

A Descriptive Analysis for the Translation of Metonymy in the Prophetic Hadith

تحليل وصفي لترجمة الكناية في الحديث النبوي الشريف

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Abstract

Metonymy as a figurative aspect of language is problematic in translation. It utilizes "contiguity" to convey meaning. Approximation in metonymy coalesces dissimilar meanings and adds power to the structure. The present paper tackles this figurative use within religious environment, i.e. Prophetic Hadith. The paper examines, reviews and analyses some examples that utilize this figurative use along with their translations. A descriptive analysis is used as a theoretical basis to handle the data. Two translations for the Forty Hadiths of Anawawi are considered for this purpose. One of the key results of the present paper is that metonymic expressions are employed as an effective means for conveying Prophetic meanings and hence need a special treatment in translation. Translators followed the same procedures in rendering metonymic items. Notes should accompany translations to clarify meaning.

Keywords : domestication- DST – foreignization - Hadith - Metonymy.

الملخص

إن الكناية بوصفها لغة بيانية تمثل مشكلة ترجمة. فهي تستخدم لغة الامتداد في إيصال المعنى. يتناول البحث الحالي هذا الاستخدام البياني في إطار النصوص الدينية وتحديدًا الحديث النبوي. فالبحث يفحص ويراجع ويحلل بعض الأمثلة التي تستخدم هذا النوع البياني مع تراجمها. وقد تم استخدام نموذج وصفي للتحليل كإطار نظري لمعالجة البيانات. وتم استخدام ترجمتين للأربعين حديثًا النووية لهذا الغرض. إن من أبرز النتائج التي توصل إليها البحث أن الخطاب النبوي استخدم تعابير الكناية بشكل فعال لإيصال المعنى الذي أرادته النبي (ص) ولذلك تحتاج إلى معاملة ترجمة خاصة. كما أن المترجمين اتبعوا إجراءات متماثلة في إيصال معاني الكناية. علاوة على ذلك فإن وضوح معنى الترجمة يتطلب تدعيمها بالشروح.

الكلمات الدالة: التغريب - التوطين - الحديث الشريف - دراسات الترجمة الوصفية- الكناية

1.Introduction

It is indubitable that figurative structures, including metonymy, represent an effective tool for conveying messages. This verity is more enhanced in a religious environment. Metonymy represents one of those effective means of effective communication. Scholars diverse in viewing the relation between the message conveyed and the metonymic expressions. Contiguity, association, substitution as well as relevance are some of those relations. Economy, effect, power of the statement and aesthetic touch are among the objectives for this use.

As a figure of speech, metonymy is used to refer to a meaning other than its literal meaning. Such substitution of meaning is conditioned by the existence of contiguous relation between the literal and figurative meanings and the existence of an implicit clue that indicates that the literal meaning is avoided.

Divergence among scholars as regards the nature of metonymy is undeniable since demarcation of such type of figures of speech is easier said than done. Generally, there are two main approaches of viewing metonymy; one is linguistic and the other is cognitive. Linguistic based view scholars claim “contiguity” as the most appropriate way of describing metonymy. Cognitive view looks at metonymy as a process mentally allows the excess of one entity to another labeling the former as the “vehicle” and the latter as the “target” provided that they both belong to the same conceptual entities and cognitive analysis is involved (Radden and Kövecses, 1999).

The linguistic perspective, led by Jakobson (1971:71), perceives “contiguity” as “covering more than one interpretation”. Following Jakobson, many scholars supported the linguistic perspective. Ullman (1962), Bredin (1984) as well as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) all claim that metonymy expresses “contiguity” relation.

Nerlich *et al.* (1999: 363) remarks that using metonymic expressions helps in delivering the message quickly and “shorten conceptual distances” which renders the message succinct.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980:35) argue that metonymy is “using one entity to refer to another that is referring to it.” Moreover, they consider metonymy as a tool for projecting special facets of communication that are “deemed particularly important”. It has the ability to represent whole-whole or part of a whole (e.g. hand for worker).

As for the cognitive perspective of metonymy, Fass (1997: 48) highlights the concise role of metonymy for an entity “to stand for another within one domain”. Moreover, Gibbs (1994: 319) highlights the conceptual aspect of metonymy by addressing the metonymic reasoning in the interpretation for indirect speech acts.

One of the outstanding works on metonymy is Radden and Kövecses (1999) who start with the traditional definition of metonymy as “a figure of speech that consist in using of the name of one thing for that of something else with which it is associated” (ibid: 17). Their definition perceives the term as “a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model” (ibid: 21). They argue that “metonymy does not simply substitute one entity for another entity but interrelates them to form a new complex meaning” (p.19).

In his work “cognitive explanation of metonymy”, Langacker (1993: 30) states that in metonymy “one conceptual entity, the reference-point, affords mental access to the desired target”.

Stallard (1993) supports the cognitive view and differentiates between two types of metonymy, namely, referential and predicative and both types suppose a cognitive conceptualization for inferring the meaning of a metonymic expression.

In his paper “transfers of meaning”, Nunberg (1995) differentiates between two types of metonymy, that is, “predicate transfer” and “deferred reference”. What is in harmony with the cognitive view is the definition given to the “predicate transfer” in which “the name of a property that applies to something in one domain can sometimes be used as the name of a property that applies to things in another domain provided the two properties respond in a certain way” (ibid.: 111).

The afore-mentioned divergence, whether linguistic or cognitive, is observable as Radden and Kövecses (1999: 9) claim that “metonymy relations could be estimated as 46 types” which explain how the concept of “contiguity” is heterogeneous.

Arabic view of metonymy is based on the traditional view. A plethora of research has been done to probe metonymy *kinayah* in which an expression has a figurative as well as a literal meaning. Yet the former is projected on condition that a *qarinah* (clue) is present. Jurjanny, a leading Arabic linguist, is believed to be the first who laid a definition of metonymy claiming that it is

a relation of “contiguity” provided that a clue is used to inform that the figurative meaning is intended. Jurjanny (1984:52) argues that metonymy is a “situation in which a meaning is expressed by means of non-conventional language; hence a contiguous meaning is applied to convey conventional one”.

It is defined by Al-Quzweeni (n.d.:185) as “a term manipulated to refer to something sensitive between two elements in order to avoid the literal meaning”.

Al-Zamakhshari (n.d.: 50) describes the term as “utilizing linguistic means to hide the meaning for the purpose of associating a relation between the addresser and the addressee. There should be a shared knowledge between the two to infer meaning”.

Al-‘Askari (1952: 310) painstakingly examined metonymy and provided a definition for the term depicting it as “an entity in which the meaning is embedded rather than expressed overtly”

Al-Kurdy (1986) devoted his work to study metonymic relations claiming that such relations fall into categories such as “part for whole” and “whole for part” or “entity for concomitant” and “concomitant for entity”.

It is to be noted that all Arabic scholars early and modern have no unanimous agreement on the shape of the relation that categorizes metonymic relations. Al-bayaty (1998) criticizes Arab rhetoricians for directing their attention to the relations and classifications ignoring functions and values of metonymy. In the present paper a trial is attempted to address those ignored aspects.

2. Research Questions

The present paper sets its aim to answer the following questions:

- 1) Does metonymy in prophetic Hadith pose a problem for translators?
- 2) What are the procedures adopted to tackle metonymic problems?
- 3) What are the most appropriate procedures for maintaining metonymy in the TL?

3. Methodology

One of the goals of the present research is to practically analyze the difficulties encountered by translators while translating metonymic expressions utilized in the prophetic Hadith. For that purpose, the descriptive approach is followed. This approach is applied as it is objective and hence

neutral. Toury (1980) laid the main principles of this approach which paved the way for other researchers to suggest their models with regard to describing translations. Descriptive analysis does not aim to devalue the work of translators. It aims at obtaining successful procedures and methods followed by them and how they solved those problems so that new translators would follow. One of those descriptive based models is authored by Jose Lambert and Hendrik van Gorp. Lambert and van Gorp's model is published in "The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation (1985)". The model is commended by Munday (2001) and Herman's (1999) as it is objective and presents an even analysis for both the SL and TL systems. Flexibility is a feature for the model as it can be adapted to be suitable for multifarious texts.

The classification of translation procedures is based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958). The SL text is given a gloss translation first before the discussion so as to uncover the changes occurred on the SL compared with the two translations under discussion.

For objectively answering the research questions, the present paper has applied the model on religious texts and has considered the Forty Hadith of Anawawi collection. This collection is very important and is recommended by unlimited number of Islamic scholars as it is essential and covers the important issues in Islamic "Shariah" jurisprudence. Lambert and van Gorp's model requires comparing the SL and TL texts. For the purpose of obtaining objective results, two well-known translations of the above-mentioned collection are selected. The first one is by Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys, Johnson-Davies (1980) (henceforth I&J) and the second one by a Malaysian scholar named Abu Hayati (2003) (henceforth A-H). The two translations are recommended by many scholars and published by a well-known publishing companies.

4. Translating Metonymy

Religious texts are very sensitive and require carefulness in translation. Islamic texts, especially Hadith are said by the prophet to guide people. Translating such divine texts involves loss of meaning. The translator should lessen the degree of loss to the minimum using appropriate procedures. The words of the prophet are part of the revelation and they are condensed with meanings; therefore the choice of words in translation is difficult as it is sacred and contain commands that should be followed by Muslims.

Nida (1964) leads the rest of scholars and his dichotomy of formal vs dynamic (later became functional) is a well-known example in which he insisted on rendering religious texts (especially biblical) dynamically (or functionally) by giving more respect to the target language reader and allowing the translator the freedom to remove all the inscrutability in the translated text. Hence, TL response or “effect” is given preference.

In contrast to Nida and his followers, Venuti's view goes to the opposite side of the scale. It prefers highlighting the cultural values as well as the identity of the SL. Venuti (1995) coined another dichotomy for translation, that is domestication vs. foreignization. Venuti thinks that the identity of the text is part of the meaning and should be preserved. He (ibid) prefers foreignization approach to translation which in turn render the translator “visible”. It is to be noted that loss in meaning is inevitable using both approaches. The present research discusses the effect of using both approaches in translating Hadith.

Newmark (1981: 122) thinks that metonymic expressions should be dealt with from a cultural point of view. Precise translation of such expressions, hence, depends on the translator's deep acquaintance and informativity with the TL culture. Religious stance is present as scholars try to prove their religious ideologies in this respect.

Radden & Kövecses (1999: 18) claim that metonymic expressions are universal since they are “motivated by general cognitive principles”. This conceptual perspective paved the way to claim that translating such expressions literally is possible depending on the degree of universality.

The following discussion is an attempt to find out the procedures adopted by translators as well as some recommendations for the optimal strategies for translating metonymic expressions. The examples are selected from the collection of Hadith under consideration. In this aspect, four examples are discussed.

Example (A):

The following illustration represents the first example of metonymy underscored in the second Hadith of the collection under study:

SL: "أَنْ تَرَى الْحُفَاةَ الْغُرَاةَ الْعَالَةَ رِعَاءَ الشَّاءِ، يَتَطَاوَلُونَ فِي الْبَنِيَانِ"

I&J: "and that you will see **the barefooted, naked, destitute herdsmen** competing in constructing lofty buildings."

A-H: "that you will see **the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep** (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings."

Al-Teebi (1997, vol.1:55) declares that the phrase “الْحَفَاءَ الْعُرَاةَ الْعَالَةَ رِعَاءِ” “الشَّاءِ” is a modified metonymic formula which means “the debased people” “الأسافل”. The phrase can be literally glossed as “the shoeless, the undressed, the penniless, the shepherds of the sheep”. By describing the people as “shoeless, undressed, and penniless”, the Prophet (ρ) visualizes the life of the Arabian peninsula at the time of His revival. The Prophet (ρ) itemizes “the shepherds of the sheep” as they are powerless and goes in harmony with the other descriptions of those people.

Al-Teebi (ibid) argues that the Prophet (ρ) said “sheep shepherds” rather than “camel shepherds” as it is more suitable in this context. Camel shepherds are often possessing superciliousness and they are far from being debased. This depiction is more consistent with the exquisiteness of the Prophet's style. Moreover, the accurateness of phrasing is unique, particularly as he began with the verb “تَرَى” “(you) to see” in addition to the particle “أَنْ” that confirmed realizing visualization for the future of the possessors of such features. Furthermore, the perspective of the Hadith takes the reader to another level describing such people competing in superstructures.

Ibn Allaan (2004: 49) asserts that the phrase “الْحَفَاءَ الْعُرَاةَ رِعَاءِ الشَّاءِ” is a metonymic formula for assigning important responsibilities to inexperienced people, and those debased of the wilderness, more often than not underprivileged, will be kings or leaders. The living style develops and their life becomes apposite for them. Accordingly, their concentration is on skyscrapers and the destruction of religion contrary to the principles of the Holy Quran and prophetic tradition.

The aforementioned portrayal in only few words, as regards the shepherds who are debased people and seek to have power over the world, is unattainable to duplicate as the Messenger (ρ) did. I&J added the word “destitute” as a modifier for the word “shepherds”. “Destitute” means “needy”, “impoverished”, “poor”, in addition to “debased people” to a lesser degree. Yet, it still requires the meaning of “non-professionals”. I&J has not specified the type of shepherds proposed by the Messenger (ρ) as the SL identified them as “shepherds of the sheep” “رِعَاءِ الشَّاءِ”. Consequently, translation loss for part of the meaning occurs. I&J followed the literal procedure and the translation nevertheless requires more elaboration.

The literal procedure is also utilized by A-H. He specified the kind of shepherds as “shepherds of the sheep” simulating the original. As a fact, Arabic culture differentiates between the “shepherds of the sheep” and the “shepherds of the camels”. A note here to support the translation is indispensable so that the TL reader may recognize the value of the

dissimilarity. As noted, both translators faced a trouble in depicting the meaning of “debased people and non-professionals” and both translations should inform the reader regarding the purpose of using this metonymy by the Messenger (ρ). To do this, translators may add a footnote to describe those “debased people and non-professionals as being the directors of this world” along with their association with a Doomsday sign so that a satisfactory depiction may succeed to provide more information in this regard.

Example (B):

A metonymic formula is also identified in the fifth Hadith illustrated below. It is manifested that this formula is very easier said than done to characterize even using many ways owing to the divergence between the deep metonymic meaning and the item illustrated. The context of this Hadith escorts the person who reads to the remote prospect to realize the agony and the complications the Messenger (ρ) encountered so as to enlighten the humanity with the heavenly message of the Islam and to initiate a system of life. The following illustration underlines the metonymic formula in Hadith No.5:

SL: مَنْ أَحَدَّثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا، مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ، فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

I&J: "He who innovates something in this **matter of ours** that is not of it will have it rejected."

A-H: "Whosoever introduces into this **affair of ours (i.e. into Islam)** something that does not belong to it, it is to be rejected."

Ibn Rajab (2007:104) declares that by the blessing of Allah, the Messenger (ρ) was successful in spreading Islam and when Allah inspired to him that there will happen some events in the future after his bereavement, that will change some teachings of Islam, he used the embedded style to confirm that the mission is accomplished and the message is clearly identifiable and nothing is hidden.

Al-Teebi (1997, vol.1:135) maintains that the metonymic formula here is signified in the selection of the word “أمرنا” that can be glossed as “our matter /affair” to denote “Islam”. The Prophet chooses the pleasurable word “أمرنا” “our matter/affair” instead of “ديننا” “our religion” to inform the followers that “this” religious conviction belongs to us and that every effort should be made to support. Subsequently, Muslim are accountable for defending it. “This matter” ought to be their primary interest.

Amazingly, the use of the deictic word “هذا” “this” signifies the idea that this religion can be depicted using tangible reference. Furthermore, the religion is devoid of any imperfection. Anyone who wishes to modify “in this

religion”, entails that he/she discovered an imperfection and this is improper comprehension.(ibid)

The literal procedure is followed by I&J. As discussed earlier, the current structure of the sentence is incapable of expressing the entire the meaning implied in the SL. The TL sentence is indefinite and incomprehensible. The structure of the Hadith is in the past; yet it refers to the present and future tense for the reason that the main verb “أَحَدَثَ” “introduce /innovate” denotes bringing in something novel to religion. In this Hadith, all Muslims are warned against every particular characteristic that may create any variation to this religion. I&J appropriately rendered the past into the present and hence indicates future reference. Nevertheless, translating “أَمْرَنَا” into “this matter of ours” fails to express the SL meaning as it lacks mentioning the one concerned with “this matter”. For that reason, reference is not specified.

A-H also followed the same procedure rendering the past tense of the SL into the present with a slight change using “introduces” as the main verb. As regards translating the word “أَمْرَنَا”, A-H, besides the literal rendering of the SL, provided a note between parenthesis “into Islam” aiming at notifying the TL reader regarding the intended message behind “this affair”. This elucidates the translation and indicates the implied message of the Messenger (ρ) as stated.

In the process of translation, to give a short rendering to conform to the original will cause a loss in meaning instead of clarifying things for TL the reader. Accordingly, the TL reader may not comprehend meaning as done by the SL receptor since there are additional information missing.

Example (C):

The companion of the Messenger Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari reported a Hadith Qudsi underlines another example to be considered:

SL: "فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيُحْمَدِ اللَّهَ ، وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ ، فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ"

I&J: "so let him who finds good praise Allah, and **let him who finds other than that** blame no one but himself."

A-H: "so he who finds good should praise Allah and **he who does not find that** should not blame anyone but his ownself."

Al-Teebi (1997, vol.2: 244) observed that the image of penalty along with the context of the unique structure of condition both underline the metonymic style. The Messenger (ρ) stated that “one who observes good let him/her pay tribute to Allah” and the phrase denotes a virtuous individual guided by the commands of the Messenger (ρ) and obtained such standing.

The Messenger's (ρ) statement "وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ" "lit. who observes other than that" is believed to be a warning for the dispossessed of the aforesaid standing for the reason that he/she resumed committing sins and did not ask forgiveness. For that reason, metonymic formula is indirectly utilized by the Messenger (ρ) as a hint to the "evil". As an alternative of stating "who observes evil acts, made by him/her (at the Day of Judgment)", the Messenger (ρ) utilized "other than that" to educate Muslims how to be respectful by avoiding the use of unpleasant words or injurious statements.

Agreement is obvious here as both translators use the literal procedure and that asserts the well-mannered wording of the Messenger (ρ). A note indicating the implied meaning of "evil" can be added to assert a more proper representation of the meaning with the intention that the TL reader might not be misguided and the Prophet's warning becomes more comprehensible. The note might be as follows: "who observes other than that (evil actions)". The note can assist in recognizing a well-mannered style of stating "evil actions".

Example (D):

The last instance to elaborate is underlined in a Hadith narrated by the companion of the prophet 'Arbad Bin Sariyah. The following illustration highlights the example:

SL: "فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ، عَضُوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِذِ،"

I&J: "so you must keep to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Rashidite Caliphs **cling to them stubbornly.**"

A-H: "So for you is to observe my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs, **holding on to them with your molar teeth.**"

A gloss translation for the metonymic formula "عَضُوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِذِ" can be "bite on it with your molar teeth".

It is believed that the *Iman* "faith" of someone still to be imperfect if not two compulsory features attained: that the teachings of the Prophet must be followed and that he/she should love the Prophet more than everything. So, a person must firmly cling to *Sunnah* (tradition) of the Prophet with his/her "molar teeth" "نَوَاجِذِ". (Ibn Rajab, 2007: 350)

Al-Teebi (1997, vol.3: 16) outlined the metonymic formula here stating that the meaning of which is "to be cautious so as not to depart the *Sunnah*". The *Sunnah* "tradition" of the Prophet (ρ) is likened to a concrete object that can be handled by hands as well as being held with teeth, specifically molar teeth which are very strong and when something is caught by them, it is very hard to regain.

I&J rendered the expression “cling to them stubbornly” using the equivalence procedure and gave the literal meaning in a footnote. I&J rendition can be said to be based on their conclusion that the TL reader may find the text bizarre as well as bewildering. This conclusion is based on the standpoint that the Messenger (ρ) is tackling an abstract notion then concludes the discourse by transferring an abstract idea into a concrete one. *Sunnah* “tradition” is an abstract notion which is reassigned a tangible status an individual can hold with “molar” teeth. The style of the Prophet is inimitable and is believed to be strange for non-Arabic speakers as well those who are not acquainted with the prophetic manner of sending messages. Following such a procedure, the powerfulness of the original style is undervalued. The above-mentioned footnote may assist realizing the original message. However, it fails to replace the original meaning.

A-H used literal procedure to render the imaginative metonymic formula through imitating the original. It is thought that A-H's idea for such rendition is to obligate the text receptor to consider the peculiarity of the original text and hence increase the receptor's queries concerning the message and its peculiarity. Novelty of representation is attained following this procedure. Utilizing such methods, unquestionably, grants the message a beauty and a power unattainable via straightforward words. Provoking inquiry results in understanding.

For some metonymic expressions in which the translation closely maintains the original message, equivalence procedure is used as the Messenger (ρ) simulated a universal image and the duty of the receptor is to recollect such images. The purpose for this use is related to the manner the translator tackles the text. The divergence between Arabic and English as well as the absence of direct rendition for some expressions within the metonymic structure are possible justifications for the translators' use of the transposition procedure which obligate the utilization of a phrase rather than a similar word category. To exemplify, the verb “يحل” “lit. to turn it into “Halal” or (legal)” in which the two translations used dissimilar structures. A-H used “be lawfully shed” while I&J used “be legally spilt”.

The examples under consideration are more representative rather exhaustive as the other examples need a separate study. Suffice it to say here that both translators follow the same procedures in rendering all the items that are identified in this collection. The distinction in A-H's translation is that he attaches notes and footnotes in most cases to reinforce the translation. A-H attempts to tell the reader that the translation is not sufficient to convey the meaning and there is an urgent need for footnotes and notes.

5. Conclusion

Religious texts utilizing figurative structures are perplexing when translated. Care is required as texts are sensitive. Religious teachings have to be presented to the TL reader in a way that reflect the original. Strategies adopted by translators reflect the narrow choice left for them. The descriptive analysis pinpoints that in many cases the two translators adopted similar procedures taking into considerations that equivalence procedures have to be a compounded by additional notes to elucidate meaning. In example (D) above I&J used equivalence procedure while A-H used literal procedure that shows how the original address ideas. It is noted that domestication procedures may deprive the TL reader from being knowledgeable with nuances of meaning. Every single word here counts. Losing the quintessence of the original is a great loss.

Retaining the strangeness of the original leads to preserve the identity which is very important in religious texts. The cultural value of the original is part of the meaning and should be preserved. The case of “عضوا عليها بالنواجذ” is a clear example of misrepresenting the original. In translating religious texts, foreignization strategies are recommended to give the original image along with the strangeness so that the TL reader knowledge is enriched. We can say that the TL reader have to know that what is read is a translation and there is a loss in meaning. Domestication strategies deprive the reader from sensing the beautifulness of the original. Peculiarity of the text is part of the meaning. In such religious texts, cautious is needed as they are not usual. They are religious commands.

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