highest number of stance adverbials in the corpus fall in the initial position (before the subject, P1)—with 65 tokens (0.159%). The second highest one is the medial (before the main verb) position (P2), with 52 tokens (0.127%). The position with the third highest number of occurrences is the final (the end of towards the end of the sentence) position (P8), with 45 tokens (0.110%). The medial (after the main verb and before a phrase/clause) position (P4) comprises 34 tokens (0.083%), which is the fourth highest number. Two positions are in fifth place, i namely the positions of medial (after the object of the main verb/a transitive verb) (P3) and medial (between a linking verb and a complement) (P7)—with 21 tokens (0.051%) each. The position of medial (between a helping verb and a main verb) (P6) includes 20 tokens (0.049%)—the sixth highest number of tokens. The medial (between two auxiliary verbs) (P5) and the final (after the object of a transitive verb) (P10) positions are both in the same place, with three tokens (0.007%) each. The position with the lowest number of occurrences is final (after an intransitive verb) (P9), with only one token (0.002%). Some actual examples of all the ten positions from the present corpus can be seen in the following.

Examples:

Initial (before the subject) (P1)

- **Indeed**, the GPO needs to elaborate to the public on this important aspect in as well (“A failure to communicate,” 2021).

Medial (before the main verb) (P2)

- Online fraud **typically** is larger and more systematic (“Bank fraud shock,” 2021).

Medial (after the object of the main verb/a transitive verb) (P3)

- But prosecutors dismissed the case **reportedly** just after one day of consideration (“Mafia pull alive and well,” 2022).

Medial (after the main verb and before a phrase/clause) (P4)

- Commission spokesman Niwatchai Kasemmongkol said it is **unlikely** that the facts about the probe can be released as they involve

accounts by witnesses which could lead to lawsuits (“Clock ticking for NACC,” 2021).

Medial (between two auxiliary verbs (helping verbs) (P5)

- The conflict has **inevitably** been politicised as it escalated (“Virus efforts a shambles,” 2021).

Medial (between a helping verb and a main verb) (P6)

- More rapid antigen tests are also need so people can **quickly** isolate themselves if they find they have caught the virus (“Enough Covid stunts already,” 2021).

Medial (between a linking verb and a complement) (P7)

- If this is **in fact** a goal, the government should study, in addition to debt clearance, the matter of brining any extension of the Green Line under the umbrella of a single, unified system (“Don’t let it be a train in vain,” 2022).

Final (the end or towards the end of the sentence) (P8)

- After all, there is no such thing as a free lunch, **especially** in Thai politics (“Govt drops ball on deal,” 2021).

Final (after an intransitive verb) (P9)

- The sinking of the bill came as **no surprise** (“Sinking of bill bodes ill,” 2021).

Final (after the object of a transitive verb) (P10)

- From now on, it will be hard to take the government's war on drugs **seriously** (“Thamanat saga a blight,” 2021).

In the overall picture, the fact that most of the stance adverbials were found in the initial position (verb before the subject) seems not to agree with the findings of Biber et al. (1999), Biber et al. (2002), and Rojanaatichartasakul (2021) who proposed that most stance adverbials are in the medial position (before or after the main verb), followed by initial, and final positions, respectively. Nonetheless, the results seem to agree with Carter and McCarthy (2011), who proposed that

stance adverbials are placed at the very beginning or the end position for emphasis. In other words, stance adverbials are normally put in mid position. However, these past studies did not further divide these three positions into smaller or finer positions. Moreover, the present study is different from Binharong (2018), since the researcher only studied the moves and stance adverbials in *The Bangkok Post* editorials in her study but did not explore the positions of the stance adverbials in each move.

Indeed, having only three main positions of stance adverbials, namely initial, medial, and final, does not actually cover other places where stance adverbials can fall into. Interestingly, the results above show that stance adverbials can really fall in different positions in sentences (Collins COBUILD, 2012; Swan & Walter, 2009; 2011). It can be said that the position of stance adverbials in a sentence is quite mobile (Stachova, 2011). Therefore, this piece of research is among the first of its kind that sheds light on a wide variety of positions of stance adverbials used in online newspaper editorials with the aim of giving criticism. Also, it can be said that when writing an online newspaper editorial, the writer should put stance adverbials in different positions to make the editorial more varied and interesting, particularly the initial position (P1), medial (before the main verb) (P2), final (the end or towards the end of the sentence), medial (after the main verb and before a phrase/clause) (P4), medial (after the object of the main verb/a transitive verb) (P3), medial (between a linking verb and a complement) (P7), and medial (between a helping verb and a main verb) (P6), respectively—with stance adverbials placed in early positions to give an emphasis on some particular information and later positions when an emphasis is not needed. In addition, it can be said that for every 100 words in an editorial, an editorial writer may need to employ stance adverbials in the initial position (P1) at the rate of around 0.159 tokens, medial (before the main verb) (P2) at around 0.127 tokens, medial (after the object of the main verb/a transitive verb) (P3) at around 0.051 tokens, medial (after the main verb and before a phrase/clause) (P4) at around 0.083 tokens, medial (between two auxiliary verbs) (P5) at around 0.007 tokens, medial (between a helping verb and a main verb) (P6) at around 0.049 tokens, medial (between a linking verb and a complement) (P7) at around 0.051 tokens, final (the end or towards the end of the sentence) (P8) at around 0.110 tokens, and final (after the object of a transitive verb) (P10) at around 0.007 tokens. As for final (after an intransitive verb) (P9) and final (after the object of a transitive verb) (P10), the writer may use 0.002 tokens

and 0.007 tokens, respectively. However, this may be further explored in additional research to confirm this result.

5. Limitations and Future Research

This study focuses only on online English newspapers published in *The Bangkok Post*—the only English broadsheet newspaper in Thailand, with only 70 online editorials aiming to criticize in the corpus. In future research, there should be a large-scale study which compares online English newspaper editorials aiming to criticize published in Thailand and those published overseas in terms of the positions of stance adverbials. In addition, to understand how different kinds of online English newspaper editorials are written, there could be an in-depth study to compare how stance adverbials and move patterns are used in online editorials aiming to criticize and those aiming to call for action in future research.

6. Conclusion

Similar to the previous studies, the results of the present study showed that Move 3: Criticizing received the highest numbers of occurrences, followed by Move 2: Discussing, Move 4: Giving suggestions, and Move 1: Introducing, respectively. However, the current study has shown that editorials with the aim of giving criticism incorporate fewer epistemic stance adverbials showing doubt or certainty, such as *probably* and *certainly*, but tend to rely more upon epistemic stance adverbials showing imprecision, such as *more or less* and *sort of*. Regarding positions of stance adverbials, the findings revealed that the initial position (before the subject), not the medial position, is the most frequently used in the corpus.

The present study will benefit Thai learners of English learning how to write online newspaper editorials aiming to give criticism and novice Thai editorial writers who would like to excel at writing online editorials to criticize by following these steps. Firstly, when writing editorials aiming to criticize, they should follow the 4-move structure, paying particular attention to Move 3: Criticizing and Move 2: Discussing, where they will need to supply some appropriate stance adverbials. Next, it is noteworthy to utilize epistemic stance adverbials (particularly epistemic showing source of knowledge, epistemic showing imprecision, epistemic showing actuality, and epistemic showing doubt, respectively) about two times more frequently than attitudinal stance adverbials, and about ten times more frequently than style stance adverbials (Biber et al., 2002; Fengchao, 2014; Hidalgo, 2004;

Kotrč, 2012). Although Biber et al. (1999), Binharong (2018), and Rojanaatichartasakul and Phoocharoensil (2022) mentioned that epistemic stance adverbials showing doubt and certainty were the most frequently used in newspaper editorials, these should be used less often than other sub-categories of epistemic stance adverbials (e.g. source of knowledge) and attitudinal stance adverbials (e.g. imprecision) in editorials aiming to criticize. As for attitudinal stance adverbials, especially attitudinal adverbials showing importance and those showing evaluation, as well as style stance adverbials, they can also play an important role when used properly. Secondly, further than what was proposed in the previous studies, a wide variety of positions of stance adverbials, especially the medial positions (P2-P7) and the initial position (P1) can be employed by editorial writers who would like to offer criticism in their writings. Doing so will make their editorials more varied and sophisticated.

7. About the Author

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