

Translation of Sexual Innuendo in King Vajiravudh's Translated Version of William Shakespeare's Plays: From Performances to Literary Studies *

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Abstract

King Vajiravudh translated Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* in 1916 followed by *As You Like It* in 1918 and his translation of *Romeo and Juliet* was first published in 1922. One of the most interesting points is his translation of Shakespeare's sexual innuendo. It is very difficult for a translator to retain the sense of humor, vulgarity, or compassion connoted in the original texts. Sexual innuendo is a kind of pun which is a complex and diverse phenomenon. The study finds that, in his translation process, King Vajiravudh tried to keep the original meaning, and his choice of Thai terms to equate to the intended English meaning is excellent. However, the degree of severity of translated bawdy words is sharply lessened, and he occasionally chose not to translate

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the sexual puns possibly due to the cultural differences between the source language and the target language, the untranslatability of complex double entendres or their inappropriateness for the royal court. Moreover, loan words were frequently used to explain sexual innuendos with full explanation in the glossary. It can be assumed that the intended effect of double entendres in Shakespeare's famous plays is lost in translation. It can be concluded that the translation of Shakespeare's plays by King Vajiravudh is a significant revolution of literary studies in Thailand that was chiefly influenced by the western literary tradition because a play is used not only for performance, but also for literary studies.

Keywords: innuendo; translation; Shakespeare; King Vajiravudh

การแปลคำสอนยทางเพศในบทละครเชกสเปียร์
พระราชนิพนธ์แปล
พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว:
จากการแสดงสู่วรรณกรรมศึกษา*

ทรงรับ รื่นบรรเทิง **

บทคัดย่อ

พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวทรงแปลบทละครของวิลเลียม เชกสเปียร์สามเรื่องคือ *เวนิสวานิช* ในปี 1916 ตามใจท่าน ในปี 1918 และ *โรมิโอ และจูเลียต* ในปี 1922 ประเด็นที่น่าสนใจในการแปลบทละครทั้งสามเรื่องของเชกสเปียร์ คือการแปลคำสอนยทางเพศ คำสอนยทางเพศเป็นการเล่นคำอย่างหนึ่งที่มีความ ซับซ้อนและหลากหลาย จึงเป็นงานยากสำหรับนักแปลที่ต้องรักษานัยแห่งความ ขบขันที่ปรากฏอยู่ในต้นฉบับ การศึกษาพบว่า ในกระบวนการแปล พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวทรงพยายามรักษาความหมายของต้นฉบับให้มากที่สุดเท่าที่จะเป็นไปได้ผ่านการสรรคำ ทว่าความรุนแรงของคำถูกลดทอนลง บางกรณีทรงละ การแปลคำสอนยทางเพศ ซึ่งอาจเกิดจากความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรมระหว่างภาษา

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ต้นฉบับกับภาษาแปล จากความซับซ้อนลึกซึ้งของการเล่นคำ หรืออาจเกิดจากความไม่เหมาะสมของคำสอนัยทางเพศกับธรรมเนียมของราชสำนัก นอกจากนี้ทรงยืมคำภาษาต้นฉบับมาใช้และทรงทำอภิธานศัพท์อธิบายเพิ่มเติม อาจกล่าวได้ว่า กลวิธีการแปลเช่นนี้ทำให้วรรณกรรมของคำสอนัยทางเพศในภาษาแปลหายไป ลักษณะดังกล่าวนี้นำไปสู่ข้อสรุปว่า พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวมิได้ทรงแปลบทละครของวิลเลียม เชกสเปียร์เพื่อนำไปแสดงเป็นละคร แต่เพื่อใช้ในการศึกษาในฐานะวรรณกรรมเช่นเดียวกับที่ปรากฏในโลกตะวันตก จึงกล่าวได้ว่าพระราชนิพนธ์แปลบทละครของวิลเลียม เชกสเปียร์ทั้งสามเรื่องเป็นการปฏิวัติวรรณกรรมศึกษาของไทยอีกวาระหนึ่งโดยได้รับอิทธิพลจากแบบแผนวรรณกรรมศึกษาของตะวันตก

คำสำคัญ: คำสอนัย; การแปล; เชกสเปียร์; พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว

1. Introduction

Four hundred years ago not far from the Globe Theater, where Shakespeare's most famous plays were staged, was a brothel called The Cardinal's Hat, which refers to the color of the tip of an erect penis. In Elizabethan England people were familiar with double meanings of sexual pun. For example they surprisingly knew that "tongue" was not only something in the mouth used for speaking but could also mean a woman's clitoris, and "noon" was not only the name for midday but also "the erect penis at its height as in pointing up to twelve on a dial," and that if you called someone "slippery", you were most likely describing a "bisexual." (Kiernan, 2008, p.2)

Each year, there were approximately 200 performances of plays in Shakespeare's time, and the theater was open 6 days a week. It was said that 1 in 8 Londoners paid a visit to a theater every week and each performance would have about two thousand people in attendance. Shakespeare's audiences were fine-tuned to hearing what we now call subtext in a way in which we cannot imagine. When they talked about going to a theater, they referred to it as "going to hear a play", not to see one (Kiernan, 2008, p.6). The playhouse was open to the skies with performances in daylight with none of our elaborate set designs and lighting to create mood, so listening closely to the words was essential. It means that Shakespeare's audiences were such skilled listeners and could decode sexual puns instantaneously.

However, there is another explanation why the audiences of the time were familiar with the language of the street. It is important to keep in mind when examining Shakespeare's obscene puns that he lived a world that seems crude, rude and vicious. Citizens use the language that was "full of figures of speech—bawdy, colorful or just plain gross to describe or disguise

the cruel facts of life: poverty, the plague, venereal disease, and the brutal violence in many forms that was everywhere around them.” Kiernan, 2008, p.12) Shakespeare’s plays observed and recorded all of these cruelties. It can be said that his greatness is in his profound understanding of the human condition, his insights into the operations not only of psychology, philosophy and politics, but also of greed, fear, jealousy, hatred, love and of course, sex.

Shakespeare is a writer who used the most puns. According to the romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, there are approximately 78 puns in each of his plays. In all of his 37 plays, Shakespeare employed more than 3,000 puns (Ghanooni, 2012, p. 91) Shakespeare’s sexual puns are sometimes simple, sometimes complex, and range from the mischievous and playful to the filthy. Shakespeare used puns because they were more entertaining than using real words. Shakespeare knows more than any other dramatists that the way to get your audience to think is to entertain them first. However, when his plays are translated into another language, puns seem to be the most challenging task for a translator to keep the humorous, witty effect of the words.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Sexual Innuendo and Pun

Dirk Delabastida, a professor of Translation Studies, noted that “pun or wordplay is the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic

structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings” (Delabastita, 1996, p.128). It means that pun or wordplay is a juxtaposition of linguistic forms that have different meanings. There are several types of pun such as homophonic puns, homographic puns or homonymic puns. Shakespeare uses every kind of pun in his works. According to the OED, innuendo is “an oblique hint, indirect suggestion; an allusive remark concerning a person or thing, esp. one of a depreciatory kind” and it defines “pun” as “of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more meanings or different associations or of two or more words of the same or nearly the same sound with different meaning as to produce a humorous effect”.

It is very important to see that pun and sexual innuendo must produce humorous effects. It is difficult for a translator to translate a pun because his translated version must retain and produce the humorous effect. Newmark says that “puns made by pun poets are most difficult to translate, since they are limited by meter. Often the puns simply have to be scarified” (Newmark, 2001, p. 12) while Reiss confesses that “in translation, puns and other kinds of play with language will have to be ignored to the great extent so as to keep the content invariant” (Reiss, 2000, p. 169). Han Dihou also proposes that “the problem of pun could not be resolved by any translation theory.” (Han Dihou, 1969, p. 37) It can be concluded that the translation of pun or wordplay is almost impossible because the double meanings of a pun are always a combination of phonological and semantic features, which is difficult to retain when it is translated into different languages.

2.2 Pun Translation

However, several scholars have come up with translation strategies for puns. Many translation strategies have been formulated for the translation of different kinds of wordplay in different text types, and even in different media, which here can be specialized in strategies for translating puns. For example, de Vries & Verheij (1997, p. 72) proposed the following strategies for translating the wordplay that occurred in the Bible: a) Pun by Pun; b) Pun to rhetorical device—including alliteration, assonance and rhyme; c) Transliteration—literal translation of words; and d) Compensation—in adjacent text fragment. However, the most comprehensible and complete strategies were developed by Dirk Delabastita (1993, p.191-221). Delabastita discussed translation techniques for translating puns which, as he insisted, might be employed in combination. His techniques are as follows:

- 1) PUN > PUN: “the source-text pun is translated by a target-language pun”
- 2) PUN > NON-PUN: “the pun is rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or by selecting one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other”
- 3) PUN > RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE: “the pun is replaced by a wordplay-related rhetorical device (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox etc.)”
- 4) PUN > ZERO: “the portion of text containing the pun is simply omitted”
- 5) PUN ST = PUN TT: “the translator reproduces the source-text pun in its original formulation, i.e. without actually ‘translating’ it”

- 6) NON-PUN > PUN: “the translator introduces a pun to make up for source-text puns lost elsewhere, or for any other reason”
- 7) ZERO > PUN: “totally new material is added”
- 8) EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES: “explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments”

These techniques will be used to analyze closely the translation of sexual puns in King Vajiravudh’s translations of Shakespeare’s plays. Moreover, the concepts of domestication and foreignization which are two major translation strategies will be employed to analyze King Vajiravudh’s translation techniques. (Munday, 2001)

3. King Vajiravudh’s Translation of Shakespeare’s Plays

King Vajiravudh graduated from Christ Church, Oxford University and he spent almost 15 years in England. He was an avid reader and loved watching dramatic performances while he was in England. He was also interested in literature, politics and history. After coming back home in 1901, he started working on his literary works including translations of Shakespeare’s works. He realized that some writers in Siam had already written adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays, but none translated the whole work in a dramatic form. He decided to translate three of Shakespeare’s plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It* in a dramatic form starting with *The Merchant of Venice* in 1916 followed by *As You Like It* in 1918 and *Romeo and Juliet* in 1922. His translation of these three plays has been recognized not only by the Thai educational arena, but also by Southwark Public Libraries in

London which requested permission from King Vajiravudh to have a copy of his translated versions of Shakespeare's plays to be displayed at the libraries.

Prefaces to his translations of *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Romeo and Juliet*

In his reminiscence on Shakespeare, King Vajiravudh wrote:

“William Shakespeare is a well-known poet and playwright whose reputation is not limited to the English Isle. People from other countries in Europe consider his work as prominent and significant pieces of writing. Shakespeare's plays have been translated into numerous languages. Though three hundred years have passed, his plays have been frequently performed in the Anglophone countries such as in America and England and in other countries in Europe, and some of his plays have already been staged in Japan.” (*Romeo and Juliet*, Preface)

Moreover in his preface to his translation of *The Merchant of Venice*, which was first published in 1916, he mentioned that “never before had anyone translated Shakespeare and kept the original form of his play, so personally, it might be a bit ambitious to complete what other people have never achieved before because in doing so it is much more difficult I intend to translate his play and keep the original meaning of Shakespeare text as much as possible and my objective is to keep the style and meaning of Shakespeare more than to fit the play into the Thai metrical, poetic language.” (*Romeo and Juliet*, Preface) In the preface to his translation of *Romeo and Juliet*, he

again repeats his intention to keep the original meaning as much as possible. He preferred a literal translation to idiomatic translation.

It can be seen that King Vajiravudh intended to keep the original meaning as much as possible; therefore, the accuracy of translation, for him, was much more important than the beauty of the metrical rhyme scheme of the translated version. In other words, it can be said that his translation of Shakespeare's plays was a semantic translation because the translator intended to keep the meaning of the source language in the target language as much as possible. Therefore if we use his intention as mentioned above as a protocol in studying his translation of Shakespeare's sexual innuendo, it could be said that he preferred to keep the original meaning of each bawdy word used in the source language rather than alter them to fit the Thai cultural context.

However, Chosita Maneesai interestingly investigated the translation strategies of King Vajiravudh's translation of *Romeo and Juliet* and found that King Vajiravudh used Thai metrical rhyme scheme instead of blank verse. He employed Karb Surangkana and Karb Chabang in some parts of his translation and Indravicheanchan and Wasantadilokchan which contain 11 syllables closely associated with Shakespeare iambic pentameter. (Maneesai, 2010, p. 144) This was a tough challenge for King Vajiravudh and it vividly reveals his literary and poetic talents. Even though he previously states that he intended to emphasize the accuracy rather than form or metrical rhyme scheme, King Vajiravudh puts his effort in keeping the original form in his translated version. It is challenging, and for some scholar imperative for a translator to keep both form and content of the original text. (Nida and Taber, 1969, p.84)

4. Data Collection and Analysis

Romeo and Juliet is a play full of sexual innuendos. Benvolio, Romeo and Mercutio play with vulgar innuendoes; Gregory, Peter, and Sampson are always talking of maidenhead and their own naked weapons; the nurse consciously or unconsciously uses puns in several scenes. The play is full of language intoxicated by carnality. Even Juliet, the romantic center of the play, quibbles with erotic meaning. Therefore, King Vajiravudh's translation of *Romeo and Juliet* will be first explored, followed by his translations of *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*.

4.1 King Vajiravudh's Translation of *Romeo and Juliet*

Nattawan Anusasananon has studied translation technique of *Romeo and Juliet* by King Vajiravudh but her study does not cover the translation of sexual innuendo. (Anussasananon, 2001). The close study of King Vajiravudh's translation of *Romeo and Juliet* reveals that he tried to retain the original meaning of the source text, and his choice of Thai terms that equate to English is excellent. However, the degree of severity of translated bawdy, vulgar words is sharply lessened, and he occasionally chose not to translate sexual puns. Moreover, loan words were frequently used to explain sexual innuendos with full explanation in the glossary.

Example 1

In the opening scene of the play Samson and Gregory, sexual innuendo is used to create a comic scene. Samson tells Gregory his friend what he is going to do if he meets one of the Capulet's members.

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
<p>Sampson: I will show myself a tyrant: when I have fought with the men. I will be cruel with the maids and cut off their heads.</p> <p>Gregory: The heads of the maids?</p> <p>Sampson: Ay, the heads of the maids or their maidenheads, take it in what sense thou wilt.</p> <p>Gregory: They must take it in sense that feel it.</p> <p>Sampson: Me they shall feel while I am able to stand and Tis known I am a pretty piece of flesh.</p> <p>Gregory: 'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou Hadst been poor John, Draw thy tool! Here comes two of the house of the Montagues.</p>	<p>แซมป์สัน: กูจะสำแดงเป็นคนดุใหญ่ เมื่อกูได้ต่อสู้กับพวกผู้ชายของเขาแล้ว กูจะดุต่อพวกผู้หญิง; กูจะสังหารให้หมด</p> <p>เกรกอรี: จะสังหารพวกผู้หญิงสาวด้วยหรือ?</p> <p>แซมป์สัน: เออ สังหารหญิงสาว หรือสังหารพรหมจารี; นี้อย่างไรก็ตามใจเถิด</p> <p>เกรกอรี: มันก็ต้องนีกอย่างที่มีรู้สึกนั้นแหละ</p> <p>แซมป์สัน: กูนะ มันต้องรู้สึกตลอดเวลาที่ยังยืนตรงอยู่ได้; และใครๆ ก็รู้ว่ากูเป็นคนแข็งนัก</p> <p>เกรกอรี: เเคราะห์ดีที่เพื่อนไม่เป่นปลา ถ้าเป่นละก็คงเป็นปลาซาลาแนละ ชักเครื่องมือเถิด คนก็มอมตะคิวมานี้สองคนแล้ว</p>

King Vajiravudh translated the word 'maidenhead' which refers to female virginity, but he did not translate the word 'head' and he translated 'cut off their heads' as 'kill' in Thai, which is different from the original meaning because what Sampson wanted to do is to 'rape' Capulet women. Moreover, when Sampson says that he is 'able to stand', which means the erection of his penis, King Vajiravudh chose to retain the denotative meaning of the word 'stand' rather than using the connotative meaning. When Sampson says that

he is 'a piece of flesh', which refers to the size of his penis, King Vajiravudh avoided using the vivid image of penis enlargement. He chose to translate the phrase 'pretty piece of flesh' as 'I am stiff.'

When Gregory told Sampson that he is 'a Poor John' which contains a sexual connotation about erection because Poor John is a dried fish (the whole fish) which is as stiff as a board, King Vajiravudh chose to translate the word 'poor John' as 'dried fish'; however, the image of dried fish in a Thai cultural context and that of an English context are quite different; dried fish in a Thai culture does not refer to the erection of the penis, but in contrast it gives the image of wrinkling, withering and impotence instead.

Example 2

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
Mercutio: If love be rough with you, be rough with love. Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.	เมอร์คิวซิโอ: รักหยาบต่อเพื่อนยา ต้องทารุณต่อรักบ้าง; รักตำตํารักพลาง และตีรักหักลงไป

From Mercutio's point of view, the sadness and melancholic feeling that Romeo is experiencing comes from the lack of sexual intercourse. He strongly believes that whenever Romeo has sexual relationships, he will forget about love. In this scene, Shakespeare plays with the word 'prick and pricking,' but in the translated version, King Vajiravudh did not translate the word 'pricking', which means penis erection.

Example 3

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
<p>This cannot anger him: 't would anger him. To raise a spirit in his mistress's circle of some strange nature, letting it there stand. Till she had laid it and conjured it down; That were some spite: my invocation is fair and honest, and in his mistress's name. I conjure only but to raise up him.</p>	<p>หาไม่ดอกนา: ถ้าจะทำให้โกรธเราต้องปลุกปีศาจโผล่ขึ้นในกลัศคู่รักของเขาอย่างแปลกมากไปเบา ให้มันยืนโตไว้จนหล่อนต้องข่มมัน, และปราบมันลงจนได้; เช่นนั้นจะขัดใจ: อันคำเชิญของฉันนี้ ไพเราะและซื่อตรง และออกนามแม่ตัวดี ก็เพราะฉันหวังที่จะให้เขาลุกขึ้นมา</p>
<p>Now will he sit under a medlar tree, And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit As maids call medlars when they laugh alone. Romeo, that she were, O that she were An open arse, thou a poperin pear! (II.i 27-39)</p>	<p>บัดนี้เขาคงนั่งอยู่ใต้ต้นเม็ดลาร์ใหญ่ และนึกให้ทราตรวยเป็นลูกไม้ชนิดที่สาว ๆ เรียกเม็ดลาร์เวลาอยู่ลำพังซี้เออโรเมโอ นี่ ให้หล่อนเป็นนั่นเถิด โอ, ละลุตที่เปิดอยู่และสุเองเป็นตุ้มโผล่!</p>

In this scene, Mercutio is looking for Romeo and teases him about his love and the scene is full of sexual innuendo. The word 'conjure' has a sexual connotation, 'hand job' and he chose to loan the English word 'medlar' instead of translating this word.

Medlar is used frequently in Shakespeare's play to refer to 'vagina' and a poperin pear is a symbol of the penis. King Vajiravudh chose to explain the sexual connotation of 'medlar' in the glossary: 'Medlar is a fruit which in Shakespeare's time had a comical connotation because they compared medlar in the same way that we do with 'chopped palm'". Instead of translating 'medlar' as a 'chopped palm' which will be much more understandable in a Thai cultural context, King Vajiravudh preferred to explain the sexual connotation of 'medlar' in the glossary. It is very interesting that when there is an equivalent meaning of pun, King Vajiravudh surprisingly chooses not to use it in his translated version.



Figure 1-2. Medlar and Poperin Pear

(source: <http://blog.metmuseum.org>, <http://wikimedia.org>)

Example 4

This scene happens when Nurse asks Romeo who Mercutio is because she is very curious to know more about Mercutio. She is furious about his ill-mannered and bawdy words. She says that if she is ill-treated by Mercutio, she will deal with him harshly. And she yells at Peter for not helping to defend her from Mercutio's verbal attack.

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
<p>Nurse: An a' speak any thing against me, I'll take him down, an a' were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skains-mates. [<i>To Peter</i>] And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure!</p> <p>Peter: I saw no man use you at his pleasure; if I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.</p> <p>Nurse: Now, afore God, I am so vexed, that every part about me quivers.</p>	<p>แม่หม่ม: แล้วก็ถ้าเขาพูดว่าฉันอย่างไร แล้วก็ ดิฉันปนได้รับมือเขาแหละถึงจะเป็นคนแข็งแรงกว่าที่เป็นอยู่ หรือคนชนิดนั้นสักญี่สิบก็ไม่ว่า แล้วก็ถ้าดิฉันรับมือไม่ได้เอง ดิฉันก็จะหาคนอื่นช่วยรับมือได้ คนอะไร! ดิฉันไม่ใช่ทีเล่นของเขา ดิฉันไม่ใช่เพื่อนเล่นของเขา- (พูดกับปีเตอร์) แล้วมึงก็มัวแต่ยืนเหม่ออยู่แล้วปล่อยให้ใครต่อใครเล่นเข้าได้ตามชอบใจเชียวหรือ</p> <p>ปีเตอร์: ผมไม่เห็นใครเล่นนายตามชอบใจเลย ถ้าได้เห็นอาวุธของผมคงได้ชักออกมาเร็วนักเทียว ผมขอบอกให้ ผมกล้าชักได้ว่องไวไม่น้อยกว่าคนอื่น ถ้าผมเห็นโอกาสเหมาะในเวลาวีวาทและถ้ากฎหมายอยู่ข้างผม</p> <p>แม่หม่ม: นี่ พระเจ้าช่วย ข้าเคืองเหลือเกินจนตัวสั่นไปทุกส่วน</p>

This scene would have drawn loud laughter from the audience in the Globe Theater in Shakespeare's time because while the Nurse condemns and chastises Mercutio for his inappropriate, bawdy language, she unconsciously uses them as well. The phrase 'take him down' can be interpreted as 'dealing with someone' or 'having sex with someone'; and the phrase 'at his pleasure' also contains sexual innuendo. When Peter tells Nurse that if Mercutio 'uses'

her 'at his pleasure', he will draw his 'weapon' as quickly as possible what he means here might be interpreted as 'masturbating'.

King Vajiravudh chose to interpret the word 'use' as 'play' in the Thai version, which is reasonably appropriate because the word 'play' also has a sexual connotation. However, he avoided being too vulgar by not directly interpreting the word 'draw the weapon' as masturbating. He just interpreted the phrase as 'drawing the weapon', which is quite similar to the primary meaning in the source language.

It can be seen that the translation of sexual innuendo in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* by King Vajiravudh is a truly semantic translation. The translator tried to retain the original meaning of the source language, and the sexual innuendoes were superbly translated with an accurate selection of words. However, he seems to reduce the degree of severity of translated bawdy words and he occasionally chose not to translate the obvious sexual puns. However, in his translation of *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, King Vajiravudh's versions reveal that the sexuality aspect of the pun words were deleted, euphemized and normalized; hence, culminating in the loss of punning activity.

4.2 King Vajiravudh's Translation of *The Merchant of Venice* (*Venice Vanich*)

Siriphan Suwannalai has studied the techniques of translating figurative language in *Venice Vanich* but she does not concentrate on the translation of sexual innuendo found in the play. (Suwannalai, 2003) King Vajiravudh's translated version of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* is surprisingly interesting because King Vajiravudh did not translate any sexual puns used

by Shakespeare in his play at all which is relatively different from his translation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Moreover, the book has been chosen by the Ministry of Education as a compulsory reading text for high school students in Thai language and literature class since 1923. It might be implied that his translation of the play aims not for performance but for literary studies (Chancharoensuk, 2011, p. 101).

Example 5

In Act II scene I, at Belmont, Portia complains to her lady-in-waiting, Nerissa, that she is weary of the world because, as her dead father's will stipulates, she cannot decide for herself whether to take a husband. Instead, Portia's various suitors must choose between three chests, one of gold, one of silver, and one of lead, in the hope of selecting the one that contains her portrait. The man who guesses correctly will win Portia's hand in marriage, but those who guess incorrectly must swear never to marry anyone. Nerissa lists the suitors who have come to guess - a Neapolitan prince, a Palatine count, a French nobleman, an English baron, a Scottish lord, and the nephew of the Duke of Saxony, and Portia criticizes their many hilarious faults.

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
NERISSA: First, there is the Neapolitan prince.	เนริสา: หนึ่ง เจ้าชายเมืองเนโปลี
PORTIA: Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse, and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts that he can shoe him himself. I am much afeard my lady his mother played false with a smith	ปอร์เซีย: ท่านผู้นี้ควรจะเป็นม้า เพราะพูดจาได้แต่เรื่องม้าของตัว ช่างน่าหัวเราะ เธอยกย่องเป็นความฉลาดที่สามารถใส่เกือกมันเองได้ ฉันสงสัยว่ามารดาของเธอนั้นจะได้สนิทติดพันกับช่างใส่เกือกม้า

King Vajiravudh chose to translate the sexual innuendo in this scene directly without hinting at the connotative meaning of the words. In the source language, the word 'horse' conveys a connotative meaning of 'penis' and the expression 'shoe him himself' connotatively means masturbation. Instead of using the connotative meaning in the target language, he decided to stick with the denotative meaning of words and phrases.

Example 6

Two famous comic characters in the play are Launcelot and Lorenzo. In Act III scene ii, they have a row about having dinner.

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
LORENZO: ...Bid them prepare for dinner.	ลอเรนโซ: ...ไปบอกเขาให้เตรียมกินข้าว
LAUNCELOT: That is done, sir. They have all stomachs.	ลานซล็อต: เตรียมอยู่แล้วขอรับ เขามีพุงอยู่ทุกคนแล้ว
LORENZO: Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! Then bid them prepare dinner.	ลอเรนโซ: เจ้าประคุณเอ๋ย ช่างเป็นเจ้าถ้อยเสียจริงๆ ถ้าเช่นนั้นก็ไปบอกให้เขาเตรียมกับข้าว
LAUNCELOT: That is done too, sir. Only "Cover!" is the word.	ลานซล็อต: นั่นก็เสร็จแล้วเหมือนกันขอรับ แต่ควรใช้คำว่า "แต่ง"
LORENZO: Will you cover then, sir?	ลอเรนโซ: ถ้าเป็นเช่นนั้นก็เชิญไปแต่งสิพ่
LAUNCELOT: Not so, sir, neither. I know my duty.	ลานซล็อต: ไม่ได้อีกขอรับ ไม่ใช่หน้าที่ผม

In this context, food means sexual appetite or sexual desire; 'stomach' has a connotative meaning as 'horny', and the word 'cover' means sexual

intercourse. Again, King Vajiravudh chose to omit the sexual meaning of each word in the target language and keep the denotative meaning of the innuendos.

Example 7

In Belmont, Portia begs Bassanio to delay choosing between the caskets for a day or two. If Bassanio chooses incorrectly, Portia reasons, she will lose his company. Bassanio insists that he make his choice now, to avoid prolonging the torment of living without Portia as his wife. Portia orders that music be played while her love makes his choice. King Vajiravudh's translated version of this passage is incredibly famous and well-known among Thais.

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's Translation
SINGER <i>Tell me where is fancy bred.</i> <i>Or in the heart or in the head?</i> <i>How begot, how nourishèd?</i> ALL Reply, reply.	บทขับร้อง ความเฝ้ายความรัก เริ่มสมัครขึ้นต้น ณ หนไหน? เริ่มเพาะเหมาะกลางหว่างหัวใจ หรือเริ่มในสมองตรงองจดี? แรกจะเกิดเป็นไหนใครรู้บ้าง? อย่าอำพรางตอบสำนวนให้ควรที่ ใครถนอมกล่อมเกลี้ยงเลี้ยงรดี ผู้ใดมีคำตอบขบใจเอเยฯ

Shakespearean scholars would easily detect the use of sexual innuendos in this scene, especially the homoerotic connotation. In Elizabethan English, 'fancy' means homosexual desire and 'heart' is not only an organ, but also an 'arse', and 'head' is a 'maiden head' or virginity or prepuce or testes. Therefore, the theatergoers in Shakespeare's time would have interpreted the above passage as follows: 'Tell me where the homosexual desire comes from?

From the love of “arse” or the longing for a penis?’ Unmistakably this scene as a comic scene draws huge laughter from the audience. However, King Vajiravudh used metaphorical language in translation by comparing love with the growth of a tree, leaving the sexual connotative of innuendos behind.

Example 8

In Act III scene iv, Portia informs Nerissa that the two of them, dressed as young men, are going to pay an incognito visit to their new husbands. When Nerissa asks why, Portia dismisses the question, but promises to disclose the whole of her purpose on the coach ride to Venice. The disguise of female characters can be pervasively seen in several of Shakespeare’s plays both in comedies and romances such as in *Twelfth Night*, *Cymbeline*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *As You Like It*. However, none of them creates humorous effect like the disguise of Portia and Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Shakespeare’s language	King Vajiravudh’s translation
PORTIA: They shall, Nerissa, but in such a habit That they shall think we are accomplished With that we lack. I’ll hold thee any wager, When we are both accoutered like young men, I’ll prove the prettier fellow of the two, And wear my dagger with the braver grace, And speak between the change of	ปอร์เซีย: แต่จะแต่งกายาแปลงเสียใหม่ จนแลดูไม่รู้ว่าเป็นผู้ใด เมื่อยามเราสองไขว้แปลงเป็นชาย ฉันเชื่อว่าทำฉันสวยกว่าหล่อน จะกรายการเหน็บกันหยั้นเดินผันผาย และพูดเสียงไม่สู้ห้าวราวเด็กชาย ที่เฟื่องกลายเป็นหนุ่มกระชุ่มกระชวย ทั้งท่วงที่ที่เดินกระมิดกระเมี้ยน ก็จะเพียรแก้ให้หาย เป็นชายสวย ทั้งอวดโป้งโผนเฟื่องว่าเก่งมวย อวดอีกด้วยว่าเราเป็นเจ้าชู้

<p>man and boy With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps Into a manly stride, and speak of frays Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies, How honorable ladies sought my love, Which I denying, they fell sick and died— I could not do withal!—Then I'll repent NERISSA: Why, shall we turn to men? PORTIA: Fie, what a question's that If thou wert near a lewd interpreter! But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device When I am in my coach, which stays for us At the park gate. And therefore haste away, For we must measure twenty miles today.</p>	<p>ผู้หญิงติดตามพะนอขอให้รัก และเราไม่สมัครจะครองคู่ หญิงเลยตายเพราะเศร้าเราเอ็นดู ร้องว่ารู้แล้วไม่ขัดใจ... มาเถิดรถคอยท่าอย่าช้าที่ จะต้องไปวันนี้ยี่สิบไมล์</p>
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Pauline Kiernan interestingly paraphrased the above passage in modern English, which is full of crude, coarse and foul language and expletives as follows:

PORTIA: *They'll think we're equipped with pricks which we haven't got. I bet you anything when we're both dressed like young men, I'll prove the sexier of the two, and wear my false penis with its most fine erection. I'll certainly be well-hung. I'll turn two mincing steps into a manly stride and speak of sexual conquests like a youth talking out of his arse, all cock and codpiece and tell quaint lies about the cunts of chaste ladies who wanted to make love with me. Ladies when I turned down their advances, crouched down and beg to be fucked.*

NERISSA: *What, shall we turn into men and have sex with women?*

PORTIA: *Don't be stupid! What sort of a question is that? You're talking like a greasy interpreter! But come on, I'll show all of my vagina and my dildo when I get into the privacy of my coach.*

From Kiernan's paraphrased language, it can be seen that Shakespeare's language is full of sexual innuendos such as 'prettier' as 'sexier' and 'dagger' refers to false penis or dildo. Similarly the word 'grace' connotatively refers to penis and 'fray' means virginity. The word 'fine' can be understood as anus and 'brag' also means penis. The word 'quaint' often refers to vagina and 'die' connotes sexual orgasm while the word 'whole' is homophonous with 'hole' and 'device' in this scene is also a dildo. However, King Vajiravudh kept the denotative meaning of all sexual entendres and again left the sexual connotation of lewd words behind. It can be noticed that not a single innuendo is translated. Moreover, he chose to shorten some of Portia's speech. This scene in Elizabethan theater undoubtedly would have brought laughter to the audience.

Example 9

In *The Merchant of Venice*, rings are repeatedly mentioned in the play and contain thematic significance and play a vital role in the play such as when Portia and Nerissa give their rings to Bassanio and Gratiano before letting them leave Belmont for Venice to help Antonio from Shylock. Again the rings are referred to when Portia asks Bassanio for his ring as a token of her success in rescuing Antonio from the death penalty. Furthermore, when Portia and Nerissa return to Belmont and meet their husbands again, they ask for the rings they previously gave them. The ring becomes a pivotal symbol in this play. Ring also means female vagina or 'arse.' However, close examination of the translated version of King Vajiravudh surprisingly reveals that the sexual connotation of "ring" is totally omitted.

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
PORTIA: This house, these servants, and this same myself Are yours, my lord's. I give them with this ring, Which when you part from, lose, or give away, Let it presage the ruin of your love	ปอร์เซีย: แต่บัดนี้เฝ้าและทราพยสิน หมดทั้งสิน อีกข้าไททั้งหลาย อีกทั้งตัวดิฉันนั้นก็กลาย เป็นข้าเธอผู้เป็นนายเหนือดวงใจ ดิฉันขอมอบแหวนแทนสมบัติ สารพัดที่ประนอมยอมยกให้ ถ้าเธอพรากจากแหวนนี้เมื่อใด คือสิ้นรักหักอาลัยไม่ไยดี

In Shakespearean England, the word 'ring' has a connotative meaning of vagina or male 'arse' because ring in Latin is 'ano' or 'annulus.' King Vajiravudh omitted the sexual connotation of 'ring' and translated the word as a type of jewelry.

From the above examples, it can be clearly seen that King Vajiravudh chose to omit the translation of all sexual innuendos found in *The Merchant of Venice*. He astonishingly preferred a literal translation keeping the denotative meaning of the words. If his translated version of the play is used in performance, the humorous effect of the puns and sexual innuendos, which was pervasive in Elizabethan theaters, will undoubtedly disappear. It can be concluded that King Vajiravudh did not want to translate Shakespeare's play for performance as he mentioned in his preface. His aim was to uplift Siam to a 'civilized' country rather than for performance. The strategies that he used in translating sexual puns is obviously repeated in his translation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (*Tam Jai Tan*).

4.3 King Vajiravudh's Translation of *As You Like It* (*Tam Jai Tan*)

In *Tam Jai Tan*, a translated version of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, King Vajiravudh, like in his translation of *The Merchant of Venice*, refuses to translate any sexual puns appearing in the original text.

Example 10

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
Jacques: What kind of this cock come of?	ยาคส์: ไก่ตัวนี้เป็นไก่ชนิดใด?
Duke Senior: Art thou thus boldened, man by thy distress?	เจ้า: เจ้ากล้าหาญเพราะว่าแสนยากเข็ญ หรือว่าเป็นคนพาลสันดานไพร่
Orlando: You touch my vein at first. The thorny point of bare distress had ta'en from me the show of smooth civility.	ไม่รู้จักมารยาทจึงอาจใจ มาพูดไร้กิริยา ทำคนดี? ออร์: อันคำตันของท่านนั้นแหละเหมาะ เพราะความยากสาหัส จัดเต็มที ข้าจึงไร้กิริยาทำผู้ดี

<p>Paraphrase to modern language</p> <p>Jacques: What inflamed desire has made this cock come?</p> <p>Duke Senior: Are you grown big by the pain of that prolonged erection?</p> <p>Orlando: You guess my condition straight away. The head of the penis in my visible erection has taken away from me the appearance of refined civility.</p>	
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Example 11

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
<p>Lesbianism (Act I scene ii)</p> <p>Celia: We still slept together, rose at an instant, learned, plays, eat together. And wheresoe'ver we went like Juno swans still we went coupled and inseperable. I cannot live out of her company.</p> <p>From the above passage, it can be seen that sexual connotation is obvious because Elizabethan vocabulary always contains sexual connotation for example: Rose = sexually aroused</p>	<p>เซเลีย: ยังร่วมหมอนนอนตื่นก็พร้อมกัน ทั้ง เรียน เล่น กินทั้งนั้น ไม่ห่างไกล จะไปไหนก็ไปเป็นเคียงคู่ เหมือนผูกมันขันอยู่ไม่พรางได้</p>

Played= enjoy sexual intimacies Eat together= to have sex Went or came= experienced orgasm	
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Example 12

However, King Vajiravudh refused to keep the sexual connotative meaning of those words. Instead, he insisted to use the denotative meaning as follows:

Shakespeare's language	King Vajiravudh's translation
Jacques: And then he drew a dial from his poke And, looking on it with lackluster eye, Says very wisely, "It is ten o'clock. Thus we may see," quoth he, "how the world wags. 'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine, And after one hour more 'twill be eleven. And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe, And then from hour to hour we rot and rot, And thereby hangs a tale." (Act II scene vii)	ยาคส์: แล้วมันควักนาฬิกามาจากพก ยกขึ้นมองด้วยตาอันริบหรี่ แล้วพูดปานนักปราชญ์ฉลาดดี "เวลานี้ได้สิบนาฬิกา" แล้วกล่าวต่อ "จะนี้หนอเราเห็นได้ ว่าโลกนี้กลิ้งไปเร็วนักหนา เมื่อโมงก่อนนี้เก้านาฬิกา พอเวลาล่วงไปอีกโมงเดียว ก็จะเป็นสิบเอ็ดอย่างสงสัย ค่อยล่วงไปที่ละโมงอย่าเฉลียว ทุกๆ โมงเราแก่ลงแน่เทียว บัดเดียวเดี๋ยวก็เริ่มทรุดโทรมไป ทุกๆ โมงแน่แท้อย่ากังขา ดังนั้นนาเป็นคติควรตรึงไว้"

From the above passage, sexual innuendo can be easily detected such as 'dial' which means penis or 'ripe' which means sexually ready. The word 'hour' is homophonous with 'whore', and the word 'rot' is also homophonous with 'rut' or fornicate. Moreover, the word 'tail' also refers to penis. If we look at King Vajiravudh's translation of the above passage, we can see that he again omitted the sexual connotation of each word.

Again, the sexual innuendo has been denotatively translated. The humorous effect of the sexual language has been ignored throughout the whole play. King Vajiravudh did not seem to concentrate on the humorous elements in his translated version of Shakespeare's plays.

If we use Dirk Delabastita's pun translation strategies to analyze King Vajiravudh's translation of sexual pun, it can be seen that King Vajiravudh used only 4 strategies which are 1) PUN > PUN, 2) PUN > NON-PUN, 3) PUN > ZERO and 4) the Editorial Technique. King Vajiravudh preferred to omit, euphemize or explain sexual pun in the glossary instead of translating all of them. His translation techniques possibly imply that he is not looking for humorous, witty effects of sexual puns. The performance might require the humorous effects of sexual pun. One might argue that his translation is an abuse of language since not only the puns and its aesthetic aspects are lost but also a bawdy sense. However, if his purpose of translation is not performative but educational, his translation of Shakespeare is undoubtedly beyond acceptable.

Moreover, if we use the concepts of domestication and foreignization to analyze King Vajiravudh's translation strategies, it can be seen that domestication which involves minimizing the source text foreign elements to the target language value has been scarcely used. King

Vajiravudh seems to prefer to apply foreignization in his translation because he is likely to retain the foreignness of the original language text.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the translation of Shakespeare's plays was not aiming for performance but rather for educational purposes. His pun translation techniques were used because of the cultural differences between the source language and the target language, the untranslatability of complex double entendre or their inappropriateness for the royal court. However, loan words were frequently used to explain sexual innuendoes with full explanation in the glossary. It can be concluded that the translated Shakespeare's plays by King Vajiravudh represent a significant revolution in literary studies in Thailand, chiefly influenced by western literary traditions. The objectives of his translations of Shakespeare are that Thai people should have more knowledge of western culture, philosophy and society. Thus, it must be beneficial for Thai people to read Shakespeare's works in Thai (Poopaka, 2010, p. 419-420). Shakespeare's works were not taught at Oxford or Cambridge until the middle of the nineteenth century. Shakespeare's plays were later published by Oxford and Cambridge University Press and by Arden Shakespeare in the late nineteenth century with full footnotes and glossaries. Students started to study Shakespeare's text and Shakespeare courses have become a compulsory subject for English major students. Shakespeare's works have become a field of literary study rather than for performance. Students might sometimes be required to see the play, but reading the text is mandatory. Studying Shakespeare has become a classroom-based study. Since King Vajiravudh graduated from Oxford, he might have intended to

translate Shakespeare just for reading and for literary studies but not for performance because there is no evidence that the translated versions of these three plays were ever performed in his era. The fact that the Ministry of Education has chosen King Vajiravudh's translation of *The Merchant of Venice* as a compulsory reading text for Thai students since 1923 is clear evidence of the change in attitudes toward education. It might be fair to say that translation of Shakespeare's plays is an introduction to literary studies in Thai education.

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