

Research Article

# Equivalence Analysis in the Translation of Deutsche Welle (DW) News Texts from German into Indonesian

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**Abstract:** This study is aimed at analyzing the degree of equivalence in the translation of Deutsche Welle (DW) news texts from German into Indonesian by applying Mona Baker's theoretical framework. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, with four DW news texts and their Indonesian translations serving as the data source. The analysis focused on equivalence at the word level and above the word level, considering syntactic, lexical, cohesive, and communicative functional aspects of the text. The findings indicate that the degree of translational equivalence varies, ranging from high to low levels. The "equivalent" category was found to be dominant, accounting for 57.6%, suggesting that most translations were able to maintain the meaning and function of the source text. Meanwhile, the categories "less equivalent" (22.9%) and "non-equivalent" (19.5%) reflect shifts in meaning, loss of information, and inaccuracies in lexical correspondences and grammatical structures. These results highlight the challenges in maintaining full equivalence during translation.

**Keywords:** Analysis; Deutsche Welle; Equivalence; News Texts; Translation.

## 1. Introduction

The German language occupies an important position in international communication, science, and the media. It is not only an official language in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, but also a significant language in the fields of economics, politics, and international organizations. One of the prominent media institutions is **Deutsche Welle (DW)**, Germany's international broadcasting service, which disseminates news and information worldwide, including in Indonesian. Through its bilingual publications (German and Indonesian), DW provides a valuable corpus for translation analysis, particularly in examining correspondences between source texts and target texts.

In the world of information and media, German plays an important role in news reporting, both directly and indirectly. The language is not only used as a mass media language in German-speaking countries but also functions as a medium of international communication, scientific inquiry, and a cultural bridge. German serves as a major media language in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and several other European regions, enabling news, opinions, and other information in German to be accessible to a broad regional audience. Moreover, German is widely used in international communication, particularly in the domains of business, science, and politics. Many news items and pieces of information from various parts of the world are translated into German in order to reach a wider audience.

One of the German news media institutions operating globally is Deutsche Welle (DW). DW is Germany's international broadcaster that delivers news and information worldwide. As an international broadcasting institution, DW plays a significant role in global news dissemination. It is actively engaged in combating disinformation and fake news by providing accurate and reliable information. In addition to radio and television broadcasting, DW also operates online platforms, including news websites and social media. DW provides neutral news and information to a global audience in various languages, including Indonesian, thereby enabling audiences to form their own opinions.

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News presented by DW is also available in Indonesian, meaning that DW news is translated into Indonesian so that Indonesian-speaking readers and viewers can understand the information conveyed. In a globalized world, media and translation are inseparably linked and play a crucial role in international news transmission. They not only inform readers but also facilitate the flow of information. Therefore, every media institution requires translators to ensure efficient communication. Many news organizations now regard translation as an integral part of the journalistic process, and it is widely practiced by newspaper institutions in various countries. News translation must not only be readable and comprehensible for readers but also accurate in content. In this regard, the news translator plays a vital role as a mediator between the source text and the target text. News translators must be able to transfer messages from the source text into the target text faithfully, so as not to influence public opinion.

In translating news texts, journalistic translators face various challenges, such as orthography, language style, sentence structure, word choice, and the meaning or message of the source text. To achieve high-quality translation, these aspects must not deviate from the source text. Journalistic translators must be capable of conveying messages from the source text completely and precisely into the target text in order not to mislead readers. In other words, a news translator must be able to produce translations of high quality.

Structural differences between German and Indonesian present a number of challenges in translation and cross-linguistic comprehension. German, which belongs to the Indo-European language family, has a complex grammatical system with cases (nominative, accusative, dative, genitive), grammatical gender (masculine, feminine, neuter), and strong verb inflection. Indonesian, by contrast, which belongs to the Austronesian language family, has a more analytical structure without grammatical gender, without a case system, and with relatively simple verb conjugation. These differences often create difficulties in selecting appropriate word equivalents, particularly when a word in one language does not have a fully equivalent concept in the other. Furthermore, the use of inappropriate or contextually inaccurate equivalents may lead to distortion of meaning. For instance, German words with specific cultural nuances (such as *Gemütlichkeit*) are difficult to translate directly into Indonesian without additional explanation. Similarly, abstract terms or technical terminology may not have exact equivalents in the target language, thus requiring adaptation or borrowing.

On the other hand, neglecting cultural and ideological aspects in translation may intensify misunderstandings. Language is not merely a means of communication but also reflects the values, norms, and perspectives of its speakers' culture. If these elements are not considered, translations may lose their original meaning or even lead to misinterpretations.

#### **Example of equivalence analysis at the sentence level:**

Source language: *Die Bundesregierung*

Target language: *Pemerintah Jerman*

Degree of equivalence: Equivalent

Explanation: Lexically and conceptually, there is neither restriction nor extension of meaning, as both terms refer to the national government of Germany. Grammatically, the structural difference does not affect meaning, since Indonesian does not form compound words in the same way as German but relies more on nominal phrases. Thus, semantic equivalence is fully maintained, and this translation meets the criteria of full equivalence at the word or phrase level.

Therefore, in producing precise and natural translations, it is essential to understand the structural, contextual, and cultural differences between German and Indonesian. Without a holistic approach, the risk of translation errors and intercultural miscommunication increases. Shifts in the translation of news texts, whether intentional or not, may lead to changes in meaning, information, or even sentence structure. These shifts can affect news quality in several ways: (1) if changes in meaning are not carefully handled, information may become inaccurate or misleading; (2) changes in style or word choice may affect the nuances or emotions of the original news; and (3) careless translation may reduce the credibility of the news in the eyes of readers.

Translation equivalence refers to the extent to which the meaning, context, and nuances of the source text (German) can be appropriately transferred into the target language (Indonesian). However, this process does not always proceed smoothly. Differences in grammatical structure, idiomatic expressions, and cultural background pose challenges to maintaining translation equivalence. Newmark (1988) supports this view, stating that translation is "the art of transferring meaning from one language to another." Particularly in news texts, which demand accuracy, objectivity, and clarity, a solid theoretical foundation is essential. Nida (1969:12) argues that translation involves producing the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message in the target language, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style. Catford (1978:20) further explains translation as the replacement of textual material in one language with equivalent textual material in another language.

To clarify the focus of this study, four environmental news articles from the Deutsche Welle (DW) news platform were selected. These articles were taken from DW's online portal and written by its environmental editorial team. The selected titles include: (1) "Wie geht es unseren Ozeanen?" translated into Indonesian as "Lautan Dunia yang Sedang Tidak Baik-Baik Saja"; (2) "UN-Klimaverhandlungen: Wer liefert und wer zögert noch?" translated as "Bagaimana Pemerintah Berkiprah Mencegah Pemanasan Global"; (3) "Iran: Umweltschäden durch den Krieg noch unklar" translated as "Iran: Simpang Siur Kerusakan Lingkungan Akibat Serangan AS"; and (4) "Unser Konto und die Klimakrise – was können wir tun?" translated as "Mengelola Keuangan Pribadi Bantu Mencegah Perubahan Iklim."

In the context of translation studies courses, the analysis of news texts is highly relevant. Translation studies emphasize not only linguistic competence but also intercultural and text-specific competence, which are indispensable in the translation process. News texts, such as those published by Deutsche Welle, require a high level of accuracy, clarity, and neutrality, making them ideal materials for translation training. By applying equivalence analysis based on the theories of Nida and Baker, students can concretely observe how theoretical concepts are implemented in practice. Thus, the analysis of news texts supports the learning objectives of translation studies, namely linking translation theory with professional practice and enhancing students' ability to critically reflect on their translation decisions.

Based on the explanation above, it is important to conduct a study on equivalence in the translation of DW news texts. By analyzing concrete examples of news texts and their translations, this study is expected to contribute to translation studies, particularly in the context of journalistic texts. Furthermore, the findings of this study may provide valuable input for lecturers, students, learners, general readers, and future research.

## 2. Methode

A descriptive qualitative method was employed in this study. The qualitative analysis was conducted using the equivalence theory approach proposed by Mona Baker. In this research, equivalence at the sentence level was analyzed based on Baker's theoretical framework.

The data of this study consisted of five German news articles on environmental issues published by Deutsche Welle (DW), along with their Indonesian translations. These articles are as follows: (1) An article written by Katharina Schantz entitled "Wie geht es unseren Ozeanen?", which was published by Deutsche Welle (DW) on 9 June 2025. The Indonesian-translated version of the article by the same author, entitled "Lautan Dunia yang Sedang Tidak Baik-Baik Saja," was published on 11 June 2025. (2) An article written by Louise Osborne entitled "UN-Klimaverhandlungen: Wer liefert – und wer zögert noch?", which was published by Deutsche Welle (DW) on 16 June 2025. The Indonesian-translated version of the article by the same author, entitled "Bagaimana Pemerintah Berkiprah Mencegah Pemanasan Global?" was published on 18 June 2025. (3) An article written by Shabnam von Hein entitled "Iran: Umweltschäden durch den Krieg noch unklar," which was published by Deutsche Welle (DW) on 26 June 2025. The Indonesian-translated version of the article by the same author, entitled "Iran: Simpang Siur Kerusakan Lingkungan akibat Serangan AS," was published on 27 June 2025. (4) An article written by Holly Young entitled "Unser Konto und die Klimakrise – was können wir tun?", which was published by Deutsche Welle (DW) on 27 May 2025. The Indonesian-translated version of the article by the same author, entitled "Mengelola Keuangan Pribadi Bantu Mencegah Perubahan Iklim," was published on 28 May 2025.

## 3. Results and Discussion

A qualitative descriptive method is employed in this study. The analysis is conducted according to Mona Baker's criteria of equivalence at the sentence level, which include the following aspects: (a) the syntactic structure (subject, predicate, object, etc.) is taken into account; (b) conformity with the grammatical rules of the target language is ensured; (c) textual cohesion, such as conjunctions, references, and ellipses, is considered; and (d) emphasis is placed on the communicative function of the sentence rather than on its literal form.

In this phase, each sentence in the Deutsche Welle (DW) text is compared with its Indonesian translation. The analysis is intended to determine the degree of correspondence based on the categories mentioned above. Each finding is supported by an example sentence from the source text (German), the translated sentence (Indonesian), and an explanation of the reasons for the assigned level of equivalence.

The results of the analysis are subsequently presented in the form of tables and descriptive explanations in order to illustrate the degree of equivalence in the translations more clearly. These findings are expected to provide an overview of the quality of the translation

of DW news texts and to demonstrate the extent to which Mona Baker's principle of equivalence has been applied in this translation process.

**Table 1.** Der Äquivalenzgrad in der Übersetzung der Nachrichtentext.

Nr	Äquivalenzgrad	Anzahl	Prozent
1	Äquivalent	53	62,4
2	wenige äquivalent	27	31,8
3	nicht äquivalent	5	5,9
	Gesamtzahl	85	100%

**Table 2.** Der Äquivalenzgrad in der Übersetzung der Nachrichtentext.

Nr	Äquivalenzgrad	Anzahl	Prozent
1	Äquivalent	26	59,1
2	wenige äquivalent	5	11,4
3	nicht äquivalent	13	29,5
	Gesamtzahl	44	100%

**Table 3.** Der Äquivalenzgrad in der Übersetzung der Nachrichtentext.

Nr	Äquivalenzgrad	Anzahl	Prozent
1	Äquivalent	10	32,3
2	wenige äquivalent	13	41,9
3	nicht äquivalent	8	25,8
	Gesamtzahl	31	100%

**Table 4.** Der Äquivalenzgrad in der Übersetzung der Nachrichtentext.

Nr	Äquivalenzgrad	Anzahl	Prozent
1	Äquivalent	32	64,0
2	wenige äquivalent	3	6,0
3	nicht äquivalent	15	30,0
	Gesamtzahl	50	100%

The summary of Tables 1 to 4 indicates that variations in the degree of translation equivalence were observed across each data group. In Table 1, the category "equivalent" was found to be dominant, accounting for 62.4%, which suggests that the meaning and function of the source text were largely maintained in most translations. A similar pattern can also be observed in Tables 2 and 4, where the "equivalent" category comprises 59.1% and 64.0%, respectively. This demonstrates that equivalence of meaning was relatively consistently preserved by the translators across the three datasets.

In contrast, Table 3 presents a more balanced distribution among the categories "equivalent," "less equivalent," and "non-equivalent." The "less equivalent" category was found to be dominant at 41.9%, indicating that many translations in Table 3 exhibit limited equivalence in terms of both meaning and structure.

This section addresses the overall findings of the analysis of translation equivalence in Texts 1 to 4 with reference to the equivalence theory proposed by Mona Baker. Within Baker's framework, equivalence is conceptualized as a multi-layered notion that can be analyzed at various levels, ranging from word-level equivalence to textual and pragmatic levels. Accordingly, the discussion does not merely focus on the success or failure of the translations, but also examines the forms of non-equivalence identified in the German Deutsche Welle news texts translated into Indonesian.

The results of the analysis indicate that the categories "equivalent" and "non-equivalent" are dominant across Texts 1 to 4. The instances of non-equivalence found in these four texts are generally associated with differences in linguistic structure, lexical choice, and meaning adjustments that were made in order to achieve acceptability in the target language. This phenomenon is consistent with Mona Baker's view that incompatibilities frequently arise due to differences in linguistic systems and cultural contexts between the source and target languages, particularly at the level of words and phrases. Nevertheless, most textual units in Texts 1 to 4 were translated in such a way that the main information and the communicative function of the source text were preserved.

Thus, the comparison of Texts 1 to 4 demonstrates varying degrees of translational correspondence, as outlined by Mona Baker. Although non-equivalences in these texts remain within acceptable limits and can largely be explained by linguistic differences, they still indicate areas where full equivalence was not achieved. In conclusion, the degree of equivalence in the translation of Deutsche Welle news texts is influenced not only by linguistic factors but also by translators' decisions and institutional guidelines. By applying Mona Baker's theoretical framework, this study demonstrates that equivalence is multi-layered and relative in nature, and therefore must be critically examined in the analysis of news translation.

#### 4. Conclusion

It can be concluded from the analysis of the equivalence of Deutsche Welle news translations from German into Indonesian that the study was conducted based on Mona Baker's criteria of sentence-level equivalence, which include consideration of syntactic structure (subject, predicate, object, etc.), conformity with the grammatical rules of the target language, attention to textual cohesion such as conjunctions, references, and ellipses, and emphasis on the communicative function of the sentence rather than its literal form. The summary of Data 1 to Data 4 indicates that the degree of equivalence varies considerably. Data 1 is dominated by the "equivalent" category at 62.4%, while Data 2 and Data 4 show similar patterns, with 59.1% and 64.0% respectively, suggesting that in these three datasets the translations generally succeed in conveying the meaning and function of the source texts. In contrast, Data 3 demonstrates a lower degree of equivalence, as the "less equivalent" category accounts for 41.9%, indicating that many translations achieve only partial equivalence. Overall analysis further reveals that the "equivalent" category predominates with 121 data instances (57.6%), showing that most source texts were translated into Indonesian with a relatively accurate transfer of meaning. However, 48 data instances (22.9%) fall into the "less equivalent" category and 41 data instances (19.5%) into the "non-equivalent" category, reflecting partial equivalence and non-equivalence caused by shifts in meaning, structural differences, and limited lexical correspondences. Thus, although the overall degree of equivalence in DW news translations can be considered relatively high, the quality of translation is not yet fully consistent and still requires improvement in order to minimize meaning shifts and issues of untranslatability.

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