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REVISITING BAKER'S EQUIVALENCE FRAMEWORK: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF RECENT APPLICATIONS IN TRANSLATION STUDIES (2022–2025)

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ABSTRACT

Mona Baker's equivalence framework, presented in *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, is widely used in translation studies to analyze meaning across several levels, including word-level, above-word, grammatical, textual, and pragmatic equivalence. Despite its influence, recent applications of the framework have not been systematically reviewed. Accordingly, this paper aims to identify recent research trends, methodological approaches, and gaps in studies applying Baker's equivalence model between 2022 and 2025. To achieve this objective, a systematic literature review was conducted using Google Scholar and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Following a multi-stage screening process, including duplicate removal and full-text evaluation, 20 peer-reviewed articles were selected and analyzed through qualitative synthesis. The findings reveal that most studies focus on above-word equivalence, particularly idiomatic expressions, followed by word-level equivalence. In contrast, few studies adopt a multi-level analytical approach. Moreover, the reviewed literature shows minimal attention to grammatical, textual, and pragmatic equivalence, indicating an imbalance in the contemporary application of Baker's framework. Overall, Baker's framework continues to demonstrate strong analytical relevance in contemporary translation research, although its higher-level dimensions remain underexplored.

KEYWORD: Baker's model; translation equivalence framework; idiomatic translation; systematic literature review; non-equivalence

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Equivalence has been an important cornerstone in translation studies both as a theoretical concept and an analytical instrument. Early linguistic theories of translation often put equivalence as central to determining the quality of translation and viewed the work of translation as a problem of finding semantic and formal matches between a source text and a target text [1,2]. The most significant examples of operationalizations of equivalence are the multi-level framework developed by Mona Baker, which divides problems of translation into the above-word-level, grammatical, word-level, textual, and pragmatic levels [3]. Since its publication, Baker's model has been widely adopted in translation pedagogy and research.

Although based on meaning, the concept of equivalence has transformed into controversy and continued to receive criticism. Equivalence was originally described by Eugene Nida, who introduced the distinction between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. He gave special emphasis to the response of the receptor [1]. Later, the study turned to the communicative purpose, or Skopos, of the target text in the functionalist school of thought. Hans J. Vermeer and Katharina Reiss shifted the focus of the discussion on the concept of functional or communicative equivalence over structural equivalence [4]. Descriptively, Gideon Toury disputed the prescriptive tenor of equivalence by predetermining normative restrictions and target culture-specificities [5]. Venuti further complicated

the issue of translation by providing a flash forward into the invisibility of the translator, the domestication processes, and the ideological mediation that influences translation practice [6]. Collectively, these perspectives challenge the assumption that translation involves a simple linear transfer of meaning, but undoubtedly uphold that translation is inherently subject to cultural, ideological, and functional processes that transcend the process of linguistic congruency.

Considering such criticisms, equivalence is no longer widely considered as a static or unqualified (objective) end of translation. Nonetheless, instead of entirely abandoning the concept, several scholars of this day also believe that it can also be viewed as a heuristic of analysis [7,8]. Operationalized in the form of conceptualized schematization like the multi-level theory by Baker, equivalence is less a normative concept and more a technique of diagnosis of understanding the problems of translation on linguistic and contextual planes [3]. Baker's strategy specifically is to redefine equivalence as a pragmatic classification of possible problem zones, as opposed to implying utter sameness of texts [9].

The fact that the scheme by Baker is still used and quoted in recent studies indicates that, although it has been theorized as an invalid method, it has been and still influences the methodological perspective of research. This bottom-up, hierarchical structure, between lexical items and pragmatic sense; presents researchers with a taxonomy by which they analyze a translation choice. The flexibility and ease of use of this framework makes it suitable as a case study-based analysis of literary, religious, and cross-cultural texts [10].

Nevertheless, although Baker's model continues to be employed in contemporary academic practice, little effort has been made to synthesize its current applications. Most existing research applies the framework to specific language pairs or individual textual case studies, while relatively few studies examine broader trends in its recent use [11]. It is unknown whether the various degrees of equivalence are being pursued at an equal pace, which dimensions prevail in the modern study, or which methodological trends are typical of its current usage.

To fill this gap, this study has performed a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed articles published in 2022-2025 that specifically employ the equivalence framework developed by Baker. The review will focus on (1) determining the current trends in the research based on the levels of equivalence, (2) reviewing the current trends in the methodological patterns of the application, and (3) mentioning the gap in research within the framework. This research paper makes its contribution to the current debates concerning the topicality, flexibility, and applicability of equivalence-based approaches to translation studies with the aim of their investigation.

1.2. The Concept of Equivalence in Translation Studies

The idea of equivalence has been traditionally viewed as one of the pillars of translation theory. The initial linguistic theories viewed translation as the process of recreating a similar meaning in different languages [1,2]. Nida drew the line between formal and dynamic equivalence and made the response of the receptors to be a measure of successful translation [2]. had presented the concept of equivalence by considering the linguistic correspondence in various ranks.

Nevertheless, it was later questioned why equivalence-based models prevailed. The emphasis on equivalence was replaced by communicative purpose, which was considered by functionalist approaches, especially the Skopos theory [4]. Descriptively, [5] maintained that translation is regulated by the norms of the target culture, not by the relations of absolute equivalence [6] also criticized the notion of equivalence because it focuses more on ideological aspects of domestication and foreignization.

However, in spite of such criticisms, the absence of equivalence does not eliminate the role of translation scholarship. Instead, it has been redefined as a flexible analytical unit rather than a fixed doctrine [8,12].

1.3. Baker's Multi-Level Equivalence Framework

Within this transforming theoretical framework, Mona Baker's model has assumed a special position. In *Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, she proposes to break down the issue of translation into five levels [3]:

- a) Word-level equivalence – lexical meaning and semantic non-correspondence
- b) Above-word-level equivalence – collocations, idioms, and fixed expressions
- c) Grammatical equivalence – tense, number, gender, voice, and syntactic variation
- d) Textual equivalence – cohesion, coherence, and thematic organization
- e) Pragmatic equivalence – implicature and context-dependent meaning

Baker introduces equivalence as a feasible model of recognizing possible areas of challenge as opposed to the previous equivalence models that suggested sameness. Her strategy accepts that languages have different ways of encoding meaning and that translators have to use strategic solutions whenever there is no direct correspondence [13].

The fact that there is operational clarity of the Baker model makes it strong. It offers a classification of translation choices to researchers and students in a systematized way. Simultaneously, its stratification structure traverses both micro-analysis of the linguistic nature and macro-analysis of the discourse [14].

1.4. Contemporary Relevance of Baker's Framework

Despite the cultural, sociological, and technological shift taken within translation studies, the framework by Baker still remains popular in empirical studies. Its flexibility across genres and language pairs has helped maintain its relevance in contemporary translation research. Nonetheless, although the model is often used, the operationalization of various levels of its equivalence has not been synthesized much [15,16].

Although Mona Baker's equivalence framework continues to be widely applied in translation studies, most existing research focuses on individual case studies examining specific texts or language pairs. There is still limited systematic synthesis that examines how the framework has been applied across recent empirical studies, which levels of equivalence receive the greatest attention, and what methodological patterns characterize these applications. Consequently, a comprehensive review is needed to map recent uses of Baker's model and identify emerging trends and underexplored areas within contemporary translation studies.

Therefore, the present study conducts a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed articles published between 2022 and 2025 that apply Baker's equivalence framework in order to identify research trends, methodological patterns, and remaining gaps in the field.

2. METHODS

2.1. Research Design

This paper adopts a systematic literature review design to synthesize recent applications of Mona Baker's equivalence framework in translation studies. A structured procedure was applied for identifying, screening, and analyzing relevant studies to ensure transparency and methodological rigor. The reporting structure of this systematic review was guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework to ensure transparent reporting of the search strategy, study selection process, and synthesis of the included studies.

2.2. Search Strategy

Google Scholar was the primary database used for literature retrieval. Google Scholar was chosen due to its extensive multidisciplinary coverage and accessibility as a result of the institution having no access to subscription databases like Scopus and ProQuest. The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) was also used as a supplement to the retrieval and to provide thorough coverage over the open-access publications. The search was conducted in January 2026.

Search queries were constructed using combinations of the following keywords:

“Mona Baker” , “equivalence framework”, “equivalence theory”, “word-level equivalence”, “textual equivalence”, “pragmatic equivalence”, “translation studies”

Searches were conducted using quotation marks to ensure phrase precision. The results were filtered to contain publications from 2022 to 2025. In DOAJ, the search was limited to journal articles, while Google Scholar results were filtered using the “since 2022” option.

2.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established prior to the screening process to ensure that only studies directly relevant to the application of Mona Baker's equivalence framework were included in the review. These criteria were designed to identify empirical and analytical research within translation studies while excluding publications that did not focus on the equivalence model as a central analytical framework. The inclusion and exclusion criteria applied during the screening process are summarized in [Figure 1](#) and [Table 1](#).

These criteria ensured that the review focused exclusively on peer-reviewed research that explicitly applied Baker's equivalence framework within translation analysis. Publications that did not meet these conditions were excluded during the screening stages to maintain the methodological relevance and analytical consistency of the review.

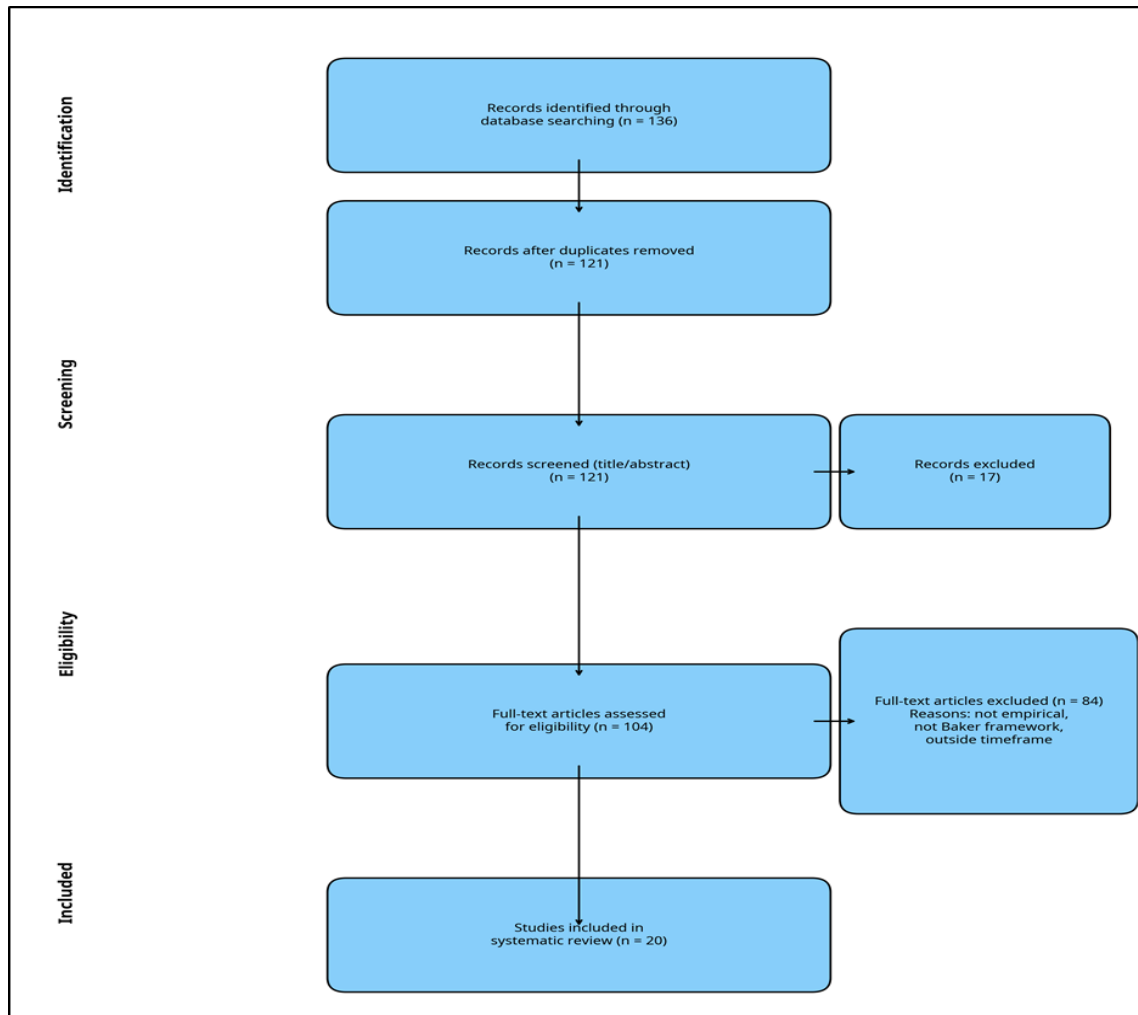


Figure 1. PRISMA-Style Study Selection Flow Diagram

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Study Selection

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Peer-reviewed journal articles	Books and book chapters
Published between 2022–2025	Editorials, commentaries, or reviews
Explicit application of Baker's equivalence framework	Studies without equivalence analysis

PRISMA-style flow diagram illustrating the study selection process from initial identification (n = 136) to final inclusion (n = 20).

2.4. Data Extraction and Coding

For each included study, the following information was extracted and recorded in a structured coding sheet:

- Author(s)
- Year of publication
- Journal/source
- Country/region
- Language pair
- Text type
- Research design and method
- Equivalence level applied
- Specific analytical focus
- Key concepts

Each study was categorized according to the primary equivalence level analyzed, based on Baker's five-level framework:

- Word-level equivalence
- Above-word equivalence
- Grammatical equivalence
- Textual equivalence
- Pragmatic equivalence
- Multiple levels (if more than one level was equally analyzed)

Frequency counts were generated to identify dominant research trends.

2.5. Data Analysis

A qualitative content analysis approach was used to synthesize findings across the selected studies. The analysis focused on identifying:

- Distribution across equivalence levels
- Dominant analytical trends
- Underrepresented areas within Baker's framework
- Methodological patterns
- Emerging research gaps

Descriptive statistics (frequency counts) were used to support qualitative interpretation.

2.6. Screening Protocol

The study selection procedure followed the PRISMA 2020 framework, documenting the stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of studies. The screening process was conducted using a structured multi-stage protocol to ensure that only studies directly relevant to the application of Mona Baker's equivalence framework were included in the final dataset. The protocol consisted of sequential stages including identification of records, removal of duplicate entries, title screening, abstract screening, and full-text assessment. This stepwise procedure helped ensure transparency, consistency, and methodological rigor in the selection of studies.

2.6.1. Identification Stage

Records were initially identified through database searching in Google Scholar and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The search strategy employed combinations of keywords related to Baker's equivalence framework and translation studies. This process yielded 136 records, which were compiled into a spreadsheet for further evaluation.

2.6.2. Duplicate Removal

All retrieved records were imported into a spreadsheet and examined for duplication. Duplicate titles appearing across search results were removed manually using spreadsheet filtering tools. After this step, 121 unique records remained.

2.6.3. Title Screening

In the first relevance assessment stage, titles were examined to determine whether they addressed translation studies and were potentially related to Baker's equivalence framework. Titles clearly unrelated to translation studies, linguistic equivalence, or translation analysis were excluded. After title screening, 119 studies were retained for further review.

2.6.4. Abstract Screening

The abstracts of the remaining articles were examined to determine whether the studies explicitly applied Baker's equivalence framework or discussed equivalence levels within translation analysis. Articles that only mentioned equivalence in passing or focused on unrelated translation topics were excluded. After abstract screening, 104 studies remained.

2.6.5. Full-Text Eligibility Assessment

The full texts of the remaining articles were then assessed to confirm whether Baker's equivalence framework constituted the central analytical model. Studies that did not apply the framework directly, or that focused primarily on unrelated theoretical models, were excluded at this stage. Following full-text evaluation, 38 studies were identified as clearly related to Baker's equivalence framework.

2.6.6. Final Selection

A final qualitative assessment was conducted to ensure methodological relevance and alignment with the study's objectives. Studies lacking clear analytical procedures or explicit application of Baker's equivalence framework were excluded. After this final screening step, 20 studies were retained for inclusion in the systematic review. The complete study selection procedure is illustrated in [Figure 1](#) (PRISMA-style flow diagram).

2.6.7. Screening Reliability

To enhance the reliability and transparency of the screening process, a structured and consistent evaluation procedure was applied at each stage of study selection. The screening criteria were predefined based on the inclusion and exclusion conditions described in the methodology. During title, abstract, and full-text screening, each record was assessed according to the same set of criteria, with particular attention to whether the study explicitly applied Mona Baker's equivalence framework as the central analytical model. To minimize subjective bias, ambiguous cases were re-examined through repeated reading of the abstract and, when necessary, the full text of the article. Studies were included only when Baker's equivalence levels constituted the primary analytical focus rather than a peripheral reference. This iterative verification process helped ensure consistency in the selection decisions and strengthened the methodological reliability of the review.

2.7. Limitations of the Review

Although this study adopts a systematic review approach, several limitations should be acknowledged. The search process initially identified 136 records through database searches. After removing 15 duplicate records, 121 unique titles remained. Title screening resulted in the exclusion of 2 studies that were clearly unrelated to translation studies, leaving 119 studies for abstract evaluation. During the abstract screening stage, 15 articles were excluded because they did not explicitly address Baker's equivalence framework or focused on unrelated translation topics. This resulted in 104 articles being examined at the full-text level.

The full-text assessment revealed that many studies mentioned equivalence only briefly or applied alternative theoretical models without directly using Baker's framework. Consequently, 66 articles were excluded at this stage because Baker's equivalence model was not the primary analytical framework. From the remaining 38 relevant studies, an additional 18 articles were excluded due to insufficient methodological detail, limited analytical relevance, or redundant analytical focus.

While this number may appear modest, the strict inclusion criteria ensured that only studies directly applying Baker's equivalence framework were analyzed. The relatively small dataset therefore reflects the narrow theoretical focus of the review rather than a limitation of the systematic procedure.

itself. In addition, the review may be subject to publication bias, since studies reporting clearer analytical findings are more likely to be published and consequently more likely to appear in searchable academic databases.

2.8. Quality Assessment of Included Studies

To ensure analytical reliability, the methodological quality of the included studies was evaluated using three criteria: clarity of research design, explicit application of Baker's equivalence framework, and transparency of analytical procedures. Each study was assessed as demonstrating high, moderate, or limited methodological clarity based on these criteria. The results of the quality assessment are summarized in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Methodological Quality Assessment of Included Studies

Quality Level	Number of Studies
High methodological clarity	8
Moderate clarity	9
Limited clarity	3

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Overview of the Selected Studies

After the multi-stage screening process, 20 peer-reviewed articles published in the period between 2022 and 2025 were kept to be qualitatively synthesized. The equivalence framework used in all the chosen works was explicitly Mona Baker in *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. The dataset indicates recent close empirical and theoretical ways of modeling Baker into various language pairs and textual genres.

The studies included differ in research design, with qualitative research design and mixed-method approaches dominating. A majority of the research is based on a comparison of texts of the sources and the target texts, often in literary works, specifically novels and religious works. The reviewed studies involve several language pairs, including Persian–Arabic, Arabic–Indonesian, and English–Indonesian.

[Table 3](#) presents the key characteristics of the studies included in the systematic review, including the language pairs analyzed, text types, research methods, and the equivalence levels addressed in each study.

Table 3. Key Characteristics of the Studies Included in the Review

No	Author(s)	Year	Language Pair (ST→TT)	Text Type	Research Method	Equivalence Level
1	Rahim & Adnan	2023	Persian → Arabic	Literary text	Qualitative textual analysis	Word-level
2	Chahboub Nadira	2023	English → Arabic	Lexical translation analysis	Qualitative analysis	Word-level
3	Prasatyo et al.	2023	English → Indonesian	Novel	Mixed methods	Multiple levels
4	Ünsal & Aşçı	2023	English → Turkish	Literary text (idioms)	Qualitative textual analysis	Above-word
5	Rohmawati et al.	2023	English → Indonesian	Religious text	Qualitative textual analysis	Above-word
6	Nufus	2022	English → Indonesian	Literary text	Qualitative analysis	Multiple levels
7	Arabiāt & Al-Momani	2022	Arabic → English	Linguistic analysis	Qualitative analysis	Multiple levels
8	Rahmi	2025	Indonesian → English	Literary text	Comparative textual analysis	Word-level
9	Arbi & Basuki	2023	English → Indonesian	Novel	Qualitative textual analysis	Above-word
10	Hajiyeva	2025	English → Azerbaijani	Short story	Qualitative textual analysis	Word-level
11	Hegazy & Ali	2023	Arabic → English	Religious text (Qur'anic translation)	Qualitative analysis	Above-word
12	Mendi et al.	2025	English → Indonesian	Novel	Qualitative textual analysis	Above-word
13	Syamsul et al.	2025	French → English	Film subtitles and dubbing	Mixed methods	Multiple levels
14	Mottaqiannia &	2024	Arabic → Persian	Religious text	Qualitative lexical	Word-level

	Navidi				analysis	
15	Muttaqin et al.	2022	Arabic → Indonesian	Aphorisms	Qualitative analysis	Word-level
16	Dwiyanti et al.	2022	Japanese → Indonesian	Novel	Qualitative textual analysis	Above-word
17	Arief & Santoso	2025	English → Indonesian	Literary corpus	Corpus-assisted analysis	Above-word
18	Angguntur et al.	2025	English → Indonesian	Novel	Qualitative textual analysis	Above-word
19	Mufidah, & Masrukhi	2024	Arabic → Indonesian	Linguistic analysis	Qualitative discourse analysis	Above-word
20	Oveis Mohammadi	2025	Arabic → Persian	Poetry	Qualitative lexical analysis	Word-level

3.2. Distribution by Equivalence Level

The selected studies were classified according to the primary equivalence level examined, following the framework proposed by Mona Baker in *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. This categorization was used to identify patterns in how Baker's model is applied in recent translation studies research. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the 20 selected studies across the different equivalence levels.

As shown in Figure 2, above-word equivalence represents the most frequently investigated category ($n = 9$), followed by word-level equivalence ($n = 7$). These two categories together account for the majority of the reviewed studies, indicating a strong research focus on lexical and phraseological translation challenges, particularly idioms, collocations, and culturally bound expressions. A smaller number of studies adopt a multi-level approach ($n = 4$), analyzing translation problems across several equivalence categories simultaneously.

In contrast, no studies in the dataset focus exclusively on grammatical, textual, or pragmatic equivalence. This imbalance suggests that recent applications of Baker's framework tend to emphasize micro-level linguistic analysis rather than discourse-level or contextual aspects of translation. The predominance of lexical and idiomatic studies may reflect the relative visibility and analytical accessibility of these translation challenges, while higher-level equivalence categories require more complex discourse or pragmatic analysis.

Overall, the distribution illustrated in Figure 2 indicates that although Baker's framework includes multiple analytical levels, contemporary research tends to concentrate primarily on lexical and phrase-level equivalence, leaving other dimensions comparatively underexplored.

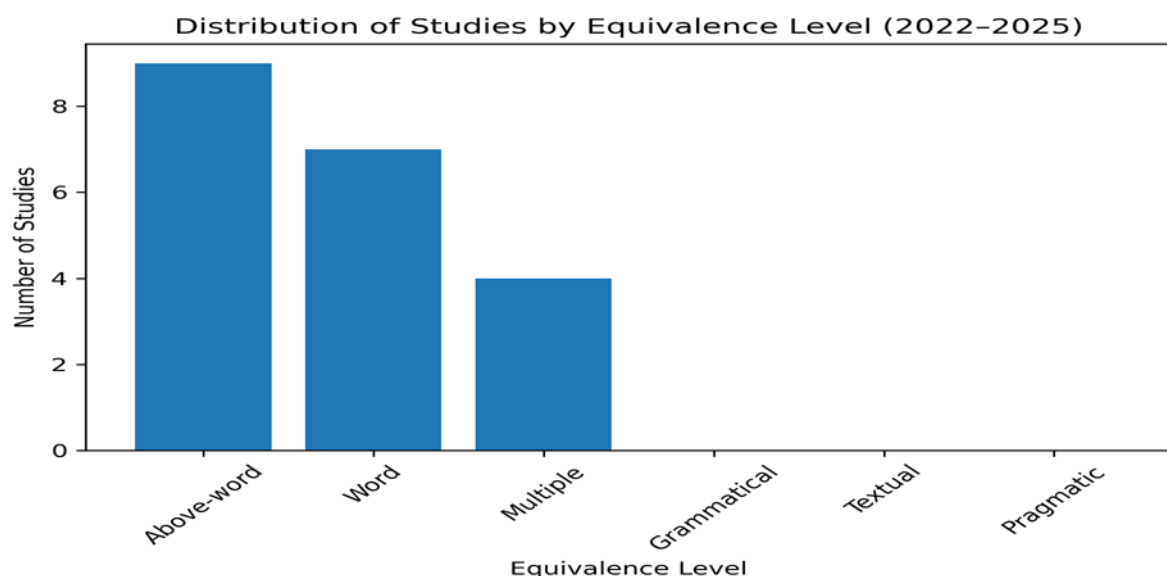


Figure 2. Distribution of Reviewed Studies Across Baker's Equivalence Levels (2022–2025)

The distribution illustrated in Figure 2 suggests that contemporary applications of Baker's framework are largely concentrated at the lexical and phraseological levels of analysis. This pattern indicates a

tendency among researchers to focus on micro-linguistic translation challenges, particularly idioms and vocabulary equivalence, while comparatively less attention is given to higher-level discourse and pragmatic dimensions. These findings raise important questions about the extent to which Baker's full multi-level framework is being systematically explored in current translation studies research, an issue that is further examined in the following discussion.

The 20 studies were categorized according to the primary level of equivalence analyzed. [Table 4](#) summarizes the distribution.

Table 4. Distribution of Studies by Equivalence Level

Equivalence Level	Frequency
Above-word	9
Word	7
Multiple levels	4
Grammatical	0
Textual	0
Pragmatic	0
Total	20

The results demonstrate the obvious prevalence of above-word equivalence ($n = 9$), which is mainly about idioms, proverbs, fixed expressions and multi-word lexical units. This implies that the current uses of the model by Baker are more heavily applied to issues raised by non-literal and culture-specific expressions.

The second category contains the most common term, word-level equivalence ($n = 7$); reviewed studies focus on the lexical choice, the semantic mismatch, and non-equivalence at the word level. These research studies usually concern polysemy, terminological ambiguity, and lexical gaps in the language between the source and target languages.

Fewer studies ($n=4$) use a multi-level approach and specifically examine translation issues on multiple levels of translation concerns of more than one of the categories of equivalence proposed by Baker (e.g., word, grammatical, textual, and pragmatic levels at the same time). These works are inclined to provide more general analyses, instead of dealing with one dimension of equivalence.

Interestingly, all of the chosen studies have not specialized in a set of the main analogies as grammatical, textual, and pragmatic equivalences. Although there are multi-level studies that contain these dimensions, they are not addressed separately, as the main research undermines them.

3.3. Dominant Research Focus: Idiomatic and Phrase-Level Equivalence

The fact that above-word studies prevail points to the high academic interest in the translation of idiomatic expressions. In such works, literary texts are often studied in terms of how translators handle non-equivalence on the fixed expression and culturally specific phrase levels.

This tendency indicates that idiomatic translation remains one of the most prominent and problematic implementations of the framework by Baker. Researchers always resort to the approaches suggested by Baker to solve non-equivalence such as paraphrase, cultural substitution, and omission.

3.4. Limited Representation of Higher-Level Equivalence

The key result of this review is that there is a relative lack of studies that isolate the grammatical, textual, or pragmatic equivalence as independent analytical categories. Despite their conceptual inseparability into the framework of Baker, recent empirical studies seem to give the lexical and phraseological issues more priority than a discourse-level or context-driven study would have them.

Such an unequal distribution suggests that recent research implementations of the Baker model can be focused on the micro-level (lexical and idiomatic) as opposed to macro-textual and macro-pragmatic dimensions.

3.5. Summary of Main Trends

Overall, the analysis of the 20 selected studies reveals three main patterns:

1. A strong emphasis on above-word (idiomatic) equivalence.
2. Substantial attention to word-level non-equivalence.
3. Limited isolated investigation of grammatical, textual, and pragmatic equivalence.

These findings demonstrate that while Baker's framework remains influential in contemporary translation research, its application tends to be uneven across equivalence levels.

3.6. Analytical Patterns Across the Reviewed Studies

Beyond the frequency distribution of equivalence levels, several analytical patterns emerged from the reviewed studies. Methodologically, most studies adopt qualitative or mixed-method approaches, typically relying on close textual comparison between source and target texts. Corpus sizes are generally small and case-study based, often focusing on individual novels, religious texts, or selected excerpts rather than large-scale datasets. In terms of text types, literary texts and idiomatic expressions dominate the dataset, reflecting the frequent application of Baker's framework to culturally embedded language. Geographically, the studies show a noticeable concentration in Asian and Middle Eastern research contexts, particularly involving language pairs such as Persian–Arabic, Arabic–Indonesian, and English–Indonesian. These patterns suggest that Baker's equivalence framework is primarily applied in micro-level textual analyses within specific linguistic and regional contexts rather than in large-scale corpus-driven research.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. The Enduring Operational Value of Equivalence

The results of the review prove that the equivalence framework developed by Mona Baker remains one of the outstanding methodological frameworks used in modern translation studies. Even though the theoretical doubt to equivalence as the core concept remained strong over the decades [5,6,8], under consideration of the reviewed studies, the structured model of Baker is still actively utilized as an analytical tool. It implies that in spite of the fact that equivalence is no longer considered a theoretical paradigm, it remains a practical instrument to use when classifying translation issues.

It seems that the accomplishment attributed to Baker is not to defend equivalence as sameness, but rather to redefine it as an increasing and multi-layered diagnostic model [3]. The most mentioned fact of continuously relying on her taxonomy shows that the researchers still appreciate its clear structure and operational accuracy, especially in applied, text-only analysis. In such a way, the framework is not a prescriptive theory of translation and is rather a methodological frame.

4.2. Micro-Level Dominance and the Linguistic Turn

What comes out in this review is that word-level and above-word-level equivalence studies predominate. The fact that idiomatic and lexical analyses are predominant makes it possible to assume that the recent uses of the framework developed by Baker are highly saturated with micro-linguistic issues. This tendency might be the manifestation of what may be called a leftover linguistic orientation in the research of applied translation, in which discrete lexical and phraseological problems are the ones that are easier to recognize and break down.

Nevertheless, this micro-focus is opposite to more general trends in the theory of translation, especially the cultural and sociological turns that moved attention to ideology, power, and textual agency [6, 5]. The comparative lack of macro-level studies of them, particularly the ones focused on textual and pragmatic equivalence, might point to the fact that the Baker framework is being applied selectively in such a manner that prefigures its linguistic aspects and under-uses its discourse-focused possibilities.

Such selective application leads to some significant theoretical questions. By making equivalence a property of lexical, idiomatic equivalence, will the model not be overloaded with an excessively large number of micro-problems instead of a full-fledged model of translational meaning-

making? The imbalance that has been found in this review indicates that the higher-level categories provided by Baker might not be getting a corresponding analytical treatment.

4.3. The Marginalization of Textual and Pragmatic Equivalence

The greatest theoretical implication of this review, perhaps, is the underrepresentation of grammatical, textual, and, to a larger extent, pragmatic equivalence as independent research areas. In his framework, Baker explicitly incorporates discourse cohesion and implicature into its framework, therefore recognizing the significance of contextual and communicative meaning [3]. However, recent empirical research seems to be reluctant to single out these dimensions.

Partly, such a pattern can be attributed to the complexity of methods. The textual and pragmatic equivalency necessitates involvement in discourse analysis, pragmatics, and sociocultural context—areas which, in many instances, necessitate interdisciplinary solutions. In comparison, lexical and idiomatic analyses are more structured and procedure-manageable.

It is especially noticeable that there is a lack of studies at the pragmatic level even after many researchers have devoted more and more attention to intercultural communication and cross-cultural pragmatics. This gap is promising as a future study since the key focus of implicature, politeness, and contextual meaning is central in the practice of translation in the real world.

4.4. Baker's Framework Between Theory and Pedagogy

The other theoretical implication is the dual role of the model by Baker as an academic model and a teaching tool. The framework seems to be applied in many of the reviewed studies, which reflect an instructional design, by using its categories in a systematic analysis of textual examples. This supports the opinion that the model created by Baker is somewhere between theory and teaching.

The approach of Baker provides a systematic analytical checklist in contrast to functionalist models, which place additional emphasis on purpose [4], or descriptive models, which place additional emphasis on norms [5]. Its durability can, consequently, be due to its flexibility both in the classroom and research contexts. Nevertheless, the above pedagogical advantage can also lead to the propensity to use the model in formulaic applications, which can constrain theory.

4.5. Implications for the Future of Equivalence-Based Research

The results of this review indicate that, instead of becoming obsolete, equivalence has been transformed. Nowadays, it serves not so much as a general theory of translation but as a regional analytical paradigm. The model of resilience presented by Baker, especially, is that equivalence is operationalized under a set of specific management categories that are manageable.

However, the unequal representation of the research by the levels of equivalence suggests that the theoretical range of research has not been thoroughly studied. By broadening empirical focus on the textual cohesion, grammatical restructuring, and pragmatic meaning, one would be able to engage the model in a more comprehensive manner. In addition, by incorporating the framework of Baker with corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and sociological methods, it might increase the explanatory scope of the framework.

Finally, the current review demonstrates a paradox: namely, equivalence as a grand theory has been problematized; nonetheless, the systematic model of equivalence as proposed by Baker remains influential on applied translation research. Its persistence has reinforced the fact that there is a persistent necessity for analytical models that are able to account for the linguistic specificity and contextual significance in the study of translation.

5. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review examined recent applications (2022-2025) of the equivalence framework by Mona Baker in the study of translation. Therefore, 20 peer-reviewed articles were preserved to pass through the qualitative synthesis after a rigorous multi-stage screening process. As the analysis shows, the model created by Baker still has a profound impact on the research on translation in the present-day, especially as the analytical tool that can be used in practical translation to define and classify the problems with translation.

It is seen that there is an evident predominance of above-word and word-level equivalence studies, particularly the ones that covered idiomatic expressions and lexical non-equivalence. These micro-level dimensions seem to be the major focus of the current research based on the framework by Baker. Grammatical, textual, and pragmatic equivalence, on the other hand, are significantly underrepresented as research areas on their own. Although these dimensions are sometimes included in multi-level analyses, they are rarely studied in detail as separate points of analysis.

Such imbalance indicates that the present-day implementations of the model by Baker are likely to focus only on the apparent challenges of lexical and phraseological nature and will not address larger discourse-based and contextual equivalence issues. The fact that there has been only a small number of studies discussing the role of textual cohesion, syntactic restructuring, and pragmatic meaning does point to the fact that there have been some considerable gaps in the empirical application of the framework.

Nevertheless, these uneven applications notwithstanding, the fact that the equivalence theory of Baker has managed to remain in use in a variety of language pairs and textual genres testifies to the timelessness of the concept in terms of its pedagogical and methodological importance. The framework is open, flexible, and operationally applicable to translation analysis. Yet, its extended theoretical domain has not been completely used in recent scholarship.

Future studies are recommended to more empirically center on grammatical, textual, and pragmatic equivalence; to use the methods of corpus; and to investigate the relevance of the model in non-literary contexts. These developments would add to a more thorough and equal involvement in the theoretical organization of Baker.

To sum up, although the concept of equivalence has undergone theoretical criticism in translation studies, the results of this review indicate that the multi-level approach to the concept formulated by Baker has remained influential in the practice of analysis. The model itself is still very powerful but applied unevenly, which refers to its strength and its potential to produce new research in modern translation studies. This review contributes to translation studies by providing one of the first systematic syntheses of recent empirical applications of Baker's equivalence framework.

Ethical considerations

This study is a systematic literature review based exclusively on previously published research. No human participants were involved, and no primary data were collected. Therefore, ethical approval was not required.

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Declaration of conflicting interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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إعادة النظر في إطار بيكر للتكافؤ: مراجعة منهجية للتطبيقات الحديثة في دراسات الترجمة (2025-2022)

الملخص

يُعد إطار التكافؤ الذي قدمته موني بيكر في كتابها *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* من أكثر الأطر استخدامًا في دراسات الترجمة لتحليل المعنى عبر مستويات متعددة، تشمل التكافؤ على مستوى الكلمة، وما فوق الكلمة، والتكافؤ النحوي، والنصي، والتداولي. وعلى الرغم من تأثيره الواسع واستمرارية أهميته العلمية، فإن تطبيقاته الحديثة لم تخضع لمراجعة منهجية شاملة. وبناءً على ذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد الاتجاهات البحثية الحديثة، والمقاربات المنهجية، والفجوات البحثية في الدراسات التي طبقت نموذج التكافؤ لدى بيكر خلال الفترة من 2022 إلى 2025. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، أجريت مراجعة منهجية للأدبيات باستخدام قاعدة بيانات جوجل سكولار ودليل الدوريات مفتوحة الوصول (DOAJ) وعقب عملية فرز متعددة المراحل شملت إزالة الدراسات المكررة وتقييم النصوص الكاملة، تم اختيار 20 مقالة محكمة وتحليلها من خلال التوليف النوعي. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن معظم الدراسات ركزت على التكافؤ فوق مستوى الكلمة، ولا سيما التعابير الاصطلاحية، يليه التكافؤ على مستوى الكلمة. في المقابل، اعتمد عدد محدود فقط من الدراسات مقارنة تحليلية متعددة المستويات. علاوة على ذلك، أظهرت الأدبيات التي تمت مراجعتها اهتمامًا محدودًا بالتكافؤ النحوي والنصي والتداولي، مما يشير إلى وجود اختلال في توظيف إطار بيكر في الدراسات المعاصرة. وبوجه عام، يواصل إطار بيكر إثبات أهميته التحليلية في أبحاث الترجمة الحديثة، على الرغم من أن أبعاده العليا لا تزال بحاجة إلى مزيد من الاستكشاف والبحث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نموذج بيكر؛ إطار التكافؤ في الترجمة؛ ترجمة التعابير الاصطلاحية؛ المراجعة المنهجية للأدبيات؛ اللاتكافؤ.