Exploring the Influence of Modality on the Translator's Style within a Multidimensional Analysis: A Case Study in the English Translations of *Ah Q Zhengzhuan*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of the modality on translator style through a multidimensional analysis of five English translations of Ah Q Zhengzhuan. Employing a mixed-method approach, the research integrates quantitative analysis using Multidimensional Analysis (MDA) framework (Biber, 1988) and Multidimensional Analysis Tagger (MAT) proposed by Nini (2019) to investigate the use of necessity, possibility, and predictive modals across the translations. Complementing the quantitative data, a qualitative analysis explores specific examples of modal choices made by each translator, providing deeper insights into their stylistic and cultural strategies. The findings indicate that Leung and Lyell favour stronger predictive modals, thereby reinforcing future certainty and maintaining the authoritative tone of the original text, while Lovell and Wang tend to balance the use of possibility and necessity modals, resulting in a more adaptive narrative style. This study offers practical implications for translators by illustrating how modality influences the expression of authority, certainty and cultural reproduction in translation, contributing to a broader understanding of the translator's style. By bridging quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the research provides original insights into the modality's role in cross-cultural literary translations and its impact on both narrative tone and cultural interpretation.

Keywords: The modality, Multidimensional Analysis Tagger (MAT), Translator's Style, Ah Q Zheng Zhuan

INTRODUCTION

its publication, , Lu Xun's modern Chinese literature classic entitled *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* (Xun, 1923) has been regarded as an essential cultural text for China's social transformation and ideological liberation (Zhe, 2024). The depiction of the protagonist, Ah Q, reveals the mental state of the people at the bottom of society and the conflicts and contradictions of society during the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China and has become one of the crucial references for studying modern Chinese history and literature (Kumar, 2024). As the influence of Lu Xun's works in the international literary world expands, *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* has also been translated into many languages, especially the English version, which in turn, made it become an essential bridge for global scholars to study Chinese literature (Jinfang, Kasuma, & Moindjie, 2023).

However, translation is not just a language conversion process; it also involves culture, ideology, and the translator's style and strategic choices (Su, 2023). Especially for works with a profound cultural background, translators face significant challenges in conveying the original text's cultural connotations and social criticism. Due to their varied cultural backgrounds, political stances, and target audiences, translators will make varying strategic decisions during the translation process, which will ultimately impact the translation's style (K. Liu & Afzaal, 2021).

In translation studies, modality pertains to the speaker's or author's attitude regarding the possibility, necessity, or obligation of an event as conveyed through language (Moindjie, 2015; Zhao, Kormos, Rebuschat, & Suzuki, 2021). The choice of the modality reflects the translator's ideological stance and style choice in the translation process to a certain extent (Y. Huang & Li, 2023). Thus, examining how various translators handle modality can illuminate the ways in which they convey the cultural and ideological implications of the original text through language.

Although a number of studies have explored cultural reproduction (it pertains to the translator's function in bridging the source culture and the target culture, ensuring that the cultural nuances of the original text are preserved or adapted to resonate with the target audience), the linguistic style and ideological choices present in the various English translations of Ah Q Zhengzhuan have not been subjected to systematic quantitative analysis regarding the specific manifestation of modality in translation and its influence on the translator's style. (T. Li, Shei, & Hladikova, 2024; Pesaro, 2021). Previous studies have primarily focused on qualitative aspects, such as cultural and ideological shifts. However, the linguistic mechanisms that support these changes, especially the modality, have not been extensively explored. Jinfang et al. (2023) examine the ideological frameworks in the translation of the Ah Q Zhengzhuan; however, the study does not consider the linguistic characteristics that shape these frameworks, such as modality. Meanwhile, although some scholars (Beetz, Herzog, & Maesse, 2021; Du & Chen, 2022; Lijuan & Afzaal, 2024) have mentioned the relationship between the modality and ideology, most of their studies focus on individual cases and lack comparative analyses of multiple translations. To shed insight on ideological shifts, Lijuan and Afzaal (2024) investigated the modality in a single translation; however, their conclusions do not apply to many translations. Yang, Zhang, and Duan (2023) looked into how modality shapes readers' perceptions, but they didn't compare how translators use modality to showcase their unique styles. Additionally, studies by Munday (2012) and Baker (2000) highlight the importance of linguistic features in shaping translators' styles, yet they do not focus on modality as a key factor.

In order to fill this research gap, this study will focus on five Chinese-English translations of *Ah Q Zhengzhuan*, namely George Kin Leung (1926), Chi-Chen Wang (1941), Yang Xianyi & Gladys Yang (as the Yangs) (Xun, 1953), William Lyell (Lyell, 1990) and Julia

Lovell (2009), and analyse the differences in the use of the modality among these translators and their impact on the translator's style. The following table is the details of the translation versions.

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The Translations of Ah Q Zhengzhuan (Jinfang et al., 2023)

Nationality	Translator	Translation Title	Publication Year	Publisher
Chinese American	George Kin Leung	*The True Story of Ah Q*	1926	The Commercial Press, Shanghai
Chinese American	Chi-Chen Wang	*Ah Q and Other Selected Stories* of Lusin	1941	Columbia University Press, the US
Chinese & British	Yang Xianyi & Gladys_Yang	*The True Story of Ah Q*	1953	Beijing Foreign Languages Press, Beijing
American	William Lyell	*Ah Q - the real story*	1990	the University of Hawaii Press, the US
British	Julia Lovell	*A-Q and Other Tales of China*	2009	Penguin Press, the U.S.

This study aims to explore the manifestation of the modality in different translations through Biber's (1988) Multidimensional Analysis (MDA) and then reveal the differences in the translator's style. Specifically, this study will answer the following question: How do different modality choices affect the translator's style?

The significance of this study is mainly reflected in the following aspects. Initially, this study contributes to addressing the gap in the modality analysis of Ah Q Zhengzhuan's translation. It enables scholars to have a more comprehensive viewpoint on translators' translation styles. Second, the current study lays the groundwork for a quantitative analysis of translation style utilising MAT and MDA. We can better understand how translators' choices represent their unique styles and ideological stances by conducting a methodical examination of the medium. This approach provides a methodological framework for future research to investigate further linguistic dimensions in translation, enhancing the discipline's ability to analyse and compare translations more thoroughly.

LITERATURE REVIEW

APPLICATION OF THE MODALITY THEORY IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

The modality is an expressed way by which a speaker or writer interprets things: modal verbs, including 'must', 'have to', 'ought to', 'should', 'might', and 'could', show different modalities of the duty or compulsion, desirability or duty of fulfilment, and possibility (Karim, Shahzad, & Hussain, 2023). Information about the manner of expression as well as the relationship between the source events and their subjects is provided by the translator's modality. It is done through the use of modals, adverbs of manner, and other expressions that are restricted permission ('must', 'can', 'should', 'probably', 'indeed') but which concede the translator the freedom of choice (Hohaus, 2020).

Hatim and Mason (2014) proposed that the choice of the modality in translation reflects the translator's ideological position because the modality can reflect the speaker's or translator's attitude towards a proposition to a certain extent. In order to conform to the cultural standards of the target language or the expectations of the readers, the translator may occasionally modify the translation's tone by altering the original text's modal intensity (Long Li, 2017; Pym, 2023). This adjustment is not only an act of language conversion but also an act of cultural and ideological reproduction (Altahmazi, 2020). To illustrate, a translator of *Ah Q Zhengzhuan*, for instance, who works with a source text that indicates a notion of making a strong obligation (something like '必须 bìxū', which means 'must'), may soften that obligation to slightly 'should' or even 'might' for a target audience, which in many cases may come from a cultural background where different preferences exist. This method makes the reader aware of the main character's nuanced function as a cultural and ideological mediator who can modify the work and fit it into the space of the intended audience while preserving its feeling of origin. Hence, modality will be a profound element in exploring the path of a translator's style and ideology. This approach may also enable scholars to draw generalizations about the translator's mindset, as their practices of addressing the modal expressions may demonstrate stylistic patterns, which can indicate their cultural fidelity or creativity. For example, Leung's rendering of *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* strives to reproduce each modal mode of the source text verbatim to the letter, reflecting the revolutionary spirit in the source material and their commitment to fidelity. On the other hand, Julia Lovell's efficiency often reduces modals' strength, so she aims to make the West readers more familiar with modern consonances and methods. These decisions not only affect how the reader interprets the text, but they also place the translator in relation to power and ideological struggles as well as cultural negotiations.

Moreover, the modality analysis could also disclose the translator's ideological attitude because the degree of malleability of formulas usually correlates to the assumptions held by the translator regarding the source material or the cultural limitations of the audience. To give an example, a translator who constantly fortifies modality expressions (e.g., changing "might" to "must") probably makes her readers believe in a strong sense of authority or certainty about the text. In contrast, if a translator willingly lightens the expression (e.g., changing "must" to "could"), they might head towards a more exploratory or open approach. Within the framework of the original text Ah Q Zhengzhuan, these modifications may be a vivid manifestation of how translators cope with the problem of sustaining the inner ideological core of the text. However, it also adjusts to the expectations of the target culture. Thus, the modality instrument seems to be a crucial area to investigate how translators address ideological or cultural inconsistencies that influence how the text is received in the language of the target audience.

RESEARCH ON THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF AH Q ZHENGZHUAN

The earliest English translation of *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* was translated by George Kin Leung in 1926, and the newest English Translation of this book was translated by Julia Lovell in 2009. This novel was translated over the course of a century. The renowned translators used various approaches at each level, depending on their standards as well as the social and political climate of the day (Tian & Jincheng, 2021). For example, Wang's translation in 1941 lifted the veil of China to U.S. readers and aroused the American people's sympathy and support for wartime China (Kao, 1942). The Yangs' translation in 1953 was selected in the teaching material on campus and used for scientific research (Yanqiu, 2015). On the other hand, Lyell's translation in 1990 was always an excellent choice for readers interested in Chinese culture because of its copious notes and background knowledge (Stebbins, 2009).

Existing studies mainly focus on cultural adaptability and translation strategies. For instance, Wang (2017) conducted a qualitative study of George Kin Leung's English translation in an academic setting. Along with the translation, the study uncovered that as ideology and cultural factors shaped the translator's approach, the textual alterations consequently followed. As evidenced by Tian and Jincheng (2021), Their report argued for scholarly examination in the subject by interpreting the translations by the Yangs and William Lyell. They looked at the various ways that translators expressed their styles and primarily concentrated on the translation principle of functional equivalency in literature interpretation. Li Li (2021) asserts that the translator's characteristic is a changing and gradual procedure permanently in progress. Knowledge of the source text is essential, often influencing the translator's choice. Huang (2022) conducted a study of the translations done by Chi-Chen Wang and found out a subtle relation between Wang's complex style choices and his operating socio-political context. It visualises the personal details that could be causing him to have a unique translation style.

In conclusion, previous studies of English translations of *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* have shed light on how translators deal with cultural, ideological, and linguistic problems. The findings of the research thus demonstrate the structural impact of sociopolitical conditions on the formulation of translation procedures. However, it is important to stress the need for cultural flexibility and functional equivalency in literary translation. However, women lack systematic, thorough editing, despite the fact that a lot of work has been done on stand-alone translations and their consequent cultural impact. By focusing on a few details, such as qualitative elements like the reproduction of culture and the modification of ideology, this area has seen a marked absence of consideration towards the role of linguistic features, e.g., modality, which form the basis for these changes. Besides, there is just a minimal amount of work covering the influence of single language instruments, such as modality, on the formation of style features of a translator.

THE APPLICATION OF MDA IN TRANSLATOR'S STYLE RESEARCH

To evaluate the features of different translators' styles from a more general perspective, MDA has been gradually applied by academia in recent years (Chou & Liu, 2024; Fang & Liu, 2023). MDA Orientation is partially based on the traditional linguistic correlates study, which can help to measure and compare the differences in the translations of 'A Thousand Splendid Suns', as well as identify the translators' styles based on specific parameters such as generative capacity, narrative strategy, and grammatical complexity, etc. (Zhang, 2023). Its main thesis is that by analysing the quantitative aspects of the language, one can identify the author's political inclination and linguistic approach (Mu, 2021).

Biber (1988) gave rise to the MDA approach, which aimed to apply variables for the linguistic usage of diverse text genres. The same method was employed in the work of such genres. Nini (2019) took this method further, and the approach is said to be customary in translation studies. That is a customary and widely used practice. Using translated materials from various perspectives, this research approach examines repression. To find the differences across all aspects, the researchers use quantitative analysis. They then connect these differences to the sociocultural background and ideological conflicts of the translator (Xie, 2020).

Nevertheless, MDA seems to have been applied within translation studies to discover the translator's traits and what role language plays in revealing the translator's background (Chou & Liu, 2024). For instance, Chou, Xiang, and Liu (2024) applied MDA to compare the lexical attributes of the translations prepared by performers and non-professional translators. Performing research on the translator's style was one of the goals of Wu (2024). For that, they

utilized MDA as a method for corpus-based research. MDA can be a beneficial technique for translator style studies, according to Chou and Liu (2024). All things considered, using MDA modality analysis to examine the translators' styles is a sufficient approach because it makes sense to link this method to identifying the cultural and ideological motivation and providing a more detailed explanation of certain linguistic choices.

METHODS

RESEARCH DESIGN

This work proposes a mixed methodology of research, that is, both quantitative and qualitative studies, envisaging the identification of modality choices in the five English versions of *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* and their effect on the style of the translators. In the quantitative research, the MDA tool MAT, developed by Nini (2019), was applied to analyse the linguistic features of the translations quantitatively, and every translation's modal features were examined via the Z-score. Z-score can be described as a measure that indicates how much a specific data value, which, in this case, is the modal feature frequency, deviates from the mean in standard deviations. For instance, a higher Z-score for the corresponding feature may indicate that a translator uses the modal verb "must" more often than would be expected from a standard dataset of all translations. Using content analysis as its methodological technique, this study conducts a thorough investigation of qualitative components. The analysis pinpoints particular instances in which the translated texts' modality selections differed. Here, the research concentrates on the items where the modal terms determine the meaning or significance, and selecting such elements (should/might/must) is essential. Such a strategy encourages the analyst to sense a more profound meaning and see the message behind modality in terms of tone, attitude, and ideology, thus improving the analytic result.

CORPUS CONSTRUCTION

For the current study, the reliability and representativeness of the analysis are guaranteed by five English translations of the Chinese novel *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* (as shown in Table 1). They also differ in style and reflect the changing times and culture of the century. The steps of corpus construction are as follows:
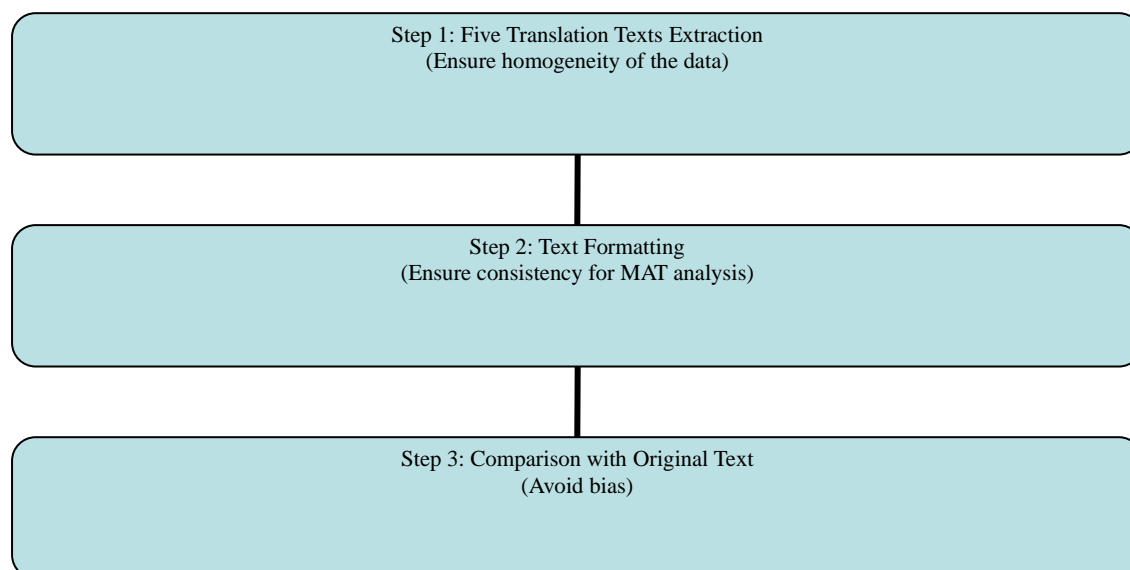
Step 1: Five Translation Texts Extraction
(Ensure homogeneity of the data)

Step 2: Text Formatting
(Ensure consistency for MAT analysis)

Step 3: Comparison with Original Text
(Avoid bias)

Figure 1

The steps of corpus construction

<div align="center">QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS</div>

<div align="center">MDA TOOL – MAT</div>

MAT, developed by Nini (2019), based on Biber's MDA model, was used to analyse the translated text of this novel. In order to run the program, a Java environment must be installed on the Windows operating system (Gill et al., 2021). This tool automates the MDA steps proposed by Biber (1988), allowing for automatic text labelling, feature extraction, and statistical data analysis. In addition, the built-in Stanford POS Tagger is used to assign part-of-speech codes and statistically analyse the performance of texts in 8 register categories, 67 language features, and five functional Dimensions, as Biber (2014) did in his MDA model (Nini, 2015). Biber, on the other hand, maintained that linguistic variation was continuous along five dimensions. He characterised discourse types by evaluating similarities and contrasts across these dimensions in tandem and identified characteristics linked with each dimension (Passonneau, Ide, Su, & Stuart, 2014). The primary steps involved in this process are as follows: Firstly, the frequency of 67 distinct features in each discourse is counted and normalised to determine the frequency per thousand words (Biber, 1988). Following this, a factor analysis is conducted on the data, wherein five to seven factors are identified based on the co-occurrence of each factor with the 67 language features specific to the corresponding register (Biber, 1988). These factors represent the "Dimensions" in the MDA approach, and each factor is associated with a specific set of language features with corresponding factor loadings (Ijaz, Tahir, & Ahmed, 2021).

The translations of Ah Q Zhengzhuan were assessed using MAT, which ensures objectivity by analysing the data results of the literary translation study. The features identified in the translations of Ah Q Zhengzhuan were normalised per 100 words to allow for comparisons between texts of different sizes. Due to the vast amount of information, the analytical procedure required, and the massive size of the corpus, precision and recall were not calculated. Additionally, the tagger currently employs the Stanford parser, which is widely recognised as one of the most reliable and commonly utilised parsers (N. Liu, 2024).

<div align="center">THE MODALITY ANALYSIS</div>

According to Nini (2019), the modal analysis in this study will focus on the use of the following three types of modals:

1. Necessity Modals

Necessity Modals are mainly used to express the necessity of an event or behaviour, with common words such as 'must', 'have to', 'should', and so on. The nature of the modality (i.e., the type of modalities) chosen by the translator can help express the translator's attitude to the necessity and the authority in the text (Leclercq, Cappelle, Depraetere, & Grandin, 2023).

2. Possibility Modals

This type of modality conceives the occurrence of an event as possible or likely as it employs such words as 'might', 'could', 'may', and many others. A different translator's choice is based on their way of being the authority or necessity with the text. The various translators imply giving different meanings by casting doubt over what is a fact and what is not (Leclercq, 2022).

3. Predictive Modals

Predictive Modals are aimed to represent probable future events and behaviours. Therefore, the commonly used verbs would be 'will' and 'shall'. Using such modals, in itself, shows the translator's outlook on the future and his effort to mirror the narrative tone of the original text (Liao, Vakanski, & Xian, 2020).

The distribution of modals will be computed using MAT, which will also yield the number of times the modes occur in the five translations. The translator is therefore familiar with how to correct the modals. The Z-score is utilised to evaluate the translation data and shows how it deviates from the norm (Ren & Lu, 2021). A Z-score more significant than or less than zero might imply that a translation runs higher or lower than the norm (Cermak, 2020).
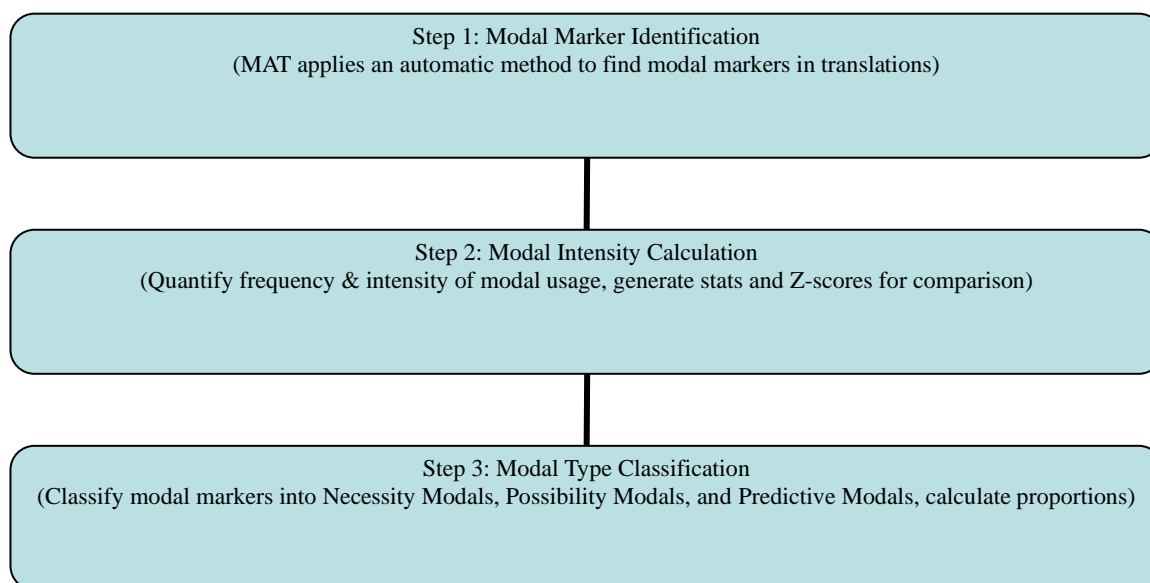
The specific steps are as follows:

Step 1: Modal Marker Identification
(MAT applies an automatic method to find modal markers in translations)

Step 2: Modal Intensity Calculation
(Quantify frequency & intensity of modal usage, generate stats and Z-scores for comparison)

Step 3: Modal Type Classification
(Classify modal markers into Necessity Modals, Possibility Modals, and Predictive Modals, calculate proportions)

Figure 2

Steps for Analysing Modal Markers Using MAT

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the qualitative part, this study will adopt the traditional qualitative analysis method to conduct an in-depth contextualised analysis of modal use in each translation. Specifically, typical example sentences of modal use will be extracted from each translation, and the modal choices of these example sentences will be interpreted and analysed in detail, taking into account the translators' context and cultural background.

In the qualitative analysis, representative modal example sentences will be selected with the following criteria:

1. Modal diversity: The flexible selection of sentences with various types of modal markers will be supported by an effort to compare the specific statements of different modalities in the same texts.

2. Contextual relevance: Choose modal sentences that suit the given social or cultural conditions in *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* and analyse the translators' ways of achieving the value of these sentences in various cultural systems.

3. Narrative Importance: Consider comprising modal sentences that play a leading role in a narrative's storyline and consider how language is used to determine the narrative direction and character roles.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The following steps are the procedures of the data analysis:

Step 1. Data collection: a corpus was constructed for the five translations, and multidimensional and modal analyses were conducted using the MAT tool.

Step 2. Data statistics: according to the results generated by the MAT tool, the scores of different dimensions and modalities were counted and compared, and a quantitative data table was generated.

Step 3. Qualitative analysis: representative modal example sentences were selected for detailed analysis and cross-validated with quantitative data.

Step 4. Comprehensive discussion: Combine the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses to discuss the overall impact of modal choices on the translator's style and relate it to the translator's cultural background, contemporary environment and ideological stance.

SUMMARY

By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, this study is not only able to grasp the differences in modal choices of different translators as a whole but also able to reveal the impact of these linguistic choices on the style and cultural reproduction of translations through in-depth analyses of specific example sentences. For the quantitative analyses, the MAT tool offers trustworthy statistical support. On the other hand, the qualitative analyses support the in-depth explanations of the modes' roles, guaranteeing that the study may investigate the connection between the modality and the translators' style at both the macroscopic and microscopic levels.

DATA ANALYSIS

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MODALITY RESULTS

A quantitative analysis of the modals of five translations (Leung, Wang, The Yangs, Lyell and Lovell) investigated the frequency of use of Necessity Modals, Possibility Modals and Predictive Modals with respect to Z-scores. It revealed significant differences in modal choices across translators. Table 2 shows the Z-score in the modality of the Five Translations.

Table 2

The Z-score in Modalities of the Five Translations

Model	Z-score		
	Necessity Modals	Possibility Modals	Predictive Modals
Leung	-0.1	-0.46	0.26
Wang	0.29	-0.14	0.05
The Yangs	0	-0.09	0.14
Lyell	-0.38	-0.14	0.48
Lovell	-0.52	-0.74	-0.29

Based on Table 2, the facts are as follows.

With a Z-score of 0.26, Leung's translation performed better on predictive modals, suggesting that Leung frequently employs more potent predictive modals like "will" and "shall," which raise future expectations and certainty in the translation. It makes the translation more decisive and conveys a stronger sense of confidence and direction, especially regarding future situations. At the same time, Leung's NECESSITY MODALS is

relatively neutral, with a Z-score of -0.1, indicating that he is more restrained in expressing responsibility or obligation, which makes the translation less obligatory.

Wang's translation shows a strong balance with a significantly higher Z-score of 0.29 for Necessity Modals, indicating that Wang expresses duties and obligations more frequently. This high-frequency modality of necessity results in greater coercion and authority in the translation. Possibility Modals have a more even Z-score of -0.14, showing that Wang maintains a certain balance in expressing uncertainty, avoiding too much ambiguity without weakening the determinism of the original text.

With a Z-score of 0.14, the Yangs' translations are more careful when utilising the predictive modality, neither inflating nor decreasing the chance of future events, placing them closer to the median on predictive modalities. Similarly, The Yangs show some balance in their use of Possibility Modals, with a Z-score of -0.09, suggesting that they are more moderate in their expression of uncertainty, in line with their overall more fluid and readable style.

Lyell's translation demonstrates an obvious pattern, evidenced by a high Z-score of 0.48 for Predictive Modals. This indicates that the significant employment of Predictive Modals in his translation distinctly underscores the certainty of the future situation, potentially reinforcing the determinism present in the original text in certain contexts. Lyell's Z-score of -0.38 for Necessity Modals indicates a notable reduction in coercion regarding the expression of obligation or responsibility. This alteration may have contributed to a diminishment of the original text's imperative or coercive characteristics in the translation.

Lovell's translations, compared with those of other translators, feature a more limited distribution of the modality, wherein Necessity Modals (Z-score is -0.52) and Possibility Modals (Z-score is -0.74) are significantly lower than those of the other translators. Such a notion suggests that Lovell encourages a straightforward portrayal of ambiguity while restricting her usage of expressing responsibility and doubt. For this type of translation, it may also be presumed that Lovell favours a simpler and more direct descriptive approach. Overall, Leung and Lyell increased the certainty of the translations about future events while adding the prediction modality, demonstrating a firmer grasp of future situations. On the other hand, Lovell maintains a cautious attitude towards future situations, reflecting the translators 'conservatism and uncertainty about future events. The results show that these differences profoundly affect the translators' style.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS RESULTS

Through the qualitative analysis of specific modal sentences, this study further reveals how translators influence the tone and style of the translated text and its cultural reproduction through modal choices in the translation process. The following is an analysis of some key sentences. The examples and the explanations are shown in Table 3 as follows.

Table 3

Example 1: Expressing Commands and Threats

Source text	自己是不动手的了，叫小 D 来搬，<u>要搬得快</u>，搬得不快打嘴巴。(Zì jǐ shì bù dòng shǒu de le, jiào Xiǎo D lái bān, <u>yào</u> bān de kuài, bān de bù kuài dǎ zuǐ ba.)
Leung	I myself <u>will not</u> lift a hand; I <u>will</u> order Little D to come move them. Little D <u>must</u> be spry; if he isn't I <u>will</u> give him a smack on the mouth.
Wang	He <u>would not</u> bestir himself about these things. Little Don <u>would</u> be told to do it and he <u>had better</u> be quick about it if he did not want to get slapped ...
The	I <u>would not</u> lift a finger myself, but order Young D to move the things for me, and to look smart about it, unless

Yangs	he wanted a slap in the face…
Lyell	<u>Won't</u> even have to lift a finger. Get Young D to do all the heavy work. Better step lively too, if he doesn't want a good belt or two.
Lovell	I <u>won't</u> be doing the moving myself, of course, <u>I'll</u> get D to do it. <u>He'll</u> get a slap around the face if he doesn't look sharp about it.

The source text presents an asserting tone. The original text employs the term 要 (yào), which expresses a significant sense of obligation or necessity, frequently interpreted as "must" or "have to." With a tone that is both authoritative and firm, the speaker gives Little D instructions to comply quickly and suggests repercussions for noncompliance. By using strong predictive and necessary modals (will, must), Leung's translation maintains the authoritative tone of the original while highlighting the command's coercive nature. Wang and the Yangs adopt a gentler approach by employing milder modals such as 'would' and 'had better,' which diminishes the sense of obligation and renders the translation more contemplative and less intimidating. Lyell's translation incorporates informal expressions (such as "won't" and "better step lively"), which diminishes the coercive tone and enhances the accessibility of the text for Western readers. Lovell's translation employs informal language (won't, I'll), while still preserving a degree of the original's directness, thereby achieving a balance between accessibility and fidelity.

Table 4

Example 2: Expressing Uncertainty and Doubt

Source text	他又退一步想道："难道他们还没有知道我已经投降了革命党么？" (Tā yòu tuì yī bù xiǎng dào: "<u>Nán dào</u> tā men hái méi yǒu zhī dào wǒ yǐ jīng tóu xiáng le gé mìng dǎng me?")
Leung	He then reflected and said, "<u>Can</u> it really be that they do not know that I have already joined the ranks of the Revolutionary Party?"
Wang	Then he comforted himself with the thought that they were <u>perhaps</u> not yet aware that he had entered the service of the revolution.
The Yangs	Then he said to himself, "<u>Maybe</u> they still don't know I have joined the revolutionaries."
Lyell	He backed up another step in his thoughts and wondered: "<u>Do you suppose</u> they don't know I've already thrown in with the Revolution Party?"
Lovell	'<u>Don't they know</u> I've surrendered to the Revolutionary Party, too?' he wondered to himself.

The original text employs the term 难道 (nán dào), which conveys a sense of disbelief or incredulity, frequently interpreted as "can it be" or "are they unaware." The speaker enquires if others recognise his commitment to the revolutionary party, conveying a sense of uncertainty and introspection. In order to preserve the original's sceptical tone and heighten the sensation of scepticism, Leung's translation makes use of the modal verb "can". Wang and the Yangs adopt a gentler approach by incorporating terms such as 'perhaps' and 'maybe', which renders the translation more contemplative and less interrogative. Lyell's translation employs the phrase 'do you suppose', which preserves the ambiguity of the original text while rendering it more approachable in tone. Lovell's translation employs the phrase 'don't they know', effectively maintaining the sceptical tone and aligning with the original intent.

Table 5

Example 3: Expressing Future Expectations and Confidence

Source text	"过了二十年又是一个……"阿 Q 在百忙中，"无师自通"的说出半句从来不说的话。"Guò le èr shí nián yòu shì yī gè……" Ā Q zài bǎi máng zhōng, "wú shī zì tōng" de shuō chū bàn jù cóng lái bù shuō de huà.
Leung	"After twenty years, <u>there will be</u> born another hero like myself," came the thought to Ah Q's bewildered mind, and "attaining knowledge alone without the help of a teacher" an incomplete sentence which had never been spoken by him before.
Wang	"In twenty years <u>I'll</u> be here again . . . ", Ah Q suddenly blurted out this immemorial defiance, which he had never heard said, in which he had never been coached, and which, therefore, he must have arrived at independently and instinctively in the crisis.
The Yangs	"In twenty years I <u>shall</u> be another…" In his agitation Ah Q uttered half a saying which he had picked up himself but never used before.
Lyell	"Twenty years from now . . . " Ah Q shouted the first half of the sentence, a sentence he had never used before, one he had never been taught but which he seemed to have mastered on his own nonetheless.
Lovell	'In twenty years, I <u>shall</u> return…' Ah-Q plucked an unrehearsed line out of his panicked subconscious.

The original text employs the expression 过了二十年又是一个 (guò le èr shí nián yòu shì yī gè), which conveys an ambiguous anticipation of what lies ahead, frequently interpreted as 'in twenty years, I will be another.' The speaker expresses a sense of assurance regarding forthcoming events, embodying an attitude of optimism and resolve. Leung's translation employs the predictive modal 'will' to amplify the confidence and certainty present in the original text, thereby strengthening its authoritative tone. By using the term "I'll," Wang's translation makes the original language more conversational and approachable while maintaining its predictive quality. The word "shall" is used in Yangs' translation, which adds a formal element while still maintaining the predictive tone. The future is made less clear by Lyell's translation, which removes the modal verb but adds the slang phrase "twenty years from now". Meanwhile, his counterpart Lovell uses 'shall', which bears the same connotation as the original text, often making the text sound more meditative and 'commanding' in both cases.

DISCUSSION

Using modals exposes the translator's style and unveils their ideological bias in cultural reproduction. In this study, we are going to explore three approaches of modal use: necessity, possibility, and predictive modals. Conversely, each translator employs these features in their individual way to create the effects of tone, authority, or cultural adaptation. The equivalent necessity modals, like must, have to, and should, express a sensation that there is an obligation or necessity. Necessity modals play the functional role of authority and responsibility in translations. The possibility modals "might," "could," and "may" function to show one's dubiousness concerning whether something will happen or is likely to happen. In translation, the intended readers' cultural norms are associated with the textual context through the use of possibility modals. The predictive modals, for example, 'will' and 'shall', depict the narration level as probably the actual event. By primarily retaining the modal of necessity and prognostication, which is apparent in the variety of the text's style, Leung and Lovell enhance the translation's authority and future likelihood. By strengthening the modes of possibility and decreasing the modes of necessity, Wang, the Yangs, and Lyell, on the other hand, soften the translation and adjust it to the expectations of readers in various cultural contexts.

The addition and subtraction of modals bring both meaning gain and some loss of meaning. For example, by increasing the predictive modality, the translation becomes more

certain in expressing future situations, but in weakening the necessity modality, the obligatory tone of the original text is diluted, resulting in a partial loss of semantic meaning. This trade-off reflects the translator's balance between maintaining the style of the original text and adapting it to the readers of the target culture.

CONCLUSION

Combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, the authors systematically explore the use of modality in five English translations of *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* and its impact on the style of the translations. The multidimensional quantitative analyses of Necessity Modals, Possibility Modals and Predictive Modals, as well as the in-depth qualitative analyses of key modal sentences, reveal the far-reaching effects of modality on the translator's style and cultural reproduction in the translation process.

In the quantitative analyses, significant differences in the use of modality across translators revealed their different orientations in terms of translator style. For example, Leung's translations showed significantly more frequent use of the Predictive Modals (z-score of 0.26), indicating that he maintains the authority and confidence of his translations by reinforcing the certainty of future events. Leung faithfully conveyed the original text's style in the qualitative analysis by using strong predictive and necessity modes, such as "will" and "must," when dealing with directives and threatening language, thus maintaining the original text's obligatory and authoritative nature. Wang and the Yangs have generally employed more directive modalisation using 'will' and 'must', thereby making their modal choices more imperative than recommendatory.

Meanwhile, Wang and the Yangs proved themselves to be more balanced in using Necessity Modals and Possibility Modals, where they received Z-scores of 0.29 and 0, in the respective quantitative analyses, which means they adopted the complete strategy for implying responsibility and possibility. For qualitative analysis, Wang and the Yangs used mild modal verbs 'would' and 'had better', which didn't set any compulsion in the original text and made the translation more reflective and softer, just like readers from the target culture needed. The translation has more psychological and sentimental aspects and therefore is more suitable for the audience in the target culture.

On the other hand, Necessity Modals (Z-scores of -0.38 and -0.52) was much lower in Lyell and Lovell's studies, however, they managed to increase the Possibility Modals (Z-scores of -0.14 and -0.74) significantly. This modal choice made the translations more open and uncertain and reduced the sense of coercion and command in the original text. In the qualitative analysis, Lyell and Lovell's translations were made more approachable through the use of more colloquial and suggestive expressions, but they also led to a partial semantic loss, weakening the authoritative and commanding nature of the original text.

The modality selection is indicative of the translator's approach to cultural reproduction, which includes the ways in which different cultural elements—like norms, values, ideologies, and social practices—are communicated and reinterpreted in a variety of contexts, often with the aid of translation. The selection of modality serves as an indication of the translator's approach to cultural reproduction, as modality functions as a linguistic instrument that expresses the speaker's or writer's perspective on possibility, necessity, or prediction. In summary, the examination of modality across the five English translations of *Ah Q Zhengzhuan* indicates that the decisions made by translators are significantly shaped by cultural and ideological considerations. Leung and Lovell's employment of robust predictive modals (such as will and shall) demonstrates their dedication to maintaining the authoritative tone and future certainty inherent in the original text, which resonates with the revolutionary

themes present in Lu Xun's work. In contrast, the preference exhibited by Wang and the Yangs for milder modals (e.g., would, might) illustrates their approach to aligning the text with the cultural expectations of Western readers. This choice serves to soften the coercive tone of the original, rendering it more reflective and accessible. Lyell's translation, characterised by its informal expressions and minimised necessity modals, exemplifies the ways in which translators address cultural and ideological disparities to produce a text that connects with the intended audience.

Both semantic gain and semantic loss are the outcomes of this modal choice. Leung and Lovell employ the predictive modality more frequently, which leads to semantic gain by enhancing the translation's assurance and authority in predicting future events. Wang and The Yangs, on the other hand, by weakening the necessity modality, reduce the coercive and imperative nature of the translation, leading to a partial semantic loss and weakening the criticality and decisiveness of the original text. Meanwhile, Lyell and Lovell show more flexibility in the addition of the possibility modality, which makes the translation more subtle and open in expressing assumptions and uncertainty, but it also weakens the imperatives in the original text, resulting in some semantic loss.

The findings underscore the significance of modality as an essential linguistic mechanism in the processes of cultural reproduction and ideological mediation within the context of translation. We can learn more about how translators strike a balance between preserving the source text's cultural and ideological integrity and bringing it into line with the standards and expectations of the target culture by looking at the modality choices. By demonstrating how linguistic features like modality can serve as a framework for analysing cultural and ideological changes in translated works, this study contributes to the vast field of translation studies.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Although this study provides an in-depth exploration of modal use through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, there are still some limitations. Firstly, this study was limited to five English translations, and future research could be extended to translations in other languages and cultural contexts to explore more extensively the differences in the treatment of modality across languages. Second, although this study conducted quantitative analyses through the MAT tool, future research can incorporate more corpus tools and analysis methods further to enrich the understanding of the translator's style and modal use.

In summary, this study shows the profound impact of modal choice on translators' style and cultural reproduction by integrating quantitative and qualitative assessments. It not only increases our comprehension of the many Ah Q Zhengzhuan translations into English, but it also offers fresh viewpoints and ideas for how modal analysis might be used in subsequent translation research.

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