

Eco-Translatology: A New Paradigm of Eco-translation*

—A Comparative Study on Approaches to Translation Studies

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As an emerging paradigm of Translation Studies from ecological perspectives, Eco-Translatology is developing progressively. Such questions and doubts about its development, however, can be heard sometimes: Where does Eco-Translatology differ from the prevailing paradigms to translation? What is the addition of knowledge that Eco-Translatology can offer to the scholarship of Translation Studies in the present world? In other words, how can Eco-Translatology be claimed as an emerging paradigm of Translation Studies? This paper makes an attempt to offer brief clarifications and responses regarding the above questions and doubts. The discussion in this paper shows that the distinctions lie at least in the following seven aspects: (1) Research perspective (ecological perspective); (2) Philosophical background (Eco-holism, Oriental eco-wisdom, Translation as Adaptation and Selection); (3) Research foci (translation ecologies, textual ecologies, “translation community” ecologies, and their interrelationships and interplays); (4) Research methodology (metaphorical analogies, conceptual borrowings); (5) Unique terminology; (6) The nine “three-in-one” expressions in the discourse construction; (7) Eco-translation ethics principles, etc. All of the above should be able to distinguish Eco-Translatology from other existing theoretical systems in Translation Studies.

Keywords: Eco-translatology, eco-translation paradigm, comparative study, eco-holism, oriental eco-wisdom

1. Introduction

In the field of translation studies, there have been continuous investigations and comments on contemporary translation theories. Most researchers choose to sort out and comment on some popular translation theories in their writings, treating them as

background and foundation of related studies. Besides, translation theoreticians have also conducted systematic studies of commentaries on special subjects. For example, as we can see from their induction and commentaries on modern translation theories, according to “school of translation theory”, they can be divided into Prague school, London school, American structuralism school/ communicative theory school, Philological School and Linguistic School that originate from the Former Soviet Union, etc. (Tan 1991; 240-303). According to disciplinary frameworks, they are divided into philology, linguistics and social semiotics, etc. (Nida 1993; 155-168). According to “translation thoughts”, they are classified into five schools, namely the North American Translation Workshop, the Science of Translation, Early Translation Studies, Polysystem Theory and Deconstruction (Gentzler 1993). According to “text orientation”, they are divided into “source text orientation” and “target text orientation” (Hatim 2001: 42). Some other scholars classify them by representative figures (Liao Qiyi 2000; 13-22) or by disciplinary subjects (Munday 2001) and so on.

In this paper, the authors will briefly present and review related studies on different translation approaches and their limitations when introducing translation theory studies from multiple perspectives such as linguistics, literary studies, culture studies, communication studies and also action goals, polysystem, deconstructionism, etc. And on this basis, the authors would like to propose a new eco-translation paradigm – Eco-Translatology – an Oriental paradigm originating from the East, from China, including the differences between Eco-Translatology and other prevailing translation theories. It is believed that this eco-translation paradigm from the East may help break the imbalance of translation theories between West and East.

1.1. Linguistic Approaches to Translation Theories

Various scholars have studied translation from the perspective of linguistics. Roman Jakobson, a linguist of Prague school, was among the first. In 1959, he differentiated in his paper titled *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, three different kinds of translation: intralingual translation, interlingual translation and intersemiotic translation (Jakobson, 1959). Eugene A. Nida from America published two books *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964) and *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (1969, co-authored with Charles R. Taber), where he put forward the concept of “dynamic equivalence”, which was later changed into “functional equivalence”. John Cunnison Catford from Britain, in *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965), initially explored the definition, general types, methods, conditions and limits of translation from the perspective of systematic

functional grammar, discussed the basis of interlingual transformation with linguistic concepts such as hierarchy, category, rank, etc, and proposed that translation equivalence could only be linguistically or functionally equivalent. In China, Wu Xinxiang and Li Hong'an published their work *Equivalent Translation Theory* (1990), which concentrates on the discussion of translation equivalence issue. In *Chinese-English Comparative Study and Translation* (1991), Liu Miqing analyzed Chinese-English differences from a micro perspective like words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and also from a macro perspective by comparing Chinese-English techniques of expression and ways of thinking, through which he advanced a series of translation strategies and norms for reference. In their studies of semantics and translation, Tan Zaixi (1991) and Ke Wenli (1992) explained some problems and proposed corresponding strategies by the application of lexical meaning, referential meaning, grammatical meaning, associative meaning, semantic shifts, hyponymy and context meaning.

On the whole, however, the linguistic approaches to studying translation theories are mainly limited to the bilingual (language-pair) transference, form and context. Once translation practice extends itself into fields such as culture, communication and translational eco-environment, there would be doubts or questions whether they are adequate to explain them.

1.2. Philological Approaches to Translation Theories

Literary translation is the earliest and the most important translation activity in the history of translation, which is influenced by philological theories (namely, the theories of Literature and Art). The theoretic study school of literary translation is represented by Jiri Levý from Czech Republic and C. Gachechiladze from the former Soviet Union. In Levý's *The Art of Translation* (Originally titled as *Umeni prekladu* 1963; the German version, 1969), he proposed that faithfulness and accuracy in the translation does not mean keeping the formal features of the original but adopting certain methods to faithfully transmit the original content and aesthetic features so as to facilitate the target readers' understanding and reception. He argued that literary translation was "a process of 're-creation' and 'creation', a creative work aiming at reproducing the aesthetic equivalence effect" (Levý 1969: 65-69; Munday 2001: 62). In China, Fu Lei's "*shen si* (spiritual similarity)" and Qian Zhongshu's "*hua jing* (ultimate realm of transfiguration)" are the representative theories. In addition, Jin Di did the research on the "equivalent effect in translation" (1989/1998); and Liu Miqing put forward the "aesthetic" aspect of Chinese translation theories (1995).

To sum up, philological translation theories have only stressed on the artistic quality of literary works, while tend to overlook “equivalence” between the source language and the target language at different levels. Their translation criteria are ambiguous and barely guide the translation of the non-literary discourses.

1.3. Cultural Approaches to Translation Theories

Cultural factors are deeply integrated into the language system, reflecting the social, historical, cultural and psychological characteristics of a nation, including ways of thinking, values, social custom, religious belief, psychological state, cultural background, etc. As the cultural carrier and container, language possesses huge cultural infiltration and inclusive power; therefore it is also profoundly restricted by the culture in the translation activities. André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett thought that the unit of translation had changed “from word to text as a unit” and “from translation as text to translation as culture” (1990: 4). Mary Snell-Hornby also put forward with the idea of “the cultural turn” (Munday 2001: 127). Wang Zuoliang, a Chinese scholar, proposed to combine translation research with comparative study of cultures, and he put forward with the proposition that the translator should be an intellectual “man of culture”. Ke Ping analyzed the non-equivalence between two languages in three semantic aspects --- reference, pragmatics and locution, which explained why the cultural differences should be an important subject in translation research (1988: 9). Yang Zijian proposes that culture in the field of translation means a generalized concept, which includes all disciplines in the areas of nature, society and mentality. It connects closely with language researches and explores the social and cultural sources of the occurrence and development of translation notions. (1994: 16).

In general, the culturological approach to the studies of translation theories mainly gives weight to the restrictions on the conversion of cultural information. But under the notion of “broad” culture, the discretionary translation criteria neither make translating easy to operate nor give sufficient considerations to many aspects of translation.

1.4. Communicative Approaches to Translation Theories

The representative of communication study of translation theories is Eugene Nida, who has studied translation from the perspectives of communication and information theory. He believes that translation is a communicative activity and also a way for the exchanging of information and ideas between two languages. According to his

“translation as communication”, any information that has no communicative function is useless (Nida et al., 1969; Nida, 1993 ; Tan Zaixi , 1999). Peter Newmark has, in his paper “Communicative and Semantic Translation” and *A Textbook of Translation*, suggests two translation approaches, namely communicative translation and semantic translation. He points out that the difference between these two translation approaches lies in the expression of the target language. Semantic translation is to make the translated text close to the form of the original text, while communicative translation is to re-organize the language structure to make the translated text fluent, idiomatic and intelligible, in a bid to highlight the effect of the information (Newmark, 1977: 163-180 ; 1988: 45-48). Basil Hatim and Mason also propose that “All types of behaviors in the translation process are essentially communicative” (Hatim & Mason, 1997: vii). In recent years, the “constructive translatology”, a theory raised by Lv Jun, a Chinese scholar, is indeed another advocacy for the communicative/semantic approach. (Lv, 2005).

In all, however, communicative translation theory stresses too much the communicative function of the translated text, often ignoring its aesthetic function, etc. It tends to distort the information communication and lacks its study from the viewpoint of “ecological dimension” (i.e., looking at translation or interpreting translation phenomena from ecological perspectives and in terms of ecological principles). Therefore, it is only applicable to a limited area.

1.5. A Skopos perspective to translation theories

Skopos Theory, a component of the theory of translational action, is first proposed by Hans J. Vermeer, a German scholar. It regards translation as a type of transition action, which is distinctive as it is based on its original text. Skopos Theory believes that translation is an action, and since every action has a purpose, translation is conditioned by its purpose. The quality of the translation depends on whether or not it could reach the pre-determined purpose.

Generally speaking, however, the idea that “translation is an action, and every action has purpose” is a meaningful and widely-accepted translation philosophy, but it fails to provide a systematic and comprehensive description of the translation process, translation methods and translation criticism.

1.6. A Polysystematical Approach to Translation Theories

Polysystem was proposed by Israeli literary theorist Itamar Even-Zohar in the 1970s. It intends to study the relationship between literary system and its social environments. The theory argues that there are always primary and secondary literary systems in a certain culture, with the refined culture taking up an important position, so the theoretical concepts of translation should be placed and examined in a larger literary, social and cultural framework (Even-Zohar, 1990). Another important scholar of this theory is Gideon Toury, who contends that translation is the secondary system in the polysystem and its influence depends on the strength and stage of its development of the target culture and its literature. He believes that the translation has no unchanged status but multiple identities due to its social, literary and historical backgrounds (Toury, 1980).

However, in general, the theory lays too much emphasis on literary system and literary theory. The theory itself consists only of abstract description and assumption; the theoretical system is in want of precision and integrity.

1.7. Deconstructive Approaches to Translation Theories

As a philosophical way of thinking, Deconstruction originated in the mid-1960s, with Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, et al. as the representatives. With his deconstruction on translation studies, Jacques Derrida opened up new horizons for translation and infused its studies with new vitality. The term *differance* which means both “defer” and “differ”, is the cornerstone of his theory. In his opinion, due to the differences between signified and signifier and their uncertainty and variability, the language itself is not harmonious but there exist various kinds of differences, contradictions and ambiguities. (Foucault 1973: 44, 300; Gentzler 1993: 149-152). Martin Heidegger holds that there exist great limits in naming and concepts of human beings, where something is revealed in the nature of language. Thus language should speak for itself through its own variations and windings. In his opinion, language/ thoughts restraints limited man’s thinking, and those limits should be destructured or deconstructed. Besides, with his denial of the original text and the translation as independent existence, he views translation as an interpretation of ourselves into the thought of the other language. Strategy of defamiliarization, such as strange wordings and structures, should be applied to the translation so as to break down the preconceived category of concepts of his readers and consequently achieve the similar effect or response that the original version evokes (Heidegger, 1962; Gentzler, 1993: 55-58).

Overall, however, deconstructive translation is a skeptical theory, which itself is also contradictory. Taking the original text as “nothingness”, it naturally lacks studies on translation process and translation methods, etc. Meanwhile, the “deconstruction” fails to be followed by “construction”.

In short, due to different countries, cultures, languages, educational and training backgrounds, researchers have different interests which lead to different focuses among the existing translation theories. However, if you examine them from a universal, philosophical, systematic, or operational way, the limitations and imperfections of existing translation theories would be obvious. In this regard, many Chinese and Western translation researchers share quite consistent viewpoints. Here are some comments from Chinese scholars. For example, “although some translation theory can also be self-contained, it is only confined to the study on the abstract concepts in an individual or extreme way, and it sometimes goes to over generalization. Generally, it is more theoretical than practical, partial and too extreme, leading to its one-sidedness and limitations. And also, abstract and tedious exposition tends to complicate the problem into mystery and deification.” (Zi Xun 1993: 30, 31, 70). “We still use the standard of literary translation to evaluate other types of translation (e.g. practical translation) which consequently cannot meet the practical requirements.” (Hu Gongze, 1994: 5). Some standards proposed by translation theorists can only be applied to their own translations. Such over-generalized translation standards also divorce from the reality. If translation standards fail to illustrate and instruct the practice, “it can only develop and progress in a blind alley without end.” (Zhang Nanfeng 1995: 16). “If the study of translation theory focuses mainly on its divergence or some details, it is doomed to be tinged with psychologically trifles.” (Zhang Boran & Xu Ju 1997: 51) “Most illustrations are limited to the strategic analysis of technological problems, thus their conclusion tends to be more a comment based on personal experience than a profound understanding achieved through researches of theoretical significance.” (Wang Ning 1998: 1) “If something is explored independently from one single subject, the overall effect of the general research should be impaired. Besides, the limitation and partiality of the translation theory now available also lead to the carelessness of people in and out of the area on their treating researching translation as a science.” (Fang Mengzhi 1999: 19) Tan Zaixi held a more concrete perspective on it by saying that, “The reason why translation theory fails to be perfect lies in the fact that researchers behold the problems of translation in a parochial standpoint, which leads to a lack of both systematic and macroscopic knowledge about translation. People tend to focus on a certain aspect of translation research, such as translation standard, methodology or skills, according to their personal preference. This is a way of referring to the whole forest according to a single

tree. A better choice would be to integrate the separate “trees” into a “forest” so as to put up an all-round theory with scientific methods. Some mistakes lie in the fact that they tend to view the problems from a single viewpoint. Thus, they fail to get hang of the overall idea at a higher level. The other mistakes lie in the fact that they tend to shop around some terms instead of focusing on a solid basis.” (Tan Zaixi 2000: 4, 10, 99) In all, it is admitted that the Chinese theorists are dissatisfied with the status quo of translation theory research in China.

Long before that, some western theorists on translation had also commented on the defects of the existing theory study. For instance, Louis G. Kelly pointed out that, one of the reasons why translation theory failed to develop was the lack of the consideration of non-literary translation. (Kelly 1979: 1) W. Wilss mentioned that the existing literatures on translation are all “a mess of uncoordinated statements.” (Wilss 1982: 11) James Holmes emphasized that many translation theories were never general, instead they were specific, referring only to some certain aspects of the translation theory; “So far, most of the translation theory is nothing but prolegomena to general translation theory.” (Holmes 1988: 73) Lawrence Venuti pointed out that the adoption of methods from linguistic, in particular textual linguistics, conversation analysis, and pragmatics, resulted in large amounts of details for analysis “...created the daunting definition of analysis; it was so very likely to change translation study into researches on branches of pragmatic linguistics, a possible trend into textual analysis for the sake of language study instead of serving translation. (Venuti 1998; Ou Jianlong 2000: 109) Ernst-August Gutt even dictated that “The ‘modern’ translation study even failed to solve some primary problems in translation, problems that can’t possibly be solved by further researches.” (Gutt 2000: 17)

Based upon the knowledge of the deficiency of contemporary translation theories, scholars in translation academia have studied and, in particular, provided their remarks, which suggest that the contemporary translation theories need improvement. Meanwhile, it is these issues that keep perplexing translation academia and continuously encouraging people to ponder and to probe.

Considering the background discussed above, we have undertaken the study and exploration on Eco-Translatology. Since Eco-Translatology is a totally novel or “formerly nonexistent” perspective of translation studies proposed by the Chinese scholars, it may be called “to create from none”; and particularly it is a systematic study with newly-coined terms and concepts utterly different from previous perspectives, so it may also be called “strike out a new line”. Therefore, the main framework of this paper is to clarify and to respond to such relevant questions as where Eco-Translation differs from other contemporary approaches to translation studies and what the innovation is.

2. Eco-Translatology and Its Features

2.1. Unique perspective of argumentation

Different from other approaches to translation studies, Eco-Translatology takes “ecology” as its perspective of argumentation, a comprehensive and holistic study on translation from the ecological perspective. Namely, Eco-Translatology tries to interpret and examine translation from eco-holism, rather than from the perspectives of linguistics, literature, culturology, communication, Skopos, feminism, ideology, etc.

Based upon the above, Eco-Translatology constructs the discourse system of Eco-Translatology under the guidance of eco-reason and by following the macroscopic eco-reason, which can be characterized by: (1) stressing wholeness and relevance; (2) seeking dynamics and balance; (3) reflecting eco-aesthetics; (4) identifying the “translation community”; (5) adhering to translation ethics; and (6) highlighting unity/diversity. (Hu Gengshen, 2001)

The result of the comparative studies shows that other approaches to translation studies do not have all the macroscopic eco-reason traits, so it can be seen as a vital difference between Eco-Translatology and other approaches to translation studies.

2.2. Unique philosophical background

One of the philosophical bases of Eco-Translatology is the contemporary ecology.

Over a century ago, ecology was nominated for the first time by Ernest Haeckel, a German zoologist, to denote the science of “studying the interrelations between organisms and their environments” (Wang Rusong & Zhou Hong, 2004: 3). Along with the deepening of our recognition towards the logical relation between organic bodies and their surrounding environments, modern ecology collects into its coverage the investigations on the logical relation between human and the nature. The rising mass movement of environmental protection in the last 60s and 70s has pushed ecology further away from biology and towards the study on the intrinsic relation between human and the nature. In the territory of humanities and social science in the past few years, the word “ecology” has been semantically expanded to aggregate natural health, maintaining balance and “harmonious co-existence”.

Ecology, having stepped out of the ivory tower exclusive to the chemists and biologists, rises to the heated global issue and becomes the people’s behavioral norm. Academically speaking, ecology is a philosophy, a science, an aesthetics and technology;

it is a systemic science of studying the relationship between organic bodies, including human beings and environment, an ancient but new inter-discipline of natural science and humanities; furthermore, it is a science of heaven-human relation from physical, social and rational perspective, a world value and a methodology as well as scientific thinking mode. To put it simple, ecology is a science studying the environment relations connecting human beings and their peers, things and their background; a livelihood and stratagem science about human conducts closely related to the existence and development of ordinary people; a way for human beings to survive, live and prosper. "Through self-generation, self-reflection, self-improvement and self-reliance, ecology will guide human beings to seek advantages while avoiding disadvantages, to adapt to the environment for the ultimate success." (2004:4) Methodologically speaking, "ecology, as a science based on holism, focuses its research methods on the entirety of interrelation and interaction". (Krohne, 2001: 11) In terms of ecological features, ecology is balanced, following the rules of holistic coordination, circulative self-generation and indestructibility of matter and conservation of energy; it is progressive, advocating competitive coexistence, efficient harmony, concurrent evolution and survival of the fittest; it is integral, seeking the synthesis of wealth, health and civilization, going for the physiological, psychological and ethical well-being. Besides, ecology is a survival and development mechanism of competition, co-existence, re-generation and self-generation; a systematizing and synthesizing function to seek temporal, spatial, quantitative, structural and orderly sustenance and harmony; a process of pursuing constant human evolution and perfection heading for sustainability.

With systematical application of ecological principles and theories, Eco-Translatology thoroughly discussed the translating and interpreting, the uniqueness of which is phenomenal for translating academia.

Meanwhile, the eco-translatology initiated by the Chinese translators also lies in the abundant Chinese ancient ecological wisdom which can be used for reference. "The beginning of Chinese culture focuses on life." (Mou Zongsan, 1997:43) "The comprehension about life" can be regarded as the mainstream of the Chinese cultural thoughts, including the comprehension and awareness about life, survival and ecology. Therefore, the classical ecological wisdom in Chinese traditional culture becomes an important theoretical support and thought component. The ecological wisdom features the "unity of heaven and man", the "doctrine of the mean", the principles of "people first" and "holistic integration", and includes abundant philosophies and critical thoughts. This is a kind of Chinese wisdom, life wisdom and ecological wisdom, which can distinguish the eco-translatology initiated in China. (Hu Gengshen, 2008)

2.3. Unique research forci

Eco-translatology focuses on three eco-themes.

The so called three eco-themes are “ecology,” “life,” and “survival.” “Ecology” here refers to translation ecology, the ecological system and environment of translation. “Life” here refers to the life of the texts involved in translation process, the vital status and living conditions of the texts. And “survival” here refers to the survival of the translators, the living standards and the future development of the translators. The confirmation of the three eco-themes indicates that the eco-translatology resorts to translation “ecology,” deals with texts’ “life”, and cares about the “survival” of translators. To be specific, much reliance on the ecology of translation lies in breaking the limits of “context”, exerting an effect of “transcending”. The text-life orientation lies in revealing the ecological mechanism of translatability, which can bring about a new explanation. Focus on the survival of translators lies in rediscovering the original motivation of translation, which can manifest a kind of “return” (namely, returning to pay attention to the transplanted text alive; to translators’ life quality; and to the balance of ST and TT translational eco-environments, etc.).

Moreover, discussions about the ecological function of and “new interpretations” on “translatability/ untranslatability” are regarded as the focuses among the three eco-themes. That is to say, other translation methods have neither such research themes nor such research focuses as eco-translatology does.

2.4. Unique research approaches

On one hand, research on Eco-Translatology emphasizes “holistic perspective”, for Eco-Translatology is based on Eco-holism. Methodologically, ecology is a holism-based science, thus, the research approach of ecology highlights the integrity of correlation and interaction (Krohne 2001: 11). Due to such interaction between correlated elements of ecological system, the change of any constituent would lead to modification in others. [For example, if the publisher is changed, then the translation requirements may also change, and the style of translated text may change accordingly.] Therefore, the highly holistic feature of ecological system can hardly be imitated by other expertise structure systems. Generally, viewing Eco-Translatology from the perspective of ecology hence bears some methodological advantages.

What’s worth mentioning is that, as for translation research, while other various research approaches may possibly pay attention to “holisticism” and “systematic balance”

to some degree, however, their focus differs from that of Eco-Translatology in that the previous ones are determined by human cognition, hence is “artificial” or “man-made”, depending upon the wisdom of the individual system designer; while the later one rests with the nature of ecological system, because it is “natural”, “institutional” and a “must”. In other words, as long as translation is evaluated from the stand of ecological system, it is natural and a must to consider systematic interaction, balance, coherence and holistic harmony. Otherwise, it will neither be viewed as ecology-based research, nor be claimed following ecological principles, since all this is determined by the “survival demand” of the mechanic and systematic ecological system.

On the other hand, the “transplantation analogy” research approach, created by the cross-disciplinary study of translology and ecology, also serves as an important distinction between Eco-Translatology and other translation research approaches. The reason lies in that translological ecology and natural ecology somehow share some association, similarity and isomorphism, which provides possibility for concept transplantation and symptom analogy in Eco-Translatology research.

2.5. Unique terminology

Eco-Translatology, developed from the perspective of translation ecology, extracts the essential of translation based on its practice, to explain the holistic translation. In recent researches, a series of unique terms and concepts have been established including “ecology”, “life”, “survival”, “translation ecology”, “translational eco-environment”, “translational eco-system”, “translation community”, “adaptation”, “selection”, “survival through selection”, “co-existence and interaction”, “ecological mechanism”, “emphasis on existence and harmony”, etc. Those unique terminologies are family members of the complete theoretical discourse system of eco-translatological studies, which distinguishes Eco-translatology from other prevailing systems. Thanks to continuous efforts in theoretical and applied researches as well as achievement accumulation, Eco-Translatology has been developed into an “independent school” in the polysystem of theoretical study of translation (Fang Mengzhi 2011: 103).

Of course, on the one hand, most of the above terms are unique, and some previously-used ones but with new meanings in eco-translatological studies. On the other hand, the acceptance of a new term, in fact, is a process, and also takes time. It is hoped that those unique terminologies can be gradually accepted in translations studies along with the increasingly deeper understanding of the Eco-translatology as a whole.

In short, as is known to all, each theoretical system has its own unique terminologies,

which not only comprise its fundamental elements and components, but also function as significant symbols distinguishing itself from other theoretical systems.

2.6. Unique discourse system

Constructed from ecological perspective, and in accordance with eco-reason, the theoretical discourse system of translation has its unique features.

Under the guidance of eco-reason, Eco-Translatology covers three levels: “Translation Studies”, “Translation Theories” and “Source/Target Texts” (a top-down structure). A developmental pattern of “three-in-one combination”—macroscopic translational structure (laying particular emphasis on translation studies), mesoscopic theoretical system (laying particular emphasis on translation theories) and microscopic textual operation (laying particular emphasis on source/target texts) has been gradually formulated. Within this pattern, “translatology”, “translation theory”, “translational text”; or “translator”, “text” and “environment” (three phases) are horizontally interactive and mutually interrelated, and are synergistically fused into an organic entity—“three integrated into one”, comprising a balanced and harmonious “community” of translation studies. In this holistic pattern of “three-in-one combination”, without macroscopic study, Eco-Translatology would lose its holistic translational structure; without meso-scopic study, it would be short of its ontological translation theory; while without microscopic operation, it would be detached from its textual support from applications.

Comparatively, no similar discourse system construction can be found in the macroscopic structure or developing route of other translation theories.

2.7. Unique translation ethics

By the analogy with ecological ethics, and in light of translation practice, we propose and deduce, based on the study orientation of Eco-Translatology, the following fundamental principles of eco-translation ethics:

Firstly, Principle of Balance and Harmony — mainly refers to maintaining the balance and harmony of Source-text Ecology and Target-text Ecology. Specifically, on one hand, through “selective adaptation” and “adaptive selection”, translators should try with great effort to maintain and transfer the linguistic ecology, cultural ecology and communicative ecology of source text; on the other hand, through “selective adaptation” and “adaptive selection”, translators should try with great effort to adapt the target text to the linguistic ecology, cultural ecology and communicative ecology of target text — to make target

text “survive” and “thrive” in the translational eco-environment of target text.

Secondly, Principle of Multiple Eco-Integration — mainly refers to the criteria of translation, which not only requires faithfulness to “source text” and appealingness to “readers”, but on the basis of maintaining textual ecology, the Holistic Degree of Adaptation and Selection in order to make the target text “survive/thrive” in the new linguistic ecology, cultural ecology and communicative ecology.

“Holistic Degree of Adaptation and Selection” — the totality of 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 speaking, holistic degree of adaptation and selection is positively correlated with a TT’s degree of “selective adaptation” and “adaptive selection”. The optimal translation is hence, comparatively speaking, the one of the highest “holistic degree of adaptation and selection”.

Thirdly, Principle of Symbiosis and Diversity — mainly refers to the symbiotic of the diversity in the studies of translation theories and of different target texts. Same as the biodiversity in eco-environment, the diversity in the studies of translation theories and the “coexistence” of different target texts should be viewed as normalcy in the development of translatology. By following the principles of “the survival of the fittest” and “preservation of the strong and elimination of the weak” in translational eco-environments, diversified translation theories and different target texts keep evolving and developing.

Fourthly, Principle of Translator Responsibility — mainly means that the translator should take “full responsibilities” for translation process, translation behavior and the whole translation activity, specifically, coordinating the interrelationship between “translational eco-environment”, “translation community”, and “source/target text”, so as to, through “translator responsibility”, embody the associated interaction and the balance and harmony in ecological holism among “environment”, “community”, and “text” (three phases).

The main principles of “ecological paradigm” in the translation ethics, as listed above, combine eco-translation morals and ethic responsibility. Compared with other approaches to translation studies, the uniqueness of Eco-Translatology, in terms of translation moral principles, is self-evident.

3. Conclusion

From the brief discussion and critical clarification above, Eco-Translatology differs from other translation study approaches in such aspects as perspective of argumentation, philosophical background, research foci, research methodology, terminology, discourse system, eco-translation ethics principles, etc. All of the above should be able to distinguish Eco-Translatology from other existing theoretical systems in Translation Studies.

As a matter of fact, there is an unwritten law in academia that the “novelty” of a science theory or an academic view depends on whether or not it can reach major consensus through doubts and debates.

This paper has solely involved the “originality” and “novelty” in comparing Eco-Translatology with other translation study approaches, but it hasn’t covered the issue that whether the “originality” and “novelty” is accepted or to what degree they are accepted. Meanwhile, this paper only involves the “ontology” of Eco-Translatology and leaves its specific application examples on aspects as studies of translation theories, translation process, translation practice, translation teaching, translators, translation history, etc.

In sum, for the limit of length, this paper only makes an attempt to offer brief clarifications and responses regarding the above questions/doubts. But new questions and further critical comments in regard to the “difference” and “novelty” between Eco-Translatology and other approaches to translation studies are delightedly welcomed.

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