

Research paper

Female Representation in the Thai Boys' Love Industry: The Intersection of Privilege and Oppression

Tanasinee Chaimongkol , Gritiya Rattanakantadilok 

Prince of Songkla University, THAILAND

*Corresponding Author: griiya.r@psu.ac.th

Citation: Chaimongkol, T., & Rattanakantadilok, G. (2026). Female representation in the Thai boys' love industry: The intersection of privilege and oppression. *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics*, 10(1), 31. <https://doi.org/10.20897/femenc/18174>

Published: March 23, 2026

ABSTRACT

Traditionally, Boys' Love (BL) narratives, a female-centred subculture, have been praised as spaces for challenging heteronormativity and reimagining masculinity. Paradoxically, women within BL narratives are often depicted as flat side characters or villains, while internalized misogyny has received limited scholarly attention. Jitirain (pseudonym of Jittinat Ngamnak), the author of *2gether*—marking Thai BL as a global phenomenon—mobilises aspects of female identity by portraying Thai women as antagonistic figures. Consequently, two of her Thai BL works *2gether* and *Fish Upon the Sky* that later underwent revision due to online criticism after the broadcast of their TV series adaptations, form the focus of this study. This research examines how female antagonism is constructed, revised, and negotiated through intersecting positions of gender, sexuality, and authorship, and how these constructions shape women's sense of belonging within BL narratives. Through comparative analysis drawing on intersectionality, feminist translation, and narrative analysis of literary and audiovisual adaptations, this study demonstrates that “female villainy” is not a stable category but is negotiated by the various agents involved in the production and consumption of BL. It further reveals language and narrative structure functioning as sites of both the reproduction and attempted subversion of misogynistic norms—efforts often constrained by translation practices and commercial imperatives.

Keywords: Thai boys' love (BL), female villainy, intersectionality, feminist translation, sense of belonging

Boys' Love (BL)¹ has gradually shifted from a marginalised interest (Supawantanakul, 2023) to a form of cultural soft power, a change that became more visible following the international success of series such as *2gether the Series* (Chaiyong, 2021; Prasannam & Chan, 2023). The impact of Thai BL media is not uniformly positive due to the continued reliance on heteronormative practices. Potentially influenced by Confucian philosophy (Kwon, 2021), BL has roots in Japanese women's subculture (O'Brien, 2008) and has been proliferated by largely female creators and consumers in East and Southeast Asia. Consequently, BL narratives are often filtered through the female gaze while remaining embedded in heteropatriarchal norms. This can be observed in the persistence of *seme-ukee* dynamics, where dominance and submission between male characters mirror conventional gender roles, leading to problematic and misleading representations of gender and sexuality norms (Bauwens-Sugimoto, 2011; Zhou et al.,

¹ Boys' Love (BL) is a media genre centered on romantic and homoerotic relationships between male characters, originating in Japan and formalised as a genre label in 1991 by the Japanese magazine *Hakuyashobo* (Fujimoto & Quimby, 2015). The genre later became a transnational phenomenon through the online circulation of pirated *dojinshi* translations (Baudinette, 2019). In Thailand, BL is commonly referred to as 'Y', an abbreviation of 'yaoi', a term initially associated with fan-produced comics (Prasannam, 2023; Yamamoto, 2023).

2018; Pojchanaphong & Kongduang, 2025; Supawantanakul, 2023). Michaels et al. (2024), for instance, report dissatisfaction among gay men in Bangkok toward these portrayals. Collectively, these studies highlight BL's paradoxical role in shaping perceptions of gender and sexuality.

Many scholars (Aoyama, 2012; Menon, 2022; Feng & Luo, 2023; Rastati & Syed, 2025) argue that BL offers women a fantasy safe space to challenge or briefly escape patriarchal norms by exploring alternative masculinities and critiques of gender roles. Fujimoto and Quimby (2015) add that different forms of BL media address diverse psychological needs among women. Yet, female characters are often relegated to supporting, secondary, or even antagonistic roles—sometimes positioned as obstacles to the central relationship. Consequently, this recurring marginalisation has prompted criticism regarding the diminished visibility of the female voice, a pattern that is noticeable to both Thai and international audiences, as suggested by existing literature. Especially given that most Thai BL series are adapted from novels authored by women, this raises questions about whether such representations stem from internalised misogyny among female creators or from the creative choices of directors and producers. In this sense, it becomes paradoxical that a genre expected to challenge heteronormativity instead reproduces stabilised gender stereotypes and marginalises women, despite women being its primary creators and consumers.

Against this backdrop, *2gether* and *Fish Upon the Sky* by Jittirain serve as case studies for examining changes in the depiction of antagonistic female characters following authorial revisions of the literary texts. By comparing the original (Jittirain, 2017a; Jittirain, 2017b; Jittirain, 2020a; Jittirain, 2020b) and the revised Thai texts (Jittirain, 2015a; Jittirain, 2015b; Jittirain, 2015b; Jittirain, 2021c; Jittirain, 2021d), their English translations (Jittirain, 2020c; Jittirain, 2020d; Jittirain, 2021a; Jittirain, 2021b), and the audiovisual versions (Thongjila, 2020; Wongsinwiset, 2021), this study explores how internalised misogyny is negotiated through translation and adaptation. Ultimately, it aims to illuminate how gender norms and ideologies are reshaped in BL's cross-media circulation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Thai BL

Recent scholarship on Thai BL identifies four main approaches—audience reception, thematic content, socio-cultural context, and business growth—with research expanding in parallel with the industry's rapid growth since 2017 (Bunyavejchewin et al., 2024; Duangwiset, 2025). Baudinette (2023) argues that Thai BL localises Japanese boys' love tropes in a heteronormative romance format while simultaneously hybridising Japanese BL with K-pop idol culture (see also Welker, 2022). This hybridisation underpins industrial strategies that commodify male actors as branded pairings (*คู่จิ้น* or *khu chin*) to sustain fan engagement and position Thai BL as a vehicle of soft power targeted primarily at cisgender female audiences (Duangwiset, 2025; Jirattikorn, 2023; Zhang & Dedman, 2021).

From Phanthaphoommee et al.'s (2025) perspective, the global success of Thai BL is also attributed to the commercialisation of "porous" masculinity, whereby male celebrities' on-screen homoerotic chemistry extends to off-screen fan service and is commodified across events and digital platforms. Fans maintain this system economically and culturally through their consumption, 'fan-subbing' of unofficial content, and participation in transnational Thai language and culture online communities. If celebrities fail to meet fans' expectations, "fan-subbing" and "queerbaiting" allegations undermine market logics and strengthen homonormativity without undermining heteronormativity. Phanthaphoommee et al. (2025) suggest that increasing public acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals through BL and male celebrity endorsements is not sustainable; LGBTQ+ communities should actively challenge conventions for a lasting change.

Despite the genre's media prominence, its literary origins in online and printed novels, and especially their translations, remain understudied (Prasannam, 2025), even as platforms such as MEB begin to offer English and Chinese versions of titles linked to major production hubs like GMMTV, DomundiTV (Mandee Work), and Studio Wabi Sabi. Standard university settings and heteronormative mirroring have stabilised audience expectations, prompting some authors to seek creative freedom in distant or historical contexts, such as Chinese settings, which afford a safer distance from everyday reality (Saejang, 2023a).

Due to its roots in Japanese women's subculture, BL is dominated by feminised authorship and framed through a female gaze, often reinforcing heteronormative and binary portrayals of LGBTQ+ characters. In mainland China from 1994–2021, Ge (2024) traces the development of *danmei* (Boys' Love), beginning with the period in which *danmei* was scrutinised, followed by its flourish on the Internet, and its online commercialisation. TV series adapted from *danmei* novels, known as *dangai* series, are filmed in a way that downplays or cuts out the same-sex sentiments of the original novel to meet the state's censorship requirements (Ge, 2024, p. 1). In contrast, the Thai state has never issued a ban on this genre. One commonality is the primary audience for both *danmei* and Thai BL who are heterosexual women engaging with the creation, recreation, and dissemination of this literary genre. Some scholars believe BL is a venue where women symbolically subvert patriarchy by rethinking masculinity and exploring alternative gender performances (Aoyama, 2012; Rastati & Syed, 2025; Zhou et al., 2018). This tension is reflected

in the marginalisation of female characters, who are typically cast as side characters, obstacles, or villains, raising questions about internalised misogyny and production hierarchies that remain underexplored.

While some work on Thai BL translation focuses on title translation strategies (Rattanawirote, 2023), other studies such as Chueasuai's (2013) analysis of *Cosmopolitan* (English–Thai) and Saejang's (2023b) examination of the protest song *Un violador en tu camino* (Spanish–Thai) trace socio-cultural shifts in gender ideology through translation. Building on this scholarship, the present study examines the representation of female characters in *2gether* (2020) and *Fish Upon the Sky* (2021), focusing on gendered translation shifts as the delayed demand for translated novels, following the global success of their television adaptations, enabled revisions that responded to online critiques of gender representation and sexual harassment amid intensified LGBTQ+ activism and feminist movements in Thailand.

Feminism

Feminist theory critiques the binary division of gender, which leads to male dominance and the marginalisation of women (Beasley, 1999; Ferguson, 2017). This critique targets the patriarchal structures that position men as the norm, relegating women and others to subordinate roles. Accordingly, Foucault (1981a) argues that discourse plays a central role in shaping thoughts and behaviours by transmitting social norms through influential agents. Discourse, conceptualised as a continuum, connects language in use with the power dynamics embedded in social contexts (Guardado, 2018). Notably, the term "sexuality" only emerged once it became a subject of discourse, especially in medical and scientific fields that contributed to the normalisation and categorisation of sexual identities (Foucault, 1978). Feminist movements, in turn, have challenged patriarchal control over these norms, exposing how social boundaries between masculinity and femininity restrict both women and men (Rubin, 1975; Rich, 1980).

Butler's work (1990) advances feminist thought by arguing that gender is not innate but performatively constituted. Its meaning is maintained through continual performance, making it contingent and open to transformation or resistance (McCann & Monaghan, 2026). Subversion within gender discourse is proposed as a tool for exposing and resisting social expectations, since exaggerated gender presentations reveal gender's constructed nature and destabilise accepted norms—even if their effect on immediate material change is limited (Salih, 2007). Furthermore, subverting or transgressing the boundaries of gender norms often leads to gender-based violence rooted in societal misogyny (Gartner, 2021). Misogyny is shaped by religious and cultural forces and can be internalised by all genders, including women themselves (Ussher, 2016).

In BL media, such subversion allows women to question patriarchal gender norms in imaginative spaces. Investigating whether BL's portrayal of female characters subverts or stabilises gender roles can reveal whether the genre signals change or perpetuates heteropatriarchal values. This study treats both the source and translated texts as sites where discourses are produced, reproduced, and negotiated, offering a lens through which the ideological effects of linguistic and translational choices can be examined.

Intersectionality

Rooted in Black feminist thought, Kimberlé Crenshaw, an African American legal scholar, introduced the concept of intersectionality in 1989. She used it as a metaphor to describe and demonstrate how it serves as a tool for recognising the complexity of marginalisation, which results from the overlapping and compounding effects of sexism, racism, classism, and other forms of discrimination (Carastathis, 2014; Carbin & Edenheim, 2013), causing the distinct experience of discrimination encountered by women. While scholars debate whether intersectionality is best described as a theory, method, or methodology, it is widely used across disciplines—such as gender studies, health, and education—to analyse the ways multiple factors intersect to create distinct forms of inequality (Charafi, 2024; Kelly et al., 2021; Koh et al., 2024).

Meyer (2015), for example, found that Black lesbians experience anti-queer violence differently from white lesbians, highlighting the interplay of race and gender. Similarly, De Vries (2015) demonstrated that white, middle-class transgender people encounter less stigma than their Latino counterparts, revealing how class and ethnicity intersect with gender identity. Intersectional analysis has also illuminated how women's workplace experiences are influenced by their background, class, and professional roles (Atewologun, 2018).

In literature and translation studies, intersectionality is employed to consider the diverse historical, political, and sociocultural contexts of authors and translators, which shape cultural representations of marginalised groups (Albakry, 2017; Brown, 2025). All women are intersectional subjects as their womanhood would intersect with other social positions to multiply their disadvantage (Zack, 2005, p. 7). In this study, intersectionality is essential for analysing how gender, sexuality, and professional roles (the author, the translators, and the production teams) converge to shape representations of female villainy in Thai BL narratives.

Feminist translation

Both literary and audiovisual translation draw on a translator's cultural and linguistic expertise and lived experience. Translation decisions are inflected by the translator's social background. Feminist theory, when applied to translation, foregrounds gender by exposing how gender biases and gendered language shape the process (Eshelman, 2007). Even in a language like Thai, which lacks grammatical gender, feminist practices such as preserving the female voice can prevent it from being muted or erased (Rattanakantadilok, 2017).

Feminist translators use gender as a key analytic lens for both source and target texts, attending to linguistic details that signal gendered meanings. This approach positions gender as a socio-political category within translation studies. Much early work in this field comes from Canadian scholars working in English and French.

Chamberlain (2012) analyses the longstanding metaphor of translation's feminisation, epitomised by *les belles infidèles*, which implies that translations—like women—may be beautiful or faithful, but not both. She calls on feminist translators to name and explain their practices, making the politics of translation explicit.

Godard (1990), Simon (1996), and von Flotow (1997; 2011) outline strategies that assert the visibility of feminist translators and female authors. For Godard (1990), translation in feminist discourse is an act of creation rather than reproduction. Von Flotow (1997, pp. 74–80) examines intervention and censorship, proposing three main strategies: supplementing (over-translation to compensate for gender differences), prefacing and footnoting (signalling the translator's agency), and hijacking (appropriating non-feminist texts through feminist intervention). These moves reject translator invisibility and inscribe gendered subjectivity into the translated text. Simon (1996) similarly argues that such intervention is shaped by the source text yet marks the translator's feminist identity.

Recent feminist translation studies (FTS) increasingly emphasise intersectional and transnational perspectives (Castro et al., 2024). Vassallo (2022) examines intersectional activism in translation and publishing and introduces feminist translator studies to theorise the agents who produce and circulate translations from under-represented nations, minority languages, and marginalised groups. Castro et al. (2024) challenge the assumption that von Flotow's strategies can be applied across languages, genres, and media, arguing that this decontextualised use sidelines other practices. Brown (2025, p. 274) likewise questions the usefulness of intersectionality for researching early women translators, whose identities were shaped by multiple, context-specific factors.

Close analysis of source texts and their translations can thus reveal how misogynistic ideologies are reproduced or resisted. A contextualised reading of Jittirain's works—across literary and audiovisual adaptations—may show that von Flotow's strategies remain productive for uncovering lesser-known feminist practices within the BL genre.

Narrative and character theory

While "narrative" in literary studies often means 'story', it encompasses more than a sequence of events. Narratives serve as a way people make sense of experience, embedding and circulating cultural meanings through language and structure (Fisher, 1989). In this sense, narrative functions as a discursive practice that extends beyond merely recounting events.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002) conceptualises narrative fiction through three analytical elements: story (the chain of events enacted by characters), text (the discourse through which readers access these events), and narration (the act of producing the text, shaped by both narrator and author). This tripartite structure highlights that narratives, and by extension characters, are constructs reflecting authors' ideological perspectives and cultural backgrounds.

Characterisation is crucial for generating narrative meaning and guiding audience interpretation, particularly concerning identity and gender (Winkler et al., 2023). Recurring features or behaviours performed by characters may develop into recognisable tropes. Chaudhary and Jhala (2022) found that different genres rely on distinct gendered tropes, with romance often highlighting female-associated ones and sports focusing on male tropes. Female villainy tropes frequently revolve around sexuality, in contrast to male villains, who are often linked with necessity or power, though female authors tend to vary these portrayals more. Even though villains have increasingly been characterised as complex figures with emotional depth and motives shaped by trauma (Wang, 2024), women in mainstream narratives such as Disney's continue to be pathologised when they deviate from traditional femininity, reinforcing stigmatised images of powerful women (Piluso, 2023; Traesar & Saktiningrum, 2024). Therefore, key elements in constructing character meaning include a character's appearance, actions (verbal and non-verbal), and interactions with others. These methods are essential for tracing how identities such as female villainy are constructed and circulated.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach to examine how gender ideologies are negotiated and transformed through the translation and adaptation of Jittirain's BL works *Together* and *Fish Upon the Sky*. Focusing on both the literary texts and their GMMTV television adaptations, the analysis foregrounds shifts in the characterisation of

female villains in response to public critiques of misogynistic representation. The study employs feminist discourse analysis informed by feminist translation approach, narrative theory, and intersectionality.

Among Jittirain's 27 novels, *2gether* and *Fish Upon the Sky* were selected because they are the only works revised and republished following television adaptation, enabling systematic comparison across versions and agents involved in meaning production. The dataset comprises the first and revised Thai novel editions, official English translations, GMMTV screenplays, and English subtitles from the television adaptations.

Purposive sampling was used to identify female antagonists based on established scholarship on villainy and gender stereotyping (Campbell et al., 2020; Gala et al., 2022; Piluso, 2023; Traesar & Saktiningrum, 2024). Characters were classified as villains if they (1) obstructed central relationships or goals, (2) exhibited negatively coded traits such as jealousy or manipulation, (3) were subject to narrative punishment, and (4) were framed through gendered stereotypes. Characters without narrative conflict or significance were excluded.

Analysis proceeded in three stages: identifying female villains across textual and audiovisual versions, extracting relevant narrative segments and dialogues, and organising data into comparative tables by character and episode or chapter. Audiovisual analysis was limited to the first season of each adaptation to ensure comparability. Comparative feminist discourse analysis was then conducted to examine linguistic and narrative patterns shaping female villainy across media and languages.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the analysis of the two Thai BL novels, *Fish Upon the Sky* and *2gether* (both their first and revised editions), and their television adaptations are presented by comparing literary and audiovisual constructions of female villainy, with contextual synopses for each text. The findings are grouped first around *Fish Upon the Sky* (Jittirain, 2015a, 2015b) and then *2gether* (Jittirain, 2017a, 2017b).

Fish Upon the Sky centres on Pi, a freshman in dentistry, as he transforms himself—outwardly and inwardly—while pursuing his crush, Nan. His journey is complicated by Mork, a charismatic medical student and Nan's close friend, who at first seems a rival but later becomes Pi's love interest within the narrative's classic enemy-to-lover framework. Supporting roles include Duean (Pi's brother), Prik (a friend), Pi's mother, and notably, Bam—a communication arts student and Mork's high school friend—who becomes the narrative's primary female antagonist. Notably, both Pi's and Mork's sexual orientations remain unlabelled, leaving open various interpretations, while female antagonism is flexibly deployed to intensify dramatic conflict (Gupta & Zheng, 2020).

In the first edition of the novel, Bam is initially cast as a supportive and personable friend to Mork, albeit somewhat performative and pretentious, exemplified by her code-mixed Thai-English speech. The revised edition neutralises her tone and enhances relational intimacy through speech shifts best captured in the Thai language, while the English translation conveys her as an "airhead", lending a boyish, approachable tone (see [Table 1](#) and [2](#)). Pi's perspective moves from negative and mocking ("damn pretty" and "slightly unhinged") to softened and positive framing in the revised version. Early on, Bam does not function as a direct obstacle, although tension emerges in private scenes, especially at the club.

Table 1

Female characterisation: Non-villainous construction in fish upon the sky2

Location	First edition	Revised edition	English translation	Characterisation element
Vol. 1, Ch. 16: Pi's POV	<p>ประหลาด....แปลกจิบหายเลยว่ะ...ถ้าตัดหน้าออกไปนี่แถวบ้านเรียกรบประสาทอ่อน ๆ ครับ...กะตะพูดไทยคำอังกฤษคำ ฟังแรก ๆ นึกว่าภาษาสก็อยด์โบสท์ (Jittirain, p. 211)</p> <p>[Weird...very strange? If she isn't pretty, people would think she is a bit insane... She speaks one Thai word mixed with one English word. When I first heard her talking, she sounded like she grew up in the hood.]</p>	<p>แบบดูจะเข้ากับคนอื่นได้ง่ายเหลือเกิน ขนาดผมที่ยังไม่ได้แนะนำตัวกับเธออย่างเบี้นทางการ เจ้าตัวก็ยื่นหน้ามาทักทายอย่างเป็นมิตร เธอดูดีมากเว้ย แต่ขณะเดียวกันก็ดูประหลาดยิ่งในขอบกล (Jittirain, p. 211)</p>	<p>Bam seems very friendly. I haven't properly introduced myself to her, but she still talks to me amiably. She looks so good but somehow feels strange at the same time. (Maggie Mae, p. 236)</p>	<p>Psychological evaluation / Narrative suspicion</p>

² The English translation, which is based on the revised edition, employs a predominantly literal approach; consequently, back translation is omitted from the revised edition column.

Table 2

Female characterisation: intensified villainous construction in fish upon the sky

Location	First edition	Revised edition	English translation	Characterisation element
Vol. 2, Ch. 25: Pi's POV	<p>“เราชอบจริง ๆ เราเจอหมอกก่อนปีนะ อยู่ดี ๆ หมอกจะคบกับปีก็เพียงเพราะเราไม่ได้บอกชอบหมอกก่อนเธอ”</p> <p>“มีหลายคนที่ยากให้เราคบกัน... ปีก็แค่คนคนหนึ่งเมื่อก่อนไม่มีอะไรเลย ไม่มีเพื่อนด้วยซ้ำ ซึ่งตรงกันข้ามกับหมอกทุกอย่าง ถ้าหมอกไม่เลือกเรา เราก็คือโอเค เราก็ยอมรับได้ทั้งนั้น แต่คนที่คู่ควรกับนายต้องไม่ใช่ปี”</p> <p>เคยมี... รู้จักใครคนหนึ่งเหมือนทำดีกับเราทุกอย่าง แต่สุดท้ายมันไม่เป็นอย่างที่เราคิด (Jittirain, p. 139)</p> <p>["I really like you. I met you first before Pi did. You want to be with him just because I didn't get to tell you that I like you before he did?"</p> <p>"A lot of people want me to be with you. Pi, he had nothing; he got no friends.</p> <p>He is entirely different from Mork... If you don't choose me, I will be okay. I can accept that, but he doesn't deserve you."</p> <p>Have you ever known someone who had been so nice to you, but nothing is as you expected?]</p>	-	-	Voyeuristic narration
Vol. 2, Ch. 27: Pi's POV	<p>"เรื่องภาพหลุด เราเป็นคนปล่อยเอง"</p> <p>"จะโกรธก็ได้นะ ก็แค่อยากขอโทษ เราแค่ไม่อยากจะให้นายเข้าใจหมอกผิด"</p> <p>"เราไม่ได้แค้นนาย แต่แค้นหมอก และเราก็ไม่อยากให้คนที่เราชอบดูแย่ในสายตาของคนอื่นด้วย"</p> <p>(Jittirain, p. 188)</p> <p>["I leaked the photo."</p> <p>"You can be mad at me. I just want to apologise, and I don't want you to think that it was Mork."</p> <p>"I don't care how you feel. I care about how Mork feels. I don't want the person I like to look bad in other people's eyes."]</p>	<p>"เรื่องภาพหลุดมันหลุดมาจากเราเอง"</p> <p>"หา?"</p> <p>"จะโกรธก็ได้นะ เราอยากขอโทษ เราแค่ไม่อยากจะให้ปีเข้าใจหมอกผิด"</p> <p>"ทำไมถึงเป็นแบบ"</p> <p>"เราไม่ได้ตั้งใจเลย ตอนนั้นเราบังเอิญเห็นรูปปีในมือถือหมอกเลย เชฟเก็บไว้ แล้ววันนั้นก็พลอเอาไปคุยกับเพื่อน"</p> <p>(Jittirain, pp. 161–162)</p>	<p>"Pi..."</p> <p>"The photo got leaked from me."</p> <p>"Huh?"</p> <p>"You can be mad at me. I just want to apologise. I don't want you to misunderstand Mork."</p> <p>"Why you?"</p> <p>"I didn't mean for it to happen at all. I stumbled across your photo on Mork's phone and saved it, and then I brought it up when I talked to my friends." (Maggie Mae, pp. 181–182)</p>	Speech / Confession

Conflict escalates as the narrative progresses: in the early versions, Bam confesses romantic feelings for Mork, denigrates Pi, and stakes a claim on Mork ("I met him first." and "We look perfect together."). These scenes, which foreground her as two-faced, are cut in the later version and translation. In the first Thai edition, Bam is explicitly responsible for sharing Pi's embarrassing past photo, apologising with little empathy—a narrative conclusion that leaves her villainised as insincere and mean. In the revised version (and its English translation), her role in the incident is reframed as accidental, and her apology is more genuine. In sum, Bam's character in the novel shifts from a covert antagonist to, in the revised version, a figure whose missteps are less malicious and more redeemable.

The TV adaptation introduces Bam as a comedically annoying but benevolent friend, a close confidant of Mork who orchestrates situations (the "placebo mission") to advance 'Mork-Pi relationship'. Her characterisation begins as playful, deliberately stirring jealousy in Pi through affectionate gestures toward Mork, but is soon unveiled to the audience as part of her friendly support. As the series continues, she comforts Pi and prevents misunderstandings, developing into a sympathetic, funny, and kind figure. Conflict emerges when Bam releases the incriminating photo of Pi online. Her motivations are rendered emotional rather than vindictive. The show resolves this by allowing her to publicly admit guilt, seek forgiveness, and regain her social footing—an arc more forgiving than in the novel.

It can be said that in the series, hints of Bam's villainy surface in subtle ways—possessive framing ("I come here with Mork all the time.") and reminders of her past with Mork—that quietly unsettle Pi. The conflict peaks with the social media scandal. Bam is revealed as the culprit, but her emotional apology and subsequent acts (helping Mork and Pi reconcile) paint her as remorseful and capable of change. By the series' conclusion, Bam is offered a chance for romantic and social reintegration, softening her villainous role and signalling redemption—a departure from the harsher literary rendering. In both media, Bam's antagonism is camouflaged under "altruism", but the series ultimately grants her rehabilitation, highlighting a trend toward more nuanced female villainy in contemporary Thai BL adaptations.

Another work in discussion is *2gether* which features Sarawat and Tine, university freshmen whose relationship embarks from a strategic (fake) romance to a true one. Female characters, particularly ex-girlfriends, generally remain minor. The main focus is on Pam, Sarawat's former crush and Tine's perceived rival; her arrival stirs suspicion and anxiety in Tine, forming the primary conflict relevant to this study's focus on female villainy. The narrative's treatment of sexual orientation remains purposely ambiguous.

In the novel, Pam emerges first in an Instagram comment to Sarawat, signalling prior closeness and leading Tine to anxiety over her role. The reader sees Pam mostly through Tine's eyes, described repeatedly as "cute" or "attractive" but with no directly malicious acts or combative interaction. Dialogue and narration from Sarawat reaffirm Pam's harmlessness, even when Tine's jealousy peaks. Pam's passivity and distance shield her from becoming an outright villain; her significance is tied more to the threat of jealousy and misunderstanding than to actual interference. Though Pam never acts as a direct antagonist in the text, Sarawat's descriptions sometimes subtly reinforce gendered stereotypes, such as Pam being more skilled in music, though these are not foregrounded as overt prejudice. The novel constructs her largely as a safe, sympathetic character who embodies neither true rivalry nor villainy (see [Table 3](#)).

Table 3

Female characterisation: Non-villainous construction in 2gether³

Location	First edition/Revised edition	English translation	Characterisation element
Vol. 2, Ch. 23: Tine's POV	พอนึกถึงความจริงข้อนี้ผมก็เริ่มเครียดขึ้น นมาเลยครับ ผู้หญิงที่ชื่อแพมเป็นรักแรก คนอย่างไอ้สารวัตรไม่มีวันลืมรักแรกได้ หรือ แล้วนี่ยังมาเจอกันอีกแถมปิดเทอมเจอกันด้วย (Jittirain, 2017b, p. 160; Jittirain, 2020b, p. 136)	I start to stress out thinking about the truth of this whole thing. The woman named Pam is his first love. They're hanging out right now. Moreover, they met during the break. (Tulip, p. 244)	Character's inner monologue / Self-conclusion
Vol. 2, Ch. 23: Tine's POV	เธอผิวขาว เธอชอบเพลงสกรับ เธอยิ้มเก่ง เธอคุมโทนไอจีด้วยสีขาว เธอเล่นดนตรีเป็นหลายอย่างโดยเฉพาะกีตาร์ เธอเคยโพสต์รูปแผ่นเพลงที่สารวัตรชอบหลายเพลง เธอเป็นผู้หญิงในอุดมคติของมัน หรือแท้จริงแล้ว ผมเองที่เป็นตัวก๊อปปี้ชั้นยอดจากเธอ... (Jittirain, 2017b, pp. 160–164; Jittirain, 2020b, p. 137)	She is fair. She likes Scrubb's songs. She smiles a lot. She has a white Instagram theme. She can play instruments – including guitar. She posted records of songs that Sarawat likes. She's his ideal woman. Am I just her grade A copy? (Tulip, pp. 245–246)	Comparative narration

The TV series elevates Pam's role as a romantic rival, directly interacting with both Sarawat and Tine and providing a more tangible source of conflict than in the novel. The adaptation assigns Pam new motivations; for example, she seeks Sarawat's help with music because she wants to switch majors, amplifying her "threat" status (see [Table 4](#)). It can be said that the scriptwriters import tropes deleted from the novel (the "I met you first" motif), paralleling Bam's villainy in *Fish Upon the Sky*. These changes point to the reproduction of "female villain" tropes familiar in Thai BL, even after the novel revisions tried to soften them. However, Pam is not fully villainised: she ultimately clarifies misunderstandings by helping Tine realise Sarawat's devotion, and, by the finale, her

³ The revisions did not target Pam's characterisation; the first and revised Thai editions remain identical and are presented in a single column.

competitive role is mitigated with gestures of goodwill and support. Her villainy thus adopts the form of a "damsel in distress" rather than a malicious rival.

Table 4

Pam's villainess construction in 2gether the series⁴

Episode/Time	Audiovisual Source Text	English Subtitles	Characterisation Element
EP. 12, Part 1 (8.09–9.24 mins)	"อ้อ เราขี้อะจะ กะว่าจะมาเรียนที่นี่" ... "ทำไมอะ จะย้ายมาเรียนหมอที่นี่เทร" "ป่าวอะ เราวาเราจะเข้าคณะดนตรีที่นี่อะ เลยว่าจะหาคนช่วยตีวงกีตาร์ให้หน่อย" "ขอโทษนะ พอดีเราเป็นคนหัวขี้อะ ต้องคนมีความอดทนสูงจริง ๆ อะ ถึงจะสอนเราได้ ขี้อะจะจายรยสารวัตร์"... "เฮ้ยสารวัตร์ เราอดสำหามาขอถึงที่นี่เลยนะ ช่วยเราหน่อยเหอะ นะ เราจะมีที่เรียนหรือไม่มีก็ขี้อยู่ที่แกลเรียน นะเว้ย นะ ช่วยเราหน่อยนะ น้า นะ ช่วยหน่อยนะ นะ นะ นะ"	"I just dropped out of school. I was thinking of studying here." ... "Why? You want to study Medicine here?" "No. I want to be in the Faculty of Music here." "That's why I need a guitar teacher."... "Sorry. I am a slow learner. My teacher has to be very patient. Isn't it right, teacher Sarawat?" ... "Sarawat. I came all the way here just to ask you. Please help. Please. My chance of getting accepted is in your hands. Please help. Please. Please say yes. Please."	Dependency/ Flirtatious interaction/ Pleading/ Persistence
EP. 12, Part 4 (5.16–6.36 mins)	"คือ...เราอยากจะได้เพลงรักสักเพลงอะ ที่พูดถึงเพื่อนสนิทสองคน สนิทกันมากจนเขาจะลำใจอะ แล้ววันหนึ่งเพื่อนสนิทคนนั้นก็ไปสนิทกับ คนอื่น อะไร ๆ ที่เขาเคยทำด้วยกันก็เปลี่ยนไป เขาเลยทิ้งเราว่าเขารักเพื่อนคนนั้นมากแต่ ไหน และเขาพร้อมที่จะทำทุกอย่าง เพื่อที่จะให้เพื่อนคนนั้นกลับคืนมา"	"I... I want a love song that describes two close friends. They are so close that they take their relationship for granted. One day, the other friend has a new best friend. They don't do what they used to do together anymore. And it's when she realises how much she loves her friend. She is willing to do anything... to get her friend back."	Confession/ Emotional vulnerability
EP. 13, Part 1 (1.48–3.04 mins)	"เรารักแกอะ" "แล้วเรารู้ด้วยว่าแกก็รู้สึกเหมือนกัน" "มันยังทันมั๊ยที่เราจะกลับไปเป็นเหมือนเดิม" "เรามาก่อนอะ ทำไมเธอไม่ขอเราเป็นแฟนตั้งแต่ตอนนี้นะ อะ แล้วทำไมต้องเป็น...ทำไมต้องเป็นไทน์ อะ ... ดอบดี ทำไมเป็นเราไม่ได้...."	"I love you." "And I know you feel the same way." "Can we still go back to the way we were?" "I met you first. Why didn't you ask me out back then? Why...? Why Tine? ... Answer me! Why not me? Answer me! Why Tine? Why not me?"	Emotional breakdown / Rejected confession
EP. 13, Part 2 (0.31–3.18 mins)	"....เราชอบมันมาตลอด และเราก็คิดว่ามันรู้สึกเหมือนกันกับเรา เราก็รอ ว่าเมื่อไหร่มันจะกล้าบอกชอบเรารู้สึกที่อะ" ... "...แต่วันนั้นมันลงรูปไทน์ในไอจีให้ทุกคนเห็น มันไม่กล้าบอกรักเราแต่กลับเปิดตัวไทน์ในโซเชียล" "เลยทำให้เราอยากรู้ว่าถ้าเรากลับมาตอนนี้อะไร ๆ จะเปลี่ยนไปมั๊ย แต่ก็ไม่" "ถ้าเป็นเรื่องเพลงอะ ไทน์ลองไปฟังดี" "ทำไมเราต้องฟังอะ" "ไทน์ลองไปฟังเหอะ เดี่ยวไทน์ก็รู้เอง"	"...I had always liked him. And I thought he felt the same way. I kept waiting. I waited for him to confess his feeling." ... "...But one day, he posted your photo on his IG. And, everyone can see. He didn't have the guts to say he liked me, but he told everyone on social media about you." "That made me wonder if I came back, would things be different? But no." ... "About the song... Give it a try." "Why do I have to?" "Just listen to it and you will know."	Emotional justification / Moral redemption

A cross-comparison shows both Bam and Pam start as non-threatening secondary characters but, depending on adaptation or revision, occupy antagonist positions tied to jealousy, insecurity, or social tension. Notably, both stories feature initial female "supporters" whose proximity to the male leads heightens conflict, but each is eventually villainised to a varying extent, sometimes through overt claim-staking, "I met him first.", at other times as the inadvertent cause of drama, such as the leaked photo or stirred doubts. The harshest forms of antagonism are eroded in the revised literary editions and their accompanying English versions, replaced with more

⁴ All audiovisual data cited in this paper were collected from the GMMTV YouTube channel, where each full episode is divided into four sequential video parts. The timestamps in the first column refer only to the elapsed time within each individual video part.

rehabilitative, contextually sympathetic resolutions, namely public apologies, support for the main couple, or new romantic prospects for the antagonist.

In the TV adaptations, narrative arcs which once punished female antagonists instead grant them second chances or clear paths to redemption. Production decisions sometimes resurrect tropes, for example, the "I met you first." trope, excised from the novels, perhaps to heighten dramatic tension for a broader audience. In both works, the motif of female villainy is never fully abandoned, but it is refashioned and softened through revision and adaptation. In both series, female antagonists are ultimately rendered as multi-dimensional, blending altruism, self-interest, and vulnerability, with their villainy being neither absolute nor permanent.

Such findings reveal a distinct ideological negotiation occurring through adaptation and translation: even as these popular BL works continue to invoke familiar tropes (jealousy, rivalry, the "other woman"), they increasingly allow for complexity, rehabilitation, and the possibility of social integration for once-vilified female characters. The shift from traditional, punitive villainy to redemptive, nuanced antagonism reflects ongoing contestation—and partial transformation—of gender ideology within contemporary Thai BL narratives.

To analyse the representation of female characters, this study also uses secondary sources, including interviews with key production agents and the author, to trace how their decisions shape narrative, characterisation, and intent. At GMMTV, executive producer and CEO Sathaporn Panichraksapong positions BL as a profit-oriented genre targeting primarily cisgender women who prefer romantic over explicitly sexual content, leading to the casting and promotion of male idols in fixed pairings and the prioritisation of audience expectations over narrative experimentation (Jirattikorn, 2023; THE SECRET SAUCE, 2023; Greene & Park, 2021). In *2gether*, this strategy intersected with online fan engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the director and screenwriters faced criticism for deviations from the novel, editing choices, and the villainisation of female characters, prompting public apologies and signalling a gradual shift away from depicting women as antagonists in later BL series (Nation, 2020). By contrast, *Fish Upon the Sky* was developed by a different, comedy-oriented team that consulted closely with the author, exercised greater care in adaptation decisions, and adjusted or omitted scenes to preserve narrative coherence while meeting readers' expectations (Pakhe Channel, 2021). The author, Jittirain, whose BL novels gained popularity on online platforms and have been widely adapted and translated, was severely criticised during the broadcast of *2gether* for problematic queer representation and homophobic content; she responded with a public apology, attributed these issues to her earlier inexperience and media influences (Kapook, 2020), and subsequently revised both *2gether* and *Fish Upon the Sky* to better align with contemporary social attitudes (see also Kittisurin, 2022). Overall, female representation in these texts emerges from a hierarchical convergence of agents, with the executive producer holding the greatest decision-making power and the author positioned lowest, such that female characters are frequently sacrificed to heighten drama or to maximise the visibility of male idols, reflecting the intersection of economic logics with gender and sexuality. At the same time, online backlash and activist-informed discourse have pressured industry and authorial practices, enabling partial renegotiation of gendered representations while still revealing the enduring force of patriarchal and capitalist production frameworks within Thai BL narratives (Deiri & Burkhard, 2025).

Concerns over the representation of women in BL have been voiced on platforms such as Reddit and X (formerly Twitter). On r/boyslove, a 2021 thread titled "Misogyny in the BL series" highlighted recurring negative depictions of women as villainous or cartoonish, with positive portrayals largely confined to supportive friends or relatives. Users like "Raistlin-2481" (2021) argued that such tropes are especially prevalent in Thai BL, while "Momopeach7" (2021) compared trends across Asia, noting Thailand's frequent reliance on these stereotypes. A related poll ranked the "crazy ex-girlfriend" as one of the genre's most overused tropes.

Focusing on the interplay between political activism and literary industry, Prasannam (2023) calls Jittirain's strategy 'authorial revision'. Since the author took criticism and progressive readership into account, in the authorial revised version of *2gether* sexual violence and insensitive language perpetuating other forms of violence were rid of. However, Prasannam (2023) did not mention any forms of revision regarding female villainy. The revisions that he discusses then serve to deconstruct the language perceived as homophobic, not the conventional language perceived as inherently misogynist (Scheffers, 2026; Amin & Ritonga, 2022).

Chamberlain (2012) highlights how translation is often sexualised through metaphors like "les belles infidèles"—implying "translations, like women, are either beautiful or faithful"—and treated as a secondary, archetypal feminine activity. Jittirain's two novels in discussion are considered 'masculine' and the subsequent English translations 'feminine'. However, applying the label 'masculine' to these BL works reinforces heteronormative frameworks that the genre often seeks to challenge (Halpern et al., 2025). If one maintains that the first Thai editions are 'masculine', these texts then serve as spaces where women can be easily villainised. To hijack a text, the feminist translator imposes feminist strategies on the work not initially intended as feminist. After receiving strong criticism and pressure, Jittirain decided to 'hijack' her own works by toning down female villainy in the genre she has built her career upon. This female author had used the 'masculine' endeavour, the act of penning the literary works, to suppress the feminine. As Prasannam (2023) observes, the original editions did little

to advance the LGBTQ+ movement. Through her revisions, Jittirain sought to 'right the wrong', allowing both queer and feminine voices to resonate more clearly in the updated texts.

The findings of this study indicate that, while Thai BL narratives offer space for subverting traditional gender norms, the representation of women remains problematic and highly mediated by various agents involved in literary and audiovisual production. Through comparative analysis of literary revisions, translations, and television adaptations, it becomes clear that 'female villainy' is not a stable category but is constructed and negotiated by the author, translators, and production teams according to distinct motivations and constraints. For Thai BL to genuinely embody progressive gender politics, creators and industry agents must attend more critically to the ideological effects of characterisation across all modes of representation. Without such attention, the genre risks reinforcing rather than transforming the very gender hierarchies it purports to challenge.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study analysed representations of female villainy in *2gether* and *Fish Upon the Sky* across multiple textual and audiovisual versions, examining how misogynistic ideologies shape creative decisions in adaptation and translation. The scope was limited to two novels by Jittirain, so the findings cannot be generalised to her broader work or to the Thai BL genre. The analysis also focused only on official texts and translations, which may diverge from fan interpretations, fan translations, or fan-subtitled versions circulating online. Although audiovisual material was included, multimodal analysis was applied only to scenes most relevant to female villainy. Grounded in feminist translation practices, intersectionality, and representation theory, the study primarily addresses gender and ideology and may not capture other analytical perspectives. Nonetheless, this approach can be applied to other Thai BL texts or BL industries in different national contexts, and the feminist discourse-analytical model proposed here offers a useful tool for translation, media, and gender scholars.

CONCLUSION

As a female author who holds certain privileges, especially when compared to queer authors who face multiple forms of marginalisation, Jittirain inadvertently oppressed heterosexual women by depicting Thai women as villains. This dynamic highlights how marginalised queer narratives can at times be advanced at the expense of those with relatively more privileged gender identities. Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 203) notes that "identities and belonging become important dimensions of people's social locations and positionings, and the relationships between locations and identifications can become empirically more intertwined." In attempting to carve out a space within the BL genre, Jittirain may have subconsciously positioned her female antagonist below her LGBTQ+ protagonists. To remain within the imagined boundary of the BL genre—a community of belonging—Jittirain might also have subconsciously framed the LGBTQ+ protagonists as 'us' and the female antagonist as 'them'. The revisions received by female characters in the BL narratives examined in this study demonstrate that identity forms through the combined processes of being and becoming, belonging, and longing to belong (Probyn, 1996; Fortier, 2000). Villainy should not be a prerequisite for women to be entitled to belong to the BL collective. As women are the genre's biggest supporters, their participatory citizenship should grant them legitimate belonging in this literary space.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Prince of Songkla University for providing institutional support throughout this research. We also thank our colleagues and peer reviewers for their valuable feedback and constructive suggestions, which have significantly improved the quality of this manuscript. Our appreciation is extended to the online communities and audiences whose discussions and critiques of Thai Boys' Love media inspired important directions in this study.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Ethical statement

This study does not involve human participants, human data, or personal identifying information. The research is based on publicly available literary texts, audiovisual media, and online discourse. All materials were analyzed in accordance with ethical standards for cultural and media studies research, ensuring respectful and responsible representation of individuals and communities discussed.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Author contributions

Chaimongkol, T. wrote introduction, Thai BL, feminism, intersectionality, narrative and character theory, methodology, findings and discussion, and limitations and recommendations; Rattanakantadilok, G. wrote feminist translation, findings and discussion, and conclusion.

Data availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are derived from publicly available sources, including published literary works, television series adaptations, and online audience discussions. These materials are accessible through commercial publishers, streaming platforms, and open online forums. Specific references to all sources are provided within the article. No additional datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

AI disclosure

The authors acknowledged the use of AI-assisted tools, including QuillBot Premium and Grammarly Desktop, to proofread the final draft of this manuscript. We entered the following prompt: 'Can you please help me check my reference list to see whether it aligns with the APA 7th edition or not?' in QuillBot's AI chat. We also used the paraphrase tool in QuillBot to find better phrasing and academic synonyms and the grammar checker for correcting errors. For Grammarly Desktop, we entered the following prompt: 'Is this paragraph/Are these paragraphs grammatically correct and comprehensible?'

Biographical sketch

Tanasinee Chaimongkol (she/her) is an M.A. candidate in the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Thailand. Her research lies at the intersection of cultural studies, gender studies, sociolinguistics, and translation studies. A native of Southern Thailand, Tanasinee was born and raised in the Kanchanadit district of Surat Thani province. Before her graduate studies, Tanasinee served as a lecturer of General English at Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University for four years. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Walailak University.

Gritiya Rattanakantadilok is Assistant Professor of Translation Studies at Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand. Her published articles and book chapters in English focus on literary translation and gender and paratextuality in translation. Her single-author book on soft power and translation in Thai for general readers was published in 2025. Her current research interests cover metaphorical translation of cultural values and audiovisual translation. She is currently working on a book chapter on Thai national epic which will be published by Oxford University Press.

Disclaimer/Publisher's note

The statements, opinions, and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Lectito Publications and/or the editor(s). Lectito Publications and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to persons or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions, or products referred to in the content.

REFERENCES

- Albakry, M. (Ed.). (2017). *Translation and the intersection of texts, contexts and politics: Historical and socio-cultural perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Amin, M., & Ritonga, A. D. (2022). The differential effect of women politicians' communication, efficacy, and ideology in building citizens' political satisfaction and trust: A case of a developing nation. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 9(4), 87–105. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/1375>
- Aoyama, T. (2012). BL (Boys' Love) literacy: Subversion, resuscitation, and transformation of the (father's) text. *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, 43, 63–84. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jwj.2013.0001>
- Atewologun, D. (2018). Intersectionality theory and practice. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of business and management*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190224851.013.48>
- Baudinette, T. (2019). Lovesick, the series: Adapting Japanese 'Boys Love' to Thailand and the creation of a new genre of queer media. *South East Asia Research*, 27(2), 115–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0967828X.2019.1627762>

- Baudinette, T. (2023). *Boys love media in Thailand: Celebrity, fans, and transnational Asian queer popular culture*. Bloomsbury.
- Bauwens-Sugimoto, J. (2011). Subverting masculinity, misogyny, and reproductive technology in SEX PISTOLS. *Image & Narrative*, 12(1), 1–18. <https://doaj.org/article/a68262bfe6cf43e6aa3a28f69860e28d>
- Beasley, C. (1999). *What is feminism? An introduction to feminist theory*. SAGE.
- Brown, H. (2025). Intersectionality and feminist translation history. In J. Hagedorn & R. Toepfer (Eds.), *Translation und Marginalisierung: Übersetzungskulturen der Frühen Neuzeit* (pp. 261–279). J.B. Metzler. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-69469-5_13
- Bunyavejchewin, P., Tungkeunkunt, K., Kamonpetch, P., Sirichuanjun, K., & Sukthungthong, N. (2024). Socio-demographics, lifestyles, and consumption frequency of Thai 'Boys Love' series content: Initial evidence from Thailand. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2307697>
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- Carastathis, A. (2014). The concept of intersectionality in feminist theory. *Philosophy Compass*, 9(5), 304–314. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12129>
- Carbin, M., & Edenheim, S. (2013). The intersectional turn in feminist theory: A dream of a common language? *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 20(3), 233–248. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506813484723>
- Castro, O., Ergun, E., Bracke, M. A., Spurlin, W. J., & Fonseca, L. C. (2024). Transnationalizing feminist translation studies? Insights from the Warwick School of Feminist Translation: A roundtable. *Journal of Feminist Scholarship*, 24(24), 4–26. <https://doi.org/10.23860/jfs.2024.24.02>
- Chaiyong, S. (2021, November 15). Support Boys' Love and expand our soft power. *Bangkok Post*. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/2215467/support-boys-love-and-expand-our-soft-power>
- Chamberlain, L. (2012). *Gender and the metaphors of translation*. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (3rd ed., pp. 254–268). Routledge.
- Charafi, S. (2024). How to use intersectional analysis in qualitative research [How-to guide]. In A. Cohen Miller (Ed.), *Diversifying and decolonising research*. SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529689327>
- Chaudhary, M. S., & Jhala, A. (2022). Computational support for trope analysis of textual narratives. In M. Vosmeer & L. Holloway-Attaway (Eds.), *Interactive storytelling: 15th International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling, ICIDS 2022* (pp. 493–508). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-22298-6_34
- Chueasuai, P. (2013). Translation shifts in multimodal texts: A case of the Thai version of cosmopolitan. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 20, 107–121. <https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2013.404>
- De Vries, K. M. (2015). Transgender people of color at the center: Conceptualising a new intersectional model. *Ethnicities*, 15(1), 3–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796814547058>
- Deiri, Y., & Burkhard, T. (2025). The "Then" and "Now" politics of fear: A multilingual intimate duo-ethnography at the crossroads of language, religion, immigration, and education. *European Journal of Education & Language Review*, 1(1), 6. <https://doi.org/10.20897/ejeler/17648>
- Duangwiset, N. (2025). Boys love series and discursive practices of soft power in Thailand. *Asia Social Issues*, 18(5). <https://doi.org/10.48048/asi.2025.278254>
- Eshelman, D. J. (2007). Feminist translation as interpretation. *Translation Review*, 74(1), 16–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07374836.2007.10523960>
- Feng, H., & Luo, X. (2023). Boy's love drama exposure and attitudes toward same-sex relationships: Applying a moderated mediation model in the Chinese context. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 16(2), 168–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2022.2153890>
- Ferguson, E. K. (2017). Feminist theory today. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20, 269–286. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051915-085422>
- Fisher, W. R. (1989). Clarifying the narrative paradigm. *Communications Monographs*, 56(1), 55–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758909390249>
- Fortier, A.-M. (2000). *Migrant belongings: Memory, space, identity* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: Volume I*. Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1981a). *The order of discourse*. Routledge.
- Fujimoto, Y., & Quimby, J. (2015). *The evolution of BL as "playing with gender": Viewing the genesis and development of BL from a contemporary perspective*. In M. McLelland, K. Nagaïke, K. Sugañuma, & J. Welker (Eds.), *Boys' love manga and beyond: History, culture, and community in Japan* (pp. 76–92). University Press of Mississippi.
- Gala, D., Khurshed, M. O., Lerner, H., O'Connor, B., & Iyyer, M. (2020). *Analysing gender bias within narrative tropes*. In D. Bamman, D. Hovy, D. Jurgens, B. O'Connor, & S. Volkova (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Fourth Workshop on Natural Language Processing and Computational Social Science* (pp. 212–217). Association for Computational Linguistics.

- Gartner, R. E. (2021). A new gender microaggressions taxonomy for undergraduate women on college campuses: A qualitative examination. *Violence Against Women*, 27(14), 2768–2790. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220978804>
- Ge, L. (2024). Repression, permeation, and circulation: Retracing and reframing danmei culture online in Mainland China. *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics*, 8(2), Article 34. <https://doi.org/10.20897/femenc/14946>
- Godard, B. (1990). *Theorising feminist discourse/translation*. In S. Bassnet & A. Lefevere (Eds.), *Translation, history, culture* (pp. 87–96). Printer Publishers.
- Greene, M. V., & Park, G. (2021). Promoting reflexivity during the COVID-19 pandemic. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 5(1), 23–29. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/9717>
- Guardado, M. (2018). *Discourse, ideology and heritage language socialisation: Micro and macro perspectives*. De Gruyter Mouton.
- Gupta, U. and Zheng, R. Z. (2020). Cognitive load in solving mathematics problems: Validating the role of motivation and the interaction among prior knowledge, worked examples, and task difficulty. *European Journal of STEM Education*, 5(1), 05. <https://doi.org/10.20897/ejsteme/9252>
- Halpern, B., Aydin, H., & Halpern, C. (2025). Seeing multilingual learners through media and AI: Pre-service teachers' perceptions in an ESOL course. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Artificial Intelligence and Society*, 1(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.20897/jirais/17647>
- Jirattikorn, A. (2023). Heterosexual reading vs. queering Thai Boys' Love dramas among Chinese and Filipino audiences. *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, 49. <https://doi.org/10.25911/R1B3-1K82>
- Jittirain. (2015a). *Pla bon fa 1* [Fish upon the sky Vol. 1]. EverY Publishing.
- Jittirain. (2015b). *Pla bon fa 2* [Fish upon the sky Vol. 2]. EverY Publishing.
- Jittirain. (2017a). *Phro rao... kbu kan 1* [2gether Vol. 1]. EverY Publishing.
- Jittirain. (2017b). *Phro rao... kbu kan 2* [2gether Vol. 2]. EverY Publishing.
- Jittirain. (2020a). *Phro rao... kbu kan 1* [2gether Vol. 1] (Rev. ed.). EverY Publishing. <https://www.mebmarket.com>
- Jittirain. (2020b). *Phro rao... kbu kan 2* [2gether Vol. 2] (Rev. ed.). EverY Publishing. <https://www.mebmarket.com>
- Jittirain. (2020c). *2gether: Vol. 1* (M. Mae, Trans.). EverY Publishing. <https://www.mebmarket.com>
- Jittirain. (2020d). *2gether: Vol. 2* (M. Mae, Trans.). EverY Publishing. <https://www.mebmarket.com>
- Jittirain. (2021a). *Fish upon the sky: Vol. 1* (Tulip, Trans.). EverY Publishing. <https://www.mebmarket.com>
- Jittirain. (2021b). *Fish upon the sky: Vol. 2* (Tulip, Trans.). EverY Publishing. <https://www.mebmarket.com>
- Jittirain. (2021c). *Pla bon fa 1* [Fish upon the sky Vol. 1] (Rev. ed.). EverY Publishing. <https://www.mebmarket.com>
- Jittirain. (2021d). *Pla bon fa 2* [Fish upon the sky Vol. 2] (Rev. ed.). EverY Publishing. <https://www.mebmarket.com>
- Kapook. (2020, May 20). *Khon kbian niyai #kban ku kbo thot lang mit ra ma nueaba so yiat phet?* [Author of #2gether apologizes after there is drama; content tends toward gender discrimination?]. Kapook. <https://drama.kapook.com/view226244.html>
- Kelly, C., Kasperavicius, D., Duncan, D., Etherington, C., Giangregorio, L., Presseau, J., & Straus, S. (2021). 'Doing' or 'using' intersectionality? Opportunities and challenges in incorporating intersectionality into knowledge translation theory and practice. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 20(187). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-021-01509-z>
- Kittisurin, S. (2022, June 22). *Before and after (Jitti)Rain: Khui kap nak kbian phu chut kra sae si ri nullvai thai lae kan rapmue chivit thi plian pai kbong 'JittiRain'* [A conversation with 'JittiRain': The author who ignited the Thai BL phenomenon on navigating her changed life]. *Continue Reading*. <https://cont-reading.com/thinking/jittirain/>
- Koh, A., Harris, D. X., Goh, D. P., & Holman Jones, S. (2024). Intersectionality, interdisciplinarity and mental health in education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 37(2), 321–326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2023.2286240>
- Kwon, J. (2021). *The past, present, and future of Boys' Love (BL) cultures in East Asia*. In *Transnational convergence of East Asian pop culture* (pp. 96–112). Routledge.
- McCann, H., & Monaghan, W. (2026). *Queer theory now: From foundations to futures*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Menon, L. (2022). *Desi Desu: Sex, sexuality, and BL consumption in urban India*. In J. Welker (Ed.), *Queer transfigurations: Boys Love media in Asia* (pp. 211–224). University of Hawai'i Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1xcxqw.2.21>
- Meyer, D. (2015). *Violence against queer people: Race, class, gender, and the persistence of anti-LGBT discrimination*. Rutgers University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1bc53v7>
- Michaels, E., Joneurairatana, E., & Sirivesmas, V. (2024). Mainstreaming queerness in Thai boys' love narratives: Impact on gay identity perceptions in Bangkok's society. *Sexualities*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634607241263194>
- Momopeach7. (2021, July 25). [Comment on the post "Misogyny in the BL series"]. Reddit. <https://www.reddit.com/r/boyslove/comments/oqy4x1/misogynyintheblseries/>

- Nation. (2020, May 9). "Chaem" phok ka. kban ku phot sao thuk wichan "na rang kiat" [2gether director 'Champ' shares sad post after criticism labels him 'Despicable']. *Nation*. <https://www.nationtv.tv/entertainment/378775750>
- O'Brien, A. A. (2008). *Boys' love and female friendships: The subculture of yaoi as a social bond between women* [Master's thesis, Georgia State University]. GSU Digital Archive.
- Pakhe Channel. (2021, June 18). *Exclusive interview samphat thim ngan #pla bon fa si ri nullwai romantic comedy haeng pi* [Exclusive Interview: Meet the team behind #FishUponTheSky, the BL romantic comedy of the year] [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZ0zOx10zjM>
- Phanthaphoommee, N., Doungphummes, N., & Vicars, M. (2025). (Re)scripting comradery capital in a Thai context: Fan-subbing, bromances and porous masculinities. In C. Lam & J. Raphael-Luu (Eds.), *Celebrity bromance and comradery capital in Asia* (pp. 87–104). Bloomsbury.
- Piluso, F. (2023). Above the heteronormative narrative: Looking up the place of Disney's villains. *Semiotica*, 2023(255), 131–148. <https://doi.org/10.1515/sem-2023-0168>
- Pojchanaphong, D., & Kongduang, T. (2025). Exploring the representation of male homosexuals in Thai boy love series through critical discourse analysis. *Chiang Mai University Journal of Humanities*, 26, 36–55. <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JHUMANS/article/view/283110>
- Prasannam, N. (2023). Authorial revisions of Boys Love/Y novels: The dialogue between activism and the literary industry in Thailand. *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, 23. <https://doi.org/10.25911/PJHM-E120>
- Prasannam, N. (2025). Revisiting queer shame in Boys love/Y novels and queer literary culture in Thailand. *Journal of Arts and Thai Studies*, 47(3), E5250 (1–23). <https://doi.org/10.69598/artssu.2025.5250>
- Prasannam, N., & Chan, Y. K. (2023). Thai Boys' Love/yaoi in literary and media industries: Political and transnational practices. *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, 49. <https://doi.org/10.25911/FC44-RB16>
- Probyn, E. (1996). *Outside belongings*. Routledge.
- r/boyslove. (2021, July 25). *Misogyny in the BL series* [Post]. Reddit. <https://www.reddit.com/r/boyslove/comments/oqy4x1/misogynyintheblseries/>
- Raistlin-2481. (2021, July 25). [Comment on the post "Misogyny in the BL series"]. Reddit. <https://www.reddit.com/r/boyslove/comments/oqy4x1/misogynyintheblseries/>
- Rastati, R., & Syed, M. A. M. (2025). Empowering women: Indonesian Muslim girl fans, Thailand's Y-Series, and gender equality. *Manusya: Journal of Humanities*, 28(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1163/26659077-20252801>
- Rattanakantadilok, G. (2017). Towards the practice of feminist translation in Thailand. *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities*, 20(23), 45–60. <https://doi.org/10.1163/26659077-02003003>
- Rattanawirote, T. (2023). *A study of strategies used in translating Thai boys' love series titles from Thai to English* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University]. TU Digital Collections. https://digital.library.tu.ac.th/tu_dc/frontend/Info/item/dc:314852
- Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs*, 5(4), 631–660. <https://doi.org/10.1086/493756>
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. (2002). *Narrative fiction: Contemporary poetics* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Rubin, G. (1975). *The traffic in women: Notes on the political economy of sex*. In R. Reiter (Ed.), *Toward an anthropology of women* (pp. 157–210). Monthly Review Press.
- Saejang, J. (2023a). Chinese historical BL by Thai writers: The Thai BL polysystem in the age of media convergence. *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, 49. <https://doi.org/10.25911/6FYV-8J71>
- Saejang, J. (2023b). The Thai translation of Un violador en tu camino: A multimodal critical discourse analysis. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 23(1), 159–179. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2023-2301-09>
- Salih, S. (2007). On Judith Butler and performativity. In K. E. Lovaas & M. M. Jenkins (Eds.), *Sexualities and communication in everyday life: A reader* (pp. 55–68). SAGE.
- Schefers, S. E. (2026). Exploring intersectionality in identity research in multicultural education: Reflecting on the past to forge a more equitable future. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education and Society*, 14(1), 3. <https://doi.org/10.20897/apjes/17906>
- Simon, S. (1996). *Gender in translation: Cultural identity and the politics of transmission*. Routledge.
- Supawantanakul, N. (2023). Wide y world: Understanding cultures and perspectives of young Thai boys' love fans in the glocalised context. *Thammasat Review*, 26(2), 245–272. <https://doi.org/10.14456/tureview.2023.20>
- THE SECRET SAUCE. (2023, October 7). *Hwam lap si ri nullwai sop nullphao woe nullphan lan chin kan thang lok | The Secret Sauce EP.674* [Secrets of the Billion-Baht BL Industry: A Global Soft Power Phenomenon] [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3P6ZLN5Kruw>
- Thongjila, W. (Director). (2020). *2gether: The series* (Phro rao khu kan เพราะเรารู้กัน) [TV series]. GMMTV.
- Traesar, L., & Saktiningrum, N. (2024). The portrayal of female villains: A representation study on Cruella. *Rubikon: Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 11(2), 327–353. <https://doi.org/10.22146/rubikon.v11i2.94900>

- Ussher, J. M. (2016). *Misogyny*. In A. Wong, M. Wickramasinghe, R. Hogben, & N. Naples (Eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell encyclopedia of gender and sexuality studies*. Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss142>
- Vassallo, H. (2022). *Towards a feminist translator studies: Intersectional activism in translation and publishing*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003032281>
- von Flotow, L. (1997). *Translation and gender: Translating in the 'era of feminism'*. St Jerome Publishing.
- von Flotow, L. (2011). *Ulrike Meinhof: De-fragmented and re-membered*. In *Translating women* (pp. 135–150). University of Ottawa Press.
- Wang, Y. (2024). Evolution and deepening of antagonistic characters in films: A typological analysis and exploration of empathy construction. *Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, 3(3), 44–50. <https://www.pioneerpublisher.com/jrsssh/article/view/710>
- Welker, J. (2022). *Introduction: Boys love (BL) media and its Asian transfigurations*. In J. Welker (Ed.), *Queer transfigurations: Boys love media in Asia* (pp. 1–16). University of Hawai'i Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1xcxqw2.6>
- Winkler, J. R., Appel, M., Schmidt, M. L. C., & Richter, T. (2023). The experience of emotional shifts in narrative persuasion. *Media Psychology*, 26(2), 141–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2022.2103711>
- Wongsinwiset, S. (Director). (2021). *Fish upon the sky* (Pla bon fa ปลาบนฟ้า) [TV series]. GMMTV.
- Yamamoto, T. (2023). *The popularity of the Thai Y series in Japan* [Master's thesis, Chulalongkorn University]. Chulalongkorn University Intellectual Repository. <https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/chulaetd/9951>
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(3), 197–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331>
- Zack, N. (2005). *Inclusive feminism: A third wave theory of women's commonality*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Zhang, C. Y., & Dedman, A. K. (2021). Hyperreal homoerotic love in a monarchized military conjuncture: A situated view of the Thai Boys' Love industry. *Feminist Media Studies*, 21(6), 1039–1043. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2021.1959370>
- Zhou, Y., Paul, B., & Sherman, R. (2018). Still a hetero-gendered world: A content analysis of gender stereotypes and romantic ideals in Chinese boy love stories. *Sex Roles*, 78(1), 107–118. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0762-y>