

# An Exploration of Translator's Identity in the Perspective of Ecological Translation

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**Abstract:** The translator is the main subject of translation activities, and there are limitations in the understanding of the translator's identity as "language transmitter" and "culture transmitter". In this paper, the relationship between the translator and the existence of translation is studied from the perspective of ecological translation, so that the understanding of the translator's subject identity changes, which is reflected in the shift from "text transmitter" to "human ecologist" and from "translator's existence" to "translator's survival". The translator as an "ecological person" should not only obey the survival situation of the translator, but also pay attention to the condition of the text, with the intention of building a harmonious relationship between the survival of the translator, the existence of the text and the translation ecology through ecological translation, which is also the embodiment of the ecological dynamic dimension of the translator's identity.

**Keywords:** Ecological translation, Translator research, Translator subject.

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## 1. Introduction

The question of "what is translation" is one of the most fundamental questions in translation research, which is concerned with the true form of translation existence. Around this question, there are both linguistic and cultural paradigms of translator identity, both lack the knowledge and construction of the relationship between the existence of translators and the essence of translation existence. An important dimension of translation studies is to understand and account for the intrinsic relationship between translator survival and translation existence. Looking at the different dimensions of translator studies on translator subjectivity, translator intersubjectivity, translator behavior, translator-centeredness, translator behavior criticism, translator ethics, etc., these translator concepts will appear in translation studies in different ways and examine and explore translation issues with a new perspective.

In essence, regardless of the development trend of translation studies, the existence of translation is inseparable from the participation of translators, and the survival of translators is always inhabited by the existence of translation, so translation and translators are inseparable. Under the perspective of ecological translation, the translator as an ecological human being establishes the dialectical unity relationship between the translator's domination, the translator's responsibility and the translator's development from the translator's survival situation. It not only examines the survival situation of the translator, but also pays attention to the life state of the text and cares for the ecological whole of translation, and its intention is to fulfill ecological translation by constructing a harmonious relationship between the survival of the translator, the life of the text and the ecology of translation. This is not only the ecological orientation of translators' research and development, but also the concrete performance of translators to make a difference. It should be emphasized that the question of "what translation actually is" also hides a basic idea, that is, the view on the essence of translation at the ontological level, which directly leads to the choice of different research horizons, and different horizons have different interpretations of "what

translation actually is". The purpose of this paper is to analyze the limitations of the translator's identity under the linguistic paradigm and the translator's identity under the cultural paradigm, and use them as an entry point to construct the essential relationship between the existence of the translator and the existence of translation under the ecological translation perspective.

## 2. Translator Identity under the Linguistic Paradigm: Translator Invisible

In the linguistic paradigm, the translator's object of study is firstly revealed in the form of language, and translation is known and understood from the level of language: on the one hand, it involves the study of translation with language as the object, and on the other hand, it takes linguistic analysis as the main way to grasp translation. Then, translation is not only included in language, but also often takes language itself as the boundary to grasp the boundary of translation, and the boundary of language is the boundary of translator, and language becomes the cornerstone to determine the cognition of translation and grasp the law of translation. With such a perspective, what translation achieves is often only language itself, not the true form of translation, nor does it involve the complexity, wholeness and diversity inherent in translation itself.

Of course, the translator's identity in the linguistic paradigm focuses on the translation activity of the text and is the first to discover the decisive role of language in the translation activity: language is both the form of the existence of translation and the way to know the existence of translation. On the one hand, translators under the linguistic paradigm regard language as the essential feature of translation ontology and pursue objectivity, certainty and reciprocity of translation, claiming that language plays a decisive role in translation activities, so that they tend to regard language as the whole of translation studies; on the other hand, they depreciate the important role of translators' subjectivity and creativity in translation practice and ignore the complexity, uncertainty and diversity of translation. On the other hand, it

depreciates the important role of translators' subjectivity and creativity in translation practice and ignores the complexity, uncertainty and diversity of translation, and even labels translators as slave girls, invisible people and porters. It is obvious that the translator's identity under the linguistic paradigm tends to conceal the translator's subjectivity and activism and treats translation as a representation of language, so that "what translation actually is" cannot be presented as it is, and the true form of translation is undoubtedly easily obscured by language.

### **3. Translator's Identity under the Cultural Paradigm: Translator Visible**

Throughout the development of translation studies, translation studies have experienced the "linguistic turn" and the "cultural turn", and their research fields have formed the original-centered theory and the translation-centered theory by understanding translation from the linguistic level and the cultural level respectively. Under the cultural paradigm, the object of translators' research is to examine translation in cultural contexts, and to recognize and understand translation from the cultural level. Compared with the language-oriented form, translation under the cultural paradigm is characterized by specificity, diversity, and uncertainty: on the one hand, it involves the translator's dynamism and tends to regard the translator as the manipulator and rewriter of translation; on the other hand, it takes the cultural analysis as the main way to grasp translation.

In this sense, the translator in the cultural paradigm involves both the interpretation of the cultural context at the macro level of translation and the attention to the translator subject at the micro level of translation. The construction and interpretation of translation by culture always infiltrates certain peripheral factors such as ideology, power relations and mainstream poetics, which not only tends to dissolve the objectivity, certainty and reciprocity of the linguistic paradigm, but also gives the translator subjectivity and creativity in the process of translation. As a result, translation is incorporated into cultural contexts and tends to determine the ontology of translation in terms of culture. It should be emphasized that while enjoying the pleasure brought by the cultural paradigm, such as the extreme promotion of the translator's subjectivity as a manipulator, we should always remember that it comes at the expense of the translator's true self. As a result, translation research is deeply immersed in the cultural context and cannot get out of it, and the translator becomes a subordinate of the cultural context because of the extreme promotion of the translator's subjectivity.

### **4. Translator Identity under Ecological Translation Studies: Translator Survival**

Throughout the development of translation studies, translation has been closely related to the survival of translators, cultural exchange and human existence, either implicitly or explicitly. In this regard, the significance of ecological translation studies on translators lies in taking human beings as the base for acquiring translation knowledge, and through revealing the object relationship between subject and object in translation, understanding how translation occurs and develops, and thus understanding the existence of

human beings themselves. It not only asks the question of "what is translation" and "what translation actually is", but also pursues the question of "existence" of translators themselves and seeks to solve the question of "what translation should be" on this basis. What translation should be". What makes a translator a translator is that he or she can understand and appreciate the question of "what is translation" and seek to solve the question of "what is translation" on the basis of the concern for the translator's survival. The solution to the question of "what is translation" is not only related to the generation and development of translation, but also inseparable from the translator's own existential situation.

#### **4.1. Translator-centeredness**

The existence of translation always unfolds in the way of the existence of the translator, and it is not an existence isolated from the translator; the essence of translation cannot be presented without the existence of the translator himself. Ontologically speaking, translation exists because of the translator and cannot be separated from the translator. As an objectively existing reality, translation is actually given by the translator, and is not a reality that evolves and survives by itself. Therefore, the existence of translation always carries the subjectivity of the translator's awareness, and constructs an objective reality based on the translator's subjectivity and connected with the translator's existence. This is the basic ontological understanding of the relationship between translation existence and translator existence.

The existence of the translator is accompanied by the translator's translation activity, and translation is born from it; as the translator's translation activity, translation is both unfolded in the whole process of the translator's existence and embedded in all aspects of the translator's existence. The translator is, first of all, the measure of the existence of translation. Of course, to link the measure of translation with the existence of translation through the translator is not to regard the translator as the judge of the existence of translation, but to emphasize that the existence of translation cannot be separated from the existence of the translator: the inquiry of translation is meaningful only to the translator, and the question of the existence or non-existence of translation does not occur outside the translator. In other words, "the translator is the measure of translation existence" sees the translator as the coordinator of the coexistence relationship with translation existence and textual life, and the mission of the translator is to realize the transition of translation existence from the life of the original text to the life of the translated text, also, the translator himself also knows himself in the process of participating in the transition of translation existence and obtains the home provided by translation existence home.

In the process of translation, the life of the original text, the life of the translated text, and the translation ecology cannot adjust themselves to exist specifically for the translator, but only the translator has the traction and integration power to adjust himself to the life of the text and the translation environment. In this regard, regardless of whether the translator is invisible or visible, the translator is always associated with translation: translation is the home of the translator's existence, a "translatorized" existence, while the translator is the measure of the existence of translation, a "translated" existence. Thus, "the translator is the measure of the existence of translation" can become a general consensus

in translator studies, an ontological commitment, a way of thinking, a concept of translation, and a character of translation practice. In this sense, the translator is placed at the root of translation studies, a kind of philosophical origin of translation studies, which is a specific concept and understanding in the sense of the value of the translator. Therefore, the translator is the root of translation in the sense of translation process, the subject inhabiting the existence of translation, the center in translation activity, and the guardian of the ecology of translation that eventually becomes in the existence of translation and translation activity.

## 4.2. Translator-Exist

Under the perspective of ecological translation science, the translator's way of behavior is an ecological practical way of thinking that requires the translator to examine and consider the ecological relationship between the original text, the translated text, the translation community (including the author of the original work, the reader of the translated text, the sponsor, the client, etc.) and the translation ecological environment. In short, the translator's way of behavior is to practice ecological translation, which is in line with the translator's survival. The essence of the translator's survival is the harmonious relationship of symbiosis and mutual existence between the translator, the text, the translation community and the translation ecological environment. Therefore, ecological translation is neither instrumental thinking nor an instrumental method, but an ecological way of practice aiming at the pursuit of harmony.

Ecological translation enables translators to adopt the correct means to achieve their purposes in the translation ecological environment, and it enables translators to view the relationship between translation and translators with a dynamic, symbiotic and systematic viewpoint when dealing with the relationship between translators and the translation community, translators and the translation ecological environment, and translators and translators themselves. Therefore, the most essential spiritual core of ecological translation is the harmonious relationship, which presents the humanistic care of translation in the symbiotic and coexistence relationship between translators and the original text, translation text, translation community and translation ecological environment, calls for translators to return to ecology, promotes the integration between translators, translation community and translation ecological environment, asks about the ecological nature of translators, and considers the survival behavior that translators should follow as the ecological center of translation.

## 5. Conclusion

Compared with the linguistic paradigm and the cultural paradigm, the ecological translation perspective shows its own vitality and unique charm in translation research. It is not only a research field with survivalist significance, but also

enriches the original translation research field at the worldview level, and reveals the essential relationship between the survival of translators and the existence of translation in a survivalist sense. Under the influence of ecological civilization thought, how to find a stable place for the development trend of translator research in the problem transformation of translator research is not only an urgent question we need to think about, but also requires us to explore the existing translator problem in depth. In this paper, the discussion on the problem transformation and ecological positioning of translator studies is an attempt to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the translator problem. In the process of the joint development and continuous maturation of translator studies and ecological translation studies, the basic issues of translator studies are either implicitly or explicitly undergoing profound transformations. These shifts will not only not affect the importance of exploring the translator issue, but will also continue to destroy new insights and meanings about the nature of translators and the translator issue.

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