

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Translating is a means of communication that transfers messages from one language to another. According to Nida & Taber (1969a), translation seeks to recreate the meaning from the Source Language (SL) into the Target Language (TL) as a natural match as closely as possible, first in terms of meaning and then language style Kurniasari (2020). This approach emphasizes that translation is not just about translating words but rather about conveying the more profound meaning and message within the SL. As the fields of translation studies developed, scholars began to recognize new theoretical perspectives from other disciplines (Roig-Sanz & Meylaerts, 2018). Multidisciplinary studies create a bridge between language and the world it represents, including cultural, social, and even ecological dimensions. The environmental perspective is initially called the 'ecological environment of translation' or similar terms, treated as a subcategory of other translation theories, or viewed more as the actual ecology than translation itself J. Xu (2023a).

In 2001, Hu Gungshen of Tsinghua University, like many other researchers who have tried multidisciplinary or integrative translation studies, found a more complete and inclusive translation system. His research culminated in the theory of translation adaptation and selection in 2004, which marked the emergence of Eco-translatology. This subfield responds to the global focus on environmental sustainability.

Eco-Translatology introduces an ecological perspective to translation that expands literary discourse by reflecting human values and the interconnectedness with nature. The theory aligns translation studies with broader social science research trends, particularly in preserving ecological integrity during translation processes Susidamaiyanti et al. (2023)

Hu further elaborated that the adaptation and selection theory draws inspiration from Darwin's Natural Selection theory and Eastern philosophy on the unity of man and nature. This perspective positions translation not only as a linguistic activity but also as a practice that responds to environmental dynamics. This holistic perspective examines the translation process as an interplay between the translator's professional development and the surrounding macro-environment, including language, culture, and communication.

Building on this foundation, Hu introduced the "three-dimensional" adaptive transformation by suggesting that translators must consider the interrelation of language, culture, and communication. The three-dimensional approach achieves a harmonious effect in the translational eco-environment. This framework is particularly relevant for narrative texts, specifically children's literature, as children's limited knowledge base, vocabulary, and reading abilities necessitate adaptive transformations Guo (2021a). Further, Xu (2023) emphasizes that children's literature often uses rhetorical devices, interjections, and onomatopoeia, focusing on figurativeness for educational purposes. Both researchers agree that linguistic, cultural, and communication dimensions are important in understanding how translators adapt and choose strategies appropriate for child

audiences. They also show that children's literature is a rich object for analysis within this framework, mainly because of its specific audience and the need for adaptation in translation.

Guo (2021) and Xu (2023) each examined two translations of children's literature from English to Chinese. Guo focused on “Peter Pan”, while Xu analyzed “The Secret Garden”. Both studies emphasized comparing translation strategies between versions, rather than exploring the ecological transformation of a single translated work. In contrast, this current study differs from the mentioned research by examining how Eco-Translatology principles manifest in the Indonesian translation of *The Wild Robot*, rather than conducting a comparison analysis.

The writer chose the children's literature “*The Wild Robot*” which was written in English by Peter Brown, due to its strong ecological themes provide contextual richness that aligns with ecological thinking. The main theme contains many representations of natural ecology and offers scope for analyzing how the translator adapts to the ecosystem of language, culture, and communication between the source text and the target text. Complemented by black-and-white illustrations, this novel also carries an educational mission and promotes environmental awareness, specifically targeting young readers.

The novel has been translated into Bahasa Indonesia, “*Sang Robot Liar*”, by Maria Lubis and published by Noura Kids in 2025. Originally published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers in 2016, “*The Wild Robot*” won the New York Times Bestseller and Bank Street College of Education 2017 Best Children's Book

of the Year. In the author's note, Peter Brown mentioned that he wrote the story around six years ago and finished it in almost 2,5 years. Additionally, *The Wild Robot* has been adapted into an animated film released in 2024. Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot* later developed into a trilogy novels with the release of *The Wild Robot Escapes* (2018) and *The Wild Robot Protects* (2023).

"*The Wild Robot*" addresses themes of wilderness survival where technology must adapt to the natural world. The novel narrates how an artificial being, Roz, a lost Robot on a remote island, can coexist with the ecosystem. During her time on the island, Roz learns the language of the jungle animals to become a mother for a newly hatched baby duck, named Brightbill. Through the journey, the book explores themes such as adaptation, community, and the relationship between technology and nature. Not just an ordinary children's story, this novel contains numerous ecological interactions ahead of ecosystems and must be translated without losing the nuances. Further, the simple narrative structure that is meant to be understood by child readers can be another challenge for translators in maintaining the mood of the story, such as characters' dialogue, majestic natural setting, and emotion. Hence, the writer aims to analyze how the Indonesian translator of "*The Wild Robot*", Maria Lubis, selects and adapts during the translation process in the translational eco-environment.

Another study conducted translation scope in children's literature from the perspective of the three-dimensional transformations in Eco-Translatology. However, not many studies with an Indonesian background examine Eco-Translatology; most are from Chinese settings (Susidamaiyanti et al., 2023). In

the study, Yu (2022) chose Zhou Kexi's Chinese translation of "The Little Prince" which was originally from France, as his/her corpus because it captures the original idea well, uses vivid language that appeals to children and better suits the target readers' ecological environment compared to other versions. Yu (2022) details how Zhou successfully navigates these dimensions to make the translation suitable for Chinese children's readers and still preserve the text's childlike simplicity while retaining key cultural elements from the original French text. The study concluded that Zhou's translation makes *The Little Prince* appealing to children while retaining its deeper meaning and literary beauty. The conclusion demonstrates his ability to comprehend both language and young readers' minds.

Further, many kinds of literature such as novels, narrative prose, and poems have been primary sources in Eco-Translatology studies. Li (2023) primarily examines adaptive selection transformation within the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. The study explores how environmental descriptions in the Chinese fantasy novel *Dragon Prince Yuan* are adapted into English. However, Li (2023) does not explicitly define the criteria for identifying environmental descriptions or explain how the translator selects which elements to translate or transform. Consequently, the selection aspect within Eco-Translatology receives limited attention in the analysis.

Similarly, Liu (2021) examines the English translation of Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum Family*, focusing on how translators adapt to the language, culture, and communication environment rather than selecting which elements to translate. Like Li (2023), Liu (2021) emphasizes the three-dimensional transformation in



translation. The study highlights Goldblatt's strategies in preserving dialect expressions while adjusting grammar (linguistic dimension), balancing domestication and foreignization (cultural dimension), and maintaining the novel's emotional and ideological impact (communicative dimension) since the object under study is historical literature.

Liu (2021) ultimately positions Eco-Translatology as a practical approach to literary translation. The study demonstrates the importance of adaptation in conveying the novel's essence across languages and cultures. In the meantime, Qianting (2020) looks at the translation of *Battle Through the Heavens* (Dou Po Cang Qiong), an online fantasy book with a large global readership and heavily impacted by online communities. The study focuses on how translators modify fantasy novels' cultural components to make them more accessible to international audiences. Although Qianting (2020), Li Jun (2023), and Fei Liu (2021) examine various literary genres, their combined results show how adaptable Eco-Translatology is in handling a range of translation issues. However, they also have one thing in common, that they focus mostly on adaptation and don't discuss much about the selection process that comes before adaptation.

Researchers have also applied the Eco-Translatology framework to other literary forms, including narrative prose and poetry. Yike & Le (2020) examine the English translation of *Recalling Dashan*, a narrative prose work. This documented the politically important friendship between Xi Jinping and Jia Dashan, a local author from Hebei Province. In contrast to novels, the prose

primarily shows actual people and events. Their study explores the application of the three-dimensional transformation approach within Eco-Translatology.

Unlike previous research on novel and narrative prose translation, Chen (2021) investigates the use of Eco-Translatology in the translation of two landscape poems. Wang Wei's poetry presents the beauty of nature and landscapes in the form of lyrics that are full of philosophical meanings. This unique challenge requires translators to navigate both linguistic and cultural dimensions while preserving aesthetic quality. The study broadens the scope of Eco-Translatology by focusing on picture translation, which is generally disregarded in talks about literary adaptation.

On the other hand, Xu & Huang (2023) conducted Eco-Translatology-based research on translating documents and descriptions of tea ware used in the China National Tea Museum from Chinese to English. Tea Wares are a traditional Chinese tea tool that embodies cultural and philosophical meanings. The paper claims that Eco-Translatology provides a more balanced approach compared to Skopos Theory, as it considers linguistic, cultural, and communicative aspects that are crucial for faithfully capturing the ingrained values of Chinese tea culture.

As previously mentioned, most studies on Eco-Translatology focus on Chinese-based texts. However, the writer found that recent studies have also applied this framework to other cultural contexts, such as Indonesia. One notable example is Susidamaiyanti et al. (2023) study on the English translation of the Gayo narrative The Legend of the Origin of Depik, which examines how Eco-Translatology can be used to translate Indigenous folklore from Aceh. This study

investigates the translation of an oral narrative and highlights the importance of ecological awareness in translating folklore.

Nevertheless, the writer found no previous research on applying Eco-Translatology in the English-to-Indonesian translation of children's literature. However, a study has analyzed the trilogy “The Wild Robot Protects (2023)” by Peter Brown. Though it is not the same corpus, Fauzan (2024) examined “The Wild Robot” third-series from an ecocritical perspective by using the concept of ecological apocalypse. However, studies exploring the translation of the series, particularly through Eco-Translatology, remain underrepresented.

The writer recognizes several gaps in previous studies. First, although Eco-Translatology has gained attention in recent years, it remains a relatively new theoretical approach, and its application is still limited, especially in English–Indonesian translation studies. Most previous works have been conducted in Chinese contexts, focusing on English–Chinese translation as seen in studies by Guo (2021), Yu (2022) or Xu (2023), etc.

Second, the use of Eco-Translate in the translation of children's literature is still underrepresented in Indonesian studies. While there has been some application of this theory to indigenous oral narratives, such as Susidamaiyanti et al. (2023) on a Gayo folktale, however, ET approach in modern children's fiction remains rare.

Lastly, “The Wild Robot” by Peter Brown, which was released in 2016 and translated into Bahasa Indonesia in early 2025, has not yet been examined from a



translation studies perspective, particularly Eco-Translatology perspective in the English–Indonesian context.

In response to the gaps mentioned, this study positions itself as an analysis of Indonesian translation by *The Wild Robot*, “Sang Robot Liar” through the three-dimensional framework of Eco-Translatology. Although previous research applied this theory to various texts, this research offers a new perspective by focusing on children's novels. This current study uses qualitative content analysis of target texts and uses eco-translology adaptation and selection theory that examines linguistic, cultural and communicative aspects of translation.

## **1.2 Research Question**

How does an Indonesian translator of “*The Wild Robot*” apply the principles of three-dimensional transformation from the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions?

## **1.3 Purpose of Study**

To explore the principle of three-dimensional transformation applied by the Indonesian translator of “*The Wild Robot*.”

## **1.4 Scope of Study**

This study examines the Indonesian translation of *The Wild Robot*, *Sang Robot Liar*, using the Eco-Translatology framework proposed by Hu Gengshen. In addition, the writer adopts qualitative content analysis with a descriptive approach.

It will explore how adaptation and selection occur in various textual elements, including linguistic expressions, cultural references, and communicative intent, to determine how the translator's choices align with the ecological perspective of translation.

### **1.5 Limitation of Study**

This study does not focus on reader reception, comparative translation analysis with other works, or the evaluation of translation quality based on grammatical accuracy or stylistic preferences. Instead, it is limited to examining the translator's decision-making process through the lens of Eco-Translatology.

### **1.6 Significance of Study**

This study expands the Eco-Translatology application by analyzing The Wild Robot's Indonesian translation. It contributes to translation studies, particularly in children's literature, by examining how linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions shape the translation process. In particular, the selected text "The Wild Robot" has not been previously analyzed through the lens of Eco-Translatology, especially within the English–Indonesian linguistic and cultural context.