

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter has six parts in total. Namely, research background, research problems, research objectives, research scope and limitations, research significance, and definition of key terms.

A. Research Background

Translation is very important in expressing messages and ideas, which can connect people's thoughts from one part of the world to another. Mohamed (2022), defines translation as the process of changing meaning from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL), which also embraces various forms, such as interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic translation. Translation means trying to understand cultural contexts, linguistic structures, and the intended message of the source text, so the process is not only a simple change of words. It has a vital role in different cultural interactions, academic search, and the distribution of information across linguistic boundaries, thereby the function of translation expands beyond mere communication. (Haroon, 2024; Stoian, 2022).

The strategic approach that the translator uses in rendering the source text into the target text, is what people call the translation method. Wariamah and Nurhalimah (2025), state that translation methods are the strategic approaches that help direct the translation process's objective. Its function as a strategy that guides translators' decisions throughout the entire text. And the degree of equivalence is an approach to measure how far the translation components (meaning, function, style, impact, and culture) achieve the desired equivalent in relation to the source

language. Thus, choosing a suitable translation method is crucial to obtain the desired level of equivalence.

When a translator is translating a motivational book, it can be quite difficult, since the translator needs to understand the full cultural and psychological contexts, and also have enough language proficiency. The impact of reader engagement on translation is not exaggerated. Research shows that people who read self-help books often times look for some emotional support and validation, and not only information (Gwynne, 2023). Additionally, Nehring (2024), suggests that a translation must improve the reader's journey of self-improvement, which shows the importance of understanding the self in self-help literature. Two studies also show that self-help books with good translation can improve readers' understanding and application of the concepts presented significantly. McLean and Vermeyleen (2017), discuss how the experiences in mental health can also be applied to self-help books, and suggest that effective translations can become some sort of help in reducing stigma and increasing the reader engagement.

To avoid future misunderstanding or errors in their work, it is important for a translator to master both languages and have an adequate understanding of both cultures. As Khan (2025) argues, "effective translation must entail cultural competency as well as linguistic competence," which emphasizes the fact that both qualities are very necessary to achieve a good translation result. Analyzing the translation methods used and the level of equivalence between the source and target texts is one practical way to look at how such skills impact the final product. This research does exactly that by examining the translation methods used to

translate a self-help book entitled *Atomic Habits*, and the degree of equivalence between the English version and the Indonesian version of the book. This self-help book is getting massive popularity due to the practical insights around habit formation and self-development. Hence, studying this book is crucial for several reasons: to know the growing importance of self-help literature in society, to acknowledge the discrepancies in motivational book translation, and to find out the implications of translation quality on reader comprehension and engagement.

The purpose of choosing *Atomic Habits* for this study is because of its significant cultural impact and its unique linguistic characteristics. *Atomic Habits* is a globally influential self-help book that offers practical strategies in habit formation. *Atomic Habits* is focused on conveying the idea that making small changes can lead to vital improvements in life, and it has appealed to many readers who aim for personal growth. Research in this field is important because more individuals are reading self-help books for affordable and quick emotional and psychological support. As noted by McLean & Vermeulen (2017), reading self-help book can significantly influence readers' views of self-improvement, which highlights the cultural impact of these texts. So, the translation of self-help books can either enhance or hinder their effectiveness for the target text readers.

Furthermore, self-help books such as *Atomic Habits* have distinct lexical challenges that need a focused analysis of the translation methods employed by the translator. Laszloczki (2024), for instance, provides a procedural viewpoint by methodically classifying the translation of phrasemes, or fixed sentences. This is crucial since it shows that translating words like “habit stacking” needs a systematic

approach. Moreover, due to James Clear's reliance on scientific metaphors, like 'atomic', 'compound growth', actionable imperatives, such as 'make it obvious', 'make it attractive', and neologisms like, 'habit stacking', present obvious challenges for Indonesian translators. These language features are deeply incorporated in the source language and the culture; therefore, they need careful cultural adaptation if translated into Indonesian to avoid any misunderstanding of semantic loss if the translator cannot adapt to the linguistically culture-bound phrases.

Some previous studies have examined translation methods and equivalence across both literary and non-literary texts. Siregar (2016), for example, analysed the Indonesian translation of a chapter from a motivational book by Stephen R. Covey and identified nine translation procedures, with the findings showing a balance between source-oriented and target-oriented approaches. A somewhat different direction appeared in Nafisah et al. (2019), who studied Tolstoy's short story *God Sees the Truth, But Waits* by employing Newmark's translation methods and Bell's equivalence theory. Their study found semantic translation to be the dominant method, while most translation units were classified as partly equivalent with added meaning. A more recent study by Fitria (2023), analysed the chapter I of *Atomic Habits*, and her findings showed that communicative and literal translation appeared most frequently. Based on her research, the Indonesian version was largely considered accurate based on translation quality assessment.

The gap between this research and the earlier studies is not only its analytical focus but also the scope of the object being analysed. Previous studies often focus

on a single aspect of translation, whether methods, equivalence, or accuracy, while this research brings together two perspectives to explore the English-Indonesian translation of *Atomic Habits* by James Clear in a more connected way. Moreover, this research analysed two chapters from the *Atomic Habits* book, while the previous study remained limited to a single chapter from the book.

Therefore, the researcher addressed those gaps through a combination of two theoretical frameworks in the English-Indonesian language pair of motivational book. This research identifies and classifies translation methods employed by the translator using Newmark's (1988) framework, alongside the degree of equivalence between the source and target texts through Bell's (1991) framework. The researcher purposively selected Newmark's theory because it is more diverse and already incorporates both source-oriented and target-oriented approaches, making it suitable for use. In addition, Bell's framework is also selected due to its structured concept of equivalence according to the classifications. Hence, it is more ideal to measure the complexity of the degree of equivalence.

In conclusion, by examining the method-equivalence dynamics in a relevant but understudied genre (self-help) and language pair (English-Indonesian), this research is anticipated to contribute to future translation studies. The increasing demand for self-help books makes it crucial to comprehend how translation can enhance the significance and utility of these publications for readers from all cultural backgrounds.

B. Research Problems

The research purposefully narrows its focus to selected translation units, instead of analyzing the entire book of *Atomic Habits*. Therefore, the problems of the research that are directly related to the research background above are:

1. What translation methods are applied in the English-Indonesian translation of *Atomic Habits* as revealed through selected translation units?
2. To what extent do the selected translation units maintain equivalence between the original English version and the Bahasa Indonesia version of *Atomic Habits*?

C. Research Objectives

Based on the research problem above, the researcher propose the objectives of this research as follows:

1. To investigate the translation methods employed by the translator in translating *Atomic Habits* from English to Indonesian as shown by the selected translation units.
2. To reveal how the Indonesian translation of *Atomic Habits* maintains equivalence with the original English version.

D. Scope and Limitations

To provide clarity and focus, here are the outlines of the specific boundaries of this research.

a. Scope

This research focuses on analyzing the Indonesian translation of the self-help book *Atomic Habits*. Specifically, the research examined the translation methods

used by the translator and determine the degree of equivalence between the Bahasa Indonesia translation and the original English book.

b. Limitations

The analysis of translation methods is strictly limited to the usage of Newmark's (1988) classification. Similarly, the determination of translation equivalence is restricted to Bell's (1991) framework. This study is also restricted to the textual analysis of the of the *Atomic Habits* book and does not extend to factors such as reader reception, cultural adaptation beyond what is apparent in the text, or the translator's decision-making process outside the scope of the chosen framework. Moreover, the researcher only analyze the introduction and Chapter I from the total of 22 chapters (including the introduction and conclusion) of the *Atomic Habits* book

E. Research Significance

The results of this study have both academic and practical significance. From an academic point of view, this research contributes to the field of translation studies by addressing the striking disparity in the translation of self-help literature studies, especially in English and Indonesian language pairs. Even though many people start to read influential self-help books such as *Atomic Habits*, the translations have not been extensively analyzed through comprehensive frameworks such as Newmark's translation method and Bell's degree of equivalence. This study provides a systematic examination that can add to theoretical discussions on translation methods and degree of equivalence by utilizing these theoretical frameworks, particularly for texts that contain cultural, psychological and motivational factors.

From a practical standpoint, this study helps a number of readers. For general readers, especially students, the researcher expects the significance of translation in delivering accurate and meaningful content in several languages can be better understood. The findings of this research are anticipated to be used by translation professionals as a guide when selecting the best translation method to maintain the original text's impact and meaning. To improve their comprehension of how translation methods impact the degree of equivalence in motivational book, future researchers might also utilize the findings of this study as a guide for investigating related works. Finally, this research not only supports academic research, but also enhances translation practices that aim to empower readers through accessible and culturally appropriate reading materials.

F. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid any possible misunderstandings, it is necessary to clarify the terms used in this research as follows.

a. Self-Help Books

Self-help books are one of the genres that assist people in improving their mental health or well-being.

b. Translation Method

A translation method is the specific approach used during the process of translation, which is determined by the translator's intended purpose.

c. Degree of Equivalence

The degree of equivalence in translation refers to the extent to which the target language reflects the meaning, style, and cultural context of the source language.