

A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF JOKO WIDODO'S REPRESENTATION IN THAI MEDIAS

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ABSTRACT. The present research examines how Joko Widodo is represented in Thai media by analyzing the semantic prosody linked to his name and exploring the linguistic framing employed by the Thai media. This research employs a mixed-method research design. The quantitative method identifies word frequency, whereas the qualitative method describes semantics prosody. The self-constructed corpus of this research includes articles from the Bangkok Post and the Nation Thailand, two widely known Thai media, analyzed using Sketch Engine software. In this research, ten collocates for “Jokowi”, “Joko Widodo”, and “Mr Widodo” were identified. From the semantic prosody investigation, “Mr Widodo” tends to have neutral to positive semantic prosody; “Jokowi” tends to have neutral to negative, and “Joko Widodo” has mixed semantic prosody with neutral, positive, and some negative meanings.

Keywords: *Corpus linguistics; Joko Widodo; collocation; semantic prosody*

INTRODUCTION

Joko Widodo, well known as Jokowi, is a key figure in Southeast Asian politics, making his representation in Thai media a compelling area of study. Jokowi's policies and diplomatic approach as president of Indonesia, who is renowned for promoting positive relations between countries, particularly those that are neighbors, have a big influence on Thailand because of the close ties between the two countries. His image as a populist leader—renowned for his modest demeanor and people-centered initiatives—stands in contrast to more traditional political figures in the region, raising interest in how he is viewed by neighboring nations. Analyzing Jokowi's portrayal in Thai media using a corpus-based approach offers valuable insights into Thailand's perceptions of regional leadership and may reveal underlying attitudes toward Indonesia's political and cultural context. According to Cohen-Almagor (in Eri and Amalia 2017) the mass media as the producers of the news have the responsibility to present the pros and the cons of what someone does objectively. However, there is no such thing as being neutral in reporting news; news media will always have standpoints. It is because the news will always contain a certain ideology (Van Dijk, 1988).

Indonesia and Thailand have had very close ties and similarities since the royal times, influenced by historical factors such as the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism. A commonly shared religious heritage between the countries thus led to similar elements in the culture of both countries in terms of art, architecture, religious functions, and literature. The relationship, therefore, initially developed with interactions among Indonesian kingdoms such as the Majapahit and Sriwijaya, has been rooted for several centuries. This rich cultural affinity provides a sound basis for diplomatic relations, whereby both

Indonesia and Thailand can advance their interests based on mutual understanding and collaboration. Since the establishment of formal diplomatic relations on March 7, 1950, the two countries have consolidated their relationship in various sectors such as trade, science and technology, economy, and culture, and have opened up more opportunities to further develop their friendship and cooperation. Such a relationship has been fostered through official visits between leaders of the two countries as an expression of strong commitment to increase mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation (Kemenlu, 2021). These diplomatic efforts are commonly used by many countries to establish cooperative relations at the international level. Such efforts aim to achieve common national interests. Bos & Melissen (2019) explain that the purpose of public diplomacy is to positively influence international public opinion to change perceptions of a country.

Indonesia and Thailand as countries in the same region often collaborate on issues ranging from trade and tourism to security initiatives, making their diplomatic and socio-political relationship relevant to the media narratives of both countries. By analyzing Thai media, this research can reveal how Joko Widodo is portrayed beyond Indonesia's borders, providing insight into regional perceptions of his leadership and policies. Furthermore, examining Thai media allows for an understanding of how Thai audiences might interpret or resonate with Jokowi's image, potentially reflecting broader ASEAN perspectives or national sentiments that influence diplomatic relations. This cross-national examination of media discourse thus contributes to a richer understanding of Southeast Asian leadership representation and inter-ASEAN media dynamics.

Semantic preference refers to word pairs that fall within an area of meaning, while semantic prosody relates to the image constructed by the

lexemes. Nodes and their associated collocations form a certain lexical field that reflects the overall meaning. The unity of meaning within this lexical set will build up the image of a node. According to Louw (1993), words contain evaluative judgments that have positive and negative tendencies. One idea associated with connotation is semantic prosody. If lexical units with positive or negative meanings accompany a word or phrase, then the word or phrase has both positive or negative semantic prosody (McEnery & Haride, 2012). The colloquialisms that appear within the nodes can be categorized according to their lexical field in order to understand the image constructed through these meanings. Semantic prosody can be used to explain representation since it helps us comprehend how words or phrases that occur in a particular context are generated. Representation analysis looks into how particular words and phrases lead to assertions about a subject that are either positive or negative. We can determine bias or a certain tendency in the phrase's usage using semantic prosody, regardless of whether the topic being discussed is neutral, positive, or negative. This is significant because it aids in the analysis of how the media, for instance, uses language to influence how the general public views a certain figure or subject.

Previous studies on media representation provide valuable insights into how public figures are portrayed across different contexts and methods. Firstly, Kurniawan and Utami (2017) analyze The Jakarta Post's portrayal of Joko Widodo throughout his political career, revealing shifts in support that correspond with specific issues. Their findings show that The Jakarta Post initially frames Jokowi positively, employing nomination and predication strategies of the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) proposed by Reisigl and Wodak (2001) to emphasize his leadership qualities. However, the portrayal turned critical during the KPK controversy, aligning with the paper's anti-corruption stance. This study demonstrates how media representation can reflect both evolving political contexts and a publication's core values. Secondly, Sidabutar and Zakrimal (2020) examine the semantic roles in BBC's portrayal of Joko Widodo during his re-election as President. Using Riemer's semantic framework, they identify roles like agent, experiencer, and theme, with "theme" being the most dominant, reflecting actions undergone by Jokowi. Their analysis underscores the nuances of language in media, revealing how specific roles in text can impact readers' interpretations of political narratives. Lastly, Simanjuntak (2023) uses the AntConc tool to investigate recurring word patterns in Joko Widodo's presidential speeches from

2015 and 2018. Through a mixed-method approach, the study reveals that the frequent use of terms like "we" and "Indonesia" reflects Jokowi's focus on national unity and development. This consistent pattern underscores how language in presidential rhetoric can build a cohesive national identity and encourage collective action.

This study aims to explore the representation of Joko Widodo in Thai media by investigating the semantic prosody associated with his name and analyzing how the Thai media frames him through language use. By examining the connotations and contextual meanings linked to Joko Widodo in Thai media, this research seeks to uncover the underlying perceptions. Additionally, it delves into how Thai media frame Jokowi's image, providing a comprehensive understanding of his portrayal in a regional context.

METHOD

The source data for this study is a corpus of articles from two Thai media sources, namely Bangkok Post and Nation Thailand, collected from October 2014 to October 2024. The articles span the period during which Joko Widodo has served as Indonesia's president. The method used in this research is mixed methods. According to Creswell (2017), mixed research method is a research approach that combines qualitative methods with quantitative methods. The quantitative data from the corpus Sketch Engine must be explained qualitatively. In this study, the quantitative method is used to identify word frequency, while the qualitative method is used to describe semantic prosody.

In analyzing the representation of Joko Widodo in the Thai media, this research started by collecting a corpus of news articles containing the keywords Jokowi, Joko Widodo, and Mr Widodo from two major Thai online news sources, Bangkok Post and Nation Thailand, then manually adding them into Sketch Engine. The self-constructed corpus, comprising a total of 858,864 tokens and 745,863 types, was analyzed quantitatively through frequency lists to see how often Joko Widodo's name appeared in the news. Then, the researchers identified and analyzed the corpus using frequency lists and collocations and listed ten words that are often associated with Jokowi, Joko Widodo, and Mr Widodo. Furthermore, the findings from the frequency lists and collocations were then used to analyze semantic prosody, which examines the emotional tone or connotation of words or phrases frequently associated with the keywords in Thai media. Through collocation analysis, words or phrases that frequently co-occur with the keywords

Jokowi, Joko Widodo, and Mr Widodo were analyzed to determine whether they have positive, negative, or neutral connotations using Connotation Lexicon Online Dictionary: A Dash of Sentiment Beneath the Surface Meaning (Feng et al., 2013). This lexicon provided a further aspect of insight into how Jokowi's image is sculpted and nuanced in the media and was crucial in understanding the underlying sentiments tied to commonly used terms or phrases. This comprehensive approach allowed for a detailed exploration of the Thai media's perspective on his leadership and the subtle sentiments conveyed through their language choices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, researchers utilized the Word Sketch feature in Sketch Engine, a corpus linguistics tool designed to reveal how certain words relate to others in a given corpus. Using Jokowi, Joko Widodo, and Mr Widodo as keywords, the Word Sketch feature was applied to examine the semantic prosody of these terms and to uncover patterns in how they are represented in Thai media. Based on a self-constructed corpus, it is known that the number of words collected in 1,149 news is 858,864 tokens and 745,863 word types. To provide a clearer overview of these linguistic patterns, the following tables categorize the key linguistic elements frequently associated with Jokowi, Joko Widodo, and Mr Widodo. These tables illustrate not only how Jokowi was portrayed but also the types of actions, descriptions, and contexts in which his name appeared. By analyzing collocates linked to Jokowi, Joko Widodo, and Mr Widodo we gained a structured view of how Thai media linguistically constructs his image.

Table 1. Jokowi, Joko Widodo, and Mr Widodo in Thai Media Corpus

	Jokowi	Joko Widodo	Mr Widodo	Jokowi + Joko Widodo + Mr Widodo
Frequency	1643	921	243	2807
Percentage of occurrence	58,5%	32,8%	8,7%	

It is possible to identify the occurrences of Jokowi, Joko Widodo, and Mr Widodo in the Thai corpus by using the word frequency list. The noun Jokowi is more frequently used than Joko Widodo and Mr Widodo. The occurrence of Jokowi is 58,5%, Joko Widodo is only 32,8%, while Mr Widodo 8,7%. The frequency analysis of word usage also reveals that Thai media are likely to prefer the word Jokowi rather than Joko Widodo and Mr Widodo.

Table 2. Collocates of Jokowi

Rank	Collocates	LogDice
1	President	11.79
16	Indonesian	9.30
19	administration	9.15
33	support	8.75
57	presidential	8.29
63	political	8.16
74	election	8.10
75	campaign	8.09
130	power	7.55
132	influence	7.54

Based on the occurrence data, the word Jokowi, identified as a noun in the context of its use (Key Word in Context or KWIC) according to the LogDice measure, was analyzed within the Thai Media Corpus. The results displayed in the table indicate that Jokowi frequently appears alongside various collocating words that help shape its portrayal in the media. Notably, Jokowi tends to collocate with terms such as President, Indonesian, administration, support, presidential, political, election, campaign, power, and influence. These collocations bring to light the role and significance of Jokowi within political and administrative contexts. For example, the terms President, Indonesian, and administration show his identity as a national leader, while the words election, campaign, and political indicate his involvement in the democratic process. Moreover, collocations such as power and influence reflect perceptions of his authority and impact, building up a portrayal that combines leadership, governance, and political dynamics in the Thai media.

Table 3. Collocates of Joko Widodo

Rank	Collocates	LogDice
1	President	13.26
2	Indonesian	11.79
8	met	9.46
9	administration	9.38
19	incumbent	9.05
41	outgoing	8.41
64	expected	8.10
74	won	7.95
83	declared	7.82
84	pledge	7.82

Based on the occurrence data, the term Joko Widodo, identified as a noun in its context of use (Key Word in Context or KWIC) and analyzed through the LogDice measure, was examined within the Thai Media Corpus. The table displays a range of collocating words that commonly appear with Joko Widodo, suggesting how the media constructs his representation. Notably, Joko Widodo often collocates with terms such as President, Indonesian, met, administration, incumbent, outgoing, expected,

won, declared, pledge. These collocations therefore give insight into how Joko Widodo is represented in the Thai media. Words like President and Indonesian suggest that he is the leader of the nation, while words such as met and administration describe his role in governance and diplomacy. Collocations such as incumbent, outgoing, and won describe his political career and electoral victory, while declared and pledge indicate commitments and policy announcements. These words together build up a picture centering on his leadership, political achievements, and responsibilities.

Table 4. Collocates of Mr Widodo

Rank	Collocates	LogDice
1	known	9.52
2	Mr	9.06
3	inauguration	9.38
4	Gen	8.74
5	behalf	8.57
6	furniture	8.50
7	office	8.49
8	won	8.42
9	term	8.41
10	speech	8.40

Based on the occurrence data, the term Mr Widodo, identified as proper noun in its context of use (Key Word in Context or KWIC) and analyzed through the LogDice measure, was examined within the Thai Media Corpus. The table displays a range of collocating words that commonly appear with Mr Widodo, suggesting how the media constructs his representation. Notably, Mr Widodo often collocates with terms such as known, Mr, inauguration, Gen, behalf, furniture, office, won, term, and speech. These collocations provide insight into how Mr. Widodo is represented in the Thai media. For instance, words like inauguration and speech highlight his role as a leader during significant events, while terms like won and term emphasize his political achievements. Additionally, collocations such as furniture and office may reflect personal or professional aspects of his identity, suggesting a multifaceted portrayal that blends leadership, accomplishments, and individual traits. Based on the data presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4, it is evident that Table 3 (Collocates of “Joko Widodo”) contains the highest values. The highest LogDice score in this table is associated with the word President (13.26), followed by Indonesian (11.79) and administration (9.38). In comparison, Table 2 (Collocates of “Jokowi”) has a slightly lower range, with President (11.79) as its highest collocate, followed by Indonesian (9.30) and administration (9.15). Table 4 (Collocates of “Mr

Widodo”) records the lowest values, with known (9.52) and inauguration (9.38) being the highest-ranked collocates.

Semantic Prosody

The word can be classified as positive, negative, or neutral according to the connotations assigned in the Connotation Lexicon, as referenced in the online dictionary A Dash of Sentiment Beneath the Surface Meaning. This classification provides insight into how words carry underlying sentiments that go beyond their surface meanings. The lexicon categorizes words based on their nuanced emotional tones, which can influence how they are perceived in various contexts, as follows:

Table 5. Semantic Prosody of Jokowi

Rank	Positive	Neutral	Negative
1		President	
16		Indonesian	
19		administration	
33	support		
57		presidential	
63		political	
74			election
75			campaign
130		power	
132			influence

In Table 5. Based on the classification results semantic prosody in the 10 words that collocate with the word Jokowi there are 1 positive values, namely in the word support. While there are 7 neutral values in the words President, Indonesian, administration, presidential, politica, and power. Then there are 3 negative values, namely on the word election, campaign, and influence. Based on these results, the word Jokowi tends to refer to leadership and political positions with largely neutral references, combined with some critical background and aspects of public impact. Thus, it may be said that the term “Jokowi” has a neutral semantic prosody that combines both positive and negative connotations.

Table 6. Semantic Prosody of Joko Widodo

Rank	Positive	Neutral	Negative
1		President	
2		Indonesian	
8	met		
9		administration	
19			incumbent
41	outgoing		
64		expected	
74	won		
83			declared
84	pledge		

In Table 6. Based on the classification results semantic prosody in the 10 words that collocate with the word Jokowi Widodo there are 4 positive values, namely in the words met, outgoing, won, and pledge. While there are 4 neutral values in the words President, Indonesian, administration, and expected. Then there are 2 negative values, namely on the words incumbent and declared. Based on these results, the word Jokowi Widodo tends to refer to features that emphasize positions, leadership, and political achievements while also having some negative or difficult connotations. Thus, it can be said that the word “Jokowi Widodo” has a mixed semantic prosody, with a fair amount of neutral, positive, and some negative connotations.

Table 7. Semantic Prosody of Mr Widodo

Rank	Positive	Neutral	Negative
1		known	
2		Mr	
3	inauguration		
4		Gen	
5	behalf		
6		furniture	
7		office	
8	won		
9		term	
10		speech	

Table 7 presents the classification results of the semantic prosody of the ten most frequent words collocating with the phrase “Mr Widodo.” The results indicate three positive words: inauguration, behalf, and won. Meanwhile, seven words are classified as neutral: known, Mr, Gen, furniture, office, term, and speech. No negative words were identified in the dataset.

These findings suggest that the phrase “Mr Widodo” is predominantly associated with neutral to positive aspects, including references to formal positions, achievements, and general mentions in public discourse. Therefore, it can be concluded that “Mr Widodo” has a semantic prosody that leans towards neutrality and positivity.

Based on the result, Thai media appears to favor a neutral portrayal of Joko Widodo, with the term “President” as the most common collocate, reflecting a straightforward depiction of his role. The use of neutral terminology like “administration,” “political,” and “presidential” indicates that Widodo’s activities are consistently and factually framed without overt bias. Following that, positive connotations such as “support,” “growth,” and “inauguration” imply a favorable perspective on aspects of Widodo’s governance that align with regional development goals. Words such as “won” and “pledge” associated

with “Joko Widodo” highlight his electoral successes and commitments. Such lexical choices likely reinforce his image as a stable leader committed to growth, an image that may contribute to fostering cross-border trust and collaboration. Negative collocations like “influence” and “power,” though limited, suggest some skepticism or perceived challenges related to Widodo’s role within ASEAN. This viewpoint may signal concerns about Indonesia’s increasing regional presence and the complexities of balancing influence within ASEAN. By examining terms like “incumbent” and “declared,” the study reveals subtle critiques of Widodo’s policies and election outcomes, suggesting that while Thai media stops short of direct criticism, it subtly acknowledges points of potential contention. The mixed prosodic semantics associated with the representation of Joko Widodo in Thai media highlights his complex role both as a regional leader and as a domestic politician. The mix of respect, mild criticism, and neutral observations likely reflects Thai audiences’ balanced view of Jokowi as an influential yet approachable leader, which contributes to the media’s role in shaping his representation.

CONCLUSION

Using a corpus-based approach, this study examined the representation of Joko Widodo, Indonesia’s president, in Thai media. This research attempts to obtain the semantic prosody and Joko Widodo framing on regional media discourse through analyzing articles available in the Bangkok Post and Nation Thailand from 2014 to 2024.

Results revealed that Thai media reports on Joko Widodo using the keywords “Jokowi”, “Joko Widodo”, and “Mr Widodo” are mainly neutral. The collocates “president” and “administration” were overwhelmingly used, which depicts the use of factual and neutral reporting. However, little variations within word usage, such as “influence” and “election,” do hint at occasional critical overtones in the reporting, thus mixed perception about his leadership. The semantic prosody associated with his name varies, with some words carrying positive connotations-for instance, “support” and “growth”-while others reflect neutral or negative sentiments-for example, “influence” and “power”.

These findings contribute to our understanding of how Thai media frames regional political figures, providing valuable insights into the complexities of ASEAN diplomacy and media discourse. The portrayal of Jokowi reflects both his role as a stable leader and the regional tensions that shape his representation in neighboring countries.

Future research can investigate how the media representation of Jokowi evolves over time, particularly during changing political scenarios, or include other media outlets from ASEAN countries to better compare how other nations depict how his leadership. It would also offer a comparative perspective in how media play a role in international political perceptions, and this can also include a media framing that similarly, yet differently affects public opinion in Thailand and other corners of ASEAN.

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