

Exploring Eco-translation Through Bachmann-Medick's Model

Ali Arjmandi* 

MA Student in English Translation Studies, Translation Studies Department, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

Samar Ehteshami 

Assistant Professor, Translation Studies Department, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

The ecological turn in translation studies subverts anthropocentric perspectives and redefines translation as a multispecies, semiotic process that transcends human language. Eco-translation, a central concept within this turn, extends the field of translation to include non-human actors and ecological networks, allowing for a more inclusive description of meaning-making. Yet this turn has also brought academics a sense of disorientation and solastalgia as scholars have to grapple with the tension between preserving traditional disciplinary boundaries and embracing the expansive horizons of transdisciplinary approaches. The current article traces the ecological turn using Doris Bachmann-Medick's three-stage model of disciplinary turn: thematic expansion, metaphorical application, and methodological refinement. It maps the evolution of eco-translation from narrowly defined practices focused on ecological themes to a broader, inclusive framework that challenges the field's traditional foundations. The article also examines the emotional and intellectual consequences of this turn, particularly the solastalgic experience of scholars experiencing the loss of familiar disciplinary contours while adapting to new paradigms.

Keywords: Eco-translation, ecological turn, solastalgia, paradigm shift, transdisciplinary approach, translation studies

Original Article

Accepted: 10.03.2025

Received: 23.02.2025

*Corresponding author: ali_arjmandi@atu.ac.ir

Cite this article: Arjmandi, A. & Ehteshami, S. (2025). Exploring eco-translation through Bachmann-Medick's model. *Translation and Interpreting Research*, 2(5), 17-29. DOI: 10.22054/tir.2025.84521.1035

Publisher: ATU Press

Translation and Interpreting Research is the journal of Research Institute for Translation Studies (RITS), affiliated with Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.

Introduction

The Copernican Revolution that displaced the Earth from the center of the universe was considered a profound shift in human consciousness and a symbolic starting point to the critique of anthropocentrism – the idea of human supremacy over all existence (Çimen, 2023). By challenging the assumption of human centrality in the universe, Copernicus's heliocentric system laid out a broader intellectual and philosophical rethinking of human's position in the natural order (Çimen, 2023). However, while the decentering of the Earth was astronomically monumental – marking the gradual discrediting of geocentric cosmology and the rise of heliocentric cosmology – the image of the celestial *sphere* gave way to that of the globe (Ingold, 2000). As Ingold (2000) pointed out, “the movement from spherical to global imagery is also one in which ‘the world’, as we are taught it exists, is drawn ever further from matrix of our lived experience” (p. 211). This transition from perception of the Earth as a celestial sphere to that of a globe poses a sense of distance, situating humans as viewers separate from the Earth as the object being viewed.

In the movement towards the modern, a practical sensory engagement with the world underpinned by the spherical paradigm is supplanted by a regimen of detachment and control. As the images of the globe proliferate, often ironically to mobilise ecological awareness, the danger is that these images themselves distort our relationship to our physical and cultural environment by continually situating us at a distance, by abstracting and subtracting us from our local attachments and responsibilities. (Cronin, 2017, p. 125)

By contrast, an ecological turn is a deeper and more radical paradigm shift (Müller & Pusse, 2018). It would decenter not the Earth, but the human ego itself, challenging the long-standing and deeply held assumption that humans are separate from or superior to the natural world (Müller & Pusse, 2018). This ecological turn recenters the *eco* – the nexus of life interwoven within the Earth – as the focal point of ethical, philosophical, and practical concern. Where the Copernican revolution questioned humanity's centrality in the universe, the ecological turn questions humanity's assumed dominance over nature, summoning a humbler, more harmonious relationship within the Earth.

Indeed, the feasibility of such relationships within an ecological niche hinges on the concept of translation through which diverse living and non-living entities communicate, interact, and coexist. Every entity – whether a living organism, an ecosystem, or even non-living elements like water, soil, or air – operates in their own rhythms of existence (Fraunhofer, 2023). Trees communicate through mycorrhizal networks, animals through sounds, gestures, and scents. Even geological formations and atmospheric conditions speak through patterns and cycles that shape the environment. The ecological turn demands that we learn to translate these myriad voices, recognizing their intrinsic value and integrating their perspectives into a more holistic understanding of the world. “The importance of translation”, then, “lies in its understanding of a phenomenon that is at the heart of our current ecological predicament” (Cronin, 2025, p. 78).

In this way, an ecological translation, so-called eco-translation, becomes necessary for reciprocity and mutual understanding between humans and the more-than-human world (Cronin, 2017). Eco-translation pushes us out of the boundaries of anthropocentric communication and encourages us to embark on a greater, more expansive dialogue with the Earth (Cronin, 2017). On the one hand, “by embracing the principles of eco-translation and incorporating interdisciplinary approaches, translation studies can evolve into a more inclusive and ethically responsible field” (Arjmandi, 2024, p. 136). On the other hand, without eco-translation, the ecological turn is not yet accomplished, for it is through this approach that we are truly *decentering the ego* and *recentering the eco*, setting the stage for sustainable and equitable coexistence.

“Natural science have for long been placed in opposition to human science because the former have always been ascribed with objectivity and the latter with subjectivity” (Naderi & Tajvidi, 2023, p. 52). On the other hand, with geography as the only exception, the social and human sciences have gradually separated themselves from the natural science (Cronin, 2017). These separations stem from a long-standing emphasis on human exceptionalism – the idea that humans and human societies are fundamentally distinct from and emancipated from the constraints of nature.

Having said that, in response to the escalating environmental crises of the 21st century – climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecological degradation – the humanities are currently experiencing an ecological turn, where various disciplines are actively addressing such environmental issues (Benchechrone & Touaf, 2024). In parallel with this broader trend, translation studies is also experiencing its own ecological turn. The growing prominence of eco-translation is evident in the field’s leading academic forums. For instance, the 7th and 8th conferences of the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS) have prominently featured eco-translation as a central theme, reflecting the discipline’s commitment to addressing ecological concerns (IATIS, n.d.). Thus, through this article, we reflect on how the ecological turn is unfolding within the field of translation studies and explore its emotional and intellectual consequences.

Methodology

The current study employs an explorative research design to investigate the ecological turn in translation studies through Bachmann-Medick’s (2009) three-stage model of disciplinary turns. The methodology combines the narrative review approach and conceptual analysis, with snowballing used to identify relevant scholarly works. By adopting this dual methodological perspective, the study aims to capture both the substantive theoretical developments and the discursive patterns that characterize this disciplinary shift. For this purpose, the literature review section is integrated into the discussion, ensuring a cohesive analysis that contextualizes findings within existing scholarly debates. The research, moreover, is fundamentally theoretical and conceptual in nature, focusing on how eco-translation has transformed from a niche concern into a significant paradigm challenging traditional anthropocentric approaches in translation studies.

To satisfy the broad range of relevant scholarship, the study engages a snowballing method at various times. The first phase of snowballing involved systematic searches on several major academic platforms (Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Academia) employing search strings using combinations of “eco-translation”, “ecological translation”, and “translation ecology”, along with relevant discipline identifiers.

This first level search identified primary texts and key scholars who shaped the discourse, including Cronin (2017) and Hu (2020). Subsequent phases expanded the corpus through backward snowballing (examining references in key publications), forward snowballing (tracking citations of seminal works), and lateral expansion (following thematic connections through subject headings and related works). Backward snowballing proved particularly valuable for uncovering foundational texts published prior to 2017, which illuminated the early intersections of ecology and translation studies. These sources revealed how eco-translation initially emerged as a scholarly concept, tracing its theoretical roots and the gradual integration of ecological frameworks into translation theory. Meanwhile, forward snowballing helped identify contemporary developments, highlighting how earlier ideas were refined or contested in recent research. Lateral expansion further enriched the research by incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives and parallel discourses in adjacent fields such as biosemiotics and ecolinguistics, ensuring a more nuanced understanding of eco-translation’s evolution. This iterative process continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, ensuring a

thorough representation of the field's development while maintaining focus on the most influential contributions.

The study applies Bachmann-Medick's (2009) three-stage model for how "a turn becomes a turn" (Bachmann-Medick, 2016, p. 16), providing a useful framework for understanding the emergence and development of transformative shifts in academic disciplines. According to Bachmann-Medick, a turn is not merely a fleeting trend but a profound reorientation that unfolds through three distinct stages: "1. expansion of the object or thematic field; 2. metaphorization; 3. methodological refinement, provoking a conceptual leap and transdisciplinary application" (Bachmann-Medick, 2009, p. 4). These stages are essential for a turn to take root and gain momentum within a discipline. In the case of the ecological turn in translation studies, eco-translation has clearly progressed through all three stages, initiating a paradigm shift in the field.

In order to systematically analyze the literature, each stage of the model was transformed into specific analytical categories, which served as a framework for identifying the stages:

Thematic expansion: The first stage involves broadening the scope of the discipline to include new objects of study or thematic concerns. It is identified through works that explicitly incorporate ecological themes (e.g., climate discourse, indigenous ecological knowledge) into translation theory. In translation studies, such works have expanded the field beyond its traditional focus on literary translation to encompass environmental issues and their representation in language. This expansion is evident in the growing body of research on topics such as the translation of ecological literature, environmental policies, and Indigenous knowledge systems, as well as the role of translation in climate communication and environmental activism.

Metaphorical application: It is coded for texts taking up ecology in a strictly metaphoric sense, in which questions of actual ecological concerns are indifferently absent. They employ ecological metaphors (e.g., "translation ecosystem", "translation ecology") to explain translation phenomena.

Methodological refinement: It is marked by studies developing theoretical frameworks connecting translation to ecological theory. Here, the concept of ecology has reemerged in the form of new paradigm, that of *eco-translation*, which extends the scope of translation studies considerably, far beyond its traditional theoretical frameworks.

Results and Discussion

This section systematically examines the ecological turn in translation studies through Bachmann-Medick's three-stage framework – thematic expansion, metaphorical application, and methodological refinement – before analyzing its intellectual and emotional impact on scholars, particularly the emergence of solastalgia. Seen in this light, it highlights how such disciplinary transformation simultaneously provokes scholarly unease while fundamentally reshaping how translation is conceptualized.

Thematic Ecotranslation

Before Cronin (2017) expands on the notion of eco-translation in his book *Eco-Translation: Translation and Ecology in the Age of the Anthropocene*, translation has been utilized in various ways to address environmental issues, albeit with limited engagement. Such inclusion of ecology in academic discussions of translation can be traced back to 1988. At that time, Newmark (1988) drew attention to how ecological factors – such as diverse natural environments and regional landscapes – pose challenges for translators. Despite his primary focus on the challenges that ecological factors present to translation practices, this perspective much aligns with ecolinguistics perspective by acknowledging the significance of ecological considerations in the translation product (for more

information about ecolinguistics see Alexander & Stibbe, 2014; Penz & Fill, 2022; Steffensen & Fill, 2014; Stibbe, 2012; Stibbe, 2014, 2015, 2021). These initiatives can be categorized as *narrowly defined ecotranslation*, and as Shread (2023) argues, “here ecology is the object of study” (p. 117). In this context, by examining a translation of Ulrike Almut Sandig’s German Poem *so habe ich sagen gehört* Bradley (2021) understands *ecotranslation* “as a translation that recognizes and retains ecological themes from the source text” (p. 1). In a similar vein, Coisson and Badenes (2015) categorized ecotranslation into three scenarios: rereading and retranslating works where nature’s voice in the source text was silenced in translation; translating works that present an ecological awareness and have not yet been translated; and translating by manipulating works that originally lack an ecological awareness to create a new, ecologically inspired text.

There are numerous other studies in which ecology serves as the object of translation. For instance, in their recent paper *The Role of Paratexts in Raising Ecological Awareness: A Case Study of the Persian Translation of Animal Farm*, Arjmandi and Ehteshami (2025) have investigated how translations can reshape the perception of ecological messages through their paratextual elements. Their proposal suggests that while exerting changes on the text may present considerable challenges such as the ethical dilemmas faced by translators and the potential compromise of translation accuracy, it is often the paratexts that could offer a more secure avenue for guiding readers towards ecological awareness. As another example, Aksoy (2020), in her article *Insights into a New Paradigm in Translation: Eco-Translation and its Reflections*, examines the recreation of physical landscapes in literary texts and their translations, focusing on how nature is represented. Similarly, Sterk’s (2019) work, *An Ecotranslation Manifesto: On the Translation of Bionyms in Nativist and Nature Writing from Taiwan*, shifts the focus to plant and animal names, emphasizing their significance in translation research aimed at protecting vulnerable ecologies. Furthermore, Masiola and Tomei’s (2016) study, *Multilingual Phytonymy: Ecotranslation and Vernaculars*, closely investigates the naming conventions of the Caribbean’s botanical world, highlighting the intersection of indigenous and colonial legacies. Together, these works illustrate a growing recognition of ecological themes within translation studies, underscoring the importance of environmental considerations in literary translation.

Metaphoric Eco-translatology

The second stage uses the concept of ecology in a metaphorical way to point at and refer to the fact that many factors coexist in the complex system of translation – such as source and target texts, languages, cultures, translators, clients, and readers – interrelate with and depend on each other. As he framed in his book *Globalization and Translation*, Cronin (2003) initially presents the concept of *translation ecology* for the first time, discussing “the role of translation in giving minority language speakers control over what, when and how texts might be translated into or out of their languages” (Cronin, 2017, p. 2). An earlier metaphorical incorporation of ecological principles into this interdisciplinary field dates back to the germination of *Eco-translatology* in Hong Kong in 2001 (Hu, 2020). Considering ecology as a metaphor, the Darwinian terminology of adaptation, selection and survival of the fittest is served as an alternative version of polysystem theory by analyzing the environment of the translated text (Shread, 2023). Eco-translatology, then, allows for deep and detailed analysis of the complexity of translation by establishing an appropriate translational environment. This approach examines not only the source and target texts and their respective languages but also delves into the intricate linguistic, cultural, and social dimensions that influence translation outcomes. Additionally, it considers the roles and perspectives of the many different agents of translation: the author producing the source text, the client commissioning the translation, and the readers before whom the translation will be presented.

The exploration of metaphoric eco-translation in China is notably advanced, with other scholars such as Wang (2011) and Jiang (2015) contributing significantly to this field. Xu, for example, has tried to account for all the variables of translation environment by categorizing them into natural, social,

normative and interior environments (Farahzad & Ehteshami, 2018). However, even his application of natural environment remains figurative.

Numerous scholars outside of China, however, have also engaged in similar metaphorical explorations of translation ecology. For instance, Scott (2015) was the first to use the very term *eco-translation*. In so doing he highlighted the open-ended, foraging nature of the translator's task, the sense of reading as an act of inhabiting the source text, and the treatment of the target text as a material object in the real world of reading (Cronin, 2018). Tosi's (2013) work, *Translation as a Test of Language Vitality*, as another metaphorical appeal, frames translation practices within the European Union as a "linguistic ecosystem" (p. 13). Beebe et al. (2017) have also applied basic ecological concepts to examine the cultural environments surrounding literary translation. In a more recent contribution *The Ecology of Translation, or The Translator as World Author*, Alex Ciorogar (2021) argues that "Translatorship – understood, here, in terms of an ecosystem – connects the imaginary and fictional world of a text with the real worlds through which it voyages" (p. 317).

Having said that, these types of metaphorical appeal to the ecology are worth recalling in that they "form an interdisciplinary field of study that lies between science and humanities" (Shread, 2023, p. 118). These initiatives resonate with Cronin's (2020a) vision of "the need to orient knowledge to different ends" and the re-evaluation of "the infrastructures of knowledge", emphasizing a transformative approach to understanding translation within ecological contexts (p. 100). Even though they differ from what we now call eco-translation, metaphorical contributions to the field of translation studies are valuable ways for rethinking translation, paving the way for such an ecological turn.

Eco-translation

In the case of narrowly defined ecotranslation, as can be observed, dropping the hyphen is encouraged. Abandoning the hyphen – or, to *unhook* it – here, plays into the full-integration of translation traditions. "This traditional scholarly approach keeps us firmly in a world that gravitates around humans, even as it addresses the responsibilities of this species to nature and the representation of these relations" (Shread, 2023, p. 117). However, eco-translation, is wisely reintroduced and redefined with a hyphen. The utility of the hyphen, then, is an important *reminder*, in that it impedes full integration into translation traditions. Eco-translation, then, adapts a critical perspective on traditional scholarship, which often centers human experiences and narratives. The anthropocentric perspective, focusing on human beings and their experiences, then, automatically cements a worldview that emphasizes human interest and values over everything else. While such scholarship may engage with environmental issues and advocate for ethical stewardship, it risks perpetuating a hierarchical relationship where nature is seen primarily as a resource or backdrop for human activity. By framing our understanding of nature within human-centric paradigms, we may overlook the complex interdependencies that exist in ecological systems and the voices of non-human actors. This calls for a more inclusive approach that recognizes the agency of all living beings and fosters a deeper, more reciprocal relationship with the environment, ultimately challenging us to rethink our place within the broader tapestry of life. Eco-translation, then, as Cronin (2017) defined it, is "an attempt to think through some of the assumptions we make about translation and how they may need to be radically re-thought on a planet that, from a human standpoint, is entering the most critical phase of its existence" (p. 3).

Not confined to his theories, eco-translation is nonetheless significantly shaped by Cronin's influence, positioning his approach at the forefront of this emerging field. His approach derives from a comprehensive understanding of *political ecology* (Robbins, 2011), which encompasses the social, cultural, political, and economic factors that affect human relationships with each other, other organisms, and the physical environment (Cronin, 2017). By conceptualizing these relationships as

translational, Cronin aims to take into account “all forms of translation thinking and practice” (Cronin, 2017, p. 2), and to establish a planetary democracy that effectively addresses the ecological crisis (Cronin, 2020c). To this end, he proposes the concept of the *tradosphere*, which refers to the collective sum of all translation systems on Earth (Cronin, 2017, 2021). He elaborates that this encompasses “all the ways in which information circulates between living and non-living organisms and is translated into a language or a code that can be processed or understood by receiving entity” (Cronin, 2017, p. 71; 2020b, p. 89).

Such expanded definition and approach defines “translation not only in linguistic and anthropocentric terms but also in as a semiotic process that takes place in and between all (living) organisms – human and non-human alike” (Meylaerts & Marais, 2023, p. 3). This concept of eco-translation we have availed ourselves of above can be approached from *biosemiotics* (see Kull, 2023; Kull & Torop, 2011; Marais, 2019; Marais & Kull, 2016; Marais et al., 2024). Chronologically, biosemiotics predates eco-translation as a conceptual framework.

While eco-translation, including interspecies communication, seems to be firmly anchored in the 21st century, Brian Baer reminds us of the emergence of biosemiotics in Soviet translatology back in the early 20th century, as linked with the Russian formalists and the adaptation of Saussurean linguistics in literature. (Gonne et al., 2024, pp. 2-3)

Biosemiotics, much like eco-translation, adopts a transdisciplinary approach that seeks to transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries through collaboration across different scientific fields. Understanding living systems and their semiotic processes requires a holistic approach that integrates knowledge and methods from various disciplines, including biology, ecology, semiotics, and translation studies. “Development of biosemiotics has been a permanent search for improvement of conceptual apparatus that would best correspond to semiotic phenomena and processes in the living world” (Kull, 2023, p. 78). Marais (2019), as a pioneer figure in bridging biosemiotics and translation studies, explores cases of translation that do not include language at all. His works, along with those of other biosemioticians, theorize translation as a concept that encompasses all semiotic phenomena within the *tradosphere*.

By broadening the scope of translation to include non-human actors and ecological systems, eco-translation challenges the traditional foundations of the field, which have long been anchored in human language and communication. This shift, while innovative and necessary in the context of global environmental crises, inevitably introduces a sense of disorientation among scholars whose work is deeply rooted in anthropocentric frameworks. For many, the move away from human language as the primary site of meaning-making can feel destabilizing, as it disrupts established methodologies, theories, and disciplinary identities. Yet, this disorientation also opens up transformative possibilities, urging scholars to rethink the boundaries of translation and to engage with the interconnected, multispecies realities of the natural world.

Solastalgia in Translation Studies

As opposed to nostalgia – the melancholia or homesickness experienced by individuals when separated from their home – solastalgia, a term coined by Australian philosopher and environmentalist Albrecht (2006), is “the pain or sickness caused by the loss or lack of solace and the sense of isolation connected to the present state of one’s home and territory” (p. 45) — a form of homesickness that one experiences not when away from home, but while still physically present in a familiar environment that has undergone profound and often unsettling changes. It can arise in any context where place identity – the emotional and psychological connection individuals have to their environment – faces significant disruption due to pervasive changes in the existing order. These alterations, whether environmental, social, or cultural, can evoke a deep sense of loss,

disorientation, and distress, even as one remains in the same physical space. The rapid changes in each of cultural, social, technological, and environmental contexts could cause to solastalgia.

The rapid and often radical shift occurring in cultural, social, technological, and environmental contexts today have made solastalgia an increasingly relevant concept. Seen in this light, environmental degradation, climate change, urbanization, and the erosion of cultural traditions can all cause solastalgia. In this sense, solastalgia is indicative of what Shread (2023) calls *ecological vertigo*. In her terms, such “vertigo begins precisely as disarticulation of body and environment, the expression of dizziness reflecting a distortion of proprioceptive functions, and the difficulty of being embodied in the world” (Shread, 2023, p. 115). What is more, in the realm of translation studies, scholars and translators are beginning to experience a sense of solastalgia within their own field. Due to innovative approaches such as eco-translation, technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, and shifting theoretical paradigms, including ecological turn, the discipline has undergone conspicuous changes in recent years. Although these changes have brought progress and new opportunities, they have also disrupted the traditional foundations and practices of the field, leaving some academics feeling a profound sense of loss and disconnection. In this context, solastalgia manifests as a form of intellectual and emotional homesickness – a longing for the familiar contours of translation studies as it once was, even as scholars remain actively engaged in the field.

This sense of solastalgia in translation studies emphasizes the common human experience of adjusting to change and loss in an increasingly dynamic world. It indicates the affective and psychological effect of ecological turn, not only on physical but also on intellectual and professional spaces. Since the field continues to evolve, the identification and reconciliation of this sense of solastalgia is necessary to foster resilience and adaptability among researchers so they can cope with the challenges of ecological turn while still having a sense of belongingness to their intellectual *home*.

The dual critique we face as scholars working on eco-translation – being advised “not to be lost in translation” and “not to lose translation” – together, encapsulates the solastalgic struggle of scholars who feel a deep attachment to the familiar contours of their discipline while simultaneously grappling with the necessity of change. The ecological turn in translation studies – driven by environmental crisis and transdisciplinary influences – have created a sense of disorientation and loss for some, even as they open up exciting new possibilities.

To be Lost in Translation

It serves, in turn, as a caution against over-theorizing or accepting overly complicated theories that would obscure the essence of translation and of translation studies. It betrays fear that theoretical evolutions in field would take it so far from its practical roots to have scholars and practitioners adrift in thought. Through this turn, what emerges as solastalgic is the experience of being *lost in translation* – misunderstood, disoriented, and adrift in the process of conceptualization. As Marais and Meylaerts (2024) rightly remark, “we left more empirical work in the background in a discipline which has been strongly characterized by empirical models” (p. 2). Strained between the empirical origins of translation studies and its unfolding theoretical and conceptual evolutions is at center of that sense of solastalgia. It becomes particularly pronounced in the third form of eco-translation. Although even in initial steps remained to have some degree of practical application and empirical grounding, the third stage is a clear turn from empiricism, embracing instead the expansive potential of conceptual and theoretical scholarly work. In her recent reflection *On Turns and Fashions in Translation Studies and Beyond*, Zwischenberger (2023), however, underscores the need for rigorous conceptual development in this evolving landscape. She argues that “in order for the concepts behind a turn to become analytical categories and go beyond the loose metaphors, considerable conceptual work is necessary” (Zwischenberger, 2023, p. 7).

To Lose Translation

This underscores apprehension at abandoning field practice precept and fundamentals in the name of innovation. The simple yet profound response to such critique is that “as researchers, our first loyalty is to research itself, not to a discipline” (Gonne et al., 2024, p. 9). By prioritizing research over discipline, scholars can embrace transdisciplinarity, respond to emerging global challenges, and contribute meaningfully to broader conversations, all while remaining true to the core ethos of inquiry and discovery that defines academia. Eco-translation, in this regard, aligns with other innovative and transdisciplinary approaches that translate cities and space (Cronin & Simon, 2014; Ehteshami, 2022; Lee, 2021; Simon, 2012, 2019), architecture (Akcan, 2012), museums (Sturge, 2007), bodies (Bennett, 2007), artwork (Bal & Morra, 2007; Baynham & Lee, 2019; Campbell & Vidal, 2024a, 2024b; Rizzo, 2017; Simon, 2023; Vidal Claramonte, 2025), and objects (Beattie et al., 2023; Bertacco & Vallorani, 2021; Ciribuco & O’Connor, 2022; Mazzara, 2019; Simon & Polezzi, 2022; Vidal Claramonte, 2025), collectively departing from privileging human language as the sole medium of meaning-making to explore diverse, often non-linguistic processes of meaning creation and translation.

What we risk and yet embrace to lose is indeed not translation itself, but rather Jakobson’s concept of *proper translation* and *the property of translation*. Blumczynski (2023) puts forward the argument that “calling one category in a taxonomy ‘proper’ automatically creates a conceptual hierarchy that renders all remaining categories somehow ‘less proper’” (p. 15). Going beyond linguistic translation, however, has raised a sense of solastalgia among many scholars and translators, prompting them to ask questions, such as the one posed by Chesterman (2020, p. 219): “If one can see anything as translation or the result of translation – parks, churches, government organizations, and so on – does the concept retain any meaningful specificity?” Yet even before Chesterman took the trouble to raise such a question, Venuti (2019), in his book *Contra Instrumentalism: A Translation Polemic*, along with many other scholars, had already addressed – or at least attempted to address – these concerns.

Translation is and always has been ubiquitous. Today it figures significantly in the practices housed in many cultural and social institutions—economic and political, legal and military, religious and scientific. The arts and human sciences depend on translation for their invention, accumulation, and dissemination of forms and ideas. Nonetheless, translation remains grossly misunderstood, ruthlessly exploited, and blindly stigmatized. Now is the time to abandon the simplistic, clichéd thinking that has limited our understanding of it for millennia. (p. ix)

As Blumczynski (2023) indicates, “abandoning this simplistic and clichéd thinking about translation would surely involve opposition to conceptualizing it as a predominantly ‘linguistic and cultural’ operation” (p. 19). To take that step requires challenging scholars to take more expansive and inclusive conceptions of translation – one that reflects the interconnected, multispecies realities of the world and challenges the anthropocentric assumptions that have long dominated the field. Translating in that manner has potential to confront the challenge of our globalized modern world while not conceding its rigor or relevance.

Conclusion

The ecological turn in translation studies is a fundamental and imperative paradigm shift, one that overhauls the anthropocentric basis of the discipline and recasts translation as a multispecies, semiotic activity. The ecological turn, as outlined in this article, has progressed through three key stages: the expansion of the thematic field, the metaphorical use of ecology, and the methodological refinement that has led to a conceptual leap and transdisciplinary application. Each phase has contributed to the development of the field and brought it away from its traditional boundaries. Having said that, such a shift, as groundbreaking and revolutionary as it is, has also been

accompanied by feelings of disorientation and solastalgia in scholars steeped in traditional, human-centered paradigms. The struggle between holding onto the foundational principles of the discipline and moving towards the general possibilities of eco-translation is part of a greater intellectual and emotional struggle in the discipline. Scholars, in doing so, are confronted with the double criticism of *not being lost in translation* and *not losing translation*, which encapsulates the solastalgic experience of coping with change while maintaining the attachment to the familiar contours of their scholarly home.

In spite of this sense of solastalgia, the ecological turn in translation studies presents stimulating new horizons for the discipline. By focusing on research rather than discipline and adopting transdisciplinarity, researchers can make significant contributions to wider debates regarding sustainability, environmental justice, and the inherent value of all living things. The tradosphere, in Cronin's suggestion, is the sum total of all the translation systems available on the globe, highlighting human and non-human agents' intertwining in meaning production and distribution. This wider sense of translation not only demolishes the simple and overworked thinking which has restrained the discipline for millennia but also persuades scholars towards a more integrative and inclusive practice.

References

- Akcan, E. (2012). *Architecture in translation: Germany, Turkey and the modern house*. Duke University Press.
- Aksoy, N. B. (2020). Insights into a new paradigm in translation eco-translation and its reflections. *Babel-Revue Internationale De La Traduction-International Journal of Translation*, 66(1), 29-45. <https://doi-org.proxy.mtholyoke.edu:2443/10.1075/babel.00136.aks>
- Albrecht, G. (2006). Solastalgia. *Alternatives Journal*, 32(4/5), 41-55.
- Alexander, R., & Stibbe, A. (2014). From the analysis of ecological discourse to the ecological analysis of discourse. *Language Sciences*, 41, 104-110.
- Arjmandi, A. (2024). Translation beyond culture and society. In H. Mollanazar (Ed.), *Sociocultural issues in translation studies* (pp. 133-136). Tarjomeh-pazhouhan.
- Arjmandi, A., & Ehteshami, S. (2025). The role of paratexts in raising ecological awareness: A case study of the Persian translation of *Animal Farm*. *Iranian Journal of Translation Studies*, 22(87), 64-84. <https://journal.translationstudies.ir/ts/article/view/1234>
- Bachmann-Medick, D. (2009). Introduction: The translational turn. *Translation Studies*, 2(1), 2-16.
- Bachmann-Medick, D. (2016). *Cultural turns: New orientations in the study of culture* (A. Blauhut, Trans.). De Gruyter.
- Bal, M., & Morra, J. (2007). Acts of translation. *Journal of Visual Culture*, 6(1), 5-11.
- Baynham, M., & Lee, T. K. (2019). *Translation and translanguaging*. Routledge.
- Beattie, P., Bertacco, S., & Soldat-Jaffe, T. (Eds.). (2023). *Time, space, matter in translation*. Routledge.
- Beebee, T., Childress, D., & Weidman, S. (2017). Translation ecologies: A beginner's guide. *Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature*, 1(4), 1-14.
- Benchekroune, L., & Touaf, L. (2024). Making the case for the humanities' take on the crucial issue of ecological crisis. *Quantum Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 5(1), 195-208.

- Bennett, K. (2007). Words into movement: The ballet as intersemiotic translation. In M. J. Brilhante & M. Carvalho (Eds.), *Teatro e tradução: Palcos de encontro* (pp. 125–138). Colibri.
- Bertacco, S., & Vallorani, N. (2021). *The relocation of culture: Translation, migration, borders*. Bloomsbury.
- Blumczynski, P. (2023). *Experiencing translationality: Material and metaphorical journeys*. Routledge.
- Bradley, H. (2021). Rumors of nature: An ecotranslation of Ulrike Almut Sandig's "So Habe Ich Sagen Gehört". *Humanities*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.3390/h10010014>
- Campbell, M., & Vidal, R. (Eds.). (2024a). *The experience of translation: Materiality and play in experiential translation*. Routledge.
- Campbell, M., & Vidal, R. (Eds.). (2024b). *The translation of experience: Cultural artefacts in experiential translation*. Routledge.
- Chesterman, A. (2020). Transfer troubles. In M. Gonne, K. Merrigan, R. Meylaerts, & H. v. Gerwen (Eds.), *Transfer thinking in translation studies: Playing with the black box of cultural transfer* (pp. 207–223). Leuven University Press.
- Çimen, Ü. (2023). Was there an association made between Geocentrism and Anthropocentrism before the Copernican Revolution? *Filosofia Unisinos*, 24(1), 1-9.
- Ciorogar, A. (2021). The ecology of translation, or, the translator as world author. *Transylvanian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in the Humanities*, 26(2), 309-318.
- Ciribuco, A., & O'Connor, A. (2022). Translating the object, objects in translation: Theoretical and methodological notes on migration and materiality. *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 17(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.00052.int>
- Coisson, J., & Badenes, G. (2015). Ecotranslation: A journey into the wild through the road less travelled. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 11(10), 356-368. <http://hdl.handle.net/11086/29427>
- Cronin, M. (2003). *Translation and globalization*. Routledge.
- Cronin, M. (2017). *Eco-translation: Translation and ecology in the age of the Anthropocene*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315689357>
- Cronin, M. (2018). Eco-translation. In K. Washbourne & B. V. Wyke (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of literary translation* (pp. 482-494). Routledge.
- Cronin, M. (2020a). Shady dealings: Translation, climate and knowledge. In F. Italiano (Ed.), *The dark side of translation* (pp. 95-110). Routledge.
- Cronin, M. (2020b). Translation and climate change. In E. Bielsa & D. Kapsaskis (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and globalization* (pp. 85-98). Routledge.
- Cronin, M. (2020c). Translation and posthumanism. In K. Koskinen & N. K. Pokorn (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and ethics* (pp. 279-293). Routledge.
- Cronin, M. (2021). From translation zone to sacrifice zone: Minor perspectives on the tradosphere. *Translation in Society*, 1(1), 105 - 124.
- Cronin, M. (2025). The translational rift: Decolonising the anthropocene. In S. Bassnett & D. Johnston (Eds.), *Debates in translation studies* (pp. 75-90). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003104773>
- Cronin, M., & Simon, S. (2014). Introduction: The city as translation zone. *Translation Studies*, 7(2), 119–132.

- Ehteshami, S. (2022). Geographical dimension and translation: A conceptual inquiry. *Iranian Journal of Translation Studies*, 20(79), 9-22. <https://dorl.net/dor/20.1001.1.17350212.1401.20.3.5.8>
- Farahzad, F., & Ehteshami, S. (2018). Spatial territories in translation studies. *Iranian Journal of Translation Studies*, 16(63), 71-87.
- Fraunhofer, H. (2023). Translating plants: A starting point. In P. Beattie, S. Bertacco, & T. Soldat-Jaffe (Eds.), *Time, space, matter in translation* (pp. 39-52). Routledge.
- Gonne, M., Meylaerts, R., & Marais, K. (2024). Introduction. In K. Marais, R. Meylaerts, & M. Gonne (Eds.), *The complexity of social-cultural emergence: Biosemiotics, semiotics and translation studies* (pp. 1-11). John Benjamins.
- Hu, G. (2020). *Eco-translatology: Towards an eco-paradigm of translation studies*. Springer.
- IATIS. (n.d.). *International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies*. Retrieved 2024, April 1 from www.iatis.org
- Ingold, T. (2000). *The perception of the environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. Routledge.
- Jiang, X. (2015). 'Eco' and 'adaptation-selection' in eco-translatology explained. In S. Yifeng (Ed.), *Translation and academic journals: The evolving landscape of scholarly publishing* (pp. 135-148). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kull, K. (2023). Biosemiotic approaches. In R. Meylaerts & K. Marais (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation theory and concepts* (pp. 77-93). Routledge.
- Kull, K., & Torop, P. (2011). Biotranslation: Translation between Umwelten. In T. Maran, D. Martinelli, & A. Turovski (Eds.), *Readings in zoosemiotics* (pp. 411-426). De Gruyter Mouton.
- Lee, T. K. (Ed.). (2021). *The Routledge handbook of translation and the city*. Routledge.
- Marais, K. (2019). *A (bio)semiotic theory of translation: The emergence of social-cultural reality*. Routledge.
- Marais, K., & Kull, K. (2016). Biosemiotics and translation studies: Challenging 'translation'. In Y. Gambier & L. v. Doorslaer (Eds.), *Border crossings: Translation studies and other disciplines* (pp. 169-188).
- Marais, K., & Meylaerts, R. (2024). Why complexity might not be too simple for translation studies. *Translation Studies*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700.2024.2421545>
- Marais, K., Meylaerts, R., & Gonne, M. (Eds.). (2024). *The complexity of social-cultural emergence: Biosemiotics, semiotics and translation studies*. John Benjamins.
- Masiola, R., & Tomei, R. (2016). *Descriptions, translations and the Caribbean: From fruits to Rastafarians*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40937-5>
- Mazzara, F. (2019). *Reframing migration: Lampedusa, border spectacle and aesthetics of subversion*. Peter Lang.
- Meylaerts, R., & Marais, K. (2023). Introduction. In R. Meylaerts & K. Marais (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation theory and concepts* (pp. 1-9). Routledge.
- Müller, S. L., & Pusse, T.-K. (Eds.). (2018). *From ego to eco: Mapping shifts from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism*. Brill.
- Naderi, S., & Tajvidi, G. (2023). The posthuman condition and a translational agency that leaks. *Iranian Journal of Translation Studies*, 20(80), 47-59.

- Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation*. Prentice Hall.
- Penz, H., & Fill, A. (2022). Ecolinguistics: History, today, and tomorrow. *Journal of World Languages*, 8(2), 232-253. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2022-0008>
- Rizzo, A. (2017). Translation as artistic communication in the aesthetics of migration: From nonfiction to the visual arts. *Ars Aeterna*, 9(2), 53-70.
- Robbins, P. (2011). *Political ecology: A critical introduction* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Scott, C. (2015). Translating the nineteenth century: A poetics of eco-translation. *Dix-Neuf*, 19(3), 285-302.
- Shread, C. (2023). Ecological approaches. In R. Meylaerts & K. Marais (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation theory and concepts* (pp. 113-125). routledge
- Simon, S. (2012). *Cities in translation: Intersections of language and memory*. Routledge.
- Simon, S. (2019). *Translation sites*. Routledge.
- Simon, S. (2023). Foreword: Thinking translationally. In P. Beattie, S. Bertacco, & T. Soldat-Jaffe (Eds.), *Time, space, matter in translation* (pp. xii-xv). Routledge.
- Simon, S., & Polezzi, L. (2022). Translation and the material experience of migration: A conversation. *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 17(1), 154-167.
- Steffensen, S. V., & Fill, A. (2014). Ecolinguistics: The state of the art and future horizons. *Language Sciences*, 41A, 6-25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2013.08.003>
- Sterk, D. (2019). An ecotranslation manifesto: On the translation of bionyms in nativist and nature writing from taiwan. In C.-j. Chang (Ed.), *Chinese environmental humanities: Practices of environing at the margins* (pp. 119-140). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-18634-0_6
- Stibbe, A. (2012). *Animals erased: Discourse, ecology, and reconnection with the natural world*. Wesleyan University Press.
- Stibbe, A. (2014). An ecolinguistic approach to critical discourse studies. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 11(1), 117-128.
- Stibbe, A. (2015). *Ecolinguistics: Language, ecology and the stories we live by*. Routledge.
- Stibbe, A. (2021). *Ecolinguistics: Language, ecology and the stories we live by* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Sturge, K. (2007). *Representing others: Translation, ethnography and the museum*. St. Jerome.
- Tosi, A. (2013). Translation as a test of language vitality. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 23(1), 1-14.
- Venuti, L. (2019). *Contra instrumentalism: A translation polemic*. University of Nebraska Press.
- Vidal Claramonte, M. C. Á. (2025). *Translation and objects: Rewriting migrancy and displacement through the materiality of art*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003488170>
- Wang, N. (2011). Shengtai wenxue yu shengtai fanyixue jiegou yu jiangou. *Zhongguo Fanyi*, 32(2), 10-15.
- Zwischenberger, C. (2023). On turns and fashions in translation studies and beyond. *Translation Studies*, 16(1), 1-16.