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NARRATOR AND LANGUAGE IN THAI ONLINE LITERATURE

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Abstract

This article studies the narrators and the language used in Thai online Literature. The selected texts were randomly selected from short stories presented on the Gay Websites. The study focused on 6 short stories about male prostitutes. The result of the study revealed that the all of the stories were composed by using the narrators as the actors. The levels of language used in the narrative texts various from semi-informal to informal in order to form the identity of the narrators as male prostitutes. The adjectives to describe beauty and look were frequently used by the narrators.

Keywords

Narrative, Language, Thai Literature, Online Literature, Male prostitutes

1. Introduction

Literature from different periods of time differs from each other and possesses its own uniqueness. Online literature is the literature circulated by people in a so called ‘Gen Y’ and ‘Gen Z’. According to ReunruthaiSatjapan (2017), after the Baby Bloom period (1946-1964) or people who were born after the Second World War, the new generations were divided into three groups. Each group was 20 years apart. There were Gen X (those who were born from 1960-1980), Gen Y (those who were born from 1980-2000) and Gen Z (those who were born from 2000 onwards) ReunruthaiSatjapan, 2017:4). The Online literature, therefore, are composed and read by people of Gen Z and Gen Y, but Gen Z was the greater part.

As people of Gen Z were born in the digital period, they tend to be familiar with easy life. Information can be retrieved easily via internet. Most of the things in everyday life can be done online as well as reading or composing literature. This easy way of life affects the composition of literature.

This article studies the narrators and the language used in Thai online Literature. The selected texts were randomly selected from short stories presented on the Gay Websites with the content about male prostitutes.

2. Research Objectives

- 2.1 To study the narrators in the selected Thai online literature
- 2.2 To study the language used of narrators

3. Research Methodology

This research studied 6 online short stories namely:

1. Yellow Label Man and Red Label Man by Yuan 18 (2007)
2. Sex Serve by Somchai Service (2007)
3. When mum knows I sell sex by Dekchai khon nueng (2011)
4. My Yellow Label Man by Libear (2012)
5. I like man (for sale) by Re Lam (2012)
6. Day I sell myself by Sunset (2013)

These selected short stories were selected from various online sites randomly. The majority of them reflected the lives of male students with hardship background who had to enter the career of prostitution. The stories were analyzed via the narrative framework focusing on the language used of the narrators.

4. Research Results

The result of the study found that the all of the short stories being studied in this research were composed by using the narrators as the actors. The levels of language used in the narrative texts various from semi-informal to informal in order to form the identity of the narrators as male prostitutes. In addition, the adjectives to describe the beauty of the narrators were frequently used. Followings are the analysis of the research results:

4.1 The Narrators in Thai Online Literature

According to MiekeBal (1999), the narrator is the most central concept in the analysis of the narrative texts as confirmed in the extract:

“...The narrator is the most central concept in the analysis of narrative texts. The identity of the narrator, the degree to which and the manner in which that identity is indicated in the text, and the choices that are implied lend the text its specific character”(Bal,1999:19).

The narrative texts selected for this study all were composed by using the narrators as the actors or the narrator is the ‘teller’ of the story. These selected literatures were selected from various online sites randomly. The majority of them reflected the lives of male students with hardship background who had to enter the career of prostitution.

These male prostitutes, as the narrators, narrate the stories of their lives as prostitutes where their main concern was about their beauty and bodies. According to Whitehead (2010), the study of body was embodied in the study of gender and power, In other word, male bodies in the sociology of masculinity is relatively invisible. However, there were some academia, for instance, Connell (1987, 1995) and Petersen (1998) studied the relationship between gendered bodies and gendered power (Whitehead, 2010:181). In contrast to academia, the media pore over and scrutinized men’s bodies (Ibid: 182). There were vast number of advertisements for cosmetics and fashions for men. Men and beauty seemed to fit in together in the new media. Online literature was another channel to present men’s concern about their bodies, especially

those literatures on the Gay websites. These literatures revealed the relationship between men and body in two aspects; body and beauty, and body as a product.

The beauty of the narrator as the main male character who was a prostitute was described in the story when mum knows I sell sex as follow:

“I was considered as a good looking boy. When I was a freshman, I won the ‘Moon and Star of the Faculty’ competition”.

(Dekchaikhonnueng (2011) cited from Khaninworathan Chairop, 2017: 91)

“As I’m a boy from Northern Thailand, I acquired fair skin since I was born. My face can be categorized as a handsome boy”.

(SomchaiService (2007) cited from Khaninworathan Chairop, 2017: 92)

The above quotations illustrated the significance of beauty for the career of male prostitution that to be succeeding in the career one must possessed ‘beauty’.

The narrators in all selected stories who were prostitutes were proud of their beauty and tried to boast about it in order to attract more clients as they viewed their bodies as the products for sale.

In the story *The Day I sell myself by Sunset* distributed in 2013, the narrator, Tor, who was the male prostitute of the story boasted “Somebody used to say I had something extraordinary” Tor also revealed his trick to get a customer as the following illustration:

“When I saw him going into the pub’s toilet, I went to the toilet as well. I stood near him and passed urine. I could see his eyes staring at ‘my passing urine organ’. This is my marketing strategy”.

(Sunset (2013) cited from Khaninworathan Chairop, 2017: 60-61)

The above exemplifications illustrated the relationship between the narrators as male prostitutes and their bodies. For the narrators, bodies must be beautiful and able to sell like a product.

4.2 The Language in Thai Online Literature

As the main concern of the narrators was the bodies, to be beautiful and marketable, the language being used were frequently the adjective to describe their bodies. In all of the selected stories the terms ‘cute’ and ‘petite’ were used. For instance, in *My Yellow Label Man* by Libear, 2012, the adjectives cute and petite were used to describe the narrator of the story and the adjectives ‘cute’ and ‘white’ were used in *I like man (for sale)* by Re Lam, 2012.

The level of language the narrators used were informal and semi-informal. The author chooses to use informal language because both the writers and readers are from Gen Z. The generation of people who prefer easy things.

There is no such a thing as ‘literary aesthetics’ as in Thai traditional literature in online gay literature.

The following extract is the illustration of common language used in these literatures:

“At one of the pubs near the weekend market, somebody I know saw me and asked

“Hi Ping, What are you doing here?”

“I come to sell.” I replied.”

(Yuan 18(2007) cited from Khaninworathan Chairap, 2017:39)

The above example exemplified the easy language and the content about selling the body was normal. In other words, apart from using easy language, the narrators make lives easy by viewing their bodies as products and treat selling a body as a common thing to do.

5. Conclusion

The study of the narrators and the language used in Thai online Literature focused on the short stories about male prostitutes from Gay websites. The result of the study revealed that all of the stories were composed by using the narrators as the actors. These narrators form their identities as male prostitutes by using semi-informal and informal language. The adjectives to describe the beauty and body of the narrators were frequently used because their main concerns were beauty and look.

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