

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Eco-Translatology distinguishes itself from other translation approaches through its unique ecological perspective, which integrates linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions into the translation process (Hu, 2020). Unlike traditional theories that often prioritize equivalence, Eco-Translatology emphasizes three main concepts. First, Adaptation and Selection, in which the translator actively selects and adapts elements from the source text to fit the "eco-environment" of the translation task (Hu, 2020). Second, Eco-Holism, which views translation as an interconnected system, recognizing the dynamic interaction between language, culture, and communication (Hu, 2020). Third, Eco-Balance, which aims to create harmony between the source text and the target context by taking linguistic and cultural factors into consideration. These principles make Eco-Translatology a holistic and flexible framework for translation, offering insights beyond conventional methodologies (Hu, 2020).

The development of Eco-Translatology is rooted in the broader ecological turn in humanities and translation studies, where scholars seek to view translation as an evolving and adaptive process. This perspective aligns with the idea that translation is not just linguistic transfer but also an interaction between multiple factors that influence meaning

construction (Hu, 2013 in Hu, 2020). Over time, Hu expanded on these ideas by integrating principles from Darwinian adaptation and selection, leading to a more systematic model of translation that accounts for the translator's role as both a decision-maker and an intermediary between cultures (Hu, 2008 in Hu, 2020). This evolutionary perspective emphasizes that translation operates within an ecosystem where linguistic, cultural, and communicative constraints dictate the translator's adaptive strategies.

Eco-Translatology has gained recognition through its application in various fields, including literary translation, audiovisual translation, and the translation of figurative language, particularly metaphors. Metaphors, as conceptual structures, are deeply embedded in culture and cognition, requiring careful adaptation to preserve their original meaning (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980 in Hu, 2020). Eco-Translatology provides a framework that considers the ecological environment of both the source and target texts, allowing for a more dynamic approach (Hu, 2009 in Hu, 2020).

In the context of song lyrics, the challenge of metaphor translation becomes even more complex due to constraints such as rhythm, melody, and audience reception. Applying Eco-Translatology to metaphor translation in song lyrics allows for an adaptive approach that prioritizes meaning preservation over direct word-for-word translation (Hu, 2017 in Hu, 2020). Meijing He (2023) stated in *A Comparative Study on the Translation of the Song Blowing in the Wind* that song lyrics often contain

metaphorical expressions that reflect the cultural and emotional landscape of their origin, making them a crucial element in musical storytelling. He (2023) stated in *A Study on the Subtitles Translation of Return to Dust* that translators must navigate linguistic, cultural, and musical constraints to ensure that metaphors retain their intended effect in the target language.

Metaphors differ from other figurative language devices, such as similes, personification, and hyperbole, in that they establish a direct conceptual link between two unrelated entities rather than making explicit comparisons (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). While similes use explicit comparative words like “as” or “like,” metaphors imply the comparison, requiring a deeper cognitive process to interpret their meaning. In Eco-Translatology, metaphors are analyzed within their ecological environment to determine the best translation strategy, whether through substitution, transformation, or explanation (Hu, 2020). This allows for a flexible approach that aligns with the adaptive nature of language and cultural expression.

Research related to the eco-translate approach has also been applied in several previous studies, such as *Eco-translatology: A Study on the English Translation of Gayo's Narrative “The Legend of the Origin of Depik”*, which was reviewed from linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions using Hu's (2001) three-dimensional theory of adaptation and selection. The findings show that strategies have been used; however, the translation faces challenges in achieving accuracy, cultural connotation,

and effective communication (Susidamaiyanti, 2023). Following this, another research titled *A Study on the Subtitles Translation of “Return to Dust” from the Perspective of Eco-translatology* (He, 2023) also analyzes translation using the three dimensions of eco-translatology. The researcher concludes that the translator should give full play to the translator's initiative, not rigidly adhere to a single dimension of the subtitles' content, but instead adjust according to the ecological environment of the translation. To balance the source and target languages, it is necessary to carry out cross-dimensional transformation to make the translation more suitable for the needs of the target language audience.

In line with this, the research titled *A Brief Analysis of Subtitle Translation of Documentary Wild China from the Perspective of Eco-translatology* (Zhou, 2019) also adopts an eco-translatology approach to analyze the translation of documentary subtitles. Taking ecological translation as the theoretical support, the researcher selects the translation of the subtitles of the documentary *Wild China* (CCTV) as the research object and combines theoretical discussion with case analysis to focus on the translator's “adaptation” and “selection” in linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. This study verifies the significance of eco-translation guidelines in translating documentary subtitles and complements the theoretical research perspectives in this area.

Continuing the focus on subtitle translation, the study *Subtitle Translation of American Sitcom Big Bang* by Liu (2020) applies the Eco-

Translatology approach to analyze strategies used in humorous and culturally rich content. The research emphasizes the use of three-dimensional transformations; linguistic, cultural, and communicative; in translating humor and cultural references. The results indicate that translators should prioritize audience comprehension while preserving humor and cultural elements. Liu concludes that effective subtitle translation requires a balance between fidelity to the original dialogue and adaptive strategies that enhance accessibility for the target audience.

Expanding the scope further, *A Case Study of the Subtitle Translation of a Short Video from the Perspective of Three-dimensional Transformation of Eco-Translatology* (Dingfang, 2022) explores how eco-translatology applies to short video content. This study argues that eco-translatology has high explanatory power in subtitle translation, particularly in terms of words, syntactic structure, and text logic, as well as culture and communication. It adopts a three-dimensional transformation translation method that incorporates the unique ecological environment of short videos, including images and sounds, to analyze adaptation and selection in this modern format.

Likewise, the study titled *Movie Subtitle Translation from the Perspective of the Three-dimensional Transformations of Eco-Translatology: A Case Study of the English Subtitle of Lost in Russia* (Zhang, 2021) employs the same three-dimensional approach. This research effectively applies “adaptive selection” and “selective

adaptation.” It argues that, considering the current state and demands of Chinese films, the government should strengthen translator training and accelerate the standardization of translation mechanisms. Translators are encouraged to create humorous and engaging subtitles that reflect the film’s characteristics while adapting to its ecological environment.

Lastly, broadening the scope to musical texts, *A Comparative Study on the Translation of the Song Blowing in the Wind from the Perspective of Eco-translatology* (Meijing, 2023) applies the three-dimensional transformation theory to the translation of song lyrics. The study compares professional and non-professional translations of the song, highlighting the adaptive features found in each. While professional translations tend to achieve greater overall accuracy, non-professional versions demonstrate creative adaptability in specific areas. The study concludes that successful song translation depends on multidimensional adaptation to the ecological environment and calls for further exploration in this area to deepen the understanding of eco-translatology in lyric translation.

Eco-translatology, proposed by Hu Gengshen, emphasizes translation as an adaptive and selective activity involving the translator's interaction with the eco-environment of the source and target texts. In the context of metaphor translation in song lyrics, this approach requires the translator to consider linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. For example, conceptual metaphors, as described by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), are rooted in bodily experiences and cultural cognition. When

translating metaphors in songs, which are often emotionally charged and culturally embedded, eco-translatology suggests that a translator must go beyond linguistic equivalence to adapt metaphorical meanings in a way that resonates with the target audience's cultural and emotional context.

Applying this approach, metaphor translation in lyrics should maintain the conceptual integrity of the original while adapting it to the target linguistic and cultural system. For instance, in the analysis of metaphor in Chinese literature, such as in *Wei Cheng*, metaphors like "*the river of life*" or "*fate is a thread*" rely heavily on cultural associations (Wu & Zhang, 2022). A direct translation of these metaphors into another language might not convey the same connotation. Eco-translatology encourages the translator to seek analogous metaphors in the target culture that evoke similar emotions or ideas, ensuring communicative effectiveness and aesthetic resonance.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) reinforces this process by highlighting how metaphors structure our thoughts and emotions through embodied experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010). For example, metaphors like *LOVE IS A JOURNEY* or *ANGER IS HEAT* are widespread across languages but may manifest differently depending on cultural norms. A translator using eco-translatology would evaluate which version of such metaphors is more effective in the target environment; whether to translate literally, adapt creatively, or substitute

entirely. This adaptability aligns with Hu's eco-translatological principle of multi-dimensional adaptation and selection (Hu, 2008).

Ultimately, eco-translatology provides a comprehensive framework for metaphor translation in song lyrics by treating translation as a dynamic process shaped by ecological factors. This paradigm values fidelity not just in terms of words, but in terms of cultural and emotional resonance. Translators become "ecological agents" who navigate between languages and cultures, adapting metaphorical meaning in ways that ensure harmony between the source intent and the target audience's reception. This is particularly crucial in song lyrics, where rhythm, emotion, and metaphorical imagery are tightly intertwined.

In this study, NIKI's album "Buzz" serves as the primary corpus to analyze metaphors through the lens of Eco-Translatology. Released on August 9, 2024, "Buzz" is NIKI's third studio album, showcasing her evolution as an artist and her exploration of new musical landscapes. NIKI, born Nicole Zefanya, is an Indonesian singer-songwriter known for her ability to blend personal narratives with universal themes, creating a rich tapestry of lyrical content. The album delves into themes of personal growth, heartbreak, and healing, with NIKI using various metaphors to articulate complex emotional experiences. The song "Buzz" exemplifies this with a witty metaphor describing the excitement of new love.

By selecting "Buzz" as the corpus, this study aims to examine how the translation of NIKI's metaphor-rich lyrics can preserve their cognitive

essence and cultural resonance, in accordance with the principles of Eco-Translatology. These metaphors, which are deeply embedded in the cultural ecosystem of the source language, pose significant challenges to translators who strive to maintain eco-balance. From the perspective of Eco-Translatology, the translation of metaphors involves adaptive selection and transformation to ensure that they align with the cultural and linguistic ecosystem of the target language while maintaining their conceptual essence. By integrating Eco-Translatology with metaphor analysis, this study explores how metaphor translation reflects the principles of ecological adaptation, illuminating the complex relationship between linguistic creativity and cultural specificity.

This research presents a novelty by combining the 3-dimensional analysis of the Eco-Translatology approach with the analysis of metaphor translation in the context of music albums. In contrast to the more common focus on subtitles in translation studies, this study fills a research gap by exploring the translation of metaphors in song lyrics, an area that remains under-researched. The writer chose this topic to contribute to the growing body of translation research and to demonstrate the applicability of Eco-Translatology in analyzing artistic texts. In addition, it is hoped that this study will serve as a reference for future studies, especially those using the Eco-Translatology approach, which is still rarely used compared to other translation theories and strategies.

1.2. Research Questions

How are the metaphors in NIKI's album "Buzz" translated into Indonesian using the three dimensions of the Eco-Translatology approach: linguistic dimension, cultural dimension, and communicative dimension?

1.3. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how metaphors in NIKI's album "Buzz" are translated into Indonesian using the three dimensions of the Eco-Translatology approach: linguistic dimension, cultural dimension, and communicative dimension.

1.4. Scope of Study

This study focuses on the translation of metaphors found in NIKI's album "Buzz" into Indonesian. The method used in this study is descriptive with a qualitative approach, involving the identification of metaphors and their analysis through the three dimensions of the Eco-Translatology approach. It will explore how the metaphors in the album "Buzz" are translated, emphasizing the application of linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions in the translation process.

1.5. Significances of Study

This study aims to contribute to the development of translation studies by researching the translation of metaphors in a music album using the Eco-Translatology approach, a method that is still rarely applied compared to other translation theories. The main objective is to explore how metaphors in NIKI's album "Buzz" are translated into Indonesian, focusing on the three dimensions of the Eco-Translatology approach: linguistic, cultural, and communicative.