

## A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH-VIETNAMESE TRANSLATION OF THE NARRATIVE *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* VIA THE APPRAISAL THEORY

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**Abstract.** It has been noted that there are certain discrepancies in the Vietnamese translation of English narratives particularly in terms of the linguistic expressions, aside from the translation's accuracy. This paper aims at investigating the Vietnamese translation and comparing them with the source texts via the Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). More specifically, the research's objectives are to discover the proportion of the appraisal resources in the source text and the target text, and the differences between the appraisal instances in the source text and the target text. In order to accomplish these, a case analysis of two extracts from Chapter 4 of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe and its Vietnamese translation is examined in the present study. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, evaluative language from the two texts were discovered and analyzed. The results indicate that there are plentiful evaluative language in both texts. It is also figured out that there are several distinctions in terms of evaluative language between the two texts, yet they do not affect the Vietnamese text's meaning and function much.

**Keywords:** Appraisal Theory, evaluative language, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, translation, narratives.

### 1. Introduction

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe [1] is considered to be the most famous and notable in Stowe's writing career. It is one of the influential novels in the world (Anderson, n.d.) [2] which centers on a black slave named Tom. It is an exemplum – a subtype of narrative, which “judges someone's character or behavior” (Humphrey et al., 2012) [3]. Tom is a good, honest, and pious man, but he leads a miserable life. He has to leave his family and is sold to different masters. This book “brought the urgent issue of slavery's brutality into the homes of white Americans” (“*I Will Be Heard!*” *Abolitionism in America*, n.d.) [4].

According to Humphrey et al. (2012) [3], there are usually four main parts of narratives. The first part is “orientation” which introduces the setting and main characters of the narrative. The second part, “complication”, consists of “a sequence of events” with some “unusual or problematic” ones which are addressed in the third part, “resolution”. The final part, “coda” may assess the events in the whole story. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, “orientation” is presented in the first chapters, especially in chapter four which depicts Uncle Tom's cabin and his wife.

Humphrey et al. (2012) [3] also classified narratives' key grammatical features into four main types which are language for expressing ideas, language for connecting ideas, language for interaction, and language for creating cohesive texts. Of these four types, much language for interaction, or evaluative language, is found in chapter four of the book.

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Received May 17, 2023. Revised June 21, 2023. Accepted July 9, 2023.

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On the other hand, as noted by Krzeszowski (1990) [5], contrastive linguistics describes similarities and differences in languages, which leads to results that are related to the linguistic theory in the search for linguistic universals. In contrastive analysis, assessing evaluative language using the Appraisal Theory is growing in popularity.

In reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its Vietnamese translation, the author discovered several inequities between the two versions, which served as the starting point of this paper.

Instead of figuring out the translation errors, this study focuses on evaluating the translated version via Appraisal Theory. The first paragraphs of chapter four in the original book and the translated one describe Uncle Tom's cabin and his general living condition, somehow depicting the novel's title, so they were chosen for analysis.

## 2. Content

### 2.1. Theoretical background

#### 2.1.1. Translation defined

According to Online Cambridge Dictionary [6], to “translate” is to “change writing or speech from one language into another.” In other words, the process of one spoken text or written text being converted from one language to another is translation.

Plentiful theorists also share a perspective of the definition of translation relatively similar to the above definition. Newmark (1988) [7] puts that “translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in another language.” Translation also can be defined as “an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another” (Catford, 1965) [8]. The meaning or message of a text is still preserved when the text is translated. The translation is also “a form of action on a Text which leads to the production of another Text” (Gile, 2009) [9]. The first text to be translated is known as the original text, or the source text, and the product text is the target text. It is “a process of explanation, interpretation, and reformulation of ideas” in which language is “a vector of carrier” of ideas (Newmark, 1988) [7].

#### 2.1.2. Systemic Functional Linguistics and Appraisal Theory

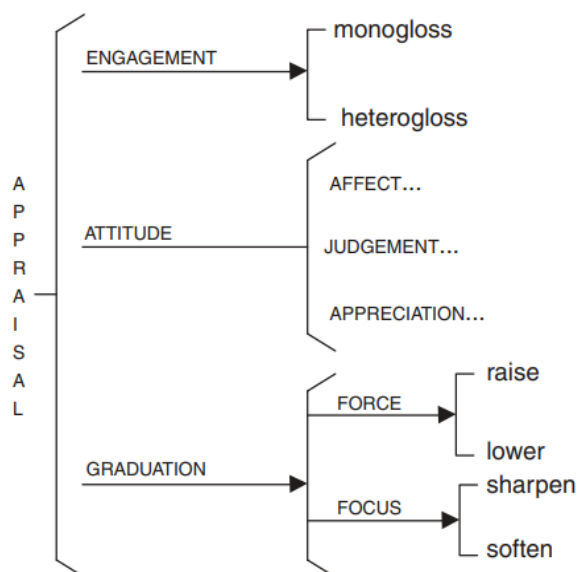


Figure 1. An overview of appraisal resources (Martin & White, 2005:38)

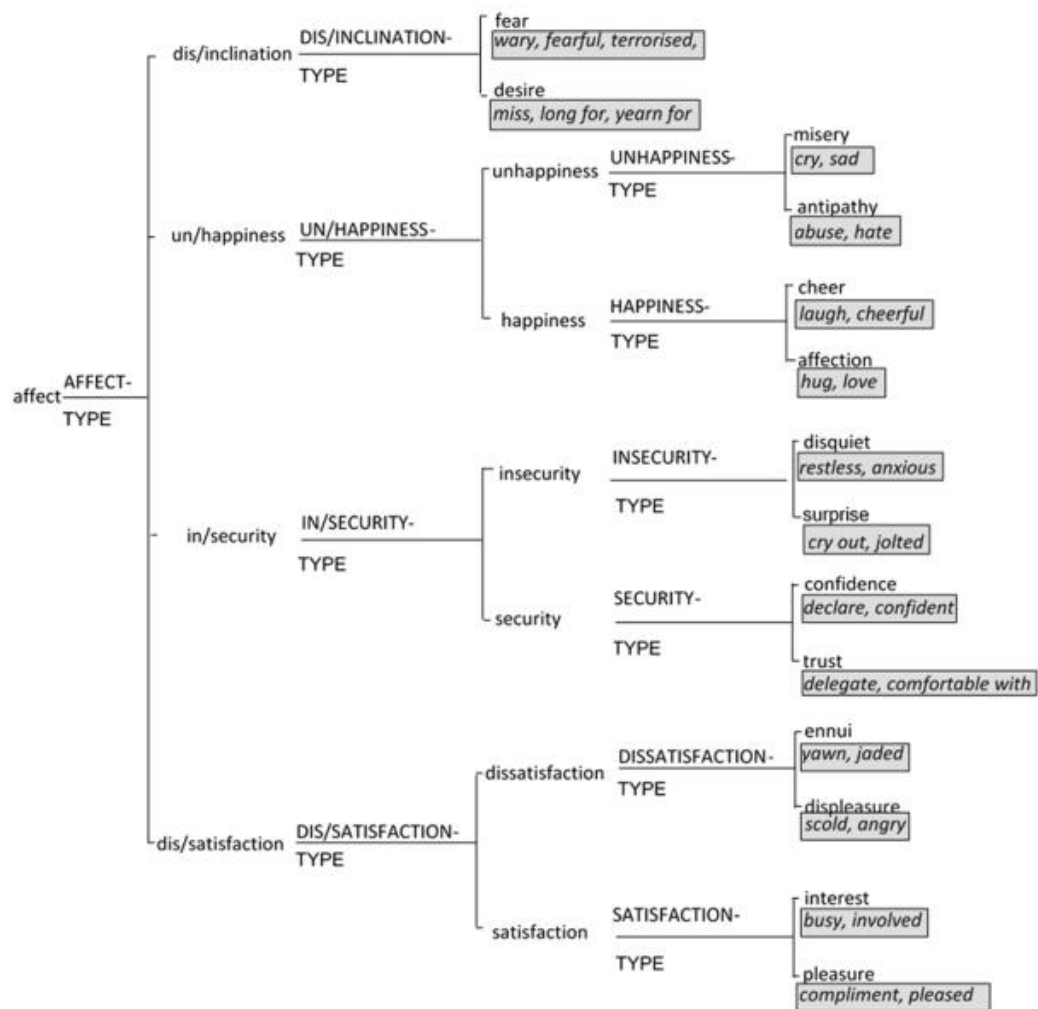


Figure 2. The Affect system (Martin & White, 2005 in Ngo & Unsworth, 2015) [13]

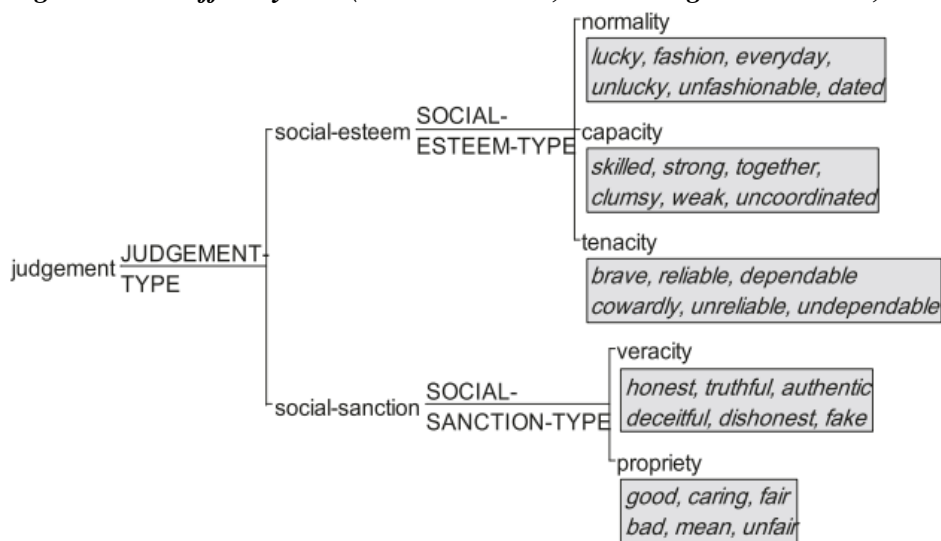


Figure 3. The judgment system (Martin & White, 2005 in Ngo & Unsworth, 2015) [13]

Systemic functional linguistics (hereafter SFL), which was primarily developed by Halliday in the 1980s, is an increasingly popular “descriptive and interpretive” paradigm for considering language as a tactical, meaning-making resource (Eggins, 2011) [10]. It is a “multi-perspective model” giving analysts several lenses for analyzing language in use. (Martin & White, 2005) [11]. One of the most fundamental of these lenses is “metafunctions”, including three main types of meaning namely “ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning.” Ideational meaning seeks the answers to wh-questions and the logical relationship in a communication event. Interpersonal meaning deals with “social relations”, especially communicators’ reactions and emotions. Textual meaning is concerned with “information flow.” (Martin & White, 2005) [11].

Of the three types of meaning, interpersonal meaning in SFL had received more attention (Martin & White, 2005) [11], and it “features” the Appraisal systems (Thomas et al., 2015) [12]. This type of meaning can be shown via modality (modal verbs and adverbs), mood (statements, questions, demand), intonation, and appraisal (evaluative language). The Appraisal Theory allows people to better understand how language is used to assess, take positions, create textual identities, and manage interpersonal positioning and relationships.

As can be seen from Fig.1, there are three resources in the appraisal system, i.e. ‘attitude’, ‘engagement’, and ‘graduation’. First of all, humans’ emotions, including emotional responses, behavioral assessments, and objectivity assessments are all part of ‘attitude’. An example of attitude can be seen in this sentence: “Here, also, in summer, various brilliant annuals, such as marigolds, petunias, four-o’clock, found an indulgent corner in which to unfold their splendors...” *Various* and *brilliant* represent the writer’s appreciation of the variety and beauty of flowers around Uncle Tom’s cabin. Affect, judgment, and appreciation are the three areas of emotion that makeup attitude, as shown in Fig.1. Resources for constructing emotional reactions are the focus of affect. Resources for evaluating behavior in light of numerous normative norms are what judgment is all about. Appreciation considers resources for evaluating things such as natural occurrences and semiosis. (Martin & White, 2005) [11]. These three subsystems are shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4, respectively.

As can be seen from Fig.2, affect can be divided into dis/inclination, un/happiness, in/security, and dis/satisfaction. Each of these groups is compiled of one positive and one negative feeling. For instance, *sung sướng* (*satisfaction and contentment*) in “khuôn mặt bác nở nang vì sung sướng” in the translated version of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is cheer happiness affect. Through this resource, readers can feel Aunt Chloe’s happiness when cooking, so it is a positive affect.

Fig.3 reveals that judgment has two main types which are social-esteem and social-sanction. Take *da đen* in “ngôi nhà của ông chủ, theo tiếng gọi của những người da đen” as an example. This is a negative social sanction judgment. The word in use in the original text is *the negro* marked as “offensive” in the Online Cambridge Dictionary [6].

Fig.4 indicates that appreciation can be classified into reaction, composition, and valuation. The reaction is related to emotions, the composition is related to “perception”, and valuation is related to “cognition.” For example, *người làm bếp giỏi nhất* in “ta thấy rõ đôi chút vẻ kiêu hãnh của “người làm bếp giỏi nhất” ở xóm này” is a valuation appreciation of Aunt Chloe. She is believed to be the best cook in the neighborhood.

Secondly, ‘engagement’ is concerned with where attitudes come from and the interaction of voices around ideas in discourse. This resource is broken into two smaller parts namely monogloss and heterogloss based on the number of voices involved. For instance, in chapter four’s first sentence, “The cabin of Uncle Tom was a small log building, close adjoining to “the house,” as the negro par excellence designates his master’s dwelling.”, the writer describes the cabin’s general look and location. These resources come from a third singular person that is the author, and she is conveying them to the readers. It can also be seen that this is a monogloss engagement

resource as there is one voice from the writer only. Additionally, Martin & White (2005) [11] gives a more detailed description of the engagement system (see Fig.5). Accordingly, contraction heterogloss “clos(es) down the space for dialogic alternatives” while expansion heterogloss “open(s) up the space for alternative positions” (Martin & White, 2005) [11].

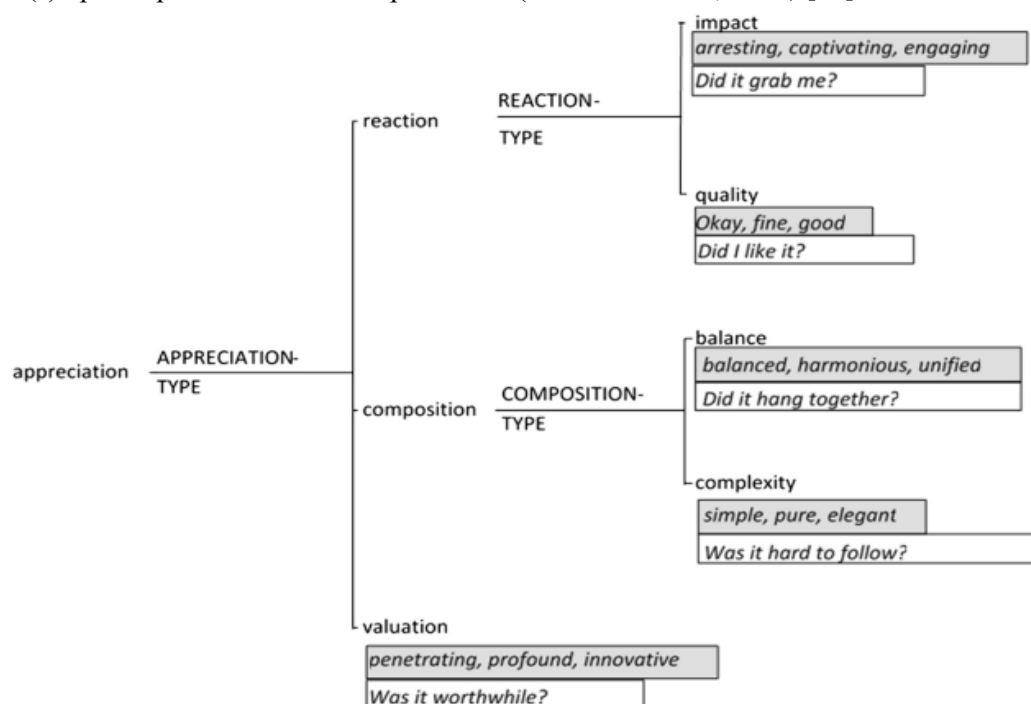


Figure 4. The appreciation system (Martin & White, 2005 in Ngo & Unsworth, 2015) [13]

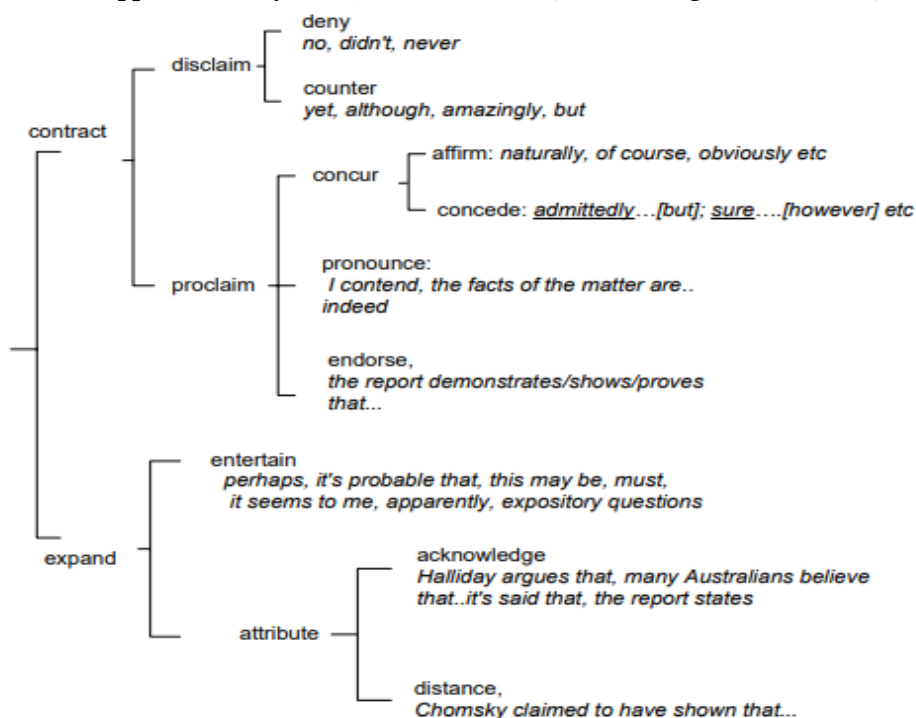


Figure 5. The engagement system (Martin & White, 2005:134)

Finally, ‘graduation’ addresses the phenomenon of grading, which causes classifications to blur and sentiments to become more intense. It demonstrates the resources’ level of intensity or amount (Martin & White, 2005) [11]. ‘Graduation’ consists of force and focus. For example, *every* in the sentence “In front it had a neat garden-patch, where, every summer, strawberries, raspberries, and a variety of fruits and vegetables, flourished under careful tending.” is a resource intensifying the flourishing frequency of fruits and vegetables in the garden. Similar to the aforementioned two resources, Martin & White (2005) [11] also provided a “system network for graduation,” and each sub-category of graduation is illustrated by some small parts and examples (see Fig.6).

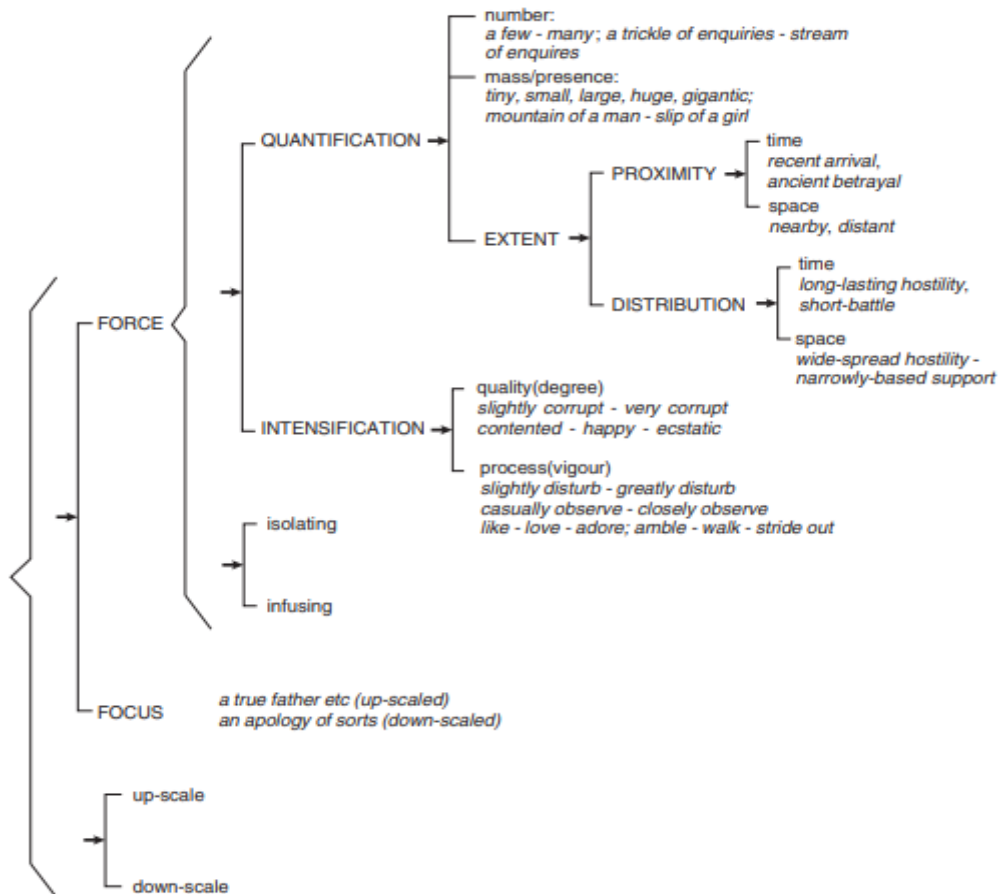


Figure 6. System network for graduation: force and focus (Martin & White, 2005:154)

### 2.1.3. Appraisal Theory in research

There have been a number of studies on the evaluative language in literary works under the Appraisal Theory.

Ataei (2019) [14] conducted a study to investigate how affect was expressed in *Twilight*, the first book in Stephenie Meyer's (2009) *Twilight* series, a well-known work of contemporary prose fiction. The discourse analytic method on 10,000 random words in the text was employed. The findings revealed that negative feelings and implied expressions of attitudes appeared more in the text. However, since the researcher only focused on three types of affect which were un/happiness, in/security, and dis/satisfaction, the existence of other feelings may have been neglected.

In 2020, the study by Piscayanti [15] used SFL Appraisal Theory to assess the character of Santiago in the book "The Old Man and the Sea" by Ernest Hemingway. The results demonstrated the prevalence of attitude (affect) and graduation (force) in the evaluative language in the book. Nevertheless, the research emphasized on the relationship between characters' development and evaluative language in the novel, so not much attention was paid to evaluative language analysis.

Furthermore, Dong & Lin's research in 2018 [16] aimed to investigate how evaluative language is distributed in the English translations of Changgan Xing by Li Bai. The study concluded that the two translated poems both make extensive use of the three attitudinal resources. The percentage of resources with explicit and implicit attitudes that are positive and negative in the English translations is about equal. However, the original poem's references, affects, and judgment-related resources are not entirely translated, and the appraisal meaning is not entirely communicated. This paper has contributed to the literature of analyzing evaluative language between the original and the translated versions of texts, and has successfully suggested some causes of discrepancies in evaluative language during the translation procedure. Yet it could be more representative if more than one poem was studied.

## **2.2. Research methodology**

### ***Research method***

This research adopts the descriptive qualitative method. To be more specific, it is the document analysis method. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" [17]. It helps the researchers "uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (Merriam, 1988) [18]. This method is suitable for qualitative case studies whose aim is to produce "rich descriptions of a single phenomenon, event, organization, or program" (Stake, 1995, and Yin, 1994 in Bowen, 2009) [17]. Bowen (2009) also lists several merits of a document analysis method such as efficiency, availability, and cost-effectiveness [17].

Accordingly, this method was chosen for this research study since it allows for the manual identification of the evaluative language employed in the two chosen texts, providing a more comprehensible insight into the analysis and synthesis of evaluative language in the two texts.

### ***Data collection tools***

Descriptive data in the study is collected by the authors. The authors noted the evaluative language in the two texts in Google Docs, which allowed them to store and keep track of the process easily, for later analysis.

### ***Research procedure***

In conducting this study, the researchers first read through the book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and chose one part that has much evaluative language. This part and its equivalent in the Vietnamese book [19] were then chosen as subjects of the study.

The researchers later described the evaluative language in the two texts using the Appraisal Theory. Specifically, each item was personally and individually examined to determine which categories of attitude the words belonged to. In particular, the attitudes are classified into three types of attitude namely affect, judgment, and appreciation using three separate color coding systems. To be more specific, the **bold** text indicates words and expressions of personal feelings (affect); the *italic* text indicates words and expressions which judge people's characters or behaviors (judgment), and the underlined text indicates words and expressions which evaluate things and phenomena (appreciation). Whether they were expressly or implicitly represented as positive (+) or negative (-), the evaluative lexicon was also investigated.

Finally, the evaluative language in the two texts were compared and contrasted to discover the differences in attitude resources between them.

## 2.3. Findings and Discussion

After analyzing data, the findings in terms of the three aspects of the appraisal system are as follows.

### 2.3.1. Engagement resources

In the English text, most of the resources are monogloss as they involve one voice from the writer. However, she also employs five heterogloss resources which concern with an external voice, and all of these resources belong to the entertainment expansion. This can be seen in these sentences: “therefore, doubt not that it is her you see by the fire.” and “so glossy as to suggest the idea that she might have been washed over with white of eggs.” This use of entertainment engagement resources deals with the “truth-value” of the propositions (Chatterjee, 2008) [20]. Furthermore, although there were no interactions, *us* and *you* are included when talking about Aunt Chloe and her cooking. For example, in the sentence “Let us enter the dwelling”, or “not that it is her you see by the fire,” not only the writer but also the readers are involved in the text.

Meanwhile, in the Vietnamese text, of the four heterogloss engagement resources, three of them (*trông như, chắc hẳn, and đúng là*) belong to the entertainment expansion which are similar to those in the source text in terms of meaning, location, and function. However, *ta thấy rõ* (meaning *we can clearly see that*) in “Trên nét mặt bác, ta thấy rõ đôi chút vẻ kiêu hãnh của “người làm bếp giỏi nhất” ở xóm này” is a pronouncing proclaim contraction resource. It insists on the proposition’s value which is different from if we must confess it (an entertaining expansion) in the source text. The translator also uses *ta (us)* twice without any *các bạn (you)* as in the original version. The discrepancy between *ta thấy rõ* and *if we must confess it* somehow changes the shade of meaning of the original text.

### 2.3.2. Attitude resources

31 instances of attitudes were found in the English text. Results reveal that among the three types of attitudes, appreciation has the highest frequency, and affect and judgment come at the second and third places respectively. Appreciation in the English text is used mainly to describe Uncle Tom's cabin and its surroundings, such as “The cabin of Uncle Tom was a small log building, close adjoining to “the house,” as the negro par excellence designates his master’s dwelling.”, or in some cases, it is also used to describe things related to Aunt Chloe’s cooking, such as “it is her you see by the fire, presiding with anxious interest over certain frizzling items in a stew-pan.” Because this text is mostly about Uncle Tom's cabin and Chloe, Uncle Tom's wife, affect in this text is utilized mostly to describe Aunt Chloe's feelings about and towards cooking as well as her cooking abilities, such as “were the delight and pride of Aunt Chloe’s heart.” Likewise, in general, judgment is also used to describe Aunt Chloe and some behaviors of her friends such as “A round, black, shining face is hers”.

Regarding the positivity and negativity in attitudes shown in the source text, positivity is dominant in all evaluative languages. Among 31 instances taken from the article, only six of them are negative attitudes whereas 25 of them are positive ones (for example, “left scarce a vestige of the rough logs to be seen”). While the negative attitudes appear most in the second part of the text which describes Aunt Chloe and her friends' attitude towards her, the positive attitudes can be found throughout the text which describes Uncle Tom's cabin and Aunt Chloe’s cooking talents.

When it comes to the Vietnamese text, with the highest frequency of 11, appreciation still surpasses the other two categories among the 21 samples. The appearances of judgment and affect are 7 and 3 respectively. Some other examples of attitude resources from the Vietnamese text are also demonstrated in Table 1 below. They are the translated instances of the English ones.

Because the Vietnamese text is the translated version of the English one, appreciation attitudes are primarily employed to describe Uncle Tom's cabin and its surroundings. For



example, the translator uses *đỏ chói* and *màu sắc sỡ* as two appreciation sources to describe the beauty of two flowers surrounding the cabin. Similarly, judgment and affect are used to characterize Aunt Chloe as well as describe her feelings. To illustrate, Aunt Chloe is judged as *người làm bếp giỏi nhất* (meaning *the best cook*), and she has some kind of *niềm vui* and *niềm kiêu hãnh* (corresponding to *the delight and pride* in the original text).

Positive attitudes outweigh negative ones in the Vietnamese text. Only 4 instances picked from the text reflect negative attitudes, while 17 of them are positive. The four negative expressions describe some disadvantaged aspects of Uncle Tom's cabin, such as *thô kệch* (*rough*) in “cây tử uy đỏ chói và cây hồng leo màu sắc sỡ quần quýt lấy nhau phủ gần kín bức vách thô kệch,” while other positive expressions illustrate the beauty of his cabin and the beauty and pride of his wife.

Some examples of attitude resources from the English and Vietnamese texts can be seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Some examples of attitude resources from the English and Vietnamese text**

	Extract from text	Types of attitudes
1	The whole front of it was covered by a large scarlet bignonia and a native multiflora rose ... cây tử uy đỏ chói và cây hồng leo màu sắc sỡ	Appreciation (+ve)
2	... left scarce a vestige of the rough logs to be seen. quần quýt lấy nhau phủ gần kín bức vách thô kệch	Appreciation (-ve)
3	Her whole plump countenance beams with <b>satisfaction</b> and <b>contentment</b> from under her well-starched checked turban Khuôn mặt bác nở nang vì <b>sung sướng</b> ...	Affect (+ve)
4	... she would narrate the <i>fruitless</i> efforts Mỗi khi bác tả lại những sự cố gắng mà <i>chẳng đi đến đâu</i>	Judgment (-ve)

### 2.3.3. Graduation resources

32 instances of graduation can be found in the English text. Results show that intensification is utilized most often. The second place is taken by figurative language, followed by quantification. Intensification is often used to emphasize the level or scale of events or objects. For example, in “A cook she certainly was”, *certainly* is a quality intensification force emphasizing the likability of Chloe being a cook. Figurative language is usually used when describing those that cannot behave as humans such as plants and animals, such as “Not a chicken or turkey or duck in the barn-yard but looked grave when they saw her approaching.” In the extract “Her corn-cake, in all its varieties of hoe-cake, dodgers, muffins, and other species too numerous to mention, was a sublime mystery to all less practiced compounders”, on the other hand, *all*, a quantification force, is employed twice to stress the whole scale of cake varieties and of Aunt Chloe's friends.

Regarding the translated text, quantification accounts for the largest amount of incidents (with 9/24 instances). For examples, in “mùa hè là mùa hái quả dâu, quả phúc bồn tử và vô số những hoa quả, rau củ khác,” *vô số những* is utilized to depict the variety of fruits and vegetables in Uncle Tom's garden. Intensification and figurative language are in the second and third

positions, respectively. These expressions are typically employed to describe things in the cabin as well as several kinds of foods Aunt Chloe can cook, such as “cây tử uy đỏ chói và cây hồng leo màu sắc sỡ quần quýt lầy nhau.”

The English text and the Vietnamese text share several similarities in the evaluative language in three resource systems. Perhaps the most striking resemblance is the preponderance of appreciation in the two texts. It is employed mostly to describe Uncle Tom's cabin. Another commonality is the dominance of positive appraisal over negative one in which there is only a small percentage of negative attitudes in both texts. These similarities occur probably because the Vietnamese text is the translation of the English one. As a result, the language used between the two texts are basically the same, and so is the deployment of evaluative language.

Nevertheless, the usage of evaluative language in the two texts differs in a few ways. It is obvious that the English text uses more evaluative language than the Vietnamese text. What is more, some attitude expressions in the English text do not have their equivalents in the Vietnamese text. For instance, in the extract “strawberries, raspberries, and a variety of fruits and vegetables, flourished under careful tending”, there is a positive judgment with the word “careful”, yet there is no corresponding attitude in the Vietnamese extract, “mùa hè là mùa hái quả dâu, quả phúc bồn tử và vô số những hoa quả, rau củ khác.” Regarding attitudes, in the English text, the attitude category that is second most frequently employed is affecting, whereas in the Vietnamese version, it is judgment. In terms of graduation, intensification resources are much more than other resources in the English text, whereas quantification has the highest incidence in the Vietnamese text.

These differences are likely to be caused by the translation process. To put it in another way, during translation, some elements of the original text need to be modified to some extent so that they can fit the culture of the target audience as well as the register of the target language. Consequently, the equivalents of some evaluative language in the English version may disappear from the translated version. In this case, the distinction between the two texts in terms of the appraisal systems does not cause many problems for the readers of the translated version. The meanings and information range may be affected to some extent, but it is inconsiderable. Both the writer and the translator have successfully conveyed the cabin's elegance and Aunt Chloe's cooking skills, and the readers can still comprehend and enjoy the texts well.

The application of the Appraisal Theory in analyzing the two texts reveal the writer's attitudes. As a result, translators should pay attention to the writer's attitudes when translating a discourse into another language. This would allow them to make a wise choice of language for translating. Moreover, it is also worth noticing that the differences between the source text and the target one does not necessarily mean that the translated version is not a good one. Depending on different factors, the translation can still convey the original work's messages to the readers.

### 3. Conclusion

This study employs the Appraisal Theory which consists of three parts namely Affect, Engagement, and Graduation, to analyze the two texts from chapter four of the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin. The study has shown clear indicators of evaluative language characteristics in both texts. The most striking feature is the supremacy of appreciation when describing the cabin. The positive attitudes are also worth considering which account for a large percentage of all the detected attitudes. Findings also reveal that there are not many discrepancies between the two texts, and most of them are related to the number of evaluative sources as well as their frequencies.

However, the author analyzed only two small parts in one chapter of the whole book. it may not represent the deployment of evaluative language in the whole work. Therefore, future research can look into a wider scale of subjects of this novel so that the results can be more comprehensive.

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