

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter serves as a crucial conceptual framework, highlighting theories and earlier studies that can provide a primary foundation for the researcher. The definition of translation, types of translation methods, degree of equivalence, an overview of Atomic Habits, and previous research relevant to this study are all included in this chapter.

A. Definition of Translation

Translation is transferring meaning from one language to another. Catford (1965), as cited in Hamamoto (2023), states that translation is the process of replacing text in the source language (SL) with equivalent text in the target language (TL). According to Saiko (2025), a natural translation demands the translator to avoid influencing the outcomes and consider the context of the message, the intended audience, the target language and cultural norms, as well as text-type characteristics. These factors require careful selection of vocabulary, syntax, and rhetorical strategies to preserve the original message and tone.

Beyond just transferring linguistic patterns, translators also consider the cultural context and values present in other language, which are important in determining meaning. So, to translate well, a translator must understand the culture of the target language in addition to mastering the language itself (Mounin, 1963, as cited in Yalçın, 2024). Thereby, translation theory should incorporate cultural context to address variations in values and beliefs among languages.

Furthermore, recent perspectives increasingly view translation not merely as a linguistic process but also as an act of intercultural mediation that bridges

differences between cultures. Yılmaz-Gümüş (2022), argues that translation involves dealing with “culture-specific items” (CSIs), which refers to aspects like customs, values, or common practices that are unique to the source culture. In this perspective, translation is seen as a bilingual and bicultural process, in which the translator needs to express meaning while adjusting it to the conventions and communicative purposes of the target culture.

B. Types of Translation Methods

Various translation methods have been developed to guide translators in balancing between the faithfulness to the source text and naturalness in the target text. Newmark categorizes translation into eight methods varying from Source Text (ST)-focused to Target Text (TT)-focused approaches. The four ST-focused approaches emphasize adherence to the original text's structure, whereas the four TT-focused approaches prioritize a natural flow for the target audience. Newmark's framework includes eight methods: word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic, communicative, idiomatic, free, and adaptation. The explanations below were from Newmark, the examples were taken from Hartono (Newmark, 1988; Hartono, 2017).

- 1. Word-for-word translation** preserves the source language's word sequence and translates each term one by one according to its most frequent definition, frequently including annotations for cultural references. This interlinear format is primarily for educational or annotation purposes.

Example:

SL: They will arrive in London tomorrow morning. (p.17)

TL: Mereka akan tiba di London besok pagi. (p.17)

2. **Literal translation** also transforms ST grammar into the closest TT structures, yet continues to translate words without considering context. This method focuses heavily on the source, potentially producing awkward target texts.

Example:

SL: It's raining cats and dogs. (p.18)

TL: Hujan kucing dan anjing. (p.18)

3. **Faithful translation** aims to replicate the precise contextual meaning of the ST while following the grammar of the TT. Its objective is complete faithfulness to the author's style and purposes.

Example:

SL: I have quite a few friends. (p.20)

TL: Saya mempunyai sama sekali tidak banyak teman. (p.20)

4. **Semantic translation** is similar to faithful translation, but it provides more flexibility for artistic expression. It might affect some literal interpretation to achieve a more elegant or natural expression in the TT. Same with Faithful, the Semantic translation method remains close to the ST, suitable for literary or delicate texts where nuance is important.

Example:

SL: Keep off the grass. (p.21)

TL: Jauhi rumput ini. (p. 21)

5. **Communicative translation** typically favors the TT because it seeks to convey the exact contextual meaning in a way that is understandable, organic, and thorough for readers of the TT.

Example:

SL: Awas Anjing Galak (p. 26)

TL: Beware of the dog! (p. 26)

6. **Idiomatic translation** takes one step further by using colloquialisms and idioms from the target language, even though some nuance from the source language is omitted. These methods, which prioritize clarity and are commonly employed for popular or highly read book.

Example:

SL: Excuse me? (p. 25)

TL: Maaf, apa maksud Anda? (p. 25)

7. **Free translation** significantly alters the form of the source language but it while retaining the essence of the original language. This method changes the message without following the original style or structure.

Example:

SL: Tatik is growing with happiness (p. 24)

TL: Tatik, hatinya, berbunga-bunga (p. 24)

8. **Adaptation** is the "most liberal" method among the others, which preserves themes and narratives while rephrasing the text in the target language culture (usually found in drama or poetry). In Adaptation, a situation from the TL culture is often used in place of the SL cultural environment. The example below was from Baladewa as cited in Hartono (Baladewa, 2010; Hartono, 2017)

Example:

SL: Hey Jude, don't make it bad

Take a sad song and make it better

Remember to let her into your heart

Then you can start to make it better (p. 22)

TL: Kasih, dimanakah

Mengapa kau tinggalkan aku

Ingatlah-ingatlah kau padaku

Janji setiamu tak kan kulupa (p. 22)

Every method serves a purpose. For example, Word-for-Word might be employed for dictionary tasks, Faithful or Semantic for literary writing, Communicative or Idiomatic for general nonfiction, and Free/Adaptation for materials requiring cultural modification (such as ads or humor). Newmark's framework assists analysts in pinpointing any translated excerpt on a continuum ranging from SL-oriented to TL-oriented translation approaches.

C. Degree of Equivalence

In translation studies, the concept of equivalence plays a significant role in evaluating how meaning is maintained across languages. Bell (1991) presents equivalence in translation as the transfer of meaning from one language to another. Translators can use formal equivalence, which is meant to stay true to the context and style of the source language, or functional equivalence, which emphasizes the communicativeness of a text for the readers of the target language to be familiar with. Bell (1991), as cited in Nafisah et al. (2019) has classified the level of equivalence into three categories. The examples below were also taken from Nafisah's research findings.

1. Fully Equivalent

Fully or completely equivalent can be obtained if the source language (SL) meaning is fully transferred.

Criteria:

- 1) The TT serves the exact meaning of ST with no apparent loss, addition, or shift in meaning, style, or function.
- 2) All semantic components (denotative, connotative, and cultural) are well maintained.
- 3) The TT is functionally equal in context with the ST.

Example:

ST: They had some tea together, and then went to bed in adjoining rooms.

TT: Mereka minum teh bersama dan kemudian tidur di kamar yang bersebelahan.

2. Partly Equivalent

Partly equivalence is when the meaning is changed or transferred only partially.

Partly equivalence is divided into two subtypes, which are partly equivalence with increased meaning and partly equivalence with decreased meaning.

Subtypes and Criteria:

a. PE with Increased Meaning (PE+)

- 1) TT adds further explanations or cultural clarifications which is not present in ST.
- 2) Conciseness is diluted, but the TT readers may find it easier to read.

b. PE with Decreased Meaning (PE-)

- 1) TT oversimplifies nuances, such as metaphors and cultural characteristics.
- 2) Meaning is flattened or omitted in some parts.

Examples:

a. PE+

ST: Aksionov was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing.

TT: Aksionov adalah seorang pria yang tampan dengan rambut kekuningan dan sedikit bergelombang. Sifatnya humoris dan sangat suka bernyanyi.

b. PE-

ST: So he said good-bye to his family, and drove away.

TT: Maka berangkatlah Aksionov.

3. Non-Equivalent

Non-equivalent is when the target language has a different meaning or no meaning at all. Non-equivalence is divided into two subtypes, which are Non-Equivalent with Different Meaning and Non-Equivalence with No Meaning.

Subtypes and Criteria:

a. NE with Different Meaning (NE-DM)

TT presents a semantically unrelated or contradictory message.

b. NE with No Meaning (NE-NM)

TT omits ST content entirely or renders it vaguely.

Examples:

a. NE-DM

ST: Aksionov laughed, and said, "You are afraid when I get to the fair I shall go on a spree."

TT: Aksionov tertawa dan berkata, "Kau hanya takut kalau aku akan kembali mabuk-mabukan sesampainya di sana."

b. NE-NM

ST: Then he made his way across to the landlord of the inn (who lived in a cottage at the back), paid his bill, and continued his journey.

TT: Kemudian dia berjalan ke tempat pemilik penginapan, membayar biaya menginapnya, dan kembali melanjutkan perjalanan.

These groups are associated with semantic correctness and cultural conveyance. Full equivalence is an indicator of high semantic and translation faithfulness, whilst partial equivalence or non-equivalence is a common indicator of either cultural misalignment or loss during translation. For instance, a proverb having no direct Indonesian equivalent may be translated partially (conveying some meaning) or entirely rephrased (with a different meaning) resulting in a reduced or modified meaning. Equivalence thus gauges the extent to which meaning in the original text is retained after translation and the extent to which it has to be modified to fit into the new culture.

Overall, Bell's model helps stress the extent to which a target language remains faithful to the source's meaning: the higher the equivalence, the more precise the semantics and the more culturally faithful the transfer; the lower the equivalence, the more likely the meaning may shift or be omitted.

D. Overview of Atomic Habits

Atomic Habits is a self-help book by James Clear that examines habit formation at the individual level and has garnered widespread attention. Its title *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones* is proclaimed, and the author claims to provide the best guide to gradual self-improvement. It was translated from English to Indonesian by the official, and the only translator of Atomic Habits, Alex Tri Kantjono Widodo. As of 2019, Atomic Habits was already translated into more than 20 languages, including Indonesian, with over 15 million copies sold worldwide in 2023 (*James Clear's "Atomic Habits" Hits 15 Million Copies Sold Worldwide*, n.d.).

The premise of Atomic Habits is that rather harmless changes in behavior add up to significant results, and every personal action is framed as a vote towards the kind of person someone wants to be. Clear combines behavioral science concepts in her writing with user-friendly metaphors, such as the 'Plateau of Latent Potential', and he is happy to give usable recommendations like the 'Four Laws of Behavior Change (Make it obvious, attractive, easy, satisfying)' (pp. 56-57). The use of neologisms and Western-biased drawings creates a linguistic problem that translators have to overcome (Yılmaz-Gümüş, 2022).

The cultural issues that arise in the Bahasa Indonesia version revolve around a different cultural context: a concept such as 'habit stacking', for instance, does not have a direct translation in Indonesian and requires a semantic adaptation (e.g., *penumpukan kebiasaan*) or a footnote, as cited in Yılmaz-Gümüş, (2022). It requires that great sensitivity to methodological choices regarding fidelity and

readability be applied to preserve motivational effectiveness when translating scientific metaphors.

The book has relevance to translation studies since it is a profile of a modern text that has complicated and culture-rich information. It contains words and meanings that give the Indonesian translators a hard time. The style of conversation and metaphors (full of idioms, technical words, and illustrations) should be expressed in Indonesian natural language without sacrificing the sense. As an example, English idiomatic phrases such as ‘the first rule of compounding’ or ‘fall to the level of your systems’ might not exist in Bahasa Indonesia at all. Similarly, James Clear created phrases (such as habit stacking, plateau of latent potential, etc.) that have no standard equivalent in the target language. So, the translator must either come up with new terms or explain them. Maintaining a motivational tone of the book, at the same time, requires semantic accuracy and cultural adequacy, a careful selection of method is required, e.g., between literal fidelity and the communicative adaptation to Indonesian readers. In a nutshell, the book *Atomic Habits* presents the reality of the problems of linguistic equivalence and cultural mediation when translating popular self-help literature.

E. Previous Research

Recent studies have shown that translation methods may vary across different genres of literature. Over the past few years, Indonesian researchers have used the models introduced by Newmark (1988) and Bell (1991) to handle English into Indonesian translations of popular nonfictional and fictional texts. For example, Siregar (2016) took the Indonesian translation of one of the chapters of the

motivational book by Stephen R. Covey. Siregar used a descriptive-qualitative approach, and he analyzed 430 paired data units comprising words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. His analysis distinguished nine translation procedures employed by the translator. Literal translation, calque, borrowing, addition, omission, modulation, transposition, equivalence, and adaptation were among these procedures. He got a nearly balanced distribution on both source-oriented and target-oriented rendering (50.7% vs. 49.3%), indicating that the translator made an effort to maintain the original message while still making the text natural and comprehensible for Indonesian readers.

The next previous study is by Nafisah et al. (2019) who investigated Newmark's (1988) eight translation methods and Bell's (1991) degree of equivalence, applied to the short story *God Sees the Truth, But Waits* by Tolstoy. The researcher carried out a qualitative study, by analyzing 169 sentences from the English source text with the Indonesian translation. They reported six methods, with semantic translation as the most dominant method, accounting for 42.2% of the total occurrences, followed by communicative translation at 28.1%. This result implies that the translator placed a high priority on maintaining the source text's stylistic subtleties and contextual meaning while also making it readable for the target readers. Moreover, the examination of equivalency showed that, with 57 instances, the most common category was partly equivalent with increased meaning, followed by fully equivalent translation in 41 instances. The researchers saw that additional information was frequently added to the target text in order to offer contextual elements that were implied in the original text, explain cultural allusions, or clarify

interpretations. As a result, even if certain translation units had additional meanings that were not included in the original text, the translation became easier for Indonesian readers to understand and access. Based on Nafisah et al. study, rather than rigorously maintaining the original linguistic form, the translator's primary goal is efficiently communicating the intended message and helping readers' understanding, which is seen in the prevalence of partially similar translations with improved meaning.

Similar findings about how well translation methods preserve meaning and readability have been found on Fitria's (2023) study, which analyzes Chapter I of the self-help book *Atomic Habits* by James Clear in order to determine the translation methods used and assess the translation quality. This study examined translation units from the source text and categorized them using Newmark's translation methods framework and utilized a qualitative descriptive approach. The results showed that there were three main methods used by the translator: 35 word-for-word, 63 literal and 65 communicative translations. Among these findings, communicative translation was the most frequently applied method, indicating the translator's tendency to prioritize the naturalness and comprehensibility of the target text while preserving the intended message of the source text. The study evaluated translation quality using Nababan's accuracy criteria in addition to looking at the translation methods. With 150 out of 163 translation units were evaluated as accurate, and only 6 were slightly inaccurate, and 3 were very inaccurate. These results imply that the original text's meaning was effectively translated into Indonesian with little loss or distortion. Additionally, the high

significance amount of translation accuracy seems to have been facilitated by the use of communicative and literal methods, which allowed the translated content to be both easily understood by Indonesian readers while maintaining its fidelity to the original language.

Collectively, based on the previous studies above, Indonesian translators of literary and non-literary English texts typically strike a balance between source-oriented and target-oriented translation methods. Siregar (2016) found literal translation to be the most common method, Nafisah et al. (2019) reported dominance of semantic translation, while Fitria (2023) found communicative translation to be the most popular approach. Despite these differences, all three studies indicate a shared tendency to preserve the original meaning while adapting the text to the linguistic and cultural expectations of Indonesian readers. Furthermore, the results consistently show relatively high levels of equivalence and translation accuracy, indicating that translators often use strategies that maintain, clarify, or broaden the source-text meaning. Because of this, the translated texts are more readable and understandable for the intended audience while typically staying true to the original message.