Ecolinguistics and English for translators: A teaching proposal

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Abstract: The importance of integrating sustainability into language education is currently being addressed in English Language Teaching (ELT) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Therefore, the English course for translation trainees could become the moment in which socially engaged language educators can work towards developing a sense of a balanced relationship with nature by tackling the anthropocentric linguistic strategies in the source text. This is favoured by the specific teaching goals of ELT for translator training, involving awareness of variations in meaning, use, and register, and examination of the writer's attitude and viewpoint. Combining cutting-edge research on teaching English in translator training with TESOL for sustainability, this contribution proposes a lesson plan that implements the theoretical principles connected to teaching sustainability and ecological issues aimed at translator trainees. Ecolinguistics will be used as a methodology to guide the analysis of environmental texts. The goal is to help students develop awareness of form and meaning, which is among the specific translation-oriented English teaching objectives. This article will thus provide English teachers working in translation courses with activities that are specifically created to suit the objectives of linguistic training for translators.

Keywords: Ecotranslation; English for translators; Ecolinguistics; Language and Sustainability; Translators' training.

1. Introduction

The ecological crisis is one of the greatest challenges of our time. The United Nations Development Programme (n.d.) objectives for environmental education had already mentioned awareness of and concern for ecological problems, in addition to understanding the relationships between human beings and their environment, and evaluating and participating in proposed solutions to these problems. The need to "improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning" (n.p.) is

specifically included in the Sustainable Development Goal 13, objective target 13.3 (United Nations, n.d.). Thus, education today needs to encourage a critical and ethical consciousness of ecological issues (Goulah, 2017) to raise "ecological citizens" (Clover et al., 2013).

The ecological shift in the humanities and social sciences is a trend that Translation Studies did not ignore (Cronin, 2017). Ecological concerns are being increasingly voiced and discussed, consolidating the strand of eco-translation, whose central tenet is the notion that the eco-environmental norms and values of the target culture tend to dominate the act of translation. Cronin's understanding of eco-translation encompasses a variety of contexts in which the distinctive view to be counteracted is that humankind is fundamentally unique and stands apart from the rest of nature and from other animals. This view is once again typical of Western culture and can be summarised as "human exceptionalism" (Cronin, 2017, p. 68).

The power of language in shaping reality, the awareness of the reciprocal influence of cultures and languages, the fact that "language is never a neutral conduit of ideas" (Katunich & Goulah, 2020, p. 4), and the connection between ideology and translation are all concepts that translation students are already familiar with—or, if at the beginning of their studies, more inclined to understand. In fact, translator trainees are learning to become "discursive strategists" (Katunich & Goulah, 2020, p. 6). This article stems from the assumption that courses teaching the L2—in this article, English—are the ideal moment to develop sensitivity towards the anthropocentric-oriented linguistic choices in the source text in the context of Translation and Interpreting degrees.

While beyond the scope of this article, a brief discussion on the approach of translators to unsustainable texts is in order, as it closely connects with the translator's ecosophy (Stibbe, 2021) and the ethical framework of the profession. Translators need to be aware of several plausible ethical issues hindering the profession's adherence to the principle of impartiality: the decision as to whether to proceed with a translation at all; the degree and nature of 'loyalty' to the source text, especially when it is of highly controversial content or with a non-scientific approach; whether to adopt a 'domesticating' or 'foreignising' stance towards the target audience; and the political implications of specific lexical, syntactic, and stylistic selections (Hutchings, 2021). Research on activist translation has tackled the literary field (Tymoczko, 2007, 2010), human rights settings (Drugan, 2017), and, most recently, international organizations and humanitarian sectors (Tesseur, 2022), but no study has so far investigated the ethics of translating environmental texts. We can certainly say that this is one of the fields in which the many interests at stake can potentially influence power and decision-making, thus making translators of such texts socially responsible (Drugan, 2017). Therefore, the focus on ecological awareness of English classes has to be properly contextualized in terms of translation ethics in translation classes.

English Language Teaching (ELT) professionals are increasingly being asked to consider and engage with the role of English and ELT in the (re)production of attitudes, ideologies, identities, and actions which contribute to ecological degradation and the climate crisis (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). However, this call for participation is not supported by specific teaching resources: an investigation on the treatment of ecological concerns in second language learning materials (Jacobs & Goatly, 2000) revealed that 2% of activities had ecological content (more frequently in coursebooks for proficiency students). Furthermore, there is little literature on Teachers of English

to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) methods and planning for science classrooms that address climate change (Goulah, 2017; Nutta et al., 2010).

Particular attention is being given to Translation and Interpreting Language Learning and Teaching (TILLT) by Spanish scholars, who suggest that a competence-based approach to translator training in general and more specific language training in particular are needed. Flores (2019) highlights the insufficient attention given to bilingual sub-competence in Translation Competence development and provides a framework for analyzing and developing English for Translation and Interpreting materials; Cerezo Herrero (2023) stresses that foreign language courses follow a generalist approach that deviates from the ultimate goal pursued in the Translation and Interpreting degree.

Therefore, this article will propose a lesson plan that is methodologically based on combining the most recent research on TILLT (Cerezo Herrero, 2023; Fois, 2023) with TESOL for sustainability and ecostylistics (Goulah & Katunich, 2020; Mercer et al., 2022; Milia & Virdis, 2021). Bearing in mind the importance of establishing lexicogrammatical goals in terms of source text analysis (for direct translation) and written production (for inverse translation) that suit the needs of ELT for translator training, the lesson plan proposed in this article will draw from ecolinguistics to tailor the analysis of environmental texts, so as to develop ecological-oriented lessons focused on the following translation-oriented skills: a) awareness of form and meaning; b) awareness of connotations and their effect on meaning.

This article is structured as follows: Section 2 will introduce the theoretical framework from TILLT underpinning the lesson plan. Section 3 will discuss the application of ecolinguistics to textual analyses of environmental texts for didactic purposes in TILLT. Section 4 will discuss the criteria for choosing the authentic materials and the didactic purpose of the tasks. Section 5 will present the lesson plan, and Section 6 will describe the learning outcomes. The conclusion will summarise the main points of this article and underline its contribution to the topic investigated.

2. TILLT: Goals and methodology

Despite being relatively new, research on TILLT has already yielded some insightful findings. In order to effectively devise language teaching for translator training, two insights of bi- or multilingual perspectives must be taken into consideration. The first insight is linguistic reflexivity, which is crucial in grammar instruction to teach learners how to analyse language. The second insight involves a contrastive methodology, which improves accuracy (Ur, 2012) and trainees' ability to switch from one language to another, thus building awareness of their linguistic repertoire (Fois, 2023). In fact, translation trainees must be prepared to translate into their L1 (direct translation), but also into their L2 (inverse translation). Specific goals include:

1. Focus on how to identify the audience, the thematic field, and the level of specialization of the written text. There appears to be a need for more diverse written materials because trainees struggle with the genre, subject area, and general style conventions of the source text (Mraček, 2018). This would have a positive influence on translation trainees' productive skills (i.e., writing) and receptive skills (i.e., reading) (Levitzky-Aviad & Laufer, 2013). Written

resources are also helpful for developing or expanding vocabulary because they are more lexically complex than spoken texts (Hiebert, 2020). In fact, learners need to know at least 95% of the words of a given text to understand its meaning (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010; Ur, 2012; Schmitt et al., 2017).

2. Focus on deducing meaning and interpreting implicatures from the co-text as well as variations in meaning, use, and register. The regulated use of stylistic variation appears to be a key topic for an English course for translation trainees, since the capacity to recognize (and later replicate) register and style is crucial in the formation and understanding of texts (Boase-Beier, 2020). It is important to teach both marked and unmarked grammatical forms, and to provide a thorough explanation of the sociolinguistic and discourse-pragmatic considerations that underlie their use (Ureel et al., 2021). The importance of this aspect is demonstrated by the fact that most errors in inverse translation include quantitative errors involving divergence from the target language usage frequency rather than qualitative errors violating the rules of the target language system (Mraček, 2018).

3. Focus on how the speaker's attitude and viewpoint emerge from the text (for instance, via modality). Knowledge of the linguistic form should be integrated by indications of its manipulative impact on the text. Understanding and recognizing the proper form for the desired meaning would improve trainees' analytical ability and written production.

4. Focus on idioms, which are a challenge for translation trainees in both direct translation and inverse translation. Trainees either fail to recognize and interpret the idiom in direct translation, or use inappropriate style and incorrect grammatical structures in inverse translation (Kovács, 2016) as a result of interference and shortcomings in English competence (Saeed, 2012; Mraček, 2018).

5. Focus on collocation and semantic prosody, which are particularly challenging (Mraček, 2018). Acceptable direct translations can be expected when collocations have an L1 literal equivalent and are linked to form recall knowledge (Sonbul et al., 2023), which implies that the emphasis on which collocations to teach should depend on the trainees' L1.

6. Linguistic training for translators ought to devote more attention to:

    a) Vocabulary expansion, trying to increase lexical awareness and interest in language use, and working on the various purposes and pragmatic effects. Collocations, connotation, lexical cohesiveness, and linguistic variety are all aspects that translators must know, and therefore must find proper space in ELT for translation training.

    b) Textual training for translation-oriented reading (Barani & Karimnia, 2014; Flores & Coy, 2019). The ability to deduce meaning and interpret implicatures from the co-text, and to identify the audience, the thematic field, and the level of specialization of the written text are among the skills expected and required of translators. Equally important are understanding the register and language functions of the written text, and detecting the textual conventions of various text types and genres.

c) Written comprehension and production. Writing for a purpose is a skill that translation students should practice to create texts that are acceptable from a pragmatic and sociolinguistic standpoint (Barani & Karimnia, 2014; Sawyer et al., 2019).

Texts revolving around and showing different perspectives on ecological issues are the ideal field in which to explore the aforementioned areas. Thanks to the insights coming "from ecology, ecosophy, anthropology, eco-criticism, religion, literature, the arts, primitive cultures and emerging eco-related sciences" (Ponton, 2022, p. 37), ecolinguistics can provide the methodological framework around which to structure the tasks. Hence, the next section will cover the current research on ELT for translator training along with how ecolinguistics can be of use as a teaching methodology.

3. TILLT and Ecolinguistics

Ecolinguistics would help learners see what texts mean, what kind of stories they promote, and how they do so. The goals of ecolinguistics are to criticize linguistic forms that contribute to ecological destruction and to look for new forms that encourage people to preserve the natural world (Stibbe, 2021). According to Stibbe (2021), texts communicate mainly eight types of stories:

1) ideologies (describing how the world is and ought to be);
2) framings (the cognitive imposition of a story from one area of life onto another area via trigger words);
3) metaphors (which use a frame from a specific, concrete, and imaginable area of life to conceptualise a distinct area of life);
4) evaluations (stories describing an area of life as either good or bad. Evaluations at the heart of today's industrial civilization are "economic growth is good", "high retail sales are good", and "profits are good", encouraging consumerism);
5) identities (stories explaining the meaning of being a given person, which implies the capacity to preserve a particular narrative);
6) convictions (stories aiming to persuade of the truthfulness or falsity of a vision of the world);
7) erasure (stories discriminating the areas of life considered unworthy of consideration: one focus of ecolinguistics is to reveal the language which erases nature); and
8) salience (stories highlighting the areas of life worthy of consideration. Linguistically, to make something salient means that the thing is talked about in a clear, prominent, and concrete way so as to capture the recipient's attention).

Underlying these stories is ideology as "a form of social cognition, that is beliefs shared by and distributed over (the minds of) group members" (Van Dijk, 2011, p. 382). The analysis that brings to light the linguistic patterns realizing these ideologies includes:

a) vocabulary (e.g., connotations, pronoun use, modals such as 'might' or 'must');

b) relationships between words (e.g., synonymy, antonymy, or hyponymy);

c) grammatical structures (e.g., active vs. passive voice, nominalisation);

d) transitivity (the arrangement of processes and participants in a clause);

e) assumptions and presuppositions embedded in clauses;

f) relationships between clauses (e.g., reason, consequence, purpose);

g) representation of events (e.g., abstractly or concretely);

h) representation of participants (e.g., as individuals or an aggregated mass);

i) presence of intertextuality (patterns of borrowing from other texts);

j) genres (conventional formats of texts which serve a social function); and

k) figures of speech (e.g., irony, metaphor, metonymy) (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Stibbe, 2021, p. 34; Van Dijk, 2011).

With proper guidance, these analytical points can be successfully used in reading comprehension tasks to help students better understand the text and to become accustomed to the type of textual analysis required in translation (more specifically points 2, 3, 4, 5 in Section 2). Ecolinguistic analytical tools raise awareness of the means through which ecological-related meanings are implicitly or explicitly conveyed. Some of the aspects which could be explored are listed below.

3.1 Appraisal Patterns

Ecolinguistics is particularly interested in appraisal patterns because groups of words that describe something in a consistently positive or negative way show how the addresser feels about a particular aspect of life (Stibbe, 2021). Negative appraisal emerges in marked words (e.g., unhappy) and positive appraisal emerges in their unmarked opposites (happy); in addition, positive/negative appraisal can be triggered by pairs of contrasting words ('more/less', 'big/small', 'tall/short', 'high/low', 'growing/shrinking'). It is crucial for translation trainees to develop the ability to detect these patterns and familiarize "with the way writers/speakers approve and disapprove, enthuse and abhor, applaud and criticise, and with how they position their readers/listeners to do likewise" (Martin & White, 2005).

3.2 Lexicon

When discussing the environment and the "discrepancy between the words used and what they aim to represent" (Penz & Fill, 2022, p. 239), ecolinguists have noticed: 1. semantic vagueness, as is the case with the uncertainty of defining the term 'sustainable'; 2. semantic underdifferentiation, e.g., omitting a clear distinction between the different meanings of the noun 'growth'; 3. misleading encoding, e.g., 'to clear land', which actually means 'removing native vegetation' (Penz & Fill, 2022, pp. 239–240). Exploitation-favouring connotations (e.g., the term "development"), euphemisms (e.g., timber harvesting), and pejorative terms referring to the environment and to its components (e.g., waste, weed) are also being highlighted. Metaphors may convey frames which can be either anthropocentric – NATURE AS MACHINE, or NATURE AS FACTORY – or biocentric – NATURE AS MOTHER,

NATURE AS WEB. These linguistic 'bricks' contribute to building the tenor of the source text and are pivotal in translation analysis (see points 2 and 3, Section 2).

3.3 Facticity

In texts, readers' convictions may be influenced by clusters of linguistic techniques which are used to represent a description of an entity as if it were "solid, neutral, independent of the speaker" (Potter, 1996, p. 1), or which go from "absolute truth at one end to absolute falsehood on the other, with a range of levels of uncertainty in between" (Stibbe, 2021, p. 127). One of the most powerful ways of increasing facticity is empiricism, namely, using language to represent conclusions as arriving directly from empirical data (Potter, 1996) on the one hand, or from calls to expert authority and the authority of consensus (Van Leeuwen, 2008) on the other. Other features building facticity are quantifiers such as 'some' or 'many', which "can be used to gloss over a lack of concrete evidence" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 192); hedges such as 'X thinks' or 'X believes', which are used to distance oneself from other people's beliefs (Machin & Mayr, 2012); modality, which expresses the degree of the speaker's commitment; and presuppositions, which describe issues as "taken for granted" (Stibbe, 2021, p. 130).

The following section will use the theoretical frameworks discussed so far to provide a lesson plan that can tackle the principles of ecological education and ecotranslation in ELT for translator training.

4. Materials and methods for the lesson plan

The authentic materials chosen for the lesson plan include:

1) A newspaper article adapted from *The New York Times*, titled 'Fossil Fuels and Frustration at COP28', by David Gelles. As COP28 is a globally significant event in climate policy, students are offered insights into ongoing international efforts to tackle climate change. The article contains persuasive language, evaluative statements, and reported speech, useful for practicing discourse analysis, vocabulary building, and stylistic awareness.
2) A post from the Greenpeace website: 'Earth to Humans…?' by Therese Salvador. The text touches on multiple pressing issues (climate change and pollution, biodiversity loss and Indigenous rights) and encourages students to see the connections between environmental, social, and economic issues. Linguistically, it is suitable for the chosen level while still offering interesting imagery and rhetorical devices (e.g., metaphor, repetition) that are valuable for language analysis.

Working on fairly recent texts (the texts appeared in 2023 and 2021 respectively) fosters motivation by showing learners the relevance of the topic under discussion. Additionally, James Balog's 2018 award-winning film *The Human Element* served as the idea for one of the two writing tasks.

The lesson plan relied on the following didactic underpinnings of language teaching:

1) Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Developed to prioritize meaningful communication over rote memorization of grammar and vocabulary, CLT is currently the most widely adopted method for teaching English to speakers of other languages. It has redefined the objectives and approaches of ELT through the concept of communicative competence, which encompasses but is not limited to linguistic competence. CLT seeks to understand the true significance of the speech in context in addition to examining structural and lexical meaning (Swan, 1985). The vision of the ideal language learning process now takes into account the importance of (a) collaboration, (b) input, and (c) negotiation of meaning between interlocutors. It is especially important to prioritize analytical, form-focused exercises in order to promote precision and appropriate language use. Language proficiency, discourse proficiency, pragmatic proficiency, sociolinguistic proficiency (Canale & Swain, 1980), and sociocultural proficiency (Littlewood, 2011) are all included in this comprehensive framework. Rather than being the sole source of knowledge, the teacher becomes a facilitator who encourages students to find their own learning method.

2) The ESA procedure method, developed within communicative methodologies. The acronym ESA stands for Engage, Study, Activate. The 'Engage' phase involves capturing students' interest and motivating them to participate. It often includes activities, discussions, or materials that introduce the topic in an engaging way. The 'Study' phase corresponds to the core of the lesson, focusing on learning specific language rules, vocabulary, or skills. The 'Activate' phase aims to encourage students to use the language they've learned in a more independent and communicative way, via interactive activities or discussions. The ESA procedure is effective in arousing students' interest, curiosity, and emotions for learning something new, motivating them to participate (Cabrera-Solano et al., 2023). Learner centredness is ensured by asking students' opinions (see Lesson 1, Reading for gist) and allowing them to personalise the task (see Lesson 1, text analysis and speaking and writing; Lesson 2, Activate).

The lesson plan also follows the principles of "significant learning" (Fink, 2013, p. 39), which involves being able to understand and remember key concepts, knowing how to use the contents and deepen their knowledge once the lesson is over. Inclusion strategies (e.g., use of concept maps, flash cards, additional time) could not be illustrated here due to space limitations, but they should always be part of the planning.

5. The lesson plan

'Actions against climate crisis' is the topic of the didactic unit, divided into two lessons. The activities were devised for second- or third-year university students (B1+/B2). Prior knowledge of direct and indirect speech (Lesson 1) and of modals (Lesson 2) is required.

One of the primary objectives is to enable students to discuss ecological issues and related political initiatives. Another central aim is to support learners in analysing lexis and grammar from a

communicative perspective, with an emphasis on how meaning is shaped by linguistic choices. This goal reflects the fundamental principle of CLT, which prioritises meaningful communication and real-world language use. Closely related is the objective of helping learners understand how language related to ecological issues changes depending on the context and communicative aims. These goals underscore another core tenet of CLT. Finally, the unit fosters an understanding of the features of different text types: newspaper article in Lesson1, and persuasive opinion article in Lesson 2.

5.1 Lesson 1 (1 hour and 45 minutes)

Engage (5 mins)

Using Google images, the teacher elicits eco-friendly practices like recycling, energy conservation, and avoiding food waste, or community-driven actions to protect the environment. This is intended to bring up the subject of the climate crisis without resorting to the type of imagery (floods, barren landscapes) that incite fear and discourage rather than inspire environmental preservation efforts (for more on apocalypse fatigue and its impact on climate action, see Fois, 2024).

Study

1. Reading for gist (20 mins)

The goal of the first exercise of the Study section – usually defined as Type 1 task (Harmer, 2013) – would be familiarizing students with the text. Relevant questions could be:

a) What is the text about?
b) Who was it written for?
c) What genre is this text? What makes you say so?
d) What message do you gain from this article? What do you think the writer's intention was?.

Open questions a), b), and c) are aimed at identifying the main topic, the potential addressee(s), and the textual genre (see Section 2). In addition to introducing the language focus, question d) aims to emphasise the crucial distinction between effect and intention in source text analysis (Nord, 1991).

2. Language focus vocabulary (20 mins)

The second stage of the Study Section entails a language focus with Type 2 activities that explore the text in detail (Harmer, 2013). Here, students are asked to explain the meaning of words and connotations (alternatively, the teacher could also challenge students to provide a translation fitting the context). This promotes the contrastive use of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries (see Section 2). Students understand the appraisal patterns by being asked to identify connotation (see Section 3).

Instructions: Match the words or collocations with the right definitions using monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. Then discuss together and decide whether the words have a neutral, positive, or negative connotation.

Table 1: Language focus on connotations

	Meaning	Connotation: positive or negative
Gleaming [1]		
Ravaging (verb- ravage) [2]		
Plodding [4]		
A flicker of hope [5]		
Pledge (noun) [5]		
Bend[ing] the curve [6]		

Source: Authors (2025)

3. Text analysis (25 mins)

The focus is on quotations.

a) Find all the quotations in the article. Can you notice similarities between them? Why do you think the author chose to put them in the text?

b) Find all reporting verbs in the article. Are they neutral or do they mirror the author's interpretation?

c) Now turn all the quotations into indirect speech. If you think the reported verb already mirrored the author's interpretation, make it neutral. If you think the reported verb was already neutral, make so that the indirect speech clearly reveals the author's position (you choose if the author's position should be positive or negative).

The purpose of the first task is to analyse reporting verbs as indicators of facticity (see Section 3). Students should understand the difference between neutral reporting verbs after direct quotations and hedges in indirect speech. Students are also introduced to the use of external voices in news reports for appraising purposes (cf. Jullian, 2011. For appraisal patterns, see Section 3).

Activate

1. Speaking (20 mins)

Students read some statements on fossil fuels and have to decide whether to stand on the "Agree" or "Disagree" side of the room.

a) Preventing climate change is more important than the economies of towns that rely on fossil fuels.

b) People employed in fossil fuels industries do not care about the environment.

c) Our modern world can exist without a reliance on fossil fuels.

d) It is important to consider the human costs of shifting away from fossil fuels, such as loss of jobs and changing economies.

Afterwards, the teacher asks students to share their viewpoints and elicits the language to express opinions and justify arguments, which are real-world communicative functions. The format mirrors the principles of CLT in promoting group discussion, shifting the focus from teacher to learners and maximizing student talking time; as there is no correct answer, students are free to share their viewpoints.

2. Follow-up writing task (home task)

Students choose one writing prompts or sentence fragments that interests them[1] and complete the writing task (150-200 words).

  a) Humans' role in caring for and preserving the earth is...
  b) Humans' relationship to the earth is…
  c) What do you think of the following quotation? "For thousands of years, many people believed that nature was made up of four elemental forces: earth, air, water, and fire. But I've come to realize there's a fifth element: people. We are a force of nature, too. People are changing the other elements. At the same time, the elements are changing us". James Balog, The Human Element.

Prioritizing student's choice boosts motivation and a sense of ownership over their work. The prompts were adapted from the website The Human Element[2], which provides lesson materials for educators who want to teach about climate science.

5.2 Lesson 2

Engage (5 mins)

Students are asked to imagine how they picture the notion of 'motherhood' as a way to introduce the biocentric metaphor (see Section 3) of the text: nature is a mother. They may conjure up ideas such as mothers holding their babies, or kissing them. The conclusion will likely be that motherhood is associated with care and affection.

Study
1) Reading (20 mins)
  a) Can you identify the author's purpose in writing this text?
  b) What nouns and adjectives are used to identify Earth? Can you identify the rhetorical device used by the author to describe the Earth?
  c) What nouns and adjectives are used to identify humans?
  d) Based on your answers to the previous questions, the author is:
    a. using a specific, concrete and imaginable concept so that readers can visualize mentally another distinct area of life;
    b. telling how the world is and should be as an idea that is shared by members of a group;
    c. underlining that an area of life is not important and does not deserve any consideration.

The questions related to the Greenpeace text features interesting ecostylistic features (Virdis, 2022). Drawing from the Engage part of the lesson, learners will be guided towards

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[1] Last consulted on 18/09/2024.
[2] Available at: https://thehumanelementmovie.com/download-access/

recognizing the metaphor's complex meaning, which will in turn introduce them to Stibbe's metaphor stories (see Section 3).

2) Language focus grammar (15 mins)

The focus is on modals and their contribution to facticity (Section 3) with an emphasis on how modals shape meaning. The task highlights their intended use in the text as well as the difference between deontic and epistemic modality.

Table 2: Task on modals

Modal	Meaning
[1]…	
[2]	
[3]…	

Source: Authors (2025)

3) Text analysis (25 mins)

Building from the grammar focus, the tasks aim to draw students' attention to the linguistic strategies to communicate the author's point of view (see Section 2 and Virdis, 2022): the inclusive 'we'; lexical choices of adjectives referring to humans; modals. The activity encourages learners to work beyond isolated sentences and consider the way grammar shapes attitudes and degrees of certainty throughout the text.

    a) Do you think that the author is talking only about herself? What linguistic clue in the text make you say so? What's the effect on the reader (and on you)?

    b) What is the author's perspective on humans? What linguistic clues in the text make you say so?

    c) Look back at the modals in the text and the meaning you assigned. Are they coherent with the analysis above?

    d) In conclusion, what would you say the author's point of view is?

Activate (40 mins)

Students gather data about coal (its uses, effects on climate change, and effects on the economy) in groups and write a report about it.

The texts of Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 highlighted that humans' dependence on fossil fuels is one of the threats to the environment. Look for information on fossil fuels, then prepare a presentation on the matter making sure your language is appropriate for the target audience you have chosen.

In order to help the students select the appropriate language for the intended audience, the teacher will present a variety of receivers (children, adults, and teenagers) and communicative scenarios based on the students' proficiency level. By doing this, students will be trained to comprehend how communicative context and register relate to one another (see Section 2).

Summative assessment: final writing task

Drawing from the texts of the last two lessons, students write a text of about 200 words:

'Someone you deeply care about (choose: a member of your family, or a friend) does not believe that we are facing an ecological crisis. How does this make you feel? What do you think the reasons for this scepticism are? What would you say to them to make them aware of the problem?'

6. Results and conclusions

The didactic unit is centred on a range of texts regarding ecological issues and the political measures to counteract them. The tasks are designed to use ecolinguistics analysis in order to meet the learning objectives of TILLT.

In the reading comprehension questions, students are prompted to consider the connection between the meaning of the text and the language used. The objective of the Language Focus sections is to illustrate the ways in which the author's attitude and point of view were influenced by their choice of vocabulary or grammar (see Section 2). It is emphasised that the language used in relation to ecological issues varies depending on the communicative context and the author's intention.

Each lesson's Text Analysis section asks students to consider particular language structures in order to deduce meaning (see Section 2). The writing and speaking tasks are designed to encourage reflection on the ecological crisis as a means to developing eco-ethical consciousness (see Section 3).

At the end of the didactic unit, students will have deepened their linguistic and textual competence, which will improve their bilingual and translation competence, as well as their ecological awareness.

Translation contributes to shape the relationship between humans and the other species of the planet (Cronin, 2017), but such relationship has been so far dominated by the anthropocentric view of humans as superior. Translation might then be the key through which a post-anthropocentric view is promoted by interacting with difference rather than eradicating it. This is even more relevant given that environmental translation, as a far-reaching and multi-faceted kind of specialised translation, is getting increasing attention. However, this field has not yet been fully problematised in translation theory nor in translation training research (with the exception of the Catalan context: see Bracho, 2010).

The debate on anthropogenic climate change is no longer only about science: it also involves culture, values, and ideology (Hoffman, 2012). Therefore, finding appropriate ways to act and engage with ecological issues is directly influenced by education, and shaping 'eco-conscious translators' strongly depends on the way translation students are trained. Linguistic training, one of the many aspects of translator training, was the focus of this article: firstly, because (foreign) languages are not constrained in terms of contents to teach; secondly, because language teachers are increasingly being called to contribute to "changing mindsets and bringing about practical action" (Maley, 2022, p. 348), knowing that "what students learn enriches the knowledge of the community" (Jacobs & Dillon, 2019, p. 24).

The English course for translation trainees could be the moment in which "socially engaged language educators" (Chau et al., 2022, p. 338) can work towards achieving a long-term goal of

environmental education: developing a sense of a right relationship with nature (Bonnett, 2007). This is favoured by the specific teaching goals of TILLT, involving variations in meaning, use, and register, and the writer's attitude and viewpoint (see Section 2.2). This article argues that an ecolinguistic approach to textual analysis in ELT for TILLT allows for a better understanding of the approaches towards nature in a wide variety of texts.

Given the lack of ready-to-use, translation-oriented English teaching materials in general and on ecological issues in particular, this article also provided a practical example of how to structure a didactic unit: starting from authentic materials on the ecological crisis and the recent COP 28, the reading comprehension tasks are structured to deepen awareness of the connection between linguistic form and meaning. The lesson plan presented in this article aims at contributing to education on sustainability and ecological issues while providing inspiration for teachers of English working in translation courses by showing tasks that prepare students for translation classes.

As a future research goal, it will be essential to test the didactic unit in classroom settings in order to evaluate its effectiveness and assess its potential in shaping students' bilingual, translation, and eco-ethical competences. This would also allow for further refinement of the materials and a more grounded contribution to the emerging field of environmental translation training.

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Annex

Text for Lesson 1: Fossil Fuels and Frustration at COP28[3]
The United Arab Emirates, one of the world's biggest oil producers, is hosting this year's climate summit.
By David Gelles
Nov. 30, 2023

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[3] https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/30/climate/fossil-fuels-and-frustration-at-cop28.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap (last consulted on 09/06/2025).

[1] I'm in Dubai at the United Nations climate summit, known as COP28, and the mood is decidedly mixed. Delegates are arriving with high hopes of making progress in the global fight against climate change, but it's impossible to ignore the fact that the summit is being held inside gleaming new facilities built with oil money.

[2] World leaders will begin speaking tomorrow, and over the next two weeks negotiators from almost every country on the planet will work on redoubling their efforts to combat climate change.

[3] And while hopes are high that countries might find ways to rapidly reduce greenhouse gases and limit the use of coal, oil and gas, the reality is that fossil fuel emissions are still growing. Meanwhile, the destructive effects of climate change are getting worse, with floods, fires, droughts and storms ravaging every corner of the globe.

[4] Frustrations with the U.N. process, and the plodding pace of progress, are running high. "We've had COPs for how many years now?" said Avinash Persaud, a climate adviser for Barbados. "If people had been compelled to act at COP1 or COP2 or COP15, we would have had a different world." Many are outraged that the United Arab Emirates, one of the world's biggest oil producers, is hosting this year's negotiations. The COP28 president, Sultan al-Jaber, is also the head of Adnoc, the state-owned oil company.
"There is skepticism of this COP—where it is and who is running it," said Ani Dasgupta, the president of the World Resources Institute, a research organization. "They went too far in naming the C.E.O. of one of the largest—and by many measures one of the dirtiest—oil companies on the planet as the president of the U.N. Conference on Climate this year," former vice president Al Gore told me.

[5] Recent developments offer a flicker of hope. Two weeks ago, the U.S. and China, the world's two biggest polluters, agreed to accelerate efforts to ramp up renewables to displace fossil fuels, although they didn't provide a timeline or other details. And rich countries may have finally met a pledge to provide $100 billion per year to help developing countries adapt to climate change, albeit four years late, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said this month.

[6] "I haven't lost faith in multilateralism," John Kerry, President Biden's special envoy for climate change, told my colleague Lisa Friedman. Kerry said it was unreasonable to think that an issue like climate change could be tackled at COP alone. "I don't think the U.N. or any institution by itself anywhere in the world has the ability to solve the climate crisis," he said. Rather, he said, COP could help point the global community in the right direction, but individual countries had to do the hard work of bending the curve on emissions and ramping up renewable energy as fast as possible. "It's up to us to produce a result," Kerry said.

Text for Lesson 2: Earth to Humans…[4]
Therese Salvador
23 April 2021

[1] Ice shelves breaking away. Microplastics in our food chain. Air pollution killing us quietly. These are just some of the news we read about lately. Disturbing news that is becoming all too frequent and no longer just confined to the environment section.

[2] It's almost as if Mother Earth has got something to say. Maybe she's been warning us all along, we just failed to listen.

[3] Mother Earth is estimated to be around 4.5 billion years old. She is weary, disheveled and drained. Given what she's been through, she feels cranky, frustrated and tired of humans. Who can blame her?

[4] We've always been needy and greedy. We keep depleting Earth's natural resources without remorse or restitution. In fact, we've been using up Earth's resources at an alarming rate. Currently, we are using up 1.6 times more than what the Earth can regenerate in a year.

[5] Though she may be resilient, we need to give Mother Earth a break—we must offer her a lifeline. We need to stop treating the environment as a commodity and as an infinite resource because doing so would be fatal.

[6] With this 'new normal', we must learn to reconnect with nature and consider the environment in everything we do. If there's anything to learn from the pandemic, it is that governments need to shift their priorities and invest on human and planetary health to make the world resilient to future shocks.

[7] We need to decarbonise economies and shift to renewable energy systems to mitigate global warming. Efforts to protect at least 30% of the world's oceans by 2030 must be supported to save marine biodiversity and to help save the climate. Forests that have stood the test of time and teeming with life must be preserved and protected from corporate interests that want to profit from it. Indigenous Peoples, with their ancient wisdom of the natural world must be empowered and recognised.

[8] She may be old and complex. But undoubtedly, Earth is a fine place and worth fighting for.

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[4] https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/47338/earth-to-humans/ (last consulted on 09/06/2025)

Editorial notes

Authorship contribution

Conceptualization: E. Fois, G. Milia
Data collection: E. Fois, G. Milia
Data analysis: E. Fois, G. Milia
Results and discussion: E. Fois, G. Milia
Review and editing: E. Fois

Research dataset
Not applicable.

Funding
Not applicable.

Image copyright
Not applicable.

Approval by ethics committee
Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest
Not applicable.

Data availability statement
The data from this research, which are not included in this work, may be made available by the author upon request.

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Publisher
Cadernos de Tradução is a publication of the Graduate Program in Translation Studies at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. The journal *Cadernos* de Tradução is hosted by the [Portal de Periódicos UFSC](https://). The ideas expressed in this paper are the responsibility of its authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or the university.

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Andréia Guerini – Willian Moura

Style editors
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Article history
Received: 20-01-2025
Approved: 05-05-2025
Revised: 09-07-2025
Published: 09-2025