

New Frontiers in Translation Studies

(Hugs) Gengshen Hu

# Eco-Translatology

Towards an Eco-paradigm of Translation  
Studies

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(Hugs) Gengshen Hu  
School of International Studies  
Zhengzhou University  
Zhengzhou, China

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# Chapter 1

## Preliminaries: The Name and Nature of Eco-Translatology



### 1.1 Introduction

Although explorations of the ecological perspective of translation studies germinated in 2001 (see details in Sect. 2.4.1), a systematic argumentation and international exposition of “Eco-translatology” did not appear until August 2006, when a conference article titled *Understanding Eco-translatology* was presented at the international conference *Translating Global Cultures: Towards Interdisciplinary (Re)Constructions*. It was published later under the title “Eco-translatology: A Primer” in *Chinese Translator’s Journal* (see Hu, 2008, pp. 11–15).

Eco-translatology is an entirely novel and “formerly nonexistent”<sup>1</sup> perspective of translation studies proposed by a Chinese scholar; it is a systematic approach with newly coined terms and concepts to “strike out a new line”<sup>2</sup> that is utterly different from previous perspectives. Curious, questioning and suspicious responses to this perspective are therefore natural, and questions such as “What is Eco-translatology?” and “What are the definition and essence of Eco-translatology?” emerge naturally within and outside the academic translation field.

One dominant purpose of this book, *Eco-translatology: Towards a New Paradigm for Translation Studies* (hereafter abbreviated as *Eco-paradigm*), apart from taking a panoramic view of Eco-translatology, is to provide answers to these questions. The origin and development of Eco-translatology will be elaborated, the overall theoretical framework and scopes of different levels of Eco-translatology will be discussed and the developmental horizon and “road map” of Eco-translatology will

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<sup>1</sup> See the relevant statement of Qian (2000, pp. 10–14) in his article “Dedicating Something Original to the World: Creativity in Foreign Language Research” in *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*.

<sup>2</sup> See the relevant statement of Yang (2009, pp. xii–xiii) in his article “On Creating a Benign Eco-environment for Literary Translation” in *Eastern Translation*.

be explicated in addition to, naturally, its applications and expansion, implications and significance for the disciplinary development of translation studies as a whole.

Eco-translatology covers, literally, at least “translatology” and “ecology”; hence, the ensuing section will visit both fields before elaborating on the definition and essence of Eco-translatology.

## 1.2 Translatology

It is natural for translatology to take priority in *Construction and Interpretation* since this monograph investigates the translational framework, theoretical systems of translatology, and translational text operations. This prioritization is reinforced by the fact that Eco-translatology is by nature a synthetic research approach to translatology from an ecological perspective; i.e., it is rooted in and resides in translatology.

A remarkably long list of investigations and discussions on translatology, particularly its disciplinary framework and theoretical system, can be identified, with contributors inside and outside China. As early as the 1950s, Western scholars, illuminated by linguistics and owing to the newest findings in that field, explored the theoretical and practical aspects of translation from the linguistic perspective. Translation studies thus gained scientific and systemic associations, paving a scientific path for the further development of translation studies proper. In 1972, James Holmes, a Dutch-American, presented his paper “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies” at a conference on applied linguistics to announce his speculations regarding establishing translation studies as an independent discipline and sketched an overall structure of translation studies to describe the scope of the field; this structure was later represented by Gideon Toury in a graphical form. In line with “Holmes’s map of translation studies,” two branches of translation studies are “pure” and “applied,” with the former being subdivided into theoretical translation studies (ThTS) and descriptive translation studies (DTS) and theoretical translation studies being further divided into general translation theory and partial translation theory (Munday, 2000, pp. 10–11). Through the joint efforts of scholars, “the growth of Translation Studies as a separate discipline is a success story of the 1980s” (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990, p. ix).

More than a few scholars in China have successively investigated translation studies issues and expounded them. A multiplicity of speculations and descriptions can be found when we examine publications in recent decades. For instance, Huang (1988) deemed “translation studies a borderline science studying instructive translation theories together with practical translation laws and their applications with a complete system and structure”; Tan (1988) subdivided translation into general, specific, and applicative branches; Liu (1989) described the exterior and interior systems in the disciplinary framework of translation studies; and Yang (1989) considered “translation studies a science investigating the thinking laws and methods of translation” and presented the research objectives, nature, and three-level disciplin-

ary structure and constructive strategic task of translation science. Wang (2001, p. 94) discussed translation studies as a science of studying the laws and arts of translation, with the principle objective of displaying the history, theories, and schools of thought domestically and abroad; explored the nature, functions, criteria, principles, and methods of translation; described the real-life translation process and stated the specialties and requirements of different types of translation; probed the scientific and artistic nature of language transformation; determined the qualities and competence required on the part of the translator and ways to cultivate and improve his or her competence, and predicted the trends of translation courses.

As mentioned above, Yang Zijian has frequently revisited the definition of translation studies: it is an independent, open, and synthetic branch of humanities that takes as its research objects the overall process of translation (including objects, subjects, processes, products, and effects), translation history, translation theory history, and methodology with the underlying notion of promoting and improving communication and reducing conflicts and harm. The key concerns are not only the general theoretical study but also the theoretical applicability (including translation practice, translation criticism, and translator training). The discipline of translation studies has two systems—a narrow one and a broad one: the former, the regimen system of the discipline, covers the underlying notions, norms, and administrative and legal systems of the discipline, and the latter, the norm system of the discipline, falls into five subsystems according to distance from practice and degree of abstraction: metatheory, translation philosophy, translation theories, translation strategies, and translation methods and tactics (Yang, 2007; Pan & Yang, 2008, pp. viii–ix).

Generally, ongoing research by scholars worldwide on the connotations, research objects, research methods, etc., has led to the continuous development of translation theories since the late 1970s. In the wake of accelerating stress over the “interdisciplinary nature” of translation studies (see Sect. 3.5.1) in particular, successive studies of translation have emerged from different disciplines, approaches, and schools, such as linguistics, comparative literature, cultural studies, communication studies, and philosophy, enabling theoretical studies of translation to prosper.

Nevertheless, the latter half of the 1990s, especially around the turn of the century, saw a relative slackening of the translation studies movement or a depression in theoretical studies, and translation exploration seemingly lapsed into a kind of late postmodern quiescence<sup>3</sup> Translation scholars could not avoid such baffling questions as what was the next “turn” of translation studies after its “cultural turn” ran aground? What would be the next “invigoration point” or “emergent point” of theoretical studies of translation? The prosperity and progress of translation studies brought excitement, whereas these puzzling issues of theoretical studies of translation urged reflection and exploration.

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<sup>3</sup>As stated by some scholars, in this era of globalization, the “Western centrism” mode of thought has been challenged, and culture itself has encountered unavoidable crisis (Wang, 2004, p. 24).

### 1.3 Ecology

An acquaintance with ecology and ecosystems is a prerequisite because Eco-translatology is a synthesis of translation studies and the ecological perspective, and the environmental rationality, disciplinary features, research findings, and research methodology of ecology definitely shed light on Eco-translatology studies.

As we know, the term “ecology” was used for the first time in 1866 by Ernst Haeckel, a German zoologist, to denote the science of “studying the interrelations between organisms and their environments” (Wang & Zhou, 2004, p. 3). In other words, “ecology” was considered the study of the interrelation between organisms and their environments,<sup>4</sup> and in the early years, ecology was defined as “a sub-branch of biology to study the interrelation between organisms and between organisms and their environments.”<sup>5</sup> Along with the deepening of recognition of the logical relation between organic bodies and their surrounding environment, modern ecology covers investigations of the logical relation between humans and nature. The rising mass environmental protection movement of the late 1960s and 1970s has pushed ecology further away from biology proper and towards the study of the intrinsic relation between humans and nature. In the territory of the humanities and social sciences in the past few years, the word “ecosystem” has been semantically expanded to aggregate natural health, maintaining balance, and “harmonious coexistence.”

Ecology has clearly moved out of the ivory tower that formerly made it exclusive to biologists and ecologists and has currently become both a heated issue (see also Sect. 2.2.1) and a kind of behavioral norm. Both material and spiritual elements of the universe are endowed with ecological connotations, and all living things have been tinted green. Scholars of the former Soviet Union, such as B. A. Rosy, Jim Shen, and H. B. Norwich, stated that ecology is “a kind of world value, methodology, and scientific thinking mode.” They declared that “one of the leading trends of modern natural science is its ecologization,” that “the future of science relies on synthesis of ecology,” that “ecology is the science of the 21st century,” and that the “existence of human beings on the earth is dependent on ecological progress” ([Russia] Jim Shen, 1993, as cited in Wang & Zhou, 2004, p. 4).

Academically speaking, ecology is a philosophy, a science, an aesthetics, and a technology; a systemic science of studying the relationship between organic bodies, including human bodies, and the environment; an ancient yet green interdisciplinary of natural sciences and the humanities; a science of the nature–human relation from physical, social, and rational perspectives; a worldwide value and methodology; and a mode of scientific thinking.

To put it simply, ecology is a science of environmental relations linking humans and their peers, objects, and surroundings; a livelihood and stratagem science of

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<sup>4</sup>C.f., *An Encyclopedia of Chinese Language*, 2007, p. 1499; *Modern Chinese Dictionary*, 2008, p. 1220.

<sup>5</sup>Neufeldt (1995, p. 429).

human conduct closely related to the existence and development of ordinary people; and a way for humans to survive, live, and prosper. “With self-generation, self-reflection and self-reliance, ecology will pilot us all through the challenges and finally to success” (Wang & Zhou, 2004, p. 4).

Methodologically, ecology, a science based on holism, values in its research methods the entirety of interrelation and interaction (Krohne, 2001, p. 11).

In terms of ecological features, ecology is balanced, following the principle of holistic coordination, circulative self-generation, and the indestructibility of matter and conservation of energy; ecology is progressive, advocating competitive coexistence, efficient harmony, concurrent evolution, and survival of the fittest; and ecology is integral, pursuing the synthesis of wealth, health, and civilization and seeking physiological, psychological, and ethical well-being.

Ecology is a survival and developmental mechanism of competition, coexistence, regeneration, and self-generation; a systematizing and synthesizing function of the search for temporal, spatial, quantitative, structural, and orderly sustenance and harmony; and a process of pursuing constant human evolution and perfection with the ultimate aim of sustainable development.

Recently, academic research employing ecological principles and ecological theories has become a trend of academic development, springing up in various disciplines like mushrooms after rain. The application of ecological theories to humanities research, in particular, has furnished a marvelous repertoire of solutions to many real-life problems and therefore has received great attention from scholars of social sciences and humanities. Ecological theories have not only expanded the scope of academic research and shaped interesting research ideas but also triggered the emergence of a series of brand-new interdisciplines (see also Sect. 2.2.3). For instance, scientific research in the humanities on diversified ecological issues is in full swing and has greatly promoted the vigorous development and interpenetration of the humanities and ecology to bring to social ecology a large variety of new disciplines and theories of an interdisciplinary and overlapping nature, including ecological methodology, ecological philosophy, ecological thought, ecological logics, ecological psychology, ecological pedagogy, ecological politics, ecological economics, ecological ethics, ecological science of law, ecological aesthetics, ecological sociology, ecological history, and ecological culturology.

Evidently, the conceptual expansion, disciplinary features, research contents, and research methods of ecology and the “ecological properties” thereof mentioned above, especially in terms of the significance of ecology for human behavior, world values, and methodology as well as its impact on investigations into the social and human sciences, are highly inspirational and instructive for translation practitioners, theoreticians, and scholars of translation studies, “translation being a kind of behavior by nature, or in other words, a kind of ‘cross-cultural behavior’” (Hans Vermeer, as quoted from Liao, 2001, p. 364). Similarly, “translation is increasingly seen as a process, a form of human behavior. A theory, therefore, should seek to establish the laws of this behavior” (Chesterman, 1993, p. 2). That is why the ecological perspective of translation studies has begun and developed (see Sect. 2.4.1), and eco-reason has become the theoretical guidance for the macro-concept studies (see Chap. 4),

the meso-theories (see Chap. 5), and the micro-performances (see Chap. 6) of Eco-translatological studies.

## 1.4 Eco-Translatology: An Eco-Paradigm of Translation Studies

Translatology, one of the two aforementioned disciplines, takes as its “task” the transmission of linguistic messages to promote the cross-cultural communication of human beings and falls within the scope of humanities, while ecology, aiming for the construction of a holistic and balanced, dynamic and harmonious environment, focuses on the relation between human beings and their environments and falls within the scope of natural sciences.

Modern science and philosophy divide the unified world into human society and nature, resulting in the separation and opposition of natural sciences and human sciences, science and arts, all progressing in their respective ways. However, concrete queries have recently emerged: Can translatology and ecology be scientifically and seamlessly “integrated” or “married”? Where do their possible “intersection sets” and “fusions” lie, and to what degree can they intersect or be fused? What “results” or “effects” will emerge from the synthesis of translation studies and an ecological perspective? How will these “results” or “effects” act on translational acts or be applied to the explication of translation phenomena? All those questions inspire reflections and explorations.

Rooted in the developments of translation studies, ecology, and the theory of translation as adaptation and selection in particular, the birth of “Eco-translatology” has been the catalyst of the growth and establishment of terminological series such as “translational ecosystem,” “translational eco-environment,” “ecosystem of translation,” “textual transplants,” “translator’s adaptations,” “translator’s selections,” “survival through selection,” “coexistence and interaction” and “emphasis on existence and harmony,” and through the ongoing theoretical research in this field, positive attempts have been made to form a different perspective of the translational ecosystem and to create an ecological basis to metaphorically discuss translation as a whole based on translational practice.

Founded on all these discussions, the subdisciplinary traits of Eco-translatology are thus fully discernible:

1. a unique research perspective (a macroscopic eco-reason perspective);
2. specific research foci (textual ecology, translator-community ecology, and translation-environment ecology);
3. systemic research subjects (interaction and interrelation between translational text, translator, and translational eco-environment; the research trinity of the macroscopic framework of translation studies, mesoscopic system of translation theory studies, and microscopic textual production, etc.);

4. supporting terminology (e.g., ecology, life, survival, selective adaptation, adaptive selection, translational eco-environment, translational ecosystem, Eco-translation ethics, translator responsibility, “doing something with Eco-translations,” “post-event penalty,” “survival through selection,” multi-symbiosis, multiple eco-integration); and
5. nascent research methodology (interdisciplinary intersections, metaphorical analogies, conceptual borrowings, and particularly the systematic synthesis of eco-holism).

In this sense, it is rational to label Eco-translatology as “cross-disciplinary”<sup>6</sup> and to consider it a subdiscipline of general translation studies.

Furthermore, if Eco-translatology is considered a subdiscipline of general translation studies, its theoretical basis can also be generalized as eco-holism and translational ontology.<sup>7</sup>

In regard to the explorations and development at present, however, although we accept ecological notions and adopt ecological principles to develop investigations, the research subject of Eco-translatology remains within translation studies. It is separate from ecology, and it is neither intended to align translation studies with ecology nor to direct its attention to the study of ecological issues. Rather, Eco-translatology is rooted in the isomorphic metaphor and conceptual analogy between the translation ecosystem and natural ecosystem, resting its major weight, to be precise, on “metaphorical reference” and revealing the illumination of metaphorical analogy through translation studies. *Green translation studies*, though accommodated in this new perspective, represent a new direction beyond the former boundaries. This leading idea has been embodied nominally, namely, “eco” has been assigned as the attributive in Eco-translatology (i.e., ecological or ecological perspective) to modify the central word, “translatology.” In other words, Eco-translatology is assigned to be a perspective of translation studies in light of eco-reason.

Eco-translatology, with which we are concerned here, is thus a paradigm of ecological translation studies rooted in eco-reason and synthesized from an ecological perspective. It originated and was displayed in an upsurge of worldwide ecological theories to synthesize and describe the entire ecology of translating and translation theories proper (including the essence, processes, criteria, principles, methods, and factual cases of translation) from the ecological perspective, drawing support from the isomorphic metaphor between the translation ecosystem and the natural

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<sup>6</sup>As has been stated by Simon (1986, pp. 234–235), an American scholar on politics and social sciences, “If the studies in an interdisciplinary research area can be sustainable and prosperous in its development, it will, then, sooner or later, become a new branch of learning,” and “As long as new subjects are studied continuously and progress can be made day by day, a new discipline will be turned out from these studies.”

<sup>7</sup>Grammatically speaking, “eco-” is just a modifier, and “translatology” should be taken as the core word in “Eco-translatology,” which can be rendered from an ecological perspective of translation phenomena and therefore considered a sub-branch of translatology or translation studies from the linguistic, cultural, cognitive, and social perspectives (Zhang & Jin, 2011, p. 262).

ecosystem; conceived in ecological holism; subordinated to Eastern ecological wisdom; probing into textual ecology, translator-community ecology, translation-environment ecology, and their interrelationship; and narrated in ecological terms and an ecological manner.

The terms and concepts of Eco-translatology originate from an understanding of the natural ecosystem and are drawn from the “theory of translation as adaptation and selection.” Eco-translatology analogizes natural ecosystems and translational ecosystems, transplants the theory of “survival of the fittest” from the former to the latter, and relates the theory to the inherent sense of life and the existence of the “translator-community.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, fusing translation practice reflections on the existential system and the existential aspect of the reflective system<sup>9</sup> by leveraging the theory of “survival of the fittest” is where the intrinsic and timeless motive of translational success lies, and this fusion is the primitive target of the investigation of textual ecology, translator-community ecology, and translation-environment ecology of translation activities.

The present book will restructure the ambit of the scholarly view of translation studies, shifting from the age-old linguistics point of view to the current ecological reference point. The ecological rules of natural ecosystems penetrate and prevail in the intrinsic structure and interaction within a benign translational ecosystem. For instance, the “system” principle in ecology is embodied by the fact that translation studies proper is not a single entity but a complex system; the “diversity” principle by the fact that in the translation process, diversified language uses exist to overtone diversified adaptations and selections; the “dynamic” principle in the fact that changes never stop, no text can divide itself from its epochal features, and readers’ perceptions of a translated text will vary over time no matter how qualified the readers are; the “response” principle in the fact that the translator will co-evolve with the text in an acting and counteracting manner; and the “yardstick” principle in the fact that reference to the whole is demanded when examining and criticizing a translated text, while scrutiny of words, phrases, and even such minute elements such as punctuation is strongly desired when discussing the syntactic structures of the translated text.

Eco-translatology, a new translation paradigm in the postmodernism context, has emerged as a cross-disciplinary or multidisciplinary progression, expansion, and transformation of contemporary translation studies, representing the trend of translation studies towards the modern, synthetically integrative perspective instead of the traditional mono-disciplinary one.

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<sup>8</sup> 11 Including translators, readers, publishers, patrons, commentators, and other human agents involved in translation activity.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, Yang (1989, pp. 17–19) stated in his article “Reflections on Constructing Translation Studies” in *Chinese Translators Journal* that “translation studies is a science studying the thinking laws and methods of translation,” and Feng (2008, pp. 82–85) stated in his article “An Existential Study of Translation and Its Embedded Value” in *Foreign Language Education* that the “translator should be taken as the ultimate basis.”



Undeniably, in almost every epoch, a leading concept from the realm of science can be nominated as a new methodology to dominate the general societal mode of thought. “Ecological science” has recently become this dominating and shaping force in contemporary society and has been revealed as a discipline of ultimate significance to human existence and development. In this sense, Eco-translatological explorations are rooted in a sound philosophical base that promises a vigorous expansion.

In a word, “Eco-translatology” approaches translation synthetically from an ecological perspective by leaning on eco-reason traits. It is essentially a neat discourse system of translation. Indiscriminate and abstract as some of the above Eco-translatological expositions may seem, they are a kind of “preparation” for the systematic elaboration in the ensuing chapters, which I sincerely hope will succeed in expanding the notion of translation studies beyond the conventional translation theories.

## 1.5 Understanding Eco-Translatology Through Terminology

A specific terminology is indispensable for each theory, with terms constituting the basic elements and components for the formation of this theory. Though a systematic elaboration will follow, a preliminary expositive list of some chief terms will be conducive to first, sketching an Eco-translatological profile and second, enabling readers to grasp the gist of the book.

A list of some ecological terms<sup>10</sup> is compulsory here because a considerable number of Eco-translatological terms come from ecology via “borrowing” or “analogy”:

- *Biosphere*—the existential and developmental state of an organism (including animals, plants, microbes, and human beings);
- *Ecological Community*—an organic aggregation set in a specified space and environment with which certain organic species interact and that shows a specific form and structure composed of morphosis and a trophic structure, denoting, in brief, the animated parts of an ecosystem;
- *Ecosystem*— a dynamic and balanced entirety; if it is a natural ecosystem, close contact and mutual action occur between ecological communities and between these communities and their environment to form, via substance exchange, energy conversion and information transmission, a dynamic and balanced entirety with a certain space, form and function. Ecological concepts, accompanied by the birth of ecology, emerge as an echo of modern biological progress. The ecosystem concept was conceived by A. G. Tansley in 1935 to accommodate

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<sup>10</sup>Based mainly on *Terminology in Ecology* (2006), published by Mongolia Education Press and <http://en.wikipedia.org/Ecology>.

the natural entirety composed of organisms and environment, a simple formula being “ecosystem = ecological communities + environmental conditions.”

- *Ecological Chain*—energy and substance are transmitted among the predators and the prey in an ecosystem to constitute a food chain, and the complex relationship between the predators and their prey resembles an invisible web and thus is known as the food web, which, together with the food chains, correlates all the species in one ecosystem and ensures structural and functional stability within the system.
- *Ecology*—essentially a science studying the habitats of organisms that evolved from a Greek etymological source in which *oikos* denotes dwellings and habitats and *logos* means a discipline.

“Ecology” can be interpreted as a notion connected with managing living resources or constructing a fairyland of residence. It was defined in 1866 by Haeckel, a German biologist, to refer to a science investigating the interaction (mutual action) between organisms and their environment (covering a biotic environment and a biological environment). The noted American ecologist Odum (1956) considered it a science concerned with the structure and function of ecosystems, whereas his Chinese peer Ma Shijun considered the interaction and interrelationship between life systems and environment ecosystems the core concern of this branch of science. Within the natural world, a bion, a colony, or a community can all be regarded as a biological system, and the surrounding energy, temperature, and soil constitute the environmental system (Li, 2004, p. 2). “Ecology” is hence a science studying the relation, rules, and mechanisms of interrelationship and interaction between organisms and the elements of their environment. Organisms are in unity with their environment in ecological terms, and human beings constitute a significant member of the ecosystem and perform a leading function in the biological chain.

- *Ecological Balance*—a novel concept in modern ecological development.

In general, when an ecosystem has an input surplus of energy and substance, its biomass will multiply, and vice versa. When input equals output over a very long period, stability consequently reigns in the structure and function of the ecosystem, and the primary stability can be restored through auto-regulation under mild interference. This is the ecosystem balance of, which therefore is called ecological balance.

In Eco-translatology, in accordance and analogy with the ecological terms and concepts stated above, these terms can be defined as follows (Hu, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010):

- *Translator-Community*—an aggregation of “participants” (all “persons”) involved in translation activities that interacts and interrelates with the generation, development, operation, results, function, and effects of translation activities, accommodating the author, target-text (TT) readership, translation critics, translation reviewers, publishers, marketers, patrons, consigners, et al., with the translator as their representative.

The translator community, ranked as important within the translational ecosystem, consists of, in ecological terms, producers, consumers, and decomposers, denoting the translators or creators of translation products, who take the central position within the translator community; the authors and TT readers, or the beneficiaries; and the researchers in the translation circle, respectively. The translation subjects—the author, the translator, and the TT readers—are mutually dependent and restrictive to constitute an open system of independent operation, namely, all “persons,” an “ecosystem of translation subjects” (see Sect. 5.4.6).

- *Translation Chain*—a series of interrelated and interactive links in the “pre-translating” (i.e., preparations before translation), “during-translating” (i.e., translational acts), and “post-translating” (i.e., effects of translation) stages of translation production.
- *Essence of Translation*—Eco-translatology defines translation as “selective activities of the translator when adapting to the translational eco-environment and transplanting texts, with the translator acting the leading role, the text as its basis, and cross-cultural information transmission as its ultimate purpose,” on the basis of the theory of translation as adaptation and selection.
- *Translational Ecosystem*—a system of society, communication, culture, and language that shows a certain spatial structure and temporal change and is subject to auto-regulation and openness, similar to a natural ecosystem. Illuminated by the definition of a natural ecosystem, the “translational ecosystem” can be defined as a functional unit of interaction and interdependence in translation studies constituted via consistent substance cycling and energy flow between languages and between the components and noncomponents of translation (society, communication, and culture, for instance). It can be interpreted, narrowly, as a “translational eco-environment” (see the entry below) or discussed in a broader view as an accommodation system to cover all possible activities connected with translation. Composed of a wide variety of subsystems of different ranges, the “translational ecosystem” is indefinitely divisible lengthwise and mutually connected breadthwise (see details in Sects. 4.3–4.5).
- *Translational Ecology*—the state of interrelation and interaction between translation subjects and between translation subjects and their surrounding environments, i.e., the existential and working state of translation subjects in an environment.

The main point to stress here is the clear distinction between “translational ecology” and “ecological translation,” the latter being an umbrella and comprehensive term of synthesizing and describing translation. In more specific terms, “ecological translation” accommodates both a synthetic view of translation as a whole and a metaphorical description of translational ecology via natural ecology; both the diversity maintenance of translated languages and cultures and the employment of translation to promote eco-environment protection and ecivilization development; both the selection of texts to translate via ecological adaption and the regulation of the “translator community” via ecological ethics; and, certainly, the selection of natural texts to translate and the natural world of

translation ecology via ecological notions. From the textual perspective solely, ecological translation may denote “textual transplants” (see details in Sect. 5.3.4) based on ST ecology and TT ecology.

- *Translational Eco-environment*—the worlds of the ST and the source/target language, namely, the interrelated and interactive entirety comprising the linguistic, communicative, cultural, and social aspects of translating, as well as the author, the client, and the readers (i.e., “translator community”). The translational eco-environment is essentially an aggregation of all the factors related to the translator’s optimal adaptations and selections. It is divisible to the microenvironment, mesoenvironment, and macroenvironment, covering the intralingual environment and extralingual environment, material environment and spiritual environment, and, furthermore, subject environment (translator, author, readers, publisher, editors, supervisors, all “persons”, et al.) and object environment (ST, TT, textual function, translation strategies and translation regularities, etc.) (see details in Sect. 3.4.1).

In regard to translational ecology, in particular, the “entirety” of subjects’ existential and working state in their environment is denoted, whereas in regard to the translational eco-environment, an “aggregation” of diversified external elements relevant to translation is nominated. These two terms, at this point, are synonymous and interchangeable but differentiated from each other in that translational ecology values the “holistic” and “integrative” state (uncountable), but the translational eco-environment gives major weight to “multitudinous” elements or a “summation” of individual environmental elements (countable).

- *Typically Important Elements*—the most important elements in the translational eco-environment.

At the stage of translator adaptation, generally speaking, the ST is the “typically important element” in the translational eco-environment, and at the stage of translator selection, the translator himself/herself will play the role (see details in Sect. 5.5.1).

- *Preservation of the Strong and Elimination of the Weak*—a principle in the translation world distinct from that in the natural kingdom.

The major difference lies in the fact that the adaptation of natural species (animals and plants) to the natural environment and their “elimination” under “natural selection” are absolute, signifying the “extinction,” “disappearance,” or “vanishing” of biological species, e.g., the extinction of the dinosaurs, South Pole wolves, and seed ferns. The translator’s or TT’s adaptation to the translational eco-environment in the translation world and the “elimination” under the selection of the translational eco-environment, in contrast, are relative or, in the metaphorical sense, denote “frustration,” “denial,” “deletion,” “substitution,” “misdirection,” or “loss” of human behavior or feelings. In other words, the “adaption” or “mal-adaptation,” “strength” or “weakness” of the translator or TT in translation activities are not absolute but metaphorically relative. Meanwhile, different TTs may have room for coexistence, as they are adaptive to different translation purposes or can satisfy different readers. “Preservation of the strong and elimination of the weak” and “coexistence” in this sense are consistent with

the basic principles of ecology (see details in Sect. 3.7.3 on “symbiosis and diversity,” an ethical principle of ecological translation).

- *Holistic Degree of Adaptation and Selection*—the totality of the translator’s “selective adaptation” when producing a text in linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions and, accordingly, the “adaptive selection” degree of attending to other elements in the translational eco-environment

Generally, the holistic degree of adaptation and selection is positively correlated with a TT’s degree of “selective adaptation” and “adaptive selection.” With the application of Eco-translatology, the optimal translation is thus, comparatively speaking, the version with the highest “holistic degree of adaptation and selection” (see details in Sect. 5.5.3).

The terms and concepts listed above have been clarified in terms of their relevance and specific connotations in this field, and they form the corpus of Eco-translatological concepts.<sup>11</sup> The disparity between the Eco-translatological discourse system and the traditional translation description may continue to reign over the readers, but the writer anticipates that these terms and concepts will facilitate the reading of the ensuing chapters and the understanding of Eco-translatological studies as a whole.

## 1.6 Glancing at Eco-Translatology Through a “Shortcut” of the Nine “Three-in-One” Expressions

“Three-in-one” here refers to a series of recapitulative expressions indicating the “triad” as different angles for a panoramic overview of the studies and developments of Eco-translatology. In other words, these “three-in-one” points of view can be taken as a “shortcut” that is conducive to an understanding of Eco-translatology. Nine “three-in-one” expressions are summarized as follows:

1. “Three eco-themes” pointing to the triple *research objects* of Eco-translatology, namely, textual ecology, translator-community ecology, and translation-environment ecology. Textual ecology refers to the vital signs and living conditions of texts; translator-community ecology refers to the existential quality and competence development of all persons involved in a translation activity; and translation-environment ecology includes all translational ecosystems and eco-environments.

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<sup>11</sup> Other core terms, such as “the Sequence Chain,” ecological paradigm, eco-reason, eco-system of translating, Eco-translation ethics, textual ecology, textual transplants, symbiotic, multidimensional integration, translator responsibility, selective adaptation and adaptive selection, “three-dimensional” transformation, doing things with translations, post-event penalty, holistic degree of adaptation and selection, translation as adaptation and selection, and translation as eco-balance, will be elaborated and interpreted in the coming chapters or sections.

The definition of the triple eco-themes relies heavily on translational ecology, an orientation towards textual life, and concern over translator survival and development. These are the “three eco-themes” of Eco-translatology.

2. “Three relationships-between,” pointing to the relationships among the trio of subjects that are defined as the *research objects* of Eco-translatology, namely, the relationship between the translational eco-environment and the “translator-community” (with the translator as its representative), the relationship between the source/target texts and the translational eco-environment, and relationship between “translator-community” and source/target texts. In other words, Eco-translatology endeavors to elaborate on the interaction and interrelation between the translational eco-environment and “translator-community,” source/target texts and translational eco-environment, and “translator-community” and source/target texts. That is, what we mean by the three relationships—between a trio of subjects.
3. “Three translation-as,” pointing to the *three core concepts*: “translation as textual transplants,” “translation as adaptation and selection,” and “translation as eco-balance.” The first relates to the textual transformation, the second to the translator’s translational acts, and the third to the translational eco-environment. “Three translation-as” is the organic entirety of the theoretical system of Eco-translatology, existing in a correlative, interactive, and mutually causal relationship with no one element separable from another and in an intrinsic and corresponding logical relationship with the “three eco-themes” and “three relationships-between” described above.
4. “Three-level studies,” pointing to three *research levels* of Eco-translatology, namely, “translation studies,” “translation theories,” and “source/target texts.” A developmental pattern of the *macroscopic* translational structure (particularly emphasizing translation studies), the *mesoscopic* theoretical system (particularly emphasizing translation theories), and the *microscopic* textual operation (particularly emphasizing source/target texts) has been gradually formulated.
5. “Three-centeredness,” pointing to the tripartite tension and ultimate trilateral relation of “source texts—translator—target texts.”<sup>12</sup> Translation studies are supposed to center not only around STs and TTs but also around translators since Eco-translatology follows with interest the translator’s “existence” and “development” and considers it compulsory that the “translator” should be “symbiotic and coexistent” with the other “two poles.”
6. “Three-dimensional transformations,” pointing to the translation methods of Eco-translatology that cover “multidimensional” transformations but are specified as “three-dimensional” transformations, i.e., translating is relatively conducted from linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions under the

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<sup>12</sup>As stated by Li and Huang (2005, p. 96) in their collaborative article “A Brand New Theoretical Construction” in *Foreign Language Education*, “Translator-centeredness (initiated by Hu Gengshen) has set up a tripartite state with ST-centeredness and reader-centeredness, to balance, in the translating process, the power in theoretical explorations of translation.”

translation principle of “multidimensional selective adaptation and adaptive selection.”

7. “Three prerequisites,” referring to the preconditions generalized as fundamental to the research and development of Eco-translatology: (1) “the Sequence Chain” displaying the human cognitive pathway; (2) the homo-analogy between translation ecology and natural ecology; and (3) the systematic investigation into translation as adaptation and selection explicated as “translation is the translator’s selective activity of adapting to the translational eco-environment and transplanting the texts.”

“Three pursuits,” namely, the “fusion of Eastern and Western cultures,” “junction of ancient and contemporary civilizations,” and “channeling of arts and science,” which are the academic pursuits targeted by Eco-translatology in the process of constructing the entire theoretical system of discourse, as is the goal of every academic field (see details in Sect. 8.2.2).

“Three paradigmatic traits,” namely, the paradigm characteristics of practicalness, openness, and universality explicated in the investigations and developments of Eco-translatology, a synthesizing and holistic research paradigm of translation studies from an ecological perspective (see details in Sect. 8.2.3).

A “shortcut” to be acquainted with in reference to Eco-translatology, these nine “three-in-one” expressions can serve as a profile of Eco-translatological investigations and developments. Those mentioned above are merely recapitulative; the implication of theoretical conceptualization, and the “prediction,” and the detailed elaboration will follow.

## 1.7 Eco-Translatology vs. Translation Studies and Other Prevailing Translation Theories

There is still a necessity to describe the relation between Eco-translatology and translation studies and the connection and segmentation between Eco-translatological investigations and other translation theories as an introduction to Eco-translatology.

Eco-translatology, as mentioned in Sect. 1.4 above, can be interpreted as an ecological perspective of translation studies. As a holistic study of investigating the interaction and interrelation between textual ecology, “translator-community” ecology and translation-environment ecology and a cross-discipline aimed at a synthetic description of translation activities from an ecological perspective, Eco-translatology can be labeled a sub-branch of general translation studies to investigate translation phenomena, to enrich translation theory studies, and eventually to promote the development of translation studies in general. The relation between Eco-translatology and translation studies is thus clear.

In regard to the connections and segmentation between Eco-translatological investigations and other translation theories, the author conceives, splendid and rational factors of some theoretical aspects of various Western translation schools

represent novel theoretical creations and fruits, whereas weakness and inapplicability exist for temporal, regional, cultural, or horizontal restraints (Hu, 2002, pp. 80–104). When constructing and interpreting an Eco-translatological framework, therefore, basic principles of assimilating or discarding, synthesizing or surpassing, inheriting or developing should be closely followed to guide the construction of an Eco-translatological discourse system. Under this guidance, an endeavor is made to assimilate the rational core of different translation schools while discarding certain elements, to override the restriction of different schools by synthesizing common views of different translation schools, and to transmit the traditional wisdom of Eastern and Western translation studies to develop Eco-translatology by relying on translation studies. That is, the aim is to theoretically synthesize translation schools and thus to construct a “pluralistic” paradigm of Eco-translatology. The direction and positioning of Eco-translatology are thus defined.

As stated by Valdeón (2012, p. 5), the editor-in-chief of *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, “Eco-translatology represents an emerging paradigm with a great potential for research and study. It is also a model with clear connections with other schools in the West.” Dollerup (2011, p. 34), a Danish translation theoretician, has also discussed Eco-translatology in the context of Western translation studies and pointed out that “Eco-translatology is related to these schools [three influential Western schools, namely, the principle of dynamic equivalence, the Skopos school, and descriptive translation studies].”

Eco-translatology, nevertheless, as a brand-new Eco-translation paradigm that differs from the existing ones, has its own characteristics and originality. A comparative study tells us that Eco-translatology is novel in terms of philosophical background, research perspective, core assumptions, research methodology, self-contained terminology, discourse system, translation ethics, etc. These all explain the “originality” and thus the “novelty” of Eco-translatology. (Hu, 2008, 2011; Hu & Tao, 2016)

“Eco-translatology is in keeping with—and is superior for explaining—actual translation practices even in the West,” as has been stated by Dollerup (2011, p. 34)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>For instance, “Eco-translatology, like translation studies integrating cultural factors or semiotics, covers a non-linguistic environment of wider scope and what distinguishes the former from the latter two lies in more weight on coordination and balance between factors of environment with ‘eco-’. The latter two, though having integrated culture and semiotics, stick to the translator’s subjective examination, integration and strategy selection among factors in translation; Eco-translatology, however, stresses the interaction between translator and other translation subjects and the impact of the holistic environment on translator and translations. It moves beyond the exploration into translational act and TT quality, rendering itself more inclusive and explaining why some translations, though thought low of by critics, can survive with a wide popularity. Eco-translatology exposes its potential when it approaches the relation between translator and translational environment, translator’s strategy selection or even assessment of translation quality. Independence of one specific strategy or technique to restrict translating practice features this theory, which allows subjective judgments and rational explanations for those judgments.... A definite purpose will accompany and pilot all through the translating stages, which echoes the arguments of *skopos*theorie. Whether the anticipated effects or purposes of translations are to be attained, nevertheless, goes far beyond the research scope of *skopos*theorie, and the translational



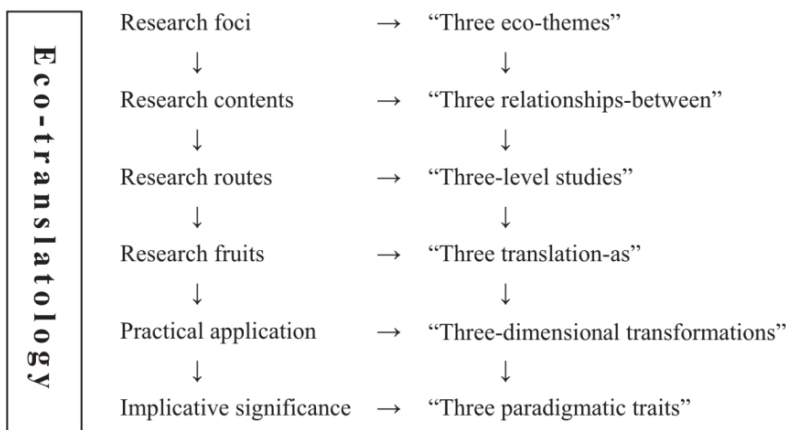


Fig. 1.1 Simplified framework of the contents of Construction and Interpretation

and echoed by his Chinese fellow scientists. “Translation studies are thus incorporated into an organic explorative system, translational eco-system, via the establishment of an Eco-translatological research paradigm, which moves translation studies beyond the comparatively ‘partial’ linguistic, literary or even cultural paradigms of translation studies to an unprecedented vision of magnitude via the route of inheritance, transcendence and return” (Meng, 2008, p. 73).

The theoretical discourse system of Eco-translatology, in brief, has been formulated with a systematic exploration and description from the perspectives of translation studies, translation theories, and textual production in this globalized world, based on synthesis and reflection on translation theories and the properties and rules of ecology and guided by ecological wisdom and values.

What has been stated above and what will be stated in this book show the developing line and overall logical framework of *the paradigm* and, moreover, the ontology of Eco-translatology as a flexible organism of a complex translational ecosystem composed of “textual ecology, translator-community ecology, and translation-environment ecology”. The framework of Eco-translatological research logic can now be simplified as follows (Fig. 1.1).

## 1.8 Summary

Translation studies, a science of theoretically exploring translation issues, investigates the arts of translation. Eco-translatology, an emerging Eco-translation paradigm synthesized from the ecological perspective, is a cross-disciplinary study that

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eco-environment will operate with more facility for its nature of being dynamic” (Han, 2013, pp. 122–123).

systematically probes the interaction and interrelation between textual ecology, translator-community ecology, and translation-environment ecology to synthesize and describe the entirety of translational ecology and the ontology of translation theories. It is grounded firmly in the isomorphic metaphor between translational ecology and natural ecology, taking ecological holism as its core, adhering to Eastern ecological wisdom and founded on the translation as “adaptation/selection” theory.

A sketch of Eco-translatology has been accomplished via the explication of translation studies, ecology, Eco-translatology, and the terminology and investigations of Eco-translatology. Satisfying answers to what Eco-translatology is, nevertheless, remain far beyond reach, particularly in regard to the issue of the “name” and “nature” of Eco-translatology. Above all, this book will serve as an indicator of a field of study that is still trying to find its boundaries.

An insight into Eco-translatology calls for further reading of this book, and the priorities are the background and inception, origin<sup>14</sup> and development of Eco-translatology in Chap. 2.

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<sup>14</sup>As stated by Ye Xiè (1627–1703), noted Chinese literary figure of the Qing Dynasty, in his *Anthology XI: essays on man and friends*, academic research should discern first its origin and then its specific developing route and hence varies to a great deal, that flexibility is the hardest to achieve and mastery is harder, even though a proposal is within reach, and that what matters ultimately is clarification of the origin and its developing route.

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# Chapter 2

## Eco-Translatology: Inception and Development



### 2.1 Introduction

Processes constitute the world. As Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) said, the world is a complex of *processes* instead of monotonous things.<sup>1</sup> “Process” here refers to phases or stages of development. In philosophical terms, “process,” denoting temporal continuity and spatial extension, is the existential and progressive form of things and their conflicts. “Process” can also be interpreted as a means of integrating resources to generate the expected outcome. For any type of process, input and output are the principal elements, the former as bases, prerequisites, and conditions of implementing a process and the latter as the outcomes of accomplishing it. The former can be tangible or intangible products, such as theories, software, or services. Only through the process can a task be accomplished and an activity conducted.

What Eco-translatology has undergone in the first decade of the twenty-first century is a process of consolidation and progression. In the course of Eco-translatological construction, the ultimate establishment of a theoretical discourse system targeted by the present writing serves as the output of this “process,” which suggests its “input,” namely, the bases, prerequisites, conditions, etc., of its inception and development. Familiarity with the records of Eco-translatology, meanwhile, promises a reasonable anticipation of its course.

Given this, what will be critically studied in this chapter is the background of the inception and the bases of exploration of Eco-translatology and its continuous study and development.

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<sup>1</sup>Zhang (2002). “Process” is defined in a darker light by the author of this book.

## 2.2 Origins

### 2.2.1 *Global Ecological Trend of Thought*

Ideas are deeply rooted in a specific historical background and ethos. The inception and development of Eco-translatology follow the progressive route of contemporary society and scholarship. First, it is a translational response to the present economic and social transformations. As is well known, the 1960s witnessed the transformation of human society from an industrial civilization to an ecological civilization. Human beings were faced with a crisis of existence and development, as declared in 1962 by Rachel Carson, an American marine biologist, when she wrote of human violence against nature in her noted *Silent Spring*. The *Declaration of Human Environment* and *Our Common Future* were announced in 1972 and 1987, respectively, by the United Nations Conference on Environment, regarding the protection of the natural environment as a problem that concerns all humankind. Eco-environmental protection has become a central concern in China since the 1970s. Later, a sustainable development strategy and scientific development strategy were formulated in succession by the Chinese government, which announced that “human society is transitioning from an industrial civilization to an ecological civilization.”<sup>2</sup> In this context, the introduction of the neglected and overlooked “ecological” dimension of scientific research fields, including translation studies, is definitely an embodiment of conforming to the trends of our times.

Second, the ecological trend of thought is an inevitable result of cognitional transitions in modern ideology and philosophy. Since the twentieth century, these two fields have experienced a cognitional transition from subject–object dichotomy to intersubjectivity, from anthropocentrism to ecological unity. For instance, in 1967, French philosopher Jacques Derrida wrote that the “center” exists at once within and without a structure and that the center is hence not a center; in 1973, Norwegian eco-philosopher Arne Naess proposed his “deep ecology” to integrate ecology into philosophy and ethics and put forward such far-reaching eco-philosophical notions as eco-ego, eco-equality, and eco-symbiosis; and in 1995, American eco-philosopher David Griffin came up with “eco-existence,” signaling the birth of eco-ontology.

The signs of progress mentioned above tell us that contemporary philosophy is turning from epistemology to ontology as well as from anthropocentrism to ecological unity. Therefore, this philosophical turn rightly broadens the horizons and mentality of translation researchers, drawing them to approach translation activities “ecologically.” Eco-translatology emerged as a response.

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<sup>2</sup>Yu (2007).

### ***2.2.2 Ecologically Related Studies in Different Disciplines***

The “return to nature” has swept the world as a global trend that increasingly drives people to seek ecological foods, ecological furnishings, ecological tourism, and a balanced eco-environment. With ecology viewed as a kind of scientific mode of thought, the word “ecological” collects profound implications and enjoys wide popularity. The concepts of ecological construction, ecological projects, ecological restoration, ecological culture, ecological architecture, ecological city, ecological forest, ecological politics, ecological movement, etc., have arisen in response. “Ecological” has become almost the most familiar and at the same time the essential keyword of news, public documents, or even street chats in recent years.

The academic community has experienced “environmentalism’s overdue move beyond science, geography and social science into ‘the humanities’” (Kerridge, 1998, p. 5). Scholars are engaged “in an effort to turn cultural attention back to the wider living environment” (Parham, 2002, p. 1; Westling, 2002). Following this trend, studies of ecological essence have emerged. Within language learning, which is closely related to translation studies, there are environmental linguistics, green grammar, language environmentology, eco-lexicology, eco-linguistics, language ecology, language acquisition ecology, ecology of language evolution, studies of linguistic and biological diversity, etc., in addition to eco-criticism, eco-aesthetics, eco-literature, eco-politics, eco-theology, ecological library science, eco-Marxism, eco-urbanology, eco-socioeconomics, environmental humanities, etc. (Fill, 2001; Gabbard, 2000; Mühlhäusler, 2003).

Now that the humanities, including applied linguistics, cultural studies, comparative literature, etc., have imported ecological notions and carried out relevant “cross-disciplinary” or “interdisciplinary” investigations, is it possible for translation studies, which is essentially “interdisciplinary,” to follow suit? This implicative “tension” and groping desire serve as a kind of “motive” for initiating Eco-translatological explorations.

### ***2.2.3 Ecologically Superficial Terms Used in Translation Studies***

Theories inspired by ecological notions have proliferated globally. In this context, translation studies from an ecological perspective have sprung up, and superficial ecological terms such as “ecology,” “environment,” “existence,” “adaptation,” and “selection” appear throughout such works. An increasing number of such studies or remarks have appeared in the translation field.

For instance, the first category of cultural words, “ecology,” as stated by Newmark (1988, p. 95), has a distinctly ecological tint; the modification and clarification of culture, as described by Katan (1999, pp. 45–52), covers the physical environment, political environment, climate, space, environment, garments, food, smell, situation,

studies and translation studies leave much to be expanded or strengthened (Lv & Hou, 2006, p. 113). For example, such issues as the “translator’s plight and translator’s competence development,” “constituents of the translational ecosystem and their interaction,” the “development of translation and evolution of human cognition,” and the “holistic study of the translational ecosystem” are crucial to translation studies, whereas they are peripheral in the eyes of cultural turn scholars. Concepts ranging from the space ecosystem to the translator’s living ecosystem go beyond the coverage of culture. Even the concept of the translational environment cannot be correctly interpreted in terms of culture in its narrow sense.

Additionally, the cultural perspective of translation studies focuses on cultural phenomena in translation and the impacts of culture on translation. It is concrete as both a translational probe of culture and a cultural probe of translation. Comparatively speaking, ecology is a kind of “metascience,” and ecological approaches are interdisciplinary in their perspective. The ecological approach to translation studies is hence a translation approach in light of ecological rationality, the application of ecological philosophy (for instance, balanced global law, symbiosis rule, diversity law, etc.) to translation studies, or a philosophically and methodologically significant study of translation. Cultural approaches to translation studies are necessary for cultural studies in translation, whereas ecological approaches to translation studies are not ecological studies in translation but a reinterpretation of translation from an ecological perspective, presenting new explanations for entire translational ecosystems and ontological translational theories and lending ecological rationality to translation studies. Therefore, as far as translation studies are concerned, cultural approaches and ecological approaches run along different lines. In this sense, characteristic of “social phenomena” and “cultural phenomena,” cultural approaches are limited in terms of their philosophical and methodological significance to translation studies.

### 3. The indefiniteness of the “leading” discipline in cross-disciplinary integration:

Many discussions or insights<sup>5</sup> have recently appeared in explorations of the integrative, multidisciplinary, or cross-disciplinary traits of translation studies. Unfortunately, vague ideas; undemanding combinations; or merely typological descriptions, analysis, or reinterpretation are featured in these attempts, which omit an interdisciplinary logical affiliation and integrative basis. An overall study will be hindered if the different disciplines remain segregated (Fang, 1999, p. 19). Cross-disciplinary integration is a false concept in the absence of a “leading” discipline or converging basis. The prosperity and perplexity of translation studies (Hu, 2002) have evoked investigations of the neglected or weak link, particularly endeavors to explore the converging basis of a relevant discipline with translation studies.

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<sup>5</sup> See *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (Snell-Hornby, 1988), *Translation Studies: An Interdiscipline* (Pöchhacker & Kaindl, 1994), “Implications of System Theory to Translation Studies” (Yang, 2004), *Multidimensional Translation: A Game Plan for Audiovisual Translation in the Age of GILT* (O’Hagan, 2005), and “Translation: Conceptual Integration Process” (Wu, 2006), etc.

In sum, Eco-translatology has sprung into being against the global trend of ecological rationality, inspired by developments in relevant disciplines, and driven by incipient “ecological perspectives” within the translation studies field. It emerged as the times required, out of a “sense of mission” to fill the gap and the personal ideology of the researcher himself/herself. The developmental and background profiles described above clearly indicate that Eco-translatology is an answer to a call from society, culture, and academia as an inevitable expansion of the research horizon in translation studies.

## 2.3 Prerequisites for the Exploration

As mentioned in “Glancing at Eco-translatology through a ‘Shortcut’ of the Nine ‘Three-in-One’ Expressions,” the “three prerequisites” of Eco-translatology are as follows:

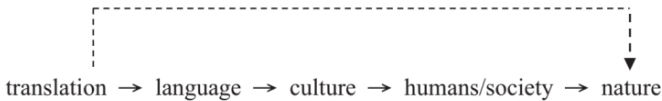
1. “The Sequence Chain” (translation  $\leftrightarrow$  language  $\leftrightarrow$  culture  $\leftrightarrow$  human beings/society  $\leftrightarrow$  nature) displays the human cognitive pathway;
2. The homo analogy between translational ecology and natural ecology;
3. A systematic investigation into Translation as Adaptation and Selection explicated as “translation is a selective activity of the translator to fit the translational eco-environment via textual transplants.”

The present section is an elaboration of these three prerequisites of Eco-translatological research and its development.

### 2.3.1 *Epistemic Sequence of the “Sequence Chain”*

It is now commonly agreed within the academic translation field that the birth and development of translation activities are bound up with the evolution of human society. Once people of different languages desire to communicate with each other, endeavors emerge that rely on translation to surmount the language obstacles to communion (Xu & Tang, 2002, p. 2). From this developmental point of view of human society, translation has massive power in society. Viewed from the praxis of social communications and cultural exchanges, culture, as we all know, emanates from human communication, and cultural exchange starts from the exchange of ideas, which, in turn, is bound up with language. “Inside or between languages, human communication equals translation” (Steiner, 1975, p. 49). From the perspective of linguistics, cultural information is carried and deposited by language, and culture and language are closely connected—culture collapses the moment it is divided from language. From the translational viewpoint, translation activities begin with the diversity of national languages; translation is a transfer of information, a





**Fig. 2.1** Links from translation to nature

semiotic event, from one language to another. Human culture depends on semiotic activities, and humans are semiotic animals (Bartes, 1964).

Based on the aforementioned points of departure, in order to highlight the pivots, we move directly to the relationship between translation activities and natural ecosystems. Hu (2003, pp. 298–299), the present author of this book, has created an illustration of a chain, tentatively named “the Sequence Chain,” that logically links “translation” to “nature” for an expansion of the cognitive horizon.

Because translation is the transfer of languages, and language constitutes culture, culture is a collection of human social activities, and human society constitutes nature, the following chain of interconnection makes sense:

The chain illustrated in Fig. 2.1 shows the vital links from translation to nature, and these links explicate the interconnection and interaction between translation activities and nature. Similarly, a reverse chain of interconnection can be naturally inferred as follows:

A straightforward explanation of Fig. 2.2 is as follows: humans are part of nature, their activities formulate culture carried by language, and translation is a necessity when one language fails to communicate.

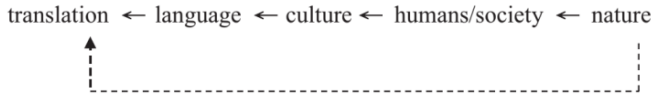
The acceptance of the explanation of these “chains” of interrelation leads to the following synthetic illustration:

A synthesis of Figs. 2.1 and 2.2, Fig. 2.3 states that translation activities, such as human behavior and natural events, are on the whole interrelated, and they interact.

The above description and analyses echo what Laplace (1835), a noted French scientist, stated: “Everything is connected in the immense chain of truths, and the general law of nature pins together what seem to be irrelevant.” The nature before us is a system, namely, an entirety of interacting bodies.<sup>6</sup> In other words, every phenomenon in nature is connected with the others, and nature is an entirety of laws mingled together (Li & Ren, 1989, p. 19). “More and more scientists claim that evolutive views are integrative concepts of ecology, even other disciplines of natural sciences (or humanities)” (Haught, 2007, p. 121). Dating back to ancient ecological holism, on the other hand, there exist such opinions as “oneness of all things,” “continuity of existing things” (Wang, 2005, p. 88), which echo the four ecological “laws”<sup>7</sup> of American ecologist Barry Commoner. Obviously, “principles applicable in the natural world are also pertinent to studies in the humanities, including

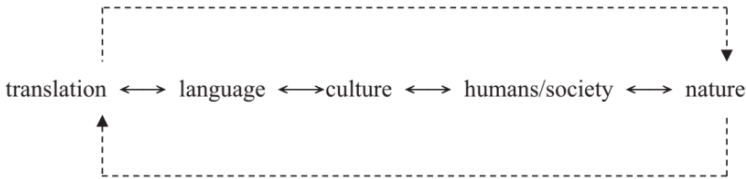
<sup>6</sup>See Marx (1972), pp. 492.

<sup>7</sup>The four laws of ecology as described in *The Closing Circle* by Barry Commoner in 1971 are: (1) everything is connected to everything else. (2) Everything must go somewhere. (3) Nature knows best, and (4) there is no such thing as a free lunch.



**Fig. 2.2** Links from nature to translation

translation” (Hu, 2003, p. 289) as part of human communication and a correlate of



**Fig. 2.3** Interrelation between translation and nature

natural events.

“The Sequence Chain” of “translation ↔ language ↔ culture ↔ humans/society ↔ nature” here profiles the route of expansion in the human cognitive horizon and progression in rational cognition. It complies with the fundamental evolutive law of human cognitive competence and the research routine of “A to B and then to C.” The chain functions, therefore, as a “deductive” or “predictive” chain to foretell the future by drawing on what has happened. As stated by a Chinese saying, “Count the past, and you will know the future Meng” (2011a). What translation studies have undergone, starting from “self-explanation” at the pre-scientific stage to the “linguistic turn” and then to the “cultural turn,”<sup>8</sup> displays, in its true sense, a shift in perspective and expansion of the horizon in this field. As a consequence, the progressiveness and interactivity of “the Sequence Chain” from “translation” to “nature” profiles the logic order and directive mechanism of the human cognitive horizon,<sup>9</sup> i.e., “translation ↔ language ↔ culture ↔ humans/society ↔ nature.”

<sup>8</sup>If the cognitive order stated by “the Sequence Chain” is to be followed, an anthropological turn can be expected for translation studies as a stage after the “cultural turn,” based on the fact that “translation is a human activity.” Then, an ecological turn follows, based on the fact that “translation is a natural activity.” Strictly speaking, however, the anthropological turn has difficulty distinguishing itself from the cultural turn, as anthropology fails to distinguish itself essentially from anthropological culturology. For instance, the investigations on translation subjectivity and intersubjectivity at the turn of the century were all studies of the “human” factor in the translation process. Such studies fall within the intersection of culturology and anthropology; hence the intangibility of the anthropological turn in translation studies (Meng, 2009, 2012). Furthermore, the “translation as adaptation and selection” theory identifies the “translator’s central position” and interprets the “translator’s predominance.” That, in fact, can be considered a transition from the “anthropological turn” to the “ecological turn” in the field of translation studies and hence a shift in the cognitive horizon.

<sup>9</sup>The interaction of translation activities and nature demonstrated by Hu Gengshen paved the way for Eco-translatology. It can be deduced that the process from translation to nature is not a linear progression. This process integrates cognitive transformation in the human brain and hence denotes

However, the translation case below is relatively simple and is also illustrative.

### 6.3.2 “Classified Instruction” or “Dispatching Commander”?

#### The Original English Version

##### The Alteration Management System (AMS)

The AMS is an automated accounting procedure designed to assist the Type Commander (TYCOM) in fulfilling his responsibility toward monitoring and controlling the configuration of attached units and in satisfying the requirements of the Fleet Modernization Program (FMP). Using a combination of the Maintenance Data System (MDS) and AMS administrative procedures, the TYCOM can direct the accomplishment of alterations, throughout his force. In support of the FMP, the AMS computer programs produce reports of the alteration in convenient formats so that the TYCOM may adequately advise the Chief of Naval Operations concerning the structure of the FMP.

#### The Translated Chinese Version

##### 备用处理系统

- 备用处理系统是一种自动计数程序,用于协助分类调配指令系统,监控所附子系统的结构并满足“舰队现代化程序”的要求。综合利用“维护数据系统”与“备用处理系统”两个管理程序,分类调配指令系统可直接实现备用方案的处理,发出不同优先级别的指令,并监控整个备用方案处理的情况。
- 在支持“舰队现代化程序”方面,该“备用处理系统”的计算机程序可以简易的格式打出备用方案的各种报告,以便分类调配指令系统能恰当地向海军作战行动首长显示“舰队现代化程序”的结构情况。

Significantly, the person engaged in marine engineering technology produced the following translation for the same text:

##### 调动管理系统

- 调动管理系统是一种自动描述过程,目的是为了协助分类调度司令官完成他监控所属部队的结构情况,以及满足“舰队现代化计划”的各种要求。利用“维护数据系统”和“管理系统”两个管理程序的组合,分类调配司令官可以在他职权范围内指挥调变,确定优化方案、监控调度进展。为了支持“舰队现代化计划”,调动管理系统的计算程序可以用简易的格式打出调动情况的报告,以便使分类调动司令官能向海军军事行动首长适时建议“舰队现代化计划”的结构情况。

From the above translation, it can be seen that the translator comprehended and translated “Commander” as “司令官,” “attached units” as “所属部队,” “direct the accomplishment of alterations, throughout his force” as “司令官可以在他职权范围内指挥调变,” “Naval Operations” as “海军军事行动,” “to direct” as “指挥,” etc. We can imagine that such “pre-established” or “existing” information in the translator’s mind of the knowledge structure, cultural background, and linguistic

China is “love,” which is analogous to Huxley’s “inborn sympathy.” Huxley holds that the development of the universal sympathy of humankind brought about the ethical evolution of humankind (Tian & Hu 2005, p. 60). Huxley states that “the fittest” in “the survival of the fittest” has the meaning of “the best,” and “the best” bears a kind of ethical implication. “The survival of the fittest” lies not in making the fittest survive but in making more people suited for survival. Therefore, “ethically, the best would survive” (Huxley, 1932, p. 57).

Yan Fu also compares Herbert Spencer’s thought that “the human mind should be subject to natural laws in governing the society” (任天为治) with Daoism: “斯宾塞氏之言治也，大旨存于任天，而人事为之辅，犹黄老之明自然，而不忘在宥是已” (in the Preface to Prolegomena V).

Here, “Letting Be, and Exercising Forbearance” is a well-known writing of Chuang Tzu in which Chuang Tzu expresses his concepts of action less governance and letting things develop naturally. Yan Fu quotes Chuang Tzu’s “闻在宥天下，不闻治天下也” (I have heard of letting the world be, and exercising forbearance; I have not heard of governing the world) as a foil to Spencer’s concept “the human mind should be subject to natural laws in governing the society” (任天为治).

It is thus clear that Yan Fu in the Preface to *Tian Yan Lun* as much as possible interrelates “natural evolution” (Tian Yan) Chinese traditional cultural classics to produce strong readability, the final purpose of which is to make *Tian Yan Lun* “survive” in the translational eco-environment of the target text.

## 2. Example Changing

In translating, Yan Fu often transforms the original examples into examples with which Chinese people are familiar. For instance, in Prolegomena IV, Yan Fu changes Huxley’s Cretaceous example into the example of a flooded botanical garden to illustrate that human control of nature is limited; thus, Chinese readers can better understand Huxley owing to the many rivers in China.

For another example, in Prolegomena VIII, Huxley uses pigeons as a metaphor to satirize the ridiculousness and impossibility of the selection of men by men: “The pigeons, in short, are to be their own Sir John Sebright.” Sir John Sebright, the nineteenth century British agronomist, was famous for improving poultry and livestock and was especially good at raising pigeons. Yan Fu transforms the illustration into Chinese allusions as follows: “今乃以人择人，此何异上林之羊，欲自为卜式，汧、渭之马，欲自为其伯翳，多见其不自量也已。” Yan Fu uses Pushi (卜式) and Boyi (伯翳) to replace Sir John Sebright to achieve the same effect among readers because Pushi (卜式) was a minister in the West Han Dynasty who became rich by raising sheep, and Boyi (伯翳) was the ancestor of the Ying (嬴) family in Chinese history. The original would have been hard for Chinese readers at that time to understand, as they likely would have had no idea what Huxley was referring to, so Yan Fu turns them into familiar, easily understandable Chinese allusions.

For the third example, in Prolegomena VIII, Yan Fu uses an English proverb, “粪在田则为肥，在衣则为不洁,” and adds “然则不洁者，乃肥失其所者也” to

- *Scenario*: In a university lecture hall, in the course of an academic lecture given by the chief editor of an American professional journal, a Chinese interpreter is standing beside the speaker to make a simultaneous interpretation.
- *Source utterance*: Talking about copyright transfer, the journal editor states that if a submitted article is accepted for publication, the copyright of the article will then be transferred to the journal. Regarding the publication charges, they depend upon the journals themselves. For instance, no page charges are generally levied for journals published in England, while the printing costs of most American journals are usually high, for example, fifty dollars per page for some journals. *Well, here is a short price list for your reference.*
- *Real-life rendition*: 谈到关于版权转让的问题, 该刊物指出: 如果所提交的文章已接受在本刊发表, 那么, 拟发表的这篇文章的版权便将转让给本刊。至于文章的发表费的问题, 主要取决于刊物本身。比如, 在英国刊登的文章, 一般不收取发表费, 而大多数的美国刊物的发表费就很昂贵。譬如, 有些刊物登载一页文章就要收费50美元。你看, 我这儿有一份简短的价格表。[('视译'价格表)《物理评论快》报每页收费110美元, 《天文学杂志》每页收费90美元; 《科学仪器评论》每页收费65美元, 《勘误表》每页收费10美元; 特约发表的研究论文不收发表费。]
- *Comments*: The above interpretation is proper, but the 62 italicized Chinese characters do not exist in the source utterance but result from the sight interpretation of the interpreter. Why did the interpreter supplement the original remarks? It turned out that the addition was the speaker's original intention, for the source utterance contained the words “Well, here is a short price list for your reference,” which showed that he originally intended to inform the audience. However, the hall was so large that it was impossible for the audience (especially people in the back rows) to see clearly, so the speaker handed the interpreter a list for sight interpretation.

Here, the “limitations” of the translational eco-environment of the interpretation scene or “deficiencies” of the translational eco-environment elements often bring about ecological “defects and insufficiencies” of the target language, which will further result in informational “defects and insufficiencies” for the audiences so that the “original intention” of the source utterance cannot be completely transmitted. Therefore, the interpreter not only must interpret the content of the source utterance but should also boldly employ the “supplementation” strategy to compensate for these deficiencies and reconstruct the target eco-environment, maintaining the relative balance of the source utterance and real-life rendition ecologies to achieve better cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communications (Hu, 1991, pp. 58–191).

## 6.5 “Leaning on” Either the Source-Text Ecology or the Target-Text Ecology

The “leaning on” strategy refers not only to leaning on the source-text ecology but also to leaning on the target-text ecology. On the one hand, leaning on the source-text ecology mostly represents the highly foreignizing treatment of the source text