What Is Eco-Translation?

A Research Seminar

Date: 10-11 November 2016
Venue: 188 Tottenham Court Road, Room 04

The fundamental idea of eco-translation – and of eco-translatology as the study of translation from an ecological perspective – is that translators and translations form part of larger system of interdependencies that can be investigated in terms of an eco-system. This means taking into account the entire ‘translation chain’ as well as its interaction with its environment. The approach raises questions about ecology, ethics and evolution.

The event covers two days. On Thursday 10 November we hear lectures by Professors Hu Gengshen (City University of Macao), Douglas Robinson (Hong Kong Baptist University) and Timothy Mathews (UCL French), and shorter papers by Dr Claire Yi-Yi Shih and Ms Anna Ponomareva (UCL CenTraS). There will be ample room for questions and discussion. The second day, Friday 11 November, takes the form of an intensive seminar as we enter into a critical discussion, in the presence of the authors, of one recent article each by Hu Gengshen, Douglas Robinson and Timothy Mathews.

Lunches, tea and coffee will be provided. The event is free, but please register online: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/centras/translation-news-and-events/what-is-eco-translation

SCHEDULE -- Thursday 10 November 2016

12:00-12:15 Welcome
12:15 -13:15 Lecture 1:

The System Model of Eco-Translatology and its Central Tenets
HU Gengshen (City University of Macao /Tsinghua University, Beijing, China)

Eco-Translatology views translation from ecological perspectives. The lecture presents a model of Eco-Translatology to describe the core concepts. On the basis of the idea of the “translation chain”, we start from the source text to be produced by the writer and move to the process of translating by the translator, and to the target text to be read by the reader. The model presents translation as textual transplant, translation as eco-balance, and translation as adaptation and selection, and it describes the ideas of a “translation textual ecology”, “translational eco-environment”, and “translators community ecology”. It covers (1) the translation chain of “three links” (pre-translating, during translating, and post-translating); (2) the subjectivity of translators from translator-centredness to translator’s responsibility; (3) the conceptual extension from “context” to “eco-environment”; (4) eco-translation ethics; (5) the explanation of translation phenomena in terms of “transplantability”; (6)
the eco-system of translation; (7) the interplay among the elements in the eco-system, and (8) the contribution of eco-translatology to the development of human eco-civilization.

13:15-14.30 Lunch
14.30-15.30 Lecture 2:

The Icosis and Ecosis of Translation
Douglas Robinson (Hong Kong Baptist University)

This paper draws on Arne Naess’s philosophy of “deep ecology” as an approach to the study of translation-as-rhetoric. Translation-as-rhetoric implies not only that translation does something to the target reader—it is a communicative action in its own right, not just a passive reproduction of someone else’s communicative act—but that the persuasivity of translation exceeds traditional rationalistic conceptions of rhetoric focused on arguments, claims, and proofs, moving us into the realm of ecological conceptions focused on rhetorical situation: the affective and conative flows of persuasivity through groups that make rhetorical persuasion possible. Drawing on Kenneth Burke’s radical reading of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* as “identification” and Arne Naess’s similar use of identification to theorize “the Self-realization of the [collectivized] ecological self,” the paper explores the “icosis” and “ecosis” of translation, with examples.

15.30-16.30 Lecture 3:

What does a translator hear, and on behalf of whom?
Timothy Mathews (UCL French)

This presentation offers a practical engagement with elements of the eco-translatology prosed by HU Gengshen, and a personal translator’s response to them: the subjectivity of translators from translator-centredness to translator’s responsibility; and the extension from “context” to “eco-environment”. My talk will also be inspired by Douglas Robinson’s account of abduction in translation, a notion drawn from C S Peirce: “The abductive experience is one of not knowing how to proceed, being confused, feeling intimidated by the magnitude of the task – but somehow making the leap, making the blind stab at understanding or reformulating an utterance.” I will present examples from my translations and co-translation into English of the French writers Guillaume Apollinaire, Gérard Macé and Michel Houellebecq. I will discuss these examples from the point of view of a translating experience, and the relations involved between translator and text, and translator and reader. The aim is to create a dialogue with those present on the relation of theory to practice in translation, and its capacity to illuminate the process.

16.30-17.00 tea
17.00-18.00 Two Shorter Papers:

Web-search behaviours in translation: a potential adaptation and selection process
Claire Yi-Yi Shih (CenTraS)

Andrew Chesterman (2009) proposed “Translator Studies” consisting of cultural, cognitive and sociological strands, as opposed to “Translation Studies”. This appears to coincide with Hu’s (2003) idea of translator-centredness in eco-translatology. In this talk, I will present my empirical findings regarding student translators’ web-search behaviours, in an attempt to demonstrate such behaviours as adaptation and selection processes within the wider context of human and computer interaction in translation.

Five Recent Views of Translating
Anna Ponomareva (CenTraS)
My presentation uses eco-terms as metaphors that are largely philosophical in origin and related to the notion of equilibrium or harmony maintenance in any environment based on certain established and acknowledged rules. These terms are also treated as metaphors embedded in gardeners’ terminology. With reference to Robinson’s work (2013), I describe the eco-translator as the one who plants his or her work, bearing in mind Confucian ideas summarised by Mencius (372–289 BC) as “four shoots”. Five recent translations of Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* into English are chosen to exemplify my points: Douglas Hofstadter (1999), Olivia Emmet and Svetlana Makourenkova (1999), Tom Beck (2004), Henry Hoyt (2008), and Stanley Mitchell (2008). Their paratexts provide details of the translating process and the translators’ environment. To a large extent, they are similar to Chen Hongshou’s album *Sixteen Views of Hermetic Living* (1651).

**SCHEDULE -- Friday 11 November 2016**

10.00-10.30 cCoffee

10.30-12.00 Gengshen Hu seminar: to discuss his article *On the Chinese Cultural “Genes” in Eco-Translatology*

12.00-13.00 Lunch


14.30-16.00 Tim Mathews seminar: to discuss the introduction to his translation of Houellebecq.

16.00- Tea/drinks