

## Translating Violence: Affect and Graduation Shifts in A Child Called 'It' and Its Indonesian Version

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### Article Info

#### Article history

Submission Date: 4 October 2024  
Acceptance Date: 30 January 2025

#### Keywords:

Translation; critical discourse analysis; affect; graduation

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### Abstract

This study examines the linguistic dimensions of negative affect and graduation in portrayals of violence within both the English original and its Indonesian translation of the novel *A Child Called 'It'*. Using a qualitative method with critical discourse analysis framework, this study examines how these linguistic elements transform during the translation process, affecting the depiction's emotional intensity and evaluative language. The novel, renowned for its vivid portrayal of violence against children, provides a foundation for analyzing the consequences of differing levels of emotional expression influenced by the values or norms of its intended audience in translation. This study identifies the emergence of 166 instances of negative affect in the source novel and 167 in its translation, indicating an addition of one negative affect in the translated version representing 0.6% of the overall violence associated with negative affect; eight (8) changes in graduation raise, accounting for 4.81% of the entire violence with negative affect; and 27 changes in graduation lower, constituting 16.26% of the total violence involving negative affect. Graduation raises and graduation lower are terms derived from appraisal theory, specifically within the graduation subsystem, which deals with the intensity or degree of language expressions. The findings show that the Indonesian translation largely preserves the negative affect and graduation of the source text, albeit with some observed changes in intensity and emotional effect. This study highlights the role of the translator in conveying content that is sensitive and emotionally nuanced, and it underscores the intersection between language, emotion, and the values and norms upheld by the target readers in literary translation. The act of translation is not merely linguistic but also deeply intertwined with the norms and emotional aspect of the target readers. These findings contribute to future research on how texts are adapted to new contexts without losing their essence or impact in translation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Novels are literary works that use language innovatively and artistically to express moral teachings, experiences, or fictitious storylines. Oatley (199, p. 105) stated that novels often portray complex human experiences and societal issues by simulating life in a way that resonates with readers' emotions and understanding of the world. This approach helps illuminate the depths of human experiences, including the theme of violence explored in *A Child Called 'It'*, by presenting a vivid and emotionally compelling simulation of life. The translation of this novel into Indonesian presents an opportunity to examine how linguistic aspects, such as negative affect and graduation, which provide emotional depth to the text, are managed in the translation process.

In recent years, the increased prevalence of violence, particularly domestic abuse, has been acknowledged as a major problem in the press and social media (Santosa, 2022 & Republika ID, 2023). This motivates us to understand the situations that victims of violence endure and how we might aid them. *A Child Called 'It'*, based on the actual story of Dave Pelzer, a victim of domestic abuse throughout his youth, is one novel that depicts the horrible experience of an abused victim. In his youth, Dave suffered significant maltreatment from his mother, who struggled with emotional instability and alcoholism. This novel has been translated into nearly forty languages and read by millions globally. It offers significant insights into the experiences of abuse survivors and the lasting effects of violence on children, both physically and psychologically, into adulthood.

In Indonesia, *A Child Called 'It'* was translated into Indonesian by two translators during different periods. In 2001, Danan Priatmoko carried out the very first translation, which was published by PT Gramedia Pustaka. Then, in 2022, Mohammad Sidik Nugraha carried out the second translation, which was published by Qantara. The researcher selected Danan Priatmoko's translation for this study because Gramedia Pustaka is one of the most prominent publishers in Indonesia and the fact that it is presently in its ninth edition, indicating significant distribution of this version.

Within the framework of translation theory, the process of translation encompasses more than just the transfer of meaning between languages; it also involves the transmission of sentiments and culture that are present in the source text. Translation is the process of transferring cultural values and meaning from the

source text (ST) to the target text (TT) while preserving the affective and moral essence of the ST, a task that becomes particularly challenging when dealing with emotionally charged content, where subtle nuances and cultural sensitivities play a critical role in conveying the source text's impact. Munday (2016, p. 99) stated that this pushes translators to make strategic choices to facilitate the transfer. Whereas, Baker (2011, p. 294) further asserts that literary translators frequently serve as advocates for the authors, adhering to the same ideology. Furthermore, Baker (2011) emphasizes the need for translators to understand the norms and social values of the target culture, which are essential for effective translation. This raises questions about how translators handle texts with values that may not align with the target readers. In the case of *A Child Called 'It'*, the novel not only depicts physical abuse but also emotional trauma, requiring the translator to carefully manage negative affect to maintain the emotional impact on readers.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) offers a solid analytical framework for examining the representation of power and ideology in translations. Fairclough (2010) asserts that discourse reflects and modifies social systems while legitimizing power dynamics in interpersonal relationships. In the context of translating *A Child Called 'It'*, CDA can be used to analyze how translators handle the representation of violence and negative affect and whether there are ideological or normative shifts marked by changes in the level of graduation in the translation. This study uses CDA approaches to analyze the interaction between the TT and Indonesia's social and cultural setting, particularly concerning how society views and accepts child abuse.

In addition, the appraisal theory proposed by Martin and Rose (2007, p. 26–63) offers a suitable framework for analyzing the expression of attitudes, values, and emotions in language. This theory belongs to the systemic functional linguistics framework, highlighting the analysis of interpersonal meaning in texts. The three primary dimensions addressed in appraisal theory are attitude, engagement, and graduation. The attitude component is crucial for comprehending the expression of emotions and moral judgments in this work. It encompasses affect (the expression of emotions), judgment (the assessment of character), and appreciation (the evaluation of value). Negative affect denotes the protagonist's suffering, whereas graduation corresponds to the intensity of the communicated attitude, signifying the strength or mildness of the emotion articulated. This theory is very useful in text

analysis to reveal how writers or speakers express their attitudes and build relationships with target readers. Utilizing this approach, the research may discern variations in emotional expression and the degree of violence between the ST and TT, thus offering insights into translation choices and their influence on the tone of the target language.

Previous studies have explored various aspects of literary translation. Riyono, Emzir, and Lustyiantie (2018) revealed lexical manipulation by translators using Fairclough's approach, but their studies did not consider the basis for data selection and tended to focus on technical translation procedures. Pratamasari (2019), who studied equivalence in appraisal aspects, such as attitude, graduation, and engagement in the bilingual children's book "Anger" (*Kemarahan*), found high consistency in translation, but Pratamasari's analysis was still limited to translation accuracy without investigating deeper discourse meanings. On the other hand, Alfetty & Dewi (2022) and Prameswari & Jaya (2022) employed corpus-based CDA to examine shifts in the subsystems of attitude and graduation; however, their research was confined to textual comparisons, lacking an in-depth exploration of the meanings embedded within the discourse.

While previous studies offer important insights, there is still a research gap in analyzing how the translation of phrases, clauses, or sentences containing negative affect and graduation affect readers' interpretation of the emotional expression of the author and translator. Therefore, this study focuses on a comprehensive analysis of the influence of negative affect and graduation on readers' understanding and reactions to acts of violence, using discourse analysis methodology. Broadly, this study aims to compare the linguistic aspects of the English source novel and its Indonesian translation, particularly regarding changes in graduation between the source text and the target text. Considering that acts of violence are often driven by the perpetrator's emotional state (Wismabrata, 2022; Dwinanda, 2023), this study focuses on negative affect, referring to the negative emotions or feelings generated or displayed through the text or discourse, and graduation in acts of violence.

Another intriguing issue to analyze is the news reports indicating that some parties have called for *A Child Called 'It'* to be banned or restricted, arguing that it depicts violence too explicitly (Mass Live, 2009; Marshall University, 2013). The researcher believes that this issue is very relevant to the current situation, where many people hold the belief, "If you didn't see it, it never happened," meaning an

event did not occur unless someone witnesses it directly or without concrete evidence. From this understanding, the researcher contends that the desire to ban or restrict a work can deprive the author of a platform to share their ideas and experiences.

Based on the research background presented, the main issue addressed in this study is how the translator's values or norms are reflected through changes in negative affect and graduation in acts of violence in the translation of *A Child Called 'It'*. Meanwhile, the research problems for this study are to identify the negative affect and graduation found in the acts of violence in the novel *A Child Called 'It'* and its translation; to explain on how graduation in *A Child Called 'It'* change in its translation; and to argue on how the changes in the level of graduation in the translation of *A Child Called 'It'* reflect the translator's values or norms. Thus, this study aims to examine the translator's values or norms, as reflected through changes in negative affect and graduation in acts of violence in the translation of *A Child Called 'It'*. To answer these research questions, this study employs critical discourse analysis methodology, focusing on the specific word choices and sentence structures in the translation to uncover how linguistic changes affect the depiction of violence in *A Child Called 'It'* and its translation.

## **METHOD**

The sources of data used in this study are sentences and clauses from the novel *A Child Called 'It'* (ST) and its Indonesian translation by Danan Priatmoko (TT). To filter the utilized data, the researcher employed the Sketch Engine software. Sketch Engine's unique ability to generate word sketches provides summary of a word's grammatical and collocational behavior. This feature is highly relevant for this study, as it allows efficient identification of key associations. This study's data set consists of words and phrases linked to violence. According to Krug, E.G., et. al. (2002, p. 5) violence is the deliberate application of physical force or power, either threatened or actual, against oneself, another individual, or a collective, with a significant probability of resulting in injury, death, psychological damage, developmental impairment, or deprivation. Incorporating power with physical force expands the definition to encompass threats, intimidation, neglect, acts of omission, as well as physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, suicide, and other forms of self-

harm. Based on this definition, the researcher used the theory of transitivity to determine the keywords when using the Sketch Engine software.

This study utilizes a qualitative methodology proposed by Bogdan and Taylor, as cited by Moleong (2007, p. 3), qualitative studies provide descriptive information in both textual and spoken formats, alongside visible human behaviors. Dornyei (2007, p. 24) states that qualitative methodology includes data collection techniques that provide verbal data, subsequently evaluated using non-statistical methods. In qualitative analysis, the researcher served as the primary instrument for acquiring primary data. Specifically for this study, the researcher's ability to sift through primary data using translation theory underpins their central role.

Another instrument used in this study is the Sketch Engine software. This corpus tool was used to process the data sources, which consist of the ST and TT in the form of Excel files. These files were uploaded to Sketch Engine, and the researcher used the word sketch feature to collect the data. To utilize the word sketch feature, the researcher had to define keywords to filter the data. In determining these keywords, the researcher employed Halliday's transitivity theory. Halliday (2014, p. 332–333) states that transitivity describes how actions or events are realized in sentences. Transitivity comprises three elements that form an action: process, participants, and circumstances. To extract action-related data using the corpus tool, the researcher selected participants as keywords, consisting of actor and goal. The research data focuses on the forms of actions and the actors involved, as reflected in the verbs, so the researcher used actors engaged in violent actions in the novel *A Child Called 'It'* as the keyword. The keyword was picked based on the novel's summary, which implies that the perpetrator of the abuse is "mother." Consequently, the researcher searched for the keyword "mother" using the word sketch tool in Sketch Engine.

After this step, using the concordance feature of the word sketch results, the researcher also extracted sentences and clauses that have the subject "she" as data. Sentences or clauses with "she" as the subject were chosen as data if they came one to two lines before or after lines with "mother" as the subject, indicating that "she" referred to the mother. The researcher detected the affect in the ST by analyzing the subsequent phrases. Afterwards, the researcher employed the parallel concordance function to identify phrases or clauses containing negative affect and its corresponding translation. The researcher subsequently assessed and categorized any changes in the graduation of phrases or words with negative affect.

In the final stage, the researcher conducted interviews with three respondents who enjoy reading both English and Indonesian novels and are proficient in English, from various educational and professional backgrounds, to determine whether there was a change in the level of graduation in the data and whether this change affected the depiction of violence in the novel *A Child Called 'It'* and its translation. Before starting the interviews, the researcher provided the following synopsis of *A Child Called 'It'*:

*A Child Called 'It'*, written by Dave Pelzer, is a heartbreaking true story about a young boy's struggle to survive one of the most brutal cases of child abuse in modern American history. Dave's journey starts with a happy childhood that quickly turns into a nightmare as his mother starts treating him as a servant instead of a son. Dave faced extreme physical and psychological abuse daily: beatings, burns, and forced consumption of rotting food. Through remarkable strength and endurance, Dave exhibited an unwavering determination despite confronting grave obstacles. The story recounts both the brutality Dave suffered and his courageous quest for liberation.

The researcher then presented five examples of sentences featuring affect and graduation that clearly describe violence vulgarly and posed a series of questions to the respondents. These questions explored which clauses or sentences from the ST and TT elicited stronger emotional reactions or depicted more extreme violence, the possible reasons behind the translator's decision to soften or intensify the portrayal of violence in the novel, and whether such modifications were influenced by the values or norms of Indonesian society. The responses were analyzed to determine whether personal perspectives on Indonesia's social context influenced the translation of *A Child Called 'It'*.

## RESULT

Data analysis utilizing Sketch Engine indicated that the word "mother" occurred as a noun 407 times, with 261 occurrences in which "mother" functioned as the subject of a verb. To enhance data analysis, the researcher reviewed data represented by lines outlined with the "</s><s>" sign. Additionally, a manual search of lines located 1–2 lines before and after those placing "mother" as the subject revealed that the lines positioning "she" as the subject of a verb appeared 53 times. After eliminating line duplications, the total usable data for analysis amounted to 241 lines. The following image illustrates data determination through word sketch and concordance in Sketch Engine.

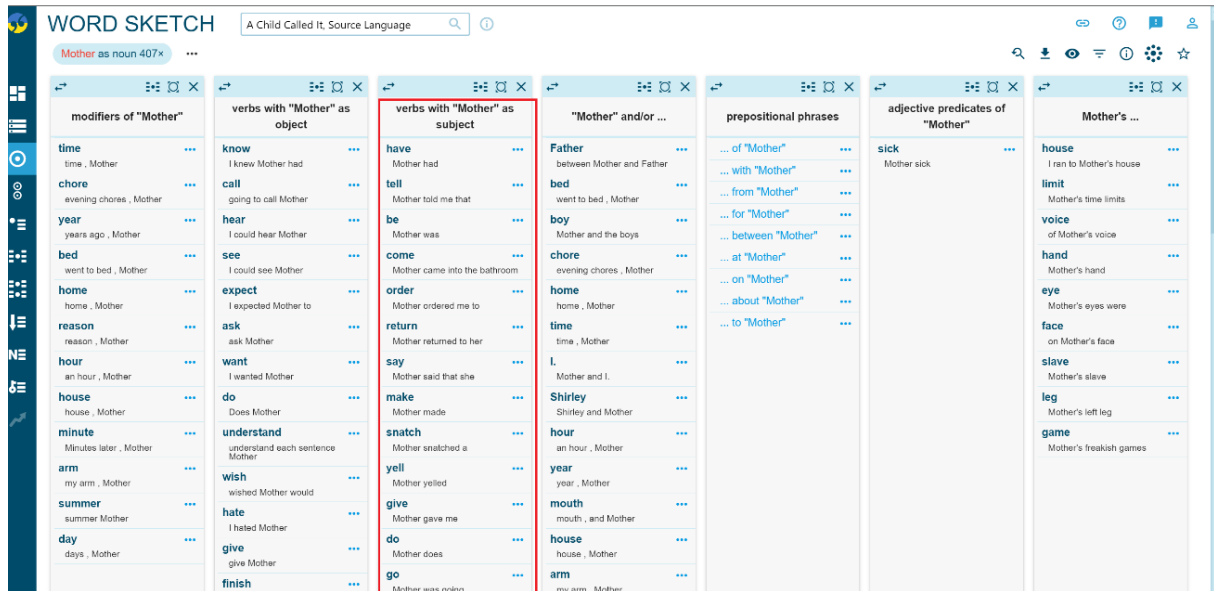


Figure 1. Word Sketch Findings with the Keyword "Mother"

Figure 1 illustrates that upon examination using the word sketch feature, the keyword "mother" appears as a noun 407 times. It displays modifiers accompanying the noun "mother," verbs that position "mother" as an object, verbs that position "mother" as a subject, prepositions associated with "mother," adjectives accompanying "mother," and words indicating possession of "mother."

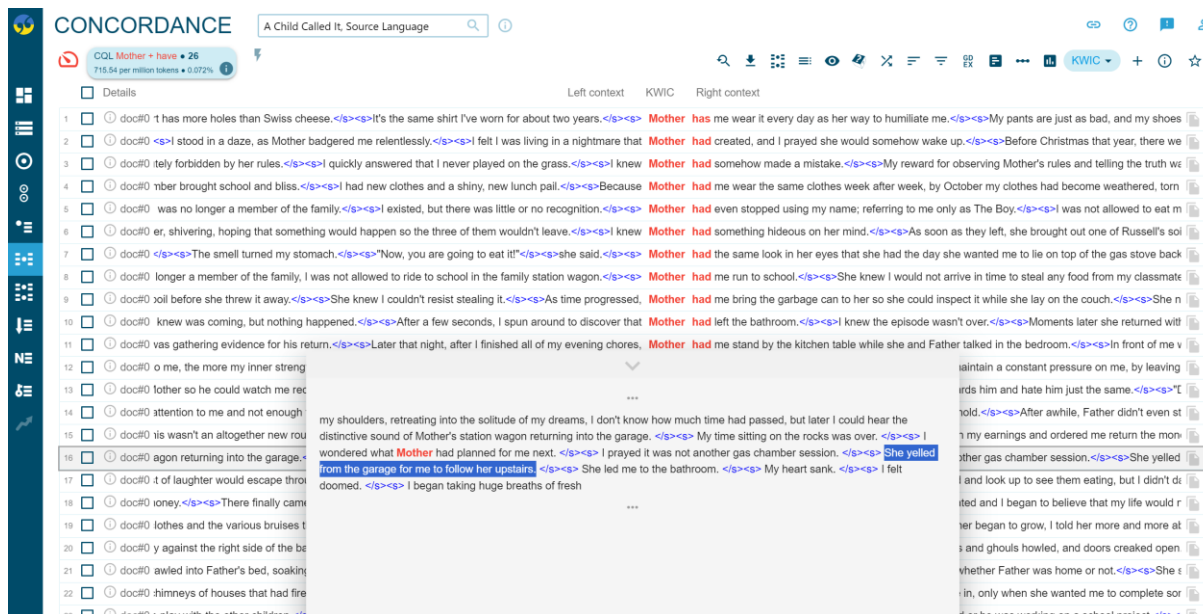


Figure 2. Findings of lines with the subject "she"

Figure 2 shows the concordance feature's data filtering capabilities, which are designed to identify clauses or sentences that employ the pronoun "she" as a substitute for "mother."

## Negative Affect and Graduation in Acts of Violence

Further analysis revealed that not all data contained affect. Among the collected data, 138 lines (including sentences and phrases) in the ST were identified



as containing actions that might lead to violence, comprising 166 instances of negative affect and eight instances of positive affect. Further analysis of the ST data, compared with the TT data, revealed changes in affect and particularly in graduation, specifically regarding graduation force. During the data analysis process, negative affect was coded as (affect-), positive affect as (affect+), consistent graduation as (grad=), raised graduation as (grad raise), and lowered graduation as (grad lower). Samples of analyses conducted on the ST data are shown below.

Table 1. Examples of affect analysis in the ST

No.	ST	Affect (+/-)
1.	<b>Mother <u>has</u> me wear it</b> (affect) every day as her way to humiliate me.	Affect-
2.	I felt I was living in a nightmare that <b>Mother had</b> created, and I prayed she would somehow wake up.	-
3.	I knew <b>Mother had</b> somehow made a mistake.	-
4.	Because <b>Mother <u>had</u> me wear</b> (affect) the same clothes week after week, by October my clothes had become weathered, torn and smelly.	Affect-
5.	<b>Mother <u>had</u> even stopped using my name</b> (affect); referring to me only as The Boy.	Affect-

Based on the analysis above, 166 instances of negative affect and 8 (eight) positive affects (a total of 174 affect) were found in ST. The aim of this study is to analyze the shifts in negative affect and graduation within the violent actions shown in the ST and TT. Thus, only negative affect is employed as the final data. Positive affect was excluded from further analysis because, as stated by Martin & Rose (2007), affect is utilized to convey feelings or emotions, while this study concentrates on the negative emotions exhibited in the violent actions perpetrated by the mother. Back translation (BT) will be incorporated into all subsequent data analysis. Back translation (BT) is a technique employed to assess the precision and quality of a translation by reverting the TT into the source language. The example of the analysis performed on the data is shown in the following table.

Table 2. Examples of analysis of changes in affect and graduation

No	ST	TT	BT	Note
1.	When an idea flashed in my brain; I knew why Mother <u>had followed every step</u> (affect-) I took.	<i>Tiba-tiba terbersit sesuatu di otakku: aku tahu kenapa tadi Ibu <u>mengikutiku terus</u> (affect-) (grad=).</i>	Suddenly something occurred to me: I know why Mom <u>was following me around</u> (affect-) (grad=).	Affect and graduation remain unchanged.

2.	I knew Mother <u>had brainwashed</u> (affect-) him, but I had begun to turn cold towards him and hate him just the same.	<i>Aku tahu Ibu sudah menanamkan kesan _____ buruk mengenai diriku di kepalanya</i> (affect-) (grad lower). Bagaimanapun, aku mulai tidak menganggap dirinya sekaligus membencinya.	I knew Mom <u>had planted a bad impression of me</u> in his head (affect-) (grad lower). In any case, I began to disregard and hate him at the same time.	1. Affect remains unchanged. 2. Graduation lowers due to "brainwash" being perceived as more extreme than "instilling a bad impression." or 'menanamkan kesan buruk'.
3.	Mother now <u>had complete control over everybody</u> (affect-) in the household.	<i>Maka, Ibu mengendalikan semua orang</i> (affect-) (grad=) yang ada di rumah itu.	So, Mom <u>controlled everyone</u> (affect-) (grad=) in the house.	Affect and graduation remain unchanged.
4.	During the Easter vacation from school the spring before, Mother <u>had sent me out</u> (affect-) to mow.	<i>Pada suatu hari, setelah aku menyelesaikan semua tugasku di pagi hari, ia menyuruhku bekerja</i> (affect-) (grad raise) memotong rumput di rumah tetangga.	One day, after I had finished all my chores in the morning, she <u>made me work</u> (affect-) (grad raise) by mowing the lawn at a neighbor's house.	1. Affect remains unchanged. 2. Graduation raises because "sent me out" can also be translated as "meminta" (request) instead of "menyuruh" (command), which carries a more coercive connotation.
5.	There finally came a time when it didn't become any good for Father to be home because Mother <u>had forbidden</u> (affect-) him to see me.	<i>Akhirnya tiba juga saat ketika keberadaan Ayah di rumah pun tidak mampu meringankan penderitaanku, sebab Ibu melarangnya</i> (affect-) (grad=) bertemu denganku.	Finally, there came a time when even my father's presence at home could not alleviate my suffering, because my mother <u>forbade him</u> (affect-) (grad=) to see me.	Affect and graduation remain unchanged.

Based on the analysis above, 166 instances of negative affect and graduation were identified in the ST, while 167 instances of negative affect and graduation were found in the TT. The data reveal an increase in the number of negative affect in the ST. This increase is evident from the following analysis.

ST: Mother was out cruising in her car, and she pulled over and caught (affect-) me with the bag.

TT: *Aku berpapasan dengan Ibu yang sedang bermobil. Ibu berhenti, bergegas keluar (affect-) dari mobil, dan menangkapku (affect-) bersama kantong coklat tadi.*

BT: I crossed paths with Mother, who was driving. She stopped, rushed out (affect-) of the car, and caught me (affect-) with the brown bag.

From the ST and TT above, it can be observed that the translator added a negative emotional reaction for the character 'Mother' by including the word "bergegas" (rushed) in the TT. This addition of negative affect appears only once in the analyzed data.

### Graduation Changes

Based on further analysis, the researcher found that there are changes in graduation focus/force within negative affect regarding acts of violence from the ST to the TT. The author identified 8 (eight) instances of graduation raise and 27 instances of graduation lower from the ST to the TT, along with 131 identical graduations between ST and TT. Below are the samples of findings from the analysis of graduation changes in negative affect concerning acts of violence present in the TT, which can be explained as follows.

#### 1. Graduation raise

There are 8 (eight) instances of graduation raise changes in the TT. These changes can be observed in the following example.

ST: She grabbed (affect-) me by the back of the neck and led (affect-) me to the kitchen.

TT: Ia mencekal (affect-) kerah belakang bajuku, lalu menyeretku (affect-) (grad raise) ke dapur.

BT: She grabbed (affect-) the back collar of my shirt, then dragged me (affect-) (grad raise) to the kitchen.

The negative affect demonstrated in the ST is represented by "grabbed" and "led," which are translated as "mencekal" and "menyeret" in the TT. The translation of "led" as "menyeret" suggests that the translator has raised the intensity of the act to make the target readers experience the event with comparable intensity to the prior event, which was conveyed with a higher level of graduation. This modification enables the target readers to perceive a consistent emotional resonance across the whole phrase. Another instance is shown as follows.

ST: Although Mother never made me swallow (affect-) ammonia again, she did make me drink (affect-) spoonful of Clorox a few times.

TT: *Sekalipun Ibu tidak lagi mencekoki aku (affect-) (grad raise) ammonia, beberapa kali ia mencekoki aku (affect-) (grad raise) Clorox–semacam cairan penghancur kotoran.*

BT: Although Mom no longer force-fed me (affect-) (grad raise) ammonia, she force-fed me (affect-) (grad raise) Clorox-a type of liquid that destroys waste. From the example above, the negative affect experienced changes because the translator translated "made me swallow" and "make me drink" as "*mencekoki*," or "forced-fed," which conveys a higher degree of coercion.

## 2. Graduation lower

A shift in graduation lower occurred 25 times in the TT. The shift can be observed in the following example.

### Analysis 1

ST: She smeared (affect-) the diaper on my face.

TT: Ibu mengusapkan (affect-) (grad lower) *popok kotor itu ke wajahku*.

BT: Mother rubbed (affect-) (grad lower) the dirty diaper on my face.

From the case above, it is shown that the translator's choice to translate "smeared" into "mengusapkan" (rub) led to the decreasing intensity (lower graduation) of the TT. The term "mengusapkan" or "rub" has a softer connotation than "smeared," which suggests the act of overspreading with something unctuous, viscous, or adhesive.

Besides this example of graduation shift, the samples where the graduation remains unchanged are also shown below.

### Analysis 2

ST: "Clean the shit off your face (affect-)," she bellowed (affect-) as she wiped the brown stains from the countertop.

TT: "Bersihkan wajahmu (affect-) (grad lower)," Ibu memerintah dengan suara pelan (affect-) (grad lower), *sambil mengelap kotoran berwarna coklat dari meja*.

BT: "Clean your face (affect-) (grad lower)," Mother ordered in a low voice (affect-) (grad lower), while wiping the brown stain off the table.

Two lower graduations are shown in the analysis above. For example, "memerintah dengan suara pelan" means "ordered in a low voice," which is quite different from the term "bellowed," which means "to shout loudly in a deep voice." The translator uses the word "pelan" (softly) to lower the graduation and greatly minimize the remark. The second distinction is the translation of the offensive phrase "Clean the shit off your face" into the significantly gentler "bersihkan wajahmu" (Clean your face).

### Analysis 3

ST: Mother would simply grab (affect-) me and smash (affect-) my face against the mirror, smearing my tear-streaked face on the slick, reflective glass.

TT: *Mulanya, wajahku ditempelkan (affect-) (grad lower) dan ditekan (affect-) (grad lower) pada kaca cermin, lalu wajahku yang basah oleh air mata digesek-gesekkan pada permukaan kaca cermin yang licin dan memantulkan wajahku.*

BT: At first, my face was pressed (affect-) (grad lower) and pushed (affect-) (grad lower) against the mirror, then my tear-streaked face was rubbed against the slick surface of the mirror that mirrored my face.

The translations of "grab" and "smash" into "ditekan" (pushed) and "ditempelkan" (pressed) shown in the analysis above, respectively show two instances of lowered graduation, as the terms convey less forceful actions than the ST.

### Graduation unchanged

The researcher observes that in the majority of instances (131 occurrences), there were no shifts in the graduation occurring in the TT, as seen in the following examples.

#### Example 1

ST: On her knees, Mother was hastily applying (affect-) a thick wad of gauze to a place on my stomach where dark red blood pumped out. TT: *Sambil berlutut, Ibu tampak tergesa-gesa menempelkan (affect-) (grad=) kain perban kasa tebal pada suatu tempat di bagian perutku yang mengeluarkan darah berwarna merah gelap.*

BT: While kneeling down, Mother appears to be hurriedly applying (affect-) (grad=) a thick gauze to a part of my stomach that was oozing dark red blood.

#### Example 2

ST: Mother then ordered me (affect-) to climb up onto the stove and lie on the flames so she could watch me burn (affect-).

TT: *Kemudian Ibu menyuruhku (affect-) (grad=) naik ke atas kompor dan berbaring di atas api sehingga ia bisa menyaksikan tubuhku terbakar (affect-) (grad=).*

BT: Then Mother ordered me to (affect-) (grad=) climb onto the stove and lie down on the fire so she could watch my body burn (affect-) (grad=).

#### Example 3

ST: As I looked at her, Mother snatched (affect-) a carving knife from the countertop and screamed (affect-), "If you don't finish on time, I'm going to kill you!" (affect-)

TT: *Waktu kulihat, Ibu baru saja menyambar (affect-) (grad=) pisau daging dari rak dan berteriak (affect-) (grad=), "Kalau kau tidak menyelesaikan tugas-tugasmu tepat waktu, kubunuh kau!" (affect-) (grad=).*

BT: As I looked, Mother had just snatched (affect-) (grad=) a butcher knife from the shelf and screamed (affect-) (grad=), "If you don't finish your assignments on time, I'll kill you!" (affect-) (grad=).

In the three examples above, there is no change in the level of graduation, as indicated by the code (grad=).

### The Role of Graduation in the Translation of Acts of Violence

Based on the analysis conducted by the researcher, it appears that the manipulation of graduation, specifically through changes in force, can either weaken or intensify the negative emotional effect of the perpetrator (Mother). By

altering graduation, the violent acts committed by the mother in the ST can appear less severe or explicit, or, conversely, more severe and explicit in the TT. This finding is evident in the following analysis samples.

#### Analysis 1

ST: "Tell her that I starve you (affect-) and beat you like a dog (affect-)," Mother snickered (affect-), trying to get the lady to laugh too.

TT: "*Katakan padanya aku tidak memberimu makan (affect-) (grad lower) dan memukulimu seperti anjing (affect-) (grad=)," kata Ibu dengan suara pelan (affect-) (grad lower), dan dengan sikapnya itu Ibu juga berharap wanita itu ikut tertawa.*

BT: Tell her I don't feed you (affect-) (grad lower) and beat you like a dog (affect-) (grad=)," said Mother in a low voice (affect-) (grad lower), and with her action Mother also hoped that the woman would laugh too.

In the example above, the negative affect of "starve" and "snickered" in the ST were translated by the translator into "*tidak memberimu makan*" (do not feed you) and "*kata Ibu dengan suara pelan*" (said Mother in a low voice), respectively. This process indicates a reduction in the intensity of the actions, resulting in the emotional weight of the terms "starve" and "snickered" being less effectively communicated in the TT, so rendering the violent act less severe in the translation.

#### Analysis 2

ST: Mother would simply grab (affect-) me and smash (affect-) my face against the mirror, smearing my tearstreaked face on the slick, reflective glass.

TT: "*Mulanya, wajahku ditempelkan (affect-) (grad lower) dan ditekan (affect-) (grad lower) pada kaca cermin, lalu wajahku yang basah oleh air mata digesek-gesekkan pada permukaan kaca cermin yang licin dan memantulkan wajahku.*

BT: At first, my face was pressed (affect-) (grad lower) and pushed (affect-) (grad lower) against the mirror, then my tear-streaked face was rubbed against the slick surface of the mirror that mirrored my face.

The terms "grab" and "smash," both signifying aggressive and powerful physical actions, are translated as "*ditempelkan*" (pressed) and "*ditekan*" (pushed). These translations indicate a decrease in the severity or hostility of the actions that indicate lower graduation. The phrases "pressed" and "pushed" imply more controlled and less severe actions, creating a notable contrast with the intensity of violence depicted in the ST.

#### Analysis 3

ST: Father stood lifeless as Mother fed me (affect-) another dose of ammonia.

TT: "*Ayah berdiri saja, tak berdaya, ketika Ibu mencekoki aku (affect-) (grad raise) lagi dengan amonia.*

BT: Father stood by, helplessly, as Mother forced-fed me (affect-) (grad raise) again with ammonia.

As a result of the translator's choice to translate "fed" as "mencekoki" (force-fed), which has a stronger intensity of force, the violent act represented in the TT seems to be more severe. This is shown by the third analysis, which indicates an increase in graduation level.

### **The Reflection of Norms or Values Manifested in Graduation Shifts**

The translator's norms and values are evident in the shifts of the graduation level in the Indonesian edition of the novel *A Child Called 'It'*, especially with the depiction of violence in the TT. Graduation, based on the appraisal theory, refers to the degree or intensity of meaning, both in terms of focus and force. There are a lot of graphic and aggressive depictions of Mother's violent acts in the ST. However, this aggressiveness is sometimes toned down in the Indonesian version. This shows how the translator adjusted to the social and cultural norms and values in Indonesia.

In several instances, the reduction in graduation is evident when violent acts in the ST are translated into the TT. For example, the sentence in the ST, "Tell her that I starve you and beat you like a dog," is translated as "*Katakan padanya aku tidak memberimu makan dan memukulimu seperti anjing.*" This example illustrates a notable reduction of the severity of the word "starve," which carries deep connotations of both physical and psychological abuse. The translator translates it with the more neutral word "*tidak memberimu makan,*" or "do not feed you," which, although still implying violence, does not convey the same intensity as the word "starve." Moreover, the word "snickered," which in the source language implies mockery, has been translated as "*kata dengan suara pelan,*" or "said in a low voice," which sounds far gentler. Both shifts are evidence of a decrease in graduation or a lessening of emotional intensity, which in turn lessens the harmful impacts of the violence that was committed by Mother. The reduction of graduation in this context makes the violence look less severe than in the ST, which may cause the target readers to not feel the same level of brutality that is communicated in the ST.

A similar shift happens in situations depicting physical violence. In the ST, the sentence "Mother would simply grab me and smash my face against the mirror." is translated into "*wajahku ditempelkan dan ditekan pada kaca cermin.*" The lowering of the intensity in this sentence is remarkable. The word "grab" in the ST connotes a quick and rough act of violence, while "smash" depicts more brutal and direct

physical violence. However, in the TT, the translator chooses the words “*ditempelkan*” (pressed) and “*ditekan*” (pushed), which give an impression of actions that are neutral and more controlled. The lowering of graduation not only changes how violence is perceived by the target readers but also reflects the norm of politeness in Indonesian culture, which avoids explicit portrayals of violence. The words “*ditempelkan*” and “*ditekan*” do not carry the same intensity as “grab” and “smash,” making the depicted violence feel less severe in the TT.

However, the degree of graduation in the TT did not decrease for every single violent act that occurred. There are some instances in which the translation enhances the severity of the violence. The sentence “Mother fed me another dose of ammonia,” for instance, is translated into “*Ibu mencekoki aku lagi dengan amonia.*” In the ST, the word “fed” carries a more neutral connotation, although the action remains a form of violence. Yet, in the translation, the translator uses the word “*mencekoki*” (forced fed), which has harsher connotation. This finding indicates that the translator sometimes chooses to raise the graduation of violence, perhaps to convey a stronger emotional impact on the reader, although generally, they tend to reduce the intensity of violence.

According to the three respondents of this study, it is noticeable that the translator generally prefers to lower the severity of violence described in the TT. The first respondent noticed a shift in the intensity from the term “smeared” in the ST, perceived as crude action, to the term “*mengusapkan*” (rub) in the TT, which appeared gentler. The second respondent stated that the expression “*mengusapkan popok kotor*” is more coherent and acceptable for the target readers. It was also noted by the third respondent that the choice of words made the expression less aggressive than the source language. Moreover, the three respondents agreed that the prevalent norms and values in Indonesian society contribute to this lowering of the intensity. The first respondent revealed that Indonesian society tends to consider it taboo to describe violence in detail. The second respondent emphasized that the softening of actions reflects the desires of Indonesian readers, who are more comfortable with less extreme descriptions of violence, and it also avoids misunderstandings in a cultural context. The third respondent also emphasized that the softening in translation may be influenced by social norms in Indonesia that avoid explicit representations of violence.



The respondents stated that softening violence in translation may be done to adjust the text for Indonesian readers, who are more comfortable with language that is not overly vulgar. For instance, the word "shit" in the ST, translated as "kotoran" in the TT, shows an avoidance of vulgar words considered inappropriate in Indonesian culture. The respondents gave different opinions regarding the possible reasons for softening the translation. The first respondent indicated that the translator may have felt uncomfortable explicitly conveying violence, especially in the context of a mother's abusive behavior towards her child. The second respondent stated that in the context of Indonesian culture, the usage of vulgar words such as "shit" is regarded as extremely inappropriate and unsuited for the target readers. As a result, translators usually opt for a word that is more subtle. The third respondent noticed that the speaker's diction was not always consistent. For example, the phrase "*memerintah dengan suara pelan*" (ordered in a low voice) was used in the TT but not "*berteriak*" (to yell or scream), which shows that the speaker's emotions were less intense in the TT.

The graduation's level shifts in the translation of the novel *A Child Called 'It'* clearly illustrate the norms and values prevalent in Indonesia. The translator's decision to lower the intensity level of vulgar language in the TT reflects his commitment to respecting and conforming to societal ideals that oppose blatant depictions of violence. However, when it is deemed necessary to convey the ST's message, the translator may choose to enhance the emotional intensity of violence, as indicated by the irregular increase in graduation. The translator's decisions to alter the degree of graduation in the TT extend beyond technical considerations; they are also rooted in a deep understanding of the cultural values and social norms that influence the perception and interpretation of violence by Indonesian readers of the TT.

## DISCUSSION

The data analysis indicates that the translation of the novel *A Child Called 'It'* generally preserves the negative affect present in the ST. Nonetheless, numerous changes in graduation have been recognized. The phrase "Mother starved me" translates to "*Ibu tidak memberiku makan*," signifying a decline in graduation level. This example highlights a significant softening of the graduation level of the word "starve," which is deeply associated with both physical and psychological abuse. The translator renders it with the more neutral phrase "*tidak memberiku makan*," or "do

not feed me." While this still suggests an act of violence, it does not carry the same intensity as the term "starve." The reduction of graduation level impacts the intensity of emotions felt by the reader. From the analysis, it was found that there are 166 instances of negative affect in the ST and 167 in the TT, showing that the affect is generally maintained, but with 35 occurrences of graduation change. The changes that were discovered in the TT are comprised of a total of eight (8) instances of raised graduation levels and 27 instances of lowered graduation levels. Based on the data, there is a pattern in the translation in which the intensity of violence is reduced through the translator's word choices, likely to conform to the social norms of the target readers. The changes may alter the readers' perception of the characters, and the intensity of the violence depicted in the TT.

To grasp how changes in graduation affect how readers perceive violence levels in the translated text, interviews were carried out with three individuals who are proficient in English and come from varied educational backgrounds. The respondents generally believed that the translation frequently minimized the depictions of violence. This indicates a tendency to lower graduation in the TT, motivated by attempts to align the translation with the prevailing norms and values of Indonesian society. The term "smeared" in the source text translates to "*mengusapkan*" (rub) in the TT, indicating a reduction in the depicted level of violence. According to the respondents, the translator probably made these changes to avoid misunderstandings and to align the TT with the values and norms of the target readers. The respondents commented that overly vulgar or harsh language may be seen as inappropriate within the Indonesian cultural context; hence, the TT is typically less harsh than the ST.

According to the respondents, adjustments in the level of graduation in the translation closely relate to the prevailing norms and values. For example, in the context of Indonesian society, depictions of excessive violence or harsh language can be seen as taboo or inappropriate. The respondents acknowledged it as a factor influencing the translator's selection of vocabulary that reduces the severity of violent actions. However, the respondents indicated that the intensity may decrease owing to the absence of similarly harsh or profane vocabulary in the target language.

Within the framework of appraisal theory, affect and graduation are critical components for assessing attitudes and emotions in text. Changes in graduation,

particularly, demonstrate how translators assess emotions in the ST and adjust to the emotional and cultural expectations of the target readers. In his overview of Critical Discourse Analysis, Van Dijk (2015, p. 467) identifies eight core aspects: (1) CDA focuses on societal issues; (2) it views power dynamics as being expressed through discourse; (3) discourse influences societal and cultural constructs; (4) it reflects ideologically motivated actions; (5) discourse is tied to historical contexts; (6) it connects text with societal contexts; (7) discourse analysis involves interpretation and explanation; and (8) it regards discourse as a social practice. The graduation changes occurring in the translation of *A Child Called 'It'* can be seen as the translator's effort to bridge the relationship between text and society. By choosing specific words and sentence structures, the translator connects the text with societal contexts and shapes how violence is perceived by the target readers.

Based on the preceding discussion, it is clear that translating *A Child Called 'It'* into Indonesian requires not just linguistic transfer but also cultural adaptation to represent the norms and values of the target readers. The translator must find a balance between emotional accuracy and social acceptance, which ultimately influences how the text is perceived and comprehended by the target readers. In this situation, the translator acts as an essential bridge between the text and the readers, ensuring the social acceptability of the novel's content.

## CONCLUSION

This study identifies the emergence of 166 instances of negative affect in the novel *A Child Called 'It'* and 167 in its translation by Danan Priatmoko, indicating an addition of one negative affect in the translated version, or 0.6% of the total instances of violence containing negative affect. Additionally, out of all the violent acts containing negative affect, eight (8) occurrences of graduation raise accounted for 4.81% and 27 cases of graduation lower for 16.26%. Despite changes in negative affect and graduation in the TT, these findings indicate that the translator intended to keep the same level of explicitness of violent acts, although some changes in negative affect and graduation occurred in the TT. This may be due to the translator sharing a similar perspective with the original author, who intends for the target audience to empathize with the survivor's feelings when experiencing violence, or the translator adhering to client requests.

Moreover, from the analysis examples, it appears that the translator has occasionally attempted to raise the graduation to enhance the emotional effect of the actor (mother). These changes might have resulted from the translator's inability to find a word in the target language that has the same meaning, or it might have been his deliberate effort to better resonate with the target readers. Moreover, interviews with three respondents indicated that the probable rationale for the translator's modification of graduation is to reflect the norms and values of Indonesian culture. However, the interviews also revealed that the translator might not have found an Indonesian word with a comparable level of harshness to the ST.

The results of this study align with those of Riyono et al. (2018), emphasizing the significance of cultural and ideological sensitivity in translation. This study presents a perspective that is mostly overlooked in Riyono's research, examining how changes in emotional expression mirror cultural norms and values. Although both studies employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), each focuses on distinct aspects of how translation influences the target reader's perception of texts addressing sensitive topics. Unlike Pratamasari (2019), who found consistent emotional translation in a children's book, this study demonstrates that translations in novels addressing sensitive issues can differ significantly, with translators either reducing or intensifying emotions to conform to the target culture. This study, following Alfetty and Dewi (2022), emphasizes the modification of emotional tone, especially in the translation of negative emotions and violent depictions, to align with the sensitivities of the target readers. In contrast to non-violent content, portrayals of violence are approached with greater caution, indicating a cautious approach to translating sensitive subjects. This study, in line with Parameswari and Jaya (2022), emphasizes the role of translators as intercultural and emotional agents, maintaining cultural suitability. This study illustrates translations as a process that modifies emotional and cultural meaning, showing the complex relation between language, emotion, and culture in literary translation.

These findings contribute significantly to the field of translation studies by illuminating the nuanced role of social and cultural norms in shaping translations, especially of emotionally charged and sensitive content like violence. They provide evidence of how translators negotiate between maintaining the source text's emotional impact or adapting it to the target reader's cultural expectations. This study also extends existing theories in translation by applying critical discourse

analysis and appraisal theory to examine shifts in negative affect and graduation, revealing how emotional intensity is either preserved, raised, or lowered during translation. This contributes to broader discussions on the socio-cultural dynamics influencing literary translation.

Despite revealing significant shifts in negative affect and graduation in the translation of violent actions, this study has limitations that may affect the scope and applicability of its findings. These limitations include several aspects. First, the limited number of respondents may affect the general representation of how Indonesian readers respond to the translation. Future research should include a larger, more diverse participant pool to validate the findings. Second, the study focuses solely on one translation of the novel *A Child Called 'It'* by Danan Priatmoko. Concentrating on one translation of *A Child Called 'It'* may limit the generalizability of the results. Comparative analyses of different translations could reveal broader patterns and variations. Third, while this study primarily focuses on linguistic and cultural factors, future research could integrate insights from sociology, psychology, and religious studies to explore the influence of broader societal dynamics on translation practices. Fourth, the linguistic approach is limited to critical discourse analysis and appraisal theory. Finally, some translation decisions may have been influenced by vocabulary limitations or the translator's norms, which may not always represent the best choices for accurately depicting violence in the target language. The impact of this limitation warrants further investigation, potentially through corpus-based approaches to identify equivalent terms in target languages. Therefore, future studies should expand the scope by involving more translation versions, increasing the number of respondents, and using interdisciplinary approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

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