

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

The fields of translation studies are considerably evolving due to their close connection with languages (Němec & Šmardová, n.d.; Roig-Sanz & Meylaerts, 2018). Translation scholars have become familiar with new theoretical perspectives from other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, cultural studies and even global history (Roig-Sanz & Meylaerts, 2018). Furthermore, eco-translatology is one theory that introduces a new perspective in translation analysis and metaphorically borrows the term ecology with translation.

Eco-translatology was first proposed by Professor Gengshen Hu in 2004, although it only developed into a systematic translation theory a decade later, in 2014 (Guo, 2021). Guo (2021: 62) states that eco-translatology studies translation behaviour from the author-centred perspective. It analyses 'why' the translator translates in a certain way, compared to other translation theory that questions 'how' (i.e., Skopos theory or functional equivalence theory). Eco-translatology borrows the basics of Darwinian evolution theory, namely the approach that teaches how organic beings tend to 'adapt' to their living environment and how the living environment 'selects' the life of organic beings. In other words, it is the idea of natural selection, or 'survival of the fittest' (Guo, 2021). Hence, Hu (2003, in Guo 2021) defines eco-translatology as a translator's selection and adaptation activities in a translational eco-environment.

Guo (2021) claims that Hu (2003) tried to explore the common grounds and similarities between ecology and translations. Hu (2003, in Guo, 2021) believes that translation activities have similar intrinsic laws and ideas of 'adaptation' and 'selection' within the 'translation biosphere.' For instance, translators adapt to the environment of the source text and source language and will proceed to choose the better one. Also, the translated text that will be selected is the one that has the most suitable translation, and the inferior one will be excluded (Guo, 2021). In other words, both translators and the translation activity will adapt to the translational eco-environment and will only let themselves be accepted by its natural selection. That is the idea of 'surviving' and 'eliminating' from Darwin (2014, in Guo, 2021). To add, Hu (2006, in Bo, 2014) claims that to have a perfect translated text, a translator should put forward the standard translation strategy; that is, to integrate their adaptation and selection at the highest level.

Eco-translatology fulfils the demand in the modern translation world for multidisciplinary research; in this case, eco-translatology combines translation science with ecology. Bo (2014) claims that translators must lead in making the proper selection and adaptation in the eco-environment to create a high-quality translation. Hu (2006, in Bo 2014) explains that the eco-environment of translation refers to the whole situation and condition presented by the source text, the source language (SL), and the target language (TL). This includes the corresponding part of languages, such as communication, culture and society; as well as the author, reader and sponsors (Guo, 2021). Hu (2004, in Guo 2021) summarised the

translation method of eco-translatology as an 'adaptive transformation from linguistic, cultural and communicative dimension.'

Although Bo (2014) stated that eco-translatology is often used as guidance for analysing translation activities, this paper uses eco-translatology as one of the possible applicable pedagogical approaches. This notion was inspired by several researchers, such as (Xiaowei, 2014) who coined the notion of applying eco-translatology in translation teaching; (Halili, 2020) who states that eco-translatology is possibly applied for translation teaching; and (Zhai, 2019b) who claims that eco-translatology can effectively promote translation teaching and help improve the translation ability of the student.

Rosyidah (2015) explains that ecological translation teaching means taking account of related elements in the overall learning process, such as curriculum, learning methods, learning materials, class formation, surrounding environment, student conditions and so on. Ultimately, translation teaching aims to improve students' competence in translating text. Thus, translation teaching with an eco-translatological approach is a way to prepare for students' competence in translation activities (Halili, 2020)

In general, translation teaching in Indonesia is classified as teacher-dominated, remaining passive to its learner. The teacher is frequently considered the centre of information, where the learners will discuss their translations (Rosyidah, 2015). Topics that learners commonly discuss with their lectures are the terminological difficulties in the text, structural ambiguity, or lack of background knowledge on the topic. To solve this problem, the teacher usually gives direct

instructions, helps the learner find the appropriate terms in the target language, and even answers all their questions. According to Shi-yang, this type of translation teaching needs to be updated (2009, in Halili, 2020) and reformed (Rosyidah, 2015)

Furthermore, Halili (2020) proposed that language study programs offering translation subjects in modern higher institutions should instead construct a method that highlights improving students' translation competence as a translator. This is where the eco-translatology approach comes to the surface. Hu & Tao (2020) claims that eco-translatology is a concept that puts translators or translation learners at the centre of translation activities, showing adaptive competence with their environment. (Rosyidah, 2015) even goes as far as to claim that this approach is an innovation in the world of science, as it changes the focus in the classroom from being characterised by passive into active learner activities. Lastly, Halili (2020) also believe that teaching translation with eco-translatology will stimulate the students to enhance their translation competence.

Reviews regarding translation competence skills have been discussed in many previous studies before. For instance, Sundari & Febriyanti (2016) conducted research that aims to analyse Indonesian students' translation competence by looking at their translation techniques. In a descriptive analysis research, Sundari & Febriyanti (2016) took 35 students majoring in English Education as respondents and a translation test as the research instrument. Borrowing the competence components by Angelelli (2009), the research shows that most students still use literal translation techniques and are less likely to paraphrase their translated text. Sundari & Febriyanti (2016) also assessed translation capability using the scoring

rubric also by Angelelli (2009), which shows an average score of 72.34, categorised as fair.

Similar research was also conducted by Wijaya (2019) who aimed to seek the level of students' translation competence at Sriwijaya University by looking at the translation strategies used by the students when doing translation activity. Wijaya (2019) took 36 students as his research samples, implementing a descriptive analysis study by obtaining data through questionnaires, tasks and interviews. By borrowing the translation competence level by Campbell (1998), the research concluded that the students' translation competence category is in the pretextual level, meaning that while the spelling is accurate, students still find difficulties translating. This is shown with their limited vocabulary, lack of background knowledge regarding the text and they still follow a similar linguistic structure of the source text.

Another similar research was conducted by Azaria (2022) who tries to identify students' translation competence and strategies when translating figure of speech. As descriptive qualitative research, Azaria (2022) uses the poem "Moonlight" by Sara Teasdale as the corpus and took the data from students' translated text of the poem. Azaria (2022) took samples of six student translators to answer an online questionnaire. By adapting the translation competence model by Neubert (2000), this research found out seven out of eighteen translation strategies applied by students in their translation, with literal translation being used the most and modulation used the least. To add, Azaria (2022) still finds incorrect use of translation strategies the students apply. Azaria (2022) concludes that the students



possess excellent subject competence, average cultural competence and poor transfer competence.

While the three previous research above focuses on measuring students' translation competence levels, Alenezi (2020) tries to analyse ways to develop students' translation competence using a task-based approach in the classroom. His study focuses on implementing the task-based approach when teaching practical translation course in a translation academic program, due to the lack of studies about this topic in Saudi universities. Alenezi (2020) adopted the task-based teaching model by Li (2013) and specifically selected the tasks to develop students' translation competence development. As a result, Alenezi (2020) discovered a tangible development of students' translation competence followed by bilingual competence. This leads Alenezi (2020) to believe that task-based teaching approach is proven to help enhance students' translation competence when applied correctly.

Meanwhile, Dewi (2019) conducted a conceptual study exploring the literature on translation competence, aiming to find the most suitable model for Indonesian novice translators to learn and achieve. In her research, she discussed sub-competencies in the translation competence proposed by many scholars, such as Roberts (1984), Vienne (1998), Fox (2000), PACTE (2005) and NAATI (2015). After discovering that these sub-competencies are somewhat similar, Dewi (2019) then present thirteen sub-competences adjusted with the needs for Indonesian novice translators taken from previously existing ones, developed from them and some combined. Dewi (2019) also presents an interesting take on bilingualism, questioning whether it is true that someone bilingual is also capable of doing a

translation. By addressing the statement from Lörcher (1986), Dewi (2019) believes that more than linguistic competencies are required for a novice translator to become a professional one.

Similarly, Yvan Rudhel & Wen (2021) questioned the proper competencies a translator needs to create a good translation, and whether being bilingual is enough to become one. Yvan Rudhel & Wen (2021) empirically investigated bilingualism and translation competence to seek the answer. They believed that translation competence is the capacity to correlate linguistic skills between the two languages, which is more of a performance skill than mere competence (Yvan Rudhel & Wen, 2021). This is shown in the result of their study, where the participants acquire an excellent bilingual sub-competence yet face some issues regarding extra-linguistic competence. While possessing the ability of bilingualism is a good start, not all participants were able to take the linguistic and extra-linguistics features into account between the source and target text. This result shows that being a translator is more than merely able to speak two languages.

Addressing the issue of the current language services industry, the demand for high-quality translators is always on the rise (Wu et al., 2019). Translators needing to enhance their skills further might go to a translation training practice. However, therein lies a problem between the translator trainers. Wu et al. (2019) claim that translator trainers are confronted with the difficulties of helping translator trainees to develop a translation competency. Wu et al. (2019) seek information on Chinese translator trainers' beliefs about translation competence and their training practices. They conducted a mixed method study which analyses both quantitative

and qualitative data, a questionnaire, interview and classroom observation. The result shows discrepancies between Chinese translator trainers' beliefs and training practices. While the trainers generally recognised the importance of all sub-competencies that make up translator competence, they focused more on developing the bilingualism of translator trainees. Wu et al. (2019) believes that factors such as lack of motivation, curricula, attitudes and students' abilities plays a part in this outcome. In other words, there is a gap between training practices of translation trainers and their pedagogical approaches.

Studies regarding translation competence to enhance translation learners' skills with translation training was also carried out by Salamah (2021). According to her, although the demand for translator training is high, several studies on this issue reports an existing pedagogical gap in translation training which encompasses several aspects, such as course objectives, guidelines, methods, design course and specialised trainers (Salamah, 2021). This caused translator trainees in Saudi Arabia lacks professional translator training and possess weak language proficiency (Salamah, 2021). Salamah (2021) believes any academic program should have its pedagogical guidelines. In this case, translation competence could be a guideline to show the professional skills and competencies needed. Salamah (2021) reviewed several translation competence models, ranging from Göpferich (2009), PACTE (2017) and EMT (2017). Even though the sub-competences may vary, they all agree on components related to language proficiency, cultural knowledge and the translation process. These translation competences are proven to help translator trainees gain the skills needed professionally.



However, Eser (2015) critiques the current existing translation competence models from Neubert (2000), Schäffner (2000), PACTE (2003) and Yazici (2007). Eser (2015) states that from an organisational process, job descriptions for translator in the translation sector may well go beyond translation process itself; hence there is a need for a change of focus from translation competence to translator's competence. Research by Eser (2015) is considered quantitative research which uses a scale of translation competence concerning perception of university student in Turkey as an empirical data collection. Eser (2015) then proposed a model of translator's competence from an educational perspective of technical, conceptual and interpersonal skills. Eser (2015) believes, as this model embraced a more holistic approach, this model would be more effective and meet the expectations in the translation sector.

In the following year, (Zou, 2015) discussed the development of translation competence models in the past four decades to clarify the constitution of translation competence in the translation world. Zou (2015) divides his reviews of translation competence into three aspects: translation competence models with language-oriented, transfer-oriented and communication-oriented. With his paper, Zou (2015) also explores the implications of effective translation competence towards translator education, which he believes would improve one's translation quality and efficiency, shaping an autonomous and more competent translator.

Meanwhile, several previous studies discussed eco-translatology in many forms of media, such as translating advertisements, literature and subtitles. However, the writer first would like to shift attention to a study by Jun (2020) which

examines a translator's subjectivity in eco-translatology. The main idea of eco-translatology is that translators are positioned as the center of translation and can make selective adaptations and adaptive selections to keep harmony within the ecological environment. Had this rule been broken (i.e., translators do not try to adapt and accept the constraint of the environment), the ecological environment would eliminate their translation; on the contrary, had the translators pursued a holistic selection and adaptation to their work while actively optimising the three-dimensional transformations, they will create the most excellent translation. Jun (2020) also states that a proper translator should understand how to seek advantages and avoid disadvantages within the complex ecological environment, implement a subjective consciousness in their work and integrate the three-dimensional ecological environment to finally achieve with other factors in the ecological environment of translation.

Translator-centred perspective is seen as a feasible way of analysing the translation of children's literature (Guo, 2021). Guo (2021) explores how children became an essential faction in the translational eco-environment and could influence the translator's selection and adaptation in translating children's literature. Guo (2021) does this by using the story of Peter Pan as its corpus study, comparing two Chinese versions of the book to analyse how each translator adapts and selects the three dimensions differently during the translation process. This study reveals that while translating children's literature, children become the most critical factor in the translational eco-environment. Both Chinese versions make sure to be considerate of children within their translational eco-environment, as they both

focus on creating and manipulating the text to be more suitable for children to read. In a sense, Guo (2021) believes that translators should be able to adapt to children's reading characteristics, such as understanding children's knowledge base, comprehension of vocabulary and reading ability. Guo (2021) even claims that eco-translatology is a suitable method to analyse the translation behaviour of children's literature since it analyses how children became a guiding factor for analysing translation and could influence the translator's adaptive selection process.

Another positive claim for eco-translatology was stated several years before by Dong & Qiu (2018). Dong & Qiu (2018) argue that common translation theories, such as functionalist or relevance theory, must be more suitable for film translation. This is where eco-translatology comes to light, providing us with a brand new and much more fitted perspective. Dong & Qiu (2018) try to see how translators adapt to the ecological environment and transform Chinese elements from several American movies on a multidimensional level. The result of their study is satisfactory, showing that eco-translatology provides them with strong explanatory power in telling traditional Chinese culture and good adaptability to translate Chinese elements into films. Dong & Qiu (2018) also highlight the importance of adapting to the eco-environment, such as language, culture and society. Thus, finding a good balance between the three dimensions using the translator's bilingual conversion of the two languages. Ultimately, Dong & Qiu (2018) agree that eco-translatology provides satisfactory guidance for translating Chinese film elements.

Similar statements regarding eco-translatology and Chinese elements in films were also stated by Shuyue & Feng (2019). This study discussed how the

theoretical perspective of eco-translatology could help explore several implications for the magnificent, large-scale documentary translation based on its linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions. In this state, eco-translatology provides a new perspective for translation studies, and it is proven to be an effective way of promoting communications towards different countries, nationalities and cultures. This research shows how the translator undergoes the process of selection and adaptation and how subtitle translation strategies on the three dimensions are appropriately used. Shuyue & Feng (2019) believe that eco-translatology could provide a new perspective for the publicity of Chinese traditional culture and serve as a reference for its future promotion.

Bo (2014) agreed with that statement even five years prior. In his study, Bo (2014) explores foreign markets in China that promote products via advertisements and shall give proper attention to their translation to avoid cheap translation errors. This is because the quality of advertisement translation plays a critical role in exploiting new markets. Advertisement translation has many characteristics influenced by ecological and environmental factors, such as cultural differences, shared beliefs, language habits and market rules. Translators should make proper adaptations and selections to reach target readers' desired taste. Bo (2014) also claims that eco-translatology could make up for the lack of aspects within advertisement translation, namely the three dimensions of eco-translation.

Almost a decade later, (Liu, 2023), in his research analysed a tourism advertisement translation by using eco-translatology as well, this time by revealing its relationship with other translation theories, such as Cronin's (2017) eco-

translation, contextual dimension by Hatim & Mason (1990), and functional approaches by Nord (2005). The corpus of Liu's (2023) study is Spain's official tourism website for Cordoba from Spanish to Chinese. In his study, Liu (2023) concludes that eco-translatology regards change in the linguistic or cultural elements in the translated version as the translator's strategy to succeed in the translational eco-environment. Unlike Western translation theory which focuses on the translated text, eco-translatology focuses on the translator as the object of the study.

Translation analysis using eco-translatology is not restricted to the most uncommon media, as Amenador & Wang (2022) prove in their study which reviews English translation of Chinese public signs. In this study, Amenador & Wang (2022) argue that the eco-translatology theory is believed to suggest a neutralised translation approach and is the primary theoretical foundation of most public sign translation studies in China. Because of this, the author decides to focus on an ecologically oriented translation approach that advocates for the consideration between the text and its environment, namely eco-translatology. Amenador & Wang (2022) mention the study by Zhu (2020), who analysed the bilingual public signs of five large hospitals in Tai'an City. The study finds that many hospitals still need to improve their English translation, such as zero translation, spelling errors, pinyin use, and even wrong translation. Amenador & Wang (2022) also deliver a strong point regarding eco-translatology, stating that translators must give equal attention to both the source and target language to produce a translation that carries traces of



the source language while also satisfying the communicative need of the target readers.

Even though the theory of eco-translatology originated in China, Novosad (2018) believes that eco-translatology applies to all language translations of fiction analysis, including the translation of fiction from Ukrainian into English. Novosad (2018) uses Lesya Ukrainka's work which has been translated into English by Roma Franko, as its research corpus and discusses two things: the characteristic of translation within the three dimensions of eco-translatology and Franko's selective adaptation to the ecological environment of translation. The study finds out that Franko's three-dimensional transformations still maintain the balance within the ecological environment of the translation. However, Novosad (2018) believes that further research is still needed.

Meanwhile, there are only a few previous studies regarding eco-translatology as an approach to translation teaching because this topic has become popular over the last several years. The pioneering figure that introduced the use of eco-translatology in the classroom is known to be Xiaowei (2014). He believes exploring translation teaching in an eco-environment could improve students' translation skills. Xiaowei (2014) claims that the ecological translation teaching mode is the new translation teaching mode which strips away the old 'teacher-centred' mode into a 'student-centred' concept as its core, with students' selection and adaptation as its main feature; and teacher's guidance, students' collaboration and cooperative learning as its primary method. All with the help of modern multimedia teaching resources to build a translation teaching ecosystem to gain the

needed translation skills. Though students are the focus, teachers are still obligated to construct the environmental elements by adjusting and providing supplements to the translation teaching course that align with the requirements of students' levels and needs.

Five years later, Zhai (2019) re-assessed the topic of applying the perspective of eco-translatology with translation teaching in his research. However, Zhai (2019) went further with this topic by attempting to explore non-English professional translation teaching under the guidance of eco-translatology approach. After experimenting with translation teaching for three months, Zhai (2019) concludes that applying the perspective of eco-translatology in translation teaching is effective. According to Zhai (2019), a teaching model with eco-translatology enables students to practice translation without the limitation of time and place, giving more flexibility to the teachers as well. When translation teachers supervise, students are proven to carry out a subjective initiative in translating, as they have significantly improved their translation ability and developed more confidence and creative thinking skills (Zhai, 2019).

One of the latest studies on eco-translatology and translation teaching is the study by Halili (2020) who discussed students' perception of translation competence with the eco-translatology approach. Their study aims to seek students' perception of translation competence and adaptation to the translation activities in the classroom. Halili (2020) took samples by observing and giving questionnaires to students from Universitas Trunojoyo Madura who enrolled in the English study program and were currently taking translation subjects. The research used a

qualitative model and used tourism and legal text as its corpus. The study finds out that by applying eco-translatology, students understood that translation is not merely transferring the language unit and meaning from the source language to the target language. Above all, this research proves that the eco-translation approach pursues a translation model to improve students' competence in translating a text.

There is also a study by Ilham et al. (2022) that discusses eco-translatology as a learning model for Arabic translation classes. In this research, Ilham et al. (2022) argue that more than the current translation learning model used to teach Arabic-Indonesian translation courses needs to be revised to build and improve students' translation competence. Therefore, they conducted this research by surveying students through questionnaires regarding the need for developing translation learning models. The respondents involved in this study were 65 random students of the Arabic Language Education study program from Universitas Negeri Jakarta. Their survey shows that most students still need help with even the most basic skills in their study program, such as difficulty translating words from Arabic to Indonesian due to students' lack of translation competence during the translation process. Setiadi (2019, in Ilham et al. 2022) believes that one of the reasons is the constant application of teacher-centred learning. To overcome this, applying eco-translatology can be a new perspective in translation studies and learning models.

Another study exploring eco-translatology as a classroom learning approach is from Hariyanto (2021). In his research, he discussed how the eco-translatology approach is adopted to develop translation competence as a soft skill for students at the English Department of State Polytechnic Malang. Hariyanto (2021) conducted

his research using a qualitative model focusing on translating narrative text, with its participants recruited from over 70 students in Malang, Indonesia. The result shows that eco-translatology gives promising evidence for teaching translation in practical uses. It gives new insights into how translation could be applied by involving the translator's environment and society.

The writer realises that as a novelty in this study, the difference between the corpus and student population will create a different result in the eco-translatology aspect. Hence, this research aims to identify students' translation competence in the fourth semester of the English Literature study program at Universitas Negeri Jakarta in their work of translating general text. The analysis will examine the quality of the student's translation by looking at their translation competence while applying the eco-translatology approach. The writerr intends to gather data through document analysis and questionnaire for this research. The writerr believes that by doing so, this research will not only help students find more references about eco-translatology topics in the future, but it could also help lecturers bring out the proof and data on promoting eco-translatology in the teaching of translating.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

How is the students' competence in translation measured when translating general text using the eco-translatology approach?

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

To measure the students' translation competence when translating general text using the eco-translatology approach.

### **1.4 Scope of Study**

This study focuses on students' translation competence while translating general text. The method of this study is descriptive with a qualitative approach by identifying the students' translation competence in the classroom. It will explore how students learn about eco-translatology during class and how they implement it in their work.

### **1.5 Limitations of Study**

This study will use the eco-translatology approach proposed by Gengshen Hu (2020). This study is limited by the lack of similar previous studies about eco-translatology, considering the topic is still relatively new. To add, this study will have limited respondents of only one (1) class, which comprises about 50 students.

### **1.6 Significances of Study**

This study aims to contribute to developing translation studies by partaking in field research of a multi-discipline pedagogical approach that has rarely been done before. The main objective is to identify the quality of a student's translation competence using the eco-translatology approach in the classroom.