Translatability of Metonymy in Prophet Muhammad’s Traditions: A Preliminary Study

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Abstract

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The present study aims at answering the questions “whether the translatability of metonymy in the Prophet’s Traditions is possible or not, and to what extent.” The data have been extracted from thirty of the metonymic Prophetic Hadiths categorized into seven sections conforming to a semantic framework, i.e., conceptual meanings. And six available English renditions of some of the collections of Hadiths have been relied upon: Sahih-i-Bukhāry by Muhsin Khan (1976 and 1990) Sahih Muslim by Matraji (1993), Sunan Abū Dawūd by Hasan (1988), Riyāḍ al-Ḍuṣārī liḥīn by Abū Ǧašr (1993) and Matraji (1993), and Miṣḳatul-Maṣābīḥ by Karim (1988).

It has been found out that translating such highly elevated, inimitable and purposeful Prophetic metonymic texts is problematic due to various obstacles at the top of which is “culture.” Hence, it has been shown that most translators inclined to adopt the functionally-oriented option in their renditions into English. This strategy, though succeeded in
transferring the exact content, most probably, it fell short of preserving the beauties of the text. To put it differently, it has been inferred that there is a kind of loss throughout the translation of such figurative texts.

The study is concluded with many recommendations one of the most vital of which is the call for the emergence of a comprehensive translation theory to be applied on such types of texts.