

**TRANSLATORS' STYLES IN FIVE
TRANSLATED WORKS OF THE TRUE STORY
OF AH Q: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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OF AH Q: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMP	Amplifiers
ANDC	Independent clause coordination
AWL	Average word length
BEMA	Be as a main verb
BYPA	By-passives
CAUS	Causative adverbial subordinators
CONC	Concessive adverbial subordinators
COND	Conditional adverbial subordinators
CONJ	Conjuncts
CONT	Contractions
CTS	Corpus-based Translation Studies
CUC	Communication University of China
DEMO	Demonstratives
DEMP	Demonstrative pronouns
DIM	Dimension
DPAR	Discourse particles
DTS	Descriptive Translation Studies
DWNT	Downtoners
EMPH	Emphatics
JJ	Attributive adjectives
MAT	Multidimensional Analysis Tagger
MDA	Multidimensional Analysis

NEMD	Necessity modal
NN	Total other nouns
NOMZ	Nominalisations
OSUB	Other adverbial subordinators
PASTP	Past participial clauses
PEAS	Perfect aspect
PIN	Total prepositional phrases
POMD	Possibility modal
PRESP	Present participial clauses
PRMD	Predictive modal
PRP	Pronouns
RB	Total adverbs
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SERE	Sentence relatives
SPAU	Split auxiliaries
SPIN	Split infinitives
ST	Source Text
STPR	Stranded preposition
SUB	Subordinate Clauses
TO	Infinitives
TPP	Third Person Pronouns
TT	Target Text
TTR	Type-Token Ratio
VB	Verbs
VBD	Past tense

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**GAYA PENTERJEMAH DALAM LIMA KARYA TERJEMAHAN TRUE
STORY OF AH Q: SATU KAJIAN PERBANDINGAN**

ABSTRAK

Penterjemahan karya sastra berkembang dari semasa ke semasa, mencerminkan perubahan dalam konvensi linguistik, pengaruh ideologi, dan kecekapan penterjemah. Namun begitu, penyelidikan sedia ada terhadap *The True Story of Ah Q* lebih menumpukan kepada terjemahan secara individu, tanpa memberikan analisis diakronik terhadap perubahan faktor-faktor ini merentasi pelbagai tempoh sejarah. Kajian ini menangani jurang tersebut dengan menjalankan analisis korpus berasaskan diakronik terhadap lima terjemahan Bahasa Inggeris yang dihasilkan antara tahun 1926 dan 2009, serta menonjolkan evolusi progresif dalam gaya penterjemah, penyesuaian ideologi, dan kecekapan penterjemahan. Dengan menggabungkan data linguistik yang boleh diukur—yang dijana menggunakan alat korpus seperti AntConc dan Multidimensional Analysis Tagger (MAT)—bersama analisis teks secara kualitatif, kajian ini mengaplikasikan reka bentuk kaedah campuran yang mengintegrasikan pendekatan komputasi dan interpretatif. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan pola leksikal, sintaksis, dan tekstual yang berbeza, mencerminkan norma linguistik yang berubah serta keutamaan penterjemah dari semasa ke semasa. Selain itu, perubahan dalam aspek modaliti, nominalisasi, dan pendomestikan menunjukkan bagaimana penterjemah menyesuaikan karya Lu Xun dengan konteks sosio-politik pada zaman masing-masing. Dari segi kecekapan penterjemahan, kajian ini mengenal pasti peralihan daripada terjemahan literal kepada strategi yang lebih berorientasikan pembaca, sekali gus menunjukkan peningkatan penekanan terhadap

sub-kecekapan dwibahasa, ekstra-linguistik dan strategik. Kajian ini adalah yang pertama menggunakan pendekatan diakronik secara menyeluruh, dan menawarkan satu kerangka yang komprehensif untuk memahami perkembangan sejarah dalam strategi penterjemahan. Dapatan kajian ini memberikan sumbangan yang signifikan kepada bidang Kajian Terjemahan Sastera, komunikasi silang budaya, dan latihan penterjemah. Tambahan pula, kajian ini menyumbang kepada Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan 4 (Pendidikan Berkualiti) dengan menyarankan pendekatan penterjemahan teks budaya yang lebih berpengetahuan dan peka terhadap konteks, bagi memastikan ketercapaian dan pemeliharaan warisan sastera kepada khalayak global.

TRANSLATORS' STYLES IN FIVE TRANSLATED WORKS OF THE TRUE STORY OF AH Q: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

ABSTRACT

The translation of literary works evolves over time, reflecting shifts in linguistic conventions, ideological influences, and translator competence. However, existing research on *The True Story of Ah Q* has focused on individual translations, lacking a diachronic analysis of how these factors change across different historical periods. This study addresses this gap by conducting a diachronic corpus-based analysis of five English translations produced between 1926 and 2009, highlighting the progressive evolution of translators' styles, ideological adaptation, and translation competence. By combining quantifiable linguistic data—generated using corpus tools including AntConc and the Multidimensional Analysis Tagger (MAT)—with qualitative text analysis, the study adopts a mixed-methods design that integrates computational and interpretive approaches. The findings reveal distinct lexical, syntactic, and textual patterns that reflect changing linguistic norms and translator preferences over time. Additionally, shifts in modality, nominalization, and domestication illustrate how translators have aligned Lu Xun's work with the socio-political contexts of their respective periods. Regarding translation competence, the study identifies a transition from literal translation to more reader-oriented strategies, demonstrating an increasing emphasis on bilingual, extra-linguistic, and strategic sub-competences. This research is novel in its diachronic approach, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding the historical development of translation strategies. The findings provide valuable insights for literary Translation Studies,

cross-cultural communication, and translator training. Furthermore, this study contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by advocating for a more informed and context-sensitive approach to translating culturally significant texts, ensuring greater accessibility and preservation of literary heritage across global audiences.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The task of a literary translation is exceedingly challenging since they must maintain the original work's aesthetic aim and stylistic core while modifying it for a new cultural as well as linguistic setting (Sheramatovich, 2023). Since Baker (2000) introduced utilising a corpus-based technique to examine the stylistic choices of literary translators, numerous scholars have displayed significant enthusiasm toward the subject matter, namely translators' styles (Huang, 2021b).

This study employs Lu Xun's literary masterpiece, *The True Story of Ah Q* (*Ah Q Zhengzhuan*), as an example of translators' styles in fiction translation. This work of contemporary Chinese literature is renowned for its realistic depiction of societal conflicts as well as the quest for self-discovery (Wang, 1998a). This research aims to identify the features of translators' styles by studying the translations via a stylistic lens. The analysis also examines the diachronic evolution of the translators' styles in the English translations of *The True Story of Ah Q* concerning ideology and translation competence.

By utilising both methodologies and tools in Translation Studies and corpus linguistics, a Multidimensional Analysis (MDA) is utilised to achieve the research

goals. The quantitative analysis evaluates the translators' styles by analysing lexicon density, sentence structure, syntactic patterns, and rhetorical device usage via corpus. The research also analyses the translators' ideology and translation competence qualitatively. Through a corpus-based investigation of the translators' styles in fiction translation, this study contributes to Translation Studies.

Chapter One serves as an introduction part to the study and provides an overview. It addresses the problem, defines clear goals, and answers questions. The limitations and significance of the study are also outlined, and the most crucial concepts are explained. Finally, the study's organisation is discussed in the last section.

1.2 Background of Study

Translation Studies have evolved as an interdisciplinary field, incorporating insights from linguistics, literary studies, and cultural studies to examine how texts are transferred across languages while maintaining meaning, style, and ideological nuances (Baker, 2019c). One significant aspect of Translation Studies is the translator's style, which refers to the distinct linguistic and textual patterns that emerge in a translator's work (Cheng, 2022). Translators' styles are influenced by cultural background, translation competence, ideology, and socio-political context, making it a crucial subject of study.

Within Translation Studies, diachronic analysis plays a vital role in exploring how translation practices evolve over time, which is in line with the types of diachronic

analysis addressed by various scholars from several disciplines, namely, the changes and transformations perceived over time in a particular phenomenon (Basile et al., 2019). The diachronic analysis focuses on longitudinal shifts in linguistic features, translator ideology, and competence, offering a historical perspective on how translators adapt texts based on evolving norms, as stated by de Saussure (2021), Chomsky (2021), and Foucault (2023). According to Keles et al. (2023), through the lens of diachronic analysis, scholars are able to identify patterns, structures, and processes in languages, cultures, and societies by examining historical events and following their development. By this method, as noted by Rheindorf (2019), scholars can better grasp the many facets of the human experience and the factors that influence development over time. Despite its importance, diachronic analysis in literary translation remains underexplored, particularly in classic Chinese literature translations into English.

Lu Xun, often regarded as the progenitor of contemporary Chinese literature, is among the earliest modern writers to have their works translated into foreign languages, which resulted in the publication of multiple English copies of his novels (Jun, 2021). The challenge of limited international exposure to Chinese literature underscores the considerable value and importance of conducting a comparative analysis of the English translations of Lu Xun's works (Tian & Jincheng, 2021a). *The True Story of Ah Q (Ah Q Zhengzhuan)* is widely regarded as a significant work in the canon of modern Chinese literature. This work is regarded as the inaugural piece to comprehensively employ Vernacular Chinese following the May 4th Movement,

which took place in 1919 in China (Kincaid, 2013). The novel presents the concept of spiritual victory, which refers to an individual's ability to rationalize personal failure by psychologically transforming it into a perceived success (Yu, 2019). This concept, deeply embedded in Chinese cultural and philosophical thought, poses challenges in translation, as it requires both linguistic and cultural sensitivity.

Given Lu Xun's influence, multiple translations of *The True Story of Ah Q* have been produced over time, each shaped by the translator's linguistic style, ideological positioning, and translation competence (Tian & Jincheng, 2021a). This study employs a diachronic perspective by examining the evolution of a translator's style, ideology, and competence across five translations of *The True Story of Ah Q*, spanning nearly a century. Each translation reflects the socio-historical context of its time, making it essential to analyse how translation strategies, linguistic structures, and ideological choices have transformed over different periods. This study uncovers historical shifts in translation practices by systematically comparing these translations, contributing to the broader understanding of translation evolution in literary works.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite extensive research in Translation Studies, there remains a significant gap in diachronic translation research, particularly concerning how translators' styles, ideologies, and translation competencies evolve over time (Tobias & Qi, 2022). While many studies focus on individual translations (synchronic analysis), little attention has

been given to how translation choices change historically, shaped by linguistic trends, ideological shifts, and the translator's developing competence (Ping, 2021).

A translator's style is a distinctive linguistic signature reflected in lexical choices, syntactic structures, and textual organization (Baker, 2019c; Hu, 2020). However, most studies on translators' styles analyse single works by a translator rather than how style develops across different translators over time. This gap makes it difficult to determine whether shifts in style result from individual preference, linguistic evolution, or changing translation norms.

This study plans to address this gap in a particular way by discussing the major work, *The True Story of Ah Q*, by Lu Xun, a key work in contemporary Chinese literature. Lexical choices are essential in translation, representing the translator's preferences and the rate at which certain terms occur (Dinh, 2022). The research conducted by Baker and Love (2023) explored the issue of lexical priming in the context of development, and it illustrates how lexical choice has an impressive effect on tone, register, and whole-text readability. In addition, structural devices, such as sentence formation and arrangement of paragraphs, are also crucial for the course of a translated text (Matthew et al., 2024). These parameters could be investigated through Vinay and Darbelnet's Model of Translation (Hani & Zainab, 2024)

What a translator usually chooses is determined by their ideology since their ideologies influence the translation process (Gunawan, 2022). The ideological point of view put forward by Hatim and Mason (2005) demonstrates how translators'

ideologies affect their translations. Ideological preferences are the filters through which we choose words, prioritise certain text components, and, thus, the overall translation perspective (Azazzi, 2020). While Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) (Toury, 2012) emphasizes how translations reflect historical norms, there has been limited empirical research tracking diachronic stylistic and ideological shifts in translated literary texts. This lack of diachronic analysis makes it unclear how translation strategies change over decades and how historical context influences translator decisions.

Moreover, translators' styles are generally based on their language, culture, and transfer skills, which formed the translation competence. These are the requirements for successful translation (Albir, 2020). The Process of Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation (PACTE) Model of translation competence offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the translator's required skills and knowledge relevant to professional translation (Albir et al., 2020). While competence studies typically examine how translators acquire skills in training programs, little is known about how professional literary translators' competence develops over time.

In general, this study employs linguistic notions, ideology, and translation competence as the main variables due to their prominent use in shaping a translator's style. Lexicons hang on to meaning and phrasing since selecting words with regard to their frequency is essential to maintain the tone and the message intact. In the course of the task of translation, which is to convey a coherent text comprehensibly, the

translator should consider the syntactical rules that order the ideas and the role of philosophy and translation competence that could affect the process. This influence probably originates in cultural and temporal contexts surrounding people's lives. After a thorough literature examination, these variables were subjected to in-depth analyses, demonstrating their applicability to translation research in clarifying analysis frames for translating culturally and historically significant works such as *The True Story of Ah Q*.

The approach to style analysis is all the more unstructured through the Internet and databases like Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar (Boase-Beier, 2023; Gough, 2024). Among them, Li et al. (2022) suggested combining the quantitative and qualitative methods, as the qualitative method is not objective and factual. Therefore, the current study uses a mixed research method based on the corpus. Corpus-based Translation Studies (CTS) refers to a field of study about the use and development of corpus linguistics methods in order to analyse translation for research purposes, either descriptive or applied (Hu, 2020). It has recently become one of the paradigms of Translation Studies through this modern method (Meng & Pan, 2022). Consequently, the corpus tools verifiably investigate the texts and extract the information on lexicons, syntactic units, and text orientations to obtain quantitative data (Bernardini & Ferraresi, 2022). For the study of ideology and translation competence of translators, mixed analyses form a methodological basis on which to study the selected translations (Bacon, 2020; Kontinen et al., 2020).

As a result, the main research problem of this study is the absence of a diachronic analysis of the translators' styles in *The True Story of Ah Q* translated into English. This study aims to fill this gap, exploring three critical aspects: linguistic notions, ideology, and translation competence. By examining these aspects from various perspectives, a detailed concept can be developed, allowing us to deeply comprehend the process of constructing the translators' styles in a particular way. This study is based on Vinay and Darbelnet's Model of Translation (1958) for the linguistic features, the Ideological Framework of Hatim and Mason (2005) for understanding ideology influence, and the PACTE Model (Albir et al., 2020) used for evaluating the translation competence. By integrating corpus-based analysis and qualitative textual examination, this research provides a comprehensive diachronic perspective on the stylistic, ideological, and competence-driven changes in the English translations of *The True Story of Ah Q*. By addressing these critical issues, this study contributes to Corpus-Based Translation Studies (CTS), historical translation competence research, and diachronic stylistic analysis, enhancing the understanding of long-term translation evolution in literary works. The next two sections (1.4 and 1.5) specify the research objectives and questions relevant to the current study and that answer the above-mentioned gaps.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study has outlined the following objectives:

1. To identify the linguistic features of the translators' styles in the five English translations of *The True Story of Ah Q* at the levels of lexicons, syntactic structures, and texts.
2. To examine how translator ideology evolves diachronically in the five English translations of *The True Story of Ah Q*.
3. To investigate how translation competence develops diachronically in the five English translations of *The True Story of Ah Q*.

1.5 Research Questions

Following the establishment of the research goals, the researcher has developed the following Research Questions (RQs):

1. What are the linguistic features of the translators' styles in the five English translations of *The True Story of Ah Q* at the level of lexicons, syntactic structures, and text?
2. How does translator ideology evolve diachronically in the five English translations of *The True Story of Ah Q*?
3. How does translation competence develop diachronically in the five English translations of *The True Story of Ah Q*?

1.6 The Significance of the Study

This research employs a diachronic corpus-based approach, utilising a diverse selection of English translations spanning different periods. The analysis compares and contrasts the linguistic features, translation strategies, and stylistic elements each translator employs. The variables under investigation encompass lexical choices, sentence structure, text features, ideology, and translation competence, which are supported by Vinay and Darbelnet's Model of Translation (Safi & Nasser, 2022), the Ideological Framework of Hatim and Mason (2005) and the PACTE Model (Albir et al., 2020; Beeby et al., 2003). The study's originality rests in its diachronic viewpoint, which would be applicable to the analysis of how translators' styles in English versions of this Chinese masterpiece has been changing through the decades. It is, therefore, the model to evaluate and compare the enterprising style of the translator with other works of theirs.

Based on the research objectives and research questions, it can predict the study's contributions. By identifying lexical, syntactic, and textual patterns in five translations of *The True Story of Ah Q*, this study advances translation research on translator's style and historical linguistic variation. It contributes to Corpus-based Translation Study (CTS) by applying quantitative linguistic analysis to study stylistic translation changes. This research explores how translators reinterpret cultural and political messages over time by tracing diachronic ideological shifts. The findings highlight the impact of historical, political, and socio-cultural factors on translation,

offering insights into power dynamics in cross-cultural communication. Examining how translation competence evolves diachronically helps refine existing translator training and assessment models. It can be considered a matter of public significance to perceive how the way the translators' styles are formed affects educational and cultural accessibility, as supported by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4).

Given these linguistic and ideological considerations, a corpus-based approach provides an objective, data-driven means of analysing diachronic shifts in translation. The methodological contribution made in the current study is to employ a corpus-based mixed research method. This method enables the style of the augmentative analysis to be unveiled, contributing to the definition of the translators' styles (Huang, 2021b). Furthermore, the study reveals instances of the same and different ways of linguistic choices used in the target language communities through the scholar's style over time. These patterns ensure that more progressive decisions have the potential for progression in translation techniques, literary studies, and Translation Studies.

Beyond methodological contributions, this study offers practical insights for translators, scholars, and educators in understanding long-term translation evolution. The outcome of the present study will enhance future investigation and current knowledge of the translator's style, which can lead to the development of Chinese-English literary translations more effectively and faster, offering practical benefits to the students, trainers, and translation professionals. Finally, the work will enrich the

scholarly world by examining the diachronic style concerning the translator and pave the way for similar research in the area.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study deals with a corpus-based examination of the translators' styles as revealed in five English translations of the novel *The True Story of Ah Q* during different historical periods. The method involves an analysis of vocabulary, sentence structures, and textual characteristics with the help of Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) Model, elaborated in the paper by Safi and Nasser (2022). Therefore, it investigates the ideological contexts that redirect translation choices and evaluates the translation competence according to the theoretical background of Hatim and Mason (2005) and the Model of PACTE (Albir et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, the research could not cover nearly all combinations or languages that were not Chinese-English pairs and had limited relevance to other languages to systems. The analysis of language evolution is limited to certain historical periods, which may result in the omission of current or future translation trends. Furthermore, there may be limitations to relying solely on established theoretical frameworks when understanding a translator's style. In addition, the information regarding the socio-political backgrounds of translators may not offer a comprehensive view, mainly because historical records can be inconsistent, and the socio-political factors are intricate and challenging to document fully. Although there are some

limitations, the study aims to provide a detailed and thorough analysis of the evolution of the translator's style. It seeks to offer valuable insights and contribute to the ongoing discussion on translation and its impact on sustainable development.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

The crucial terminology employed in this research is briefly defined to facilitate a clearer comprehension of the study's goals. Definitions of the following terms aid this comprehension:

Corpus: A corpus is formed by collecting or creating versions of Target Text (TT) through data collection (Reppen & Simpson-Vlach, 2019). For this analysis, the researcher gathers texts from the English translations of this novel to construct an all-inclusive corpus database.

Corpus-based Translation Study (CTS): According to Hu (2016), CTS refers to the area of Translation Studies that analyses the features of translation in terms of its outcomes and methodologies. This study involves analysing corpora and employing statistical methods to compare the characteristics of translated texts with non-translated texts and their source texts. This research explores the diachronic changes in the translators' styles concerning *The True Story of Ah Q* by analysing a corpus of English translations using specialised software tools and techniques.

Diachronic: In linguistics and Translation Studies, diachronic refers to researching how language has changed and evolved (Redelinghuys, 2022). Through

diachronic research in this study, the researcher could delve deeper into how translators' styles have become and how various historical, social, and cultural factors have impacted this evolution.

Ideology: As per Bassnett and Lefevere (1998), ideology is defined as “the conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time, and through which readers and translators approach texts” (p.48). A translator might subtly convey their ideologies using particular lexical words, grammatical structures, and text preparation in the target language (Karim et al., 2023). In the current study, ideology is a crucial cultural and social factor affecting the translator's style, and it will be studied via Hatim and Mason's (2005) Ideological Framework.

Multidimensional Analysis (MDA): The MDA was developed to examine the linguistic patterns with regard to variation among written and spoken registers (Biber, 1995). In this study, the researcher utilises the corpus tool Multidimensional Analysis Tagger (MAT) to conduct the statistical analysis to identify patterns and relationships between the varying linguistic features in the corpus.

Translator's Style: The proposal of the translator' style was initially made by Baker (2000) who defines translator's style as a linguistic thumbprint that distinguishes one translator's work from another. However, while Baker's definition focuses on individual translators, this study extends the concept to diachronic evolution, examining how linguistic and ideological patterns shift across multiple

translations over time. By analysing these stylistic variations, this research explores the long-term development of translator identity, ideology, and competence.

Translation Competence: Translation competence refers to the knowledge, skills, and abilities that a translator uses in conducting the translation job (Yvan Rudhel & Wen, 2021). Therefore, this investigation employs the PACTE Model of translation competence (Albir et al., 2020) as part of the inner factors governing the translator's style.

1.9 Organisation of the Thesis

The current study is to be structured across five chapters, which are arranged as given below:

Chapter One serves as a comprehensive overview of the study's current focus. It contains the research objectives, RQs, and problem statement. In order to ensure a clear understanding, this study also provides an overview of its significance, key concepts, and a summary of Chapter One while acknowledging its limitations.

Chapter Two of this dissertation extensively assesses pertinent literature and research, delving into crucial aspects of this study. The literature review is organised into various segments, commencing with a critical analysis of theoretical and empirical studies about literary Translation Studies. Accompanying this is a section focused on related research on the translator's style. Subsequently, the concept of corpus-based MDA is explored in detail. Lastly, while providing contextual information on the

translators, the fourth section scrutinises translations of *The True Story of Ah Q*. Other than that, two models and one framework are highlighted in the theoretical framework section, the sixth part of this chapter. A summary brings this chapter to a close.

Chapter Three examines the study's research design, corpora, data collection procedure, analysis approach, and mixed research methods. Note that various aspects of these elements are explored throughout the chapter.

Chapter Four encompasses the practical component of the research when a descriptive assessment is conducted based on the previously described theoretical foundations. The data analysis process is segmented into three consecutive phases, each specifically tailored to investigate one of the three RQs.

Chapter Five is the last part of this study. It describes the findings from the data analysis in the previous chapter and the answers to the RQs. It also presents discussions, highlights the need for further investigation to fill the possible gaps related to the topic, and recommends probable areas of future studies.

1.10 Summary of Chapter One

The chapter's opening briefly summarises the pertinent information about this research. This chapter includes the research background centred around the English translations of *The True Story of Ah Q*, followed by the study's problem statement, research objectives, RQs, and significance. Consequently, the dissertation structure

and a list of definitions are also provided, along with the limitations and scope of the study integrated throughout.

The following chapter will present an in-depth literature review regarding the study topic, with Chapter One as the foundation for the investigation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

For several years, Translation Studies have demonstrated a keen interest in delving into the intricacies of the translators' styles (Chesterman, 2017; Huang, 2021b). According to Liang and Xu (2017), examining translators' styles across time, known as diachronic analysis, is a relatively new field of study. The main objective of this review is to clarify the potential impacts of this research on the field by identifying and emphasising deficiencies and constraints in the existing body of literature.

The following literature review comprehensively assesses various works on the subject matter, categorised into multiple sections. The section on literary translation contains a thorough analysis of theoretical and empirical studies. Section 3 of this chapter is on diachronic translation, Section 4 is on Corpus-based Translation Studies (CTS), and Section 5 is on Multidimensional Analysis (MDA). Subsequently, this review encompasses the research on the style used by translators. The seventh section contextualises *The True Story of Ah Q*, adding the translator's background to it. In the next section, the research presents its theory and conceptual framework, focusing on two theories. Eventually, the chapter wraps up with the conclusion of the literature review.

2.2 Previous Studies on Literary Translation

When analysed through the lens of the power dynamics present in the international literary arena, literary translation is increasingly understood as more than just a straightforward transfer between languages and cultures (Casanova & Brownlie, 2021). The most demanding category of literary translation, fiction translation, is also one of the vital text types to discuss (Ismoilov & Ergasheva, 2021). The following segment focuses on the fundamentals of literary translation and Chinese literature Translation.

It is the task of literary translation, providing the transference of the core of the artwork walking from the native language to another, that the researcher analyse works such as plays, novels, and poems, to name a few (Berman & Venuti, 2021). In the past few decades, literary translation has made more considerable scholarly contributions, and it is often accepted as an essential topic in promoting cultural dialogue (Sun, 2020). Literary translation usually puts forward an idea requiring the translator to have an extensive and profound understanding of the original text and its cultural and historical context, emotional impact, and stylistic features. In addition, it translates the words into another language and understands what they are about and why they matter (Akan et al., 2019). This knowledge implies familiarity with the literary traditions and cultural contexts in which the source and the Target Texts (TTs) exist (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020).

The field of translation competence, where cultural and literary aspects of translation are covered, has focused on such literary translations (Plyth, 2020). Its applicability lies in facilitating intercultural understanding and connection and enlightening the literary traditions of other nations (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020). Therefore, the field of literary translation has had a wider area of research than before by bringing forth various topics concerning the translation of works of literature. The Polysystem Theory of Even-Zohar (1979) provided the concept that has had such a strong impact on the literary translation theory that translation also means the movement of a text within various cultural and literary systems. Another basic approach is Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) (Toury, 2012), which observes language compliance through translation applications.

In recent years, the academy has been discovering more and more ways in which Translation Studies can help to strengthen mutual communication and understanding across cultures. For this reason, translation products, processes, and functions are studied closely (Baker, 2019b). As a result, there has emerged a surge of intellectual disciplines examining translation in various contexts, such as the translator's style, translation and postcolonialism, and translation and globalisation (Plyth & Craham, 2020). The translators' styles are a vital part of the translation process, and literary translation scholars must examine the inhibitors of translating works, both culturally and linguistically (Lefebure, 2019). The branch of literary translation tasks may keep progressing and adjusting, revealing meaningful messages about translation and cross-cultural communication.

On the other hand, researchers have started exploring non-Western literature's translation and supporting neglected cultures and literature works (Jin, 2021). Over the last three decades, there has been a steady increase in the number of investigations related to Chinese literature translation, working on a broad range of its facets by scholars. This includes Cîndea Giță (2021), Tor-Carroggio and Rovira-Esteva (2021), and Wei (2022). Notably, China has been towered as one of the world's most prolific and varied works on translation. The idea of truth, as connected by Valdeón and Zhao (2020), is not peculiar as it was a famous phenomenon that Chinese literature in a global sense remained popular during the 20th century. Chinese literary translation is undergoing intensified scrutiny, with scholars studying and interpreting many facets of the cultural and linguistic milieu. This inquiry includes different unpredictabilities like the efforts involved in the translation of Chinese literature into other languages. It also involves the effect of translation on the global spread of some Chinese books and the complex concept of culture and ideology evolved as a product of translation, as highlighted by Moratto (2022).

Translation Studies of the Chinese literary texts has greatly valued the translator's style (R. Sun, 2021). Through systemic collocation of the translator's style, it is obtained that translators' choices toward involving the Source Text's (ST) linguistic and cultural details. At the same time, various schools of thought on the translators' styles in the context of Chinese literary translation, such as the lexical, the structural, and the textual, have also been discussed by researchers (Liu & Afzaal, 2021b; Liu, 2022; Yanghua & Lianbing, 2021). As an illustration, Francis Ross

Carpenter translated *The Classic of Tea's* book, which was received in China in 1974 (Wu, 2024). The book is characterised by accurate, lucid, and aesthetically pleasing translations. At the same time, another significant night occurred in 1988 when Stephen Mitchell released a translation of *The Tao Te Ching* (Chih-hong Rudy, 2024). Due to its ability to create a poetic and understandable depiction, this translation version won significant praise, which helped the *Tao Te Ching* spread more widely in Western civilisations.

Modern Chinese novels and poetry have garnered a resurgence of interest from academics like Bassnett (2007), Tor-Carroggio and Rovira-Esteva (2021), and Wei and Geng (2022) in the field of literary translation. Scholarly sources like Jahangirova (2020) and Jun (2021) agreed that Lu Xun, a well-known writer of the 20th century, constitutes one of the most significant Chinese authors in history. His essays and short stories have been further perceived as the pillars of modern Chinese writing and society, leaving a deadly impact on the Chinese milieu. *The True Story of Ah Q*, a time-honoured piece of modern Chinese literature, is considered one of the most valuable books in the formal canon (Khan, 2023).

This study mainly observes the English translation of *The True Story of Ah Q* and uses a corpus-based research approach. This work seeks to specify translators' styles and their lexical, syntactic, and textual features, as well as the development of this style as the continuation of the translator's ideology. It also includes the growth of the translator's translation competence in examining the diachronic development of

five relatively different English versions of this novel. Consequently, the research investigates the various trends and methods of translating this literary work. Nevertheless, as the research on diachronic translators' styles goes more profound, the community may embrace their understanding of the translation process and its contributing role in intercultural communication and text accessibility. Furthermore, one significant improvement in the Relationship between the West and China is the findings from the works on the issues of Chinese literature translation. Accordingly, research in this field has notably made literary translation an undertaking in Translation Studies.

2.3 Previous Studies on Diachronic Translation

The diachronic study of translation examines how translation strategies, linguistic features, and ideological perspectives change over time (Pischedda, 2020). While many studies focus on synchronic analyses of translations within a single period, diachronic research reveals patterns of translation evolution. In the case of *The True Story of Ah Q*, each translation reflects distinct linguistic norms, translation theories, and ideological perspectives prevalent in its historical context. For example, Leung's (1926) translation, produced in the early 20th century, differs significantly in style and lexical choices from Lovell's (2009) modern translation. By tracing these diachronic shifts, this study uncovers broader trends in translation competence, ideological adaptation, and stylistic evolution over nearly a century. The diachronic study of translation requires a far-reaching investigation of various theories and

methodologies employed in Translation Studies (Kaindl, 2019). According to Shah et al. (2024), this procedure analyses the historical changes in translation theory and practice as well as the social, cultural, and linguistic environments.

Diachronic translation is channelling numerous paradigms and translation concepts, which is important in its implementation. Furthermore, Butkuvienė and Petrulionė (2023) argued that this activity focuses on studying translation not as an isolated practice but as an event characterised by certain social and cultural elements, which considers norms, changes, and translated texts' perceptions. In dealing with the multiple facets of learning and teaching, as well as translation, Translation Studies may be uniquely positioned to benefit greatly from a diachronic approach. Regarding the historical development of translation and the manifestation of the language and culture, the diachronic perspective is an excellent method of reference, which enables a review of the process in depth. Consequently, following a diachronic approach, a study of the translators' styles and their influence on the target language could become an exciting way to analyse the translation techniques employed in the periods studied and how the practice changes over time (Boiko, 2023)

Diachronic translation cannot do without focusing on translation universals, specifically linguistic phenomena that set translated texts distinctively apart from original texts. This is the assumption, according to Jia et al. (2022), that no matter the initial pair or translation direction, the universals shall always be. A notable feature of the discipline is the investigation of what the universals are, and this issue was recently