



The Translation of Selected Cultural Items in Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths: A Descriptive and Analytical Study

Mimouna Zitouni¹ , Ahad Alzahrani² , Nouf Al Kous³ , Sultana Almutlaq⁴ ,
Abdul-Qader Abdul-Ghafour⁵ , Bahia Zemni⁶ 

Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Saudi Arabia & Queen Arwa University, Yemen

Abstract: Cultural words usually pose some challenges to translators, especially when they translate texts into languages which are culturally different. This study investigates the translation of cultural items in The Forty Hadiths by Imam Al-Nawawi. It adopted a qualitative approach for selecting and analyzing the translation of culturally-bound items of the selected Prophet Mohammed's hadiths posted on the Web by Sunnah.com. Moreover, it used Lambert and Van Gorp's (1985) method to examine the translations and Vinay and Darbelnet's translation strategies to identify the procedures selected by the translators to convey the meanings of the cultural contents. The findings indicated that the translators implemented various procedures to convey the cultural meanings of the hadiths. However, whenever confronted with difficult categories, due to the lexical, syntactic, and cultural differences between Arabic and English, they were inconsistent in their choices of translation procedures. Furthermore, they did not succeed in rendering the aesthetic features of the Prophet's utterances, an issue that is yet to be addressed by researchers. The present study provides implications which could be useful for translators, especially translators of religious texts.

Keywords: Islamic Translation, Cultural Translation, Translation of Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths, Vinay And Darbelnet's Translation Procedures, Lambert And Van Gorp's Descriptive Model.

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Corresponding Author:

Abdul-Qader Abdul-Ghafour
Alsaaqafabdulqader2017@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Imam Al-Nawawi is a Muslim scholar who collected the Prophet Muhammed's hadiths, i.e., speeches, utterances, or sayings, in the 13th century. His collection encapsulates the major teachings of the sunnah, the Prophetic tradition, conveyed in eloquent and elegant utterances characterized by evocative terseness of expression, the rhetorical richness of meaning, and exquisite beauty of style. The hadiths' genuine and effortless stylistic sophistication and meaningfulness have challenged most commentators, let alone translators. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the difficulties and challenges posed by this kind of religious texts, the increasing demand in recent years for Islamic-related materials in languages other than Arabic has prompted translation specialists and practitioners to exert themselves in producing better translations of the Prophet's hadiths into many languages, including English, which has become the lingua franca of the globalized world.

In fact, translating religious texts is extremely challenging and problematic (Al-Harashsheh, 2013). Part of the problem arises from what Dweik and Khaleel (2017) identify as the text's 'fixed and constant language' inherent in religious discourse, which always implies, in the words of Dickins et al., "the existence of a spiritual world that is not fictive but has its own external realities and truths" (Dickins et al., 2002: 178). Another problem in translating religious texts is the cultural discourse embedded within them. In this respect, Nida (1964) has pointed out the difficulty of translating cultural connotations and explained that the translator should determine which cultural aspects take priority in translation: those of the source language, the target language, or a combination of both. In his view, when concentrating on the semantic and pragmatic meaning, priorities should be given to the cultural elements of the target text. However, this choice might seem some problematic for some translators, who would then argue in favor of the aesthetic and rhetoric features of the Prophetic discourse.

Debates like this will never be appeased because Islamic texts exhibit all the features and translation difficulties inherent in religious, literary, and cultural discourses, as underlined by transl-

^{1,2,3,4,6} Translation Department/College of Languages/ Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Saudi Arabia

⁵ Translation Department / Queen Arwa University, Yemen.

-ation specialists. For example, Elfaki (2018) observes that the problem of translating them stems from the linguistic and cultural differences between Arabic, a Semitic language, and English. However, when it comes to the translation of the Prophet's speech, an added difficulty arises as to

how to render his unique linguistic and rhetorical skills. Indeed, the Prophet is known to be the most competent user of Arabic (Al-Suyuti, 1907), and his hadiths often coined terms and concepts hitherto unknown or unused in that language. The Prophet underlines this rhetorical feature of his speech when he explains that his pithy utterances always carry out more than one meaning.

This study is concerned with the translation of the Prophet's speech and addresses the issue of its translatability by going over a contemporary English translation of a number of cultural terms and concepts contained in Imam Al-Nawawi's collection of forty hadiths. The study raises two main research questions with regard to the cultural and religious features of the selected items:

How are the cultural and religious features of the selected items conveyed in the target language? What is/are the strategies used by the translator to transfer them into English? How is the meaning conveyed in translation? What are the meanings and features of the hadiths lost in translation? What are the cases of untranslatable? In answering these questions, it is hoped that the findings could contribute to a better understanding of the Prophet's speech by English speakers and also improve the quality of Islamic texts' translations, given that the field suffers from a lack of accredited terminology.

2. Literature Review

The contemporary developments in translation scholarship may be the reason behind the positive change of heart in the Arab-Muslim world's attitude towards translation in general and the translation of religious texts, more specifically. Today, the Middle East is witnessing a powerful interest in religious translation and translation studies, as various projects are being carried out to convey the meanings of Islam's sacred books into various languages, with a particular focus on English. Moreover, established and genuine translations of various Islamic books are scrutinized in the light of modern translation theories in order to establish their value and to uncover their methodologies. Al-Nawawi's book under study here is no exception since it has already attracted the attention of translators and researchers alike (Al-Hussein, Eghfier, Abujamra, and Dango, 2017).

Hadith translation and translation studies are relatively new research subjects when compared to the translation of the Quran and Quranic translation studies, because few hadith books have been translated into English. In fact, the first contributions to the translation of the Prophet's sayings date back to the 1930s, when some Western converts to Islam started to render their meanings into that language. This is the case, for example, of Muhammad Asad (alias Leopold Weiss), who published in translation the first five books of Bukhari's Sahih between 1935 and 1938 in Lahore. More recently, in 1997, Muhammad Muhsin Khan performed another English translation of the same book. However, translations of multi-volume works such as that of Bukhari are rare, and the efforts of contemporary translators seem to concentrate on smaller books, such as Al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths*, which has already been subject to a number of translations, among which the one considered here, and which has already attracted a few studies (Al-Hussein et al. 2017, Mutar 2014).

Hadith translation studies mobilize various translation theories to analyze the overall aspects of the Prophet's discourse. Those aspects are varied and range from the texts' conceptual meanings emerging from juristic, exegetical, or any other religious-related perspectives to esthetic, rhetorical, and linguistic features, including semantics, lexis, and syntax (Al-Rahawan, 2019). Other research foci in Hadith translation studies are linked to the relation of the text to context and how their communicative function is transferred into the target text (Al-Megrab, 1997). Furthermore, the transliteration of Islamic religious terms is the other research subject explored by translation scholars, who tend to assess which of transliteration or translation is more suitable depending on the semantic context (Hassan, 2016).

Al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths* is a religious handbook which encapsulates the basic teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Its popularity among ordinary Muslims and scholars alike has prompted a number of English translations, as well as studies of those translations. For example, in "The Translation of Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths, A Comparative Study", Al-Hussein Mohsen et al. (2017) bring to comparison a selection of eight hadiths' translations by three different translators (Sidheeque, Badi, and an unnamed author from 4muhammed.com). The study underscores the relevance of religious references and the importance of Arabic grammar to understand the source text (ST) as the first step for a reliable translation. However, beyond these general prescriptions, the authors do not explore the procedures of the selected translations, nor do they confront the issues raised by the presence of untranslatable idioms and terms.

Another case in point is Mutar's study (2014), which carries out a descriptive analysis of the strategies used by translators to convey the meanings of the Prophet's forty hadiths. The researcher highlights the translators' diverging stands as regards the use of translation procedures and argues that the Prophet's elevated style is beyond the translators'

skills. Mutar concludes that the rendition of the hadiths' cultural components is always achieved at the expense of one another.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Islamic scholars are traditionally wary of their sacred books' translations for the best of reasons. Indeed, translation is always enmeshed with ideology, and the relationship between the two, as demonstrated by translation specialists such as Venuti (1995) and Hatim & Mason (2005), has always been very complicated. To understand this concern, one needs to define ideology and show that it is a fuzzy concept, which always encompasses the personal, the social, and the political, and is most often linked to the concomitant notions of the value system, belief, power, and Power struggle. For example, for Simpson, ideology is "the tacit assumptions, beliefs, and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups" (cited in Hatim & Mason, 2005: 144). Fairclough (2013: 71), on the other hand, extends the concept's scope and claims that "ideology invests language in various ways at various levels".

The contamination of language by ideology raises, therefore, the issues of the truth value and validity of translations that have always been at the core of translation theory and might give credit to traditional Islamic scholars' cautious attitude towards the practice's ability to convey the meanings of sacred texts properly. After all, doesn't the multiplicity of translations testify to the different, sometimes conflicting, ideologies that underlie them? In this regard, Al-Hussein (2017) argues that translations of religious texts are always controversial because they either attack or defend religions as a way to understand them.

However, currently, translation scholars unanimously agree that the untranslatable features of texts can never be completely done with and that the best way to cope with them is to encourage retranslation. As a result, translators have grown increasingly aware of the diversity and plurality of translations, their own translation intentions and objectives, the underlying consequences of their choice of texts and strategies, as well as their linguistic medium and their representations of cultures and politics. Furthermore, they have also taken hold of the controversial notion of the untranslatable, which used to foster the sectarian view of translation by proclaiming the impossibility of conveying faithfully and convincingly the meaning of sacred texts. For example, this is the case of Berman (1999), who sees the untranslatable as a value and one of the text's self-affirming modes that need to be preserved.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus of the Study

This study adopts the qualitative approach for selecting and analyzing the data of the study. It also uses the stratified sample method to study the translation of cultural words and phrases extracted with permission from sunnah.com, which has undertaken the translation of forty hadiths collected by Imam Al-Nawawi and republished in 2009 by Dar Al-Minhaj under the title أربعون حديثاً في الأحاديث الصحيحة النوية (*Forty Hadiths in El-Nawawi's Collection of Authentic Hadiths*). For convenience and simplicity reasons, the selected items are classified into three categories in the discussion: Hadiths with 1-3 cultural items, Hadiths with 4-6 cultural items, and Hadiths with more than 6 cultural items. The following principles are followed in the analysis:

- Repeated words, phrases, and phrases with one-word changes are studied in one context only
- To save repetitions, only the singular form of words is dealt with
- cultural-bond words (such as / صلاة/ Salat, / سنة/ Sunnah) are not analyzed because they have received enough academic investigation (See Ghazala, 2014, and Elewa, 2014a and 2014b).

3.2. Methods of Analysis

This study is underpinned by descriptive translation studies, which first originated in the work of French scholars Vinay and Darbelnet in the 1950s before it became a fully-fledged theory in the 1980s, in the works of various authors, namely Gideon Toury and his influential *Descriptive Translation Studies – And Beyond* (1995). Because it combines theory with case studies, Descriptive Translation Studies have survived the cultural and ideological turn in translation studies at the end of the last millennium, and, after a period of relative waning, it has returned to inform the works of many researchers. For example, one of those works which fall within the same gambit as the one conducted here is "A Comparative Study of Three English Translations of Yasin Surah Regarding Vinay and Darbelnet Strategies" by Mojtaba Aghajani and Goldis Seyedi Jalali (2019). However, the recent resurgence of descriptive translation is not limited to religious discourse since it is applied to literary works as well, as in Mona Arhire's "Cătălina Iliescu-Gheorghiu: a polysystemic model for the comparative analysis of drama from the perspective of descriptive translation studies" (2020).

a- Lambert and Van Gorp (1985)

The description of the selected hadiths under study relies on the parameters established by Lambert and Van Gorp (1985), who have also offered a complex network of relations among literary systems that are essential in any

descriptive study of literary translations. Rosa (2010/2016) explains that Lambert and Van Gorp's methodology means to take the translated text as it is while considering the features underlying its nature. Lambert and Van Gorp's analytical categories are four in number:

- Preliminary data: they include information on title and title pages, metatexts, and general translation strategies, and lead to hypotheses on the macro- and micro-structural levels
- Macro-level data: they include information on text division, titles, and presentation of sections, acts, internal narrative structure, dramatic intrigue or poetic structure, as well as authorial comment, and lead to hypotheses on the micro-structure
- Micro-level data: they include the selection of words, dominant grammatical patterns, and formal literary structures, forms of speech reproduction, narrative point of view, modality, and language levels, and lead to a reconsideration of macro-structural data
- Systemic context data: oppositions between macro- and micro-levels, as well as intertextual and inter-systemic relations

b- Vinay and Darbelnet's Translation Procedures

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) propose a translation model which suits this study. Underpinned in comparative stylistics between English and French, it is intended to examine "translation shifts," a term first introduced by Catford (1965) to mean "an SL [source language] item at one linguistic level has a TL [target language] translation equivalent at a different level." The term 'shift', therefore, refers to the linguistic changes that happen in the process of translation. (Munday, 2016). Vinay and Darbelnet's translation model comprises seven procedures, which fall into two main strategies: direct and oblique translations.

1. Direct Translation: It happens whenever "structural parallelism" or "metalinguistic parallelism" between two language systems occurs. It involves the following procedures:

- Borrowing: it is used in the case of a translation gap or for the purpose of adding a stylistic dimension
- Calque: a special variation of borrowing, it entails the borrowing of SL structure or expression and translating it into the TL.
- Literal Translation: defined as "the direct transfer of an SL text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate TL text" (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995: 33), it is used in the translation between two languages belonging to the same family.

2. Oblique Translation: When parallelism is absent between two languages, oblique translation is favoured. It involves four procedures:

- Transposition: it means to change the lexical item's class in the process of translation and to preserve meaning.
- Modulation: it is a "variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view." (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995) The variation can be free or obligatory, provided that it conveys the text's sentiment.
- Equivalence: In this procedure, translators use equivalent items in the TL to render the idioms, proverbs, and common expressions of the SL.
- Adaptation: it is used whenever the SL message is not available or doesn't function in the TL culture, as is often the case in literary texts. In this procedure, the message and the situation are recreated to avoid the rendering of a connotation different from that intended by the SL writer.

4. Findings

4.1. Analysis of the Translation of the Selected Hadiths

A. Macro-level

All hadiths under analysis begin with the chain of narrators and end with the citations in the two languages. They are punctuated by commas in the ST, whereas in the TT, periods are consistently used, which is the norm of English. However, the translation is less consistent with *صلى الله عليه وسلم* / *and / رضي الله عنه* /, which usually accompany the names of the Prophet and his companions, respectively. These two expressions are sometimes respectively translated into "peace and blessings of Allah be upon him" and "may Allah be satisfied with him/her." At other times, they are replaced by the original Arabic text *ﷺ* for the former and the clipped form (ra) for the latter.

B- Micro-level

The translation of El-Nawawi's forty hadiths by sunnah.com reveals the following: except in one case, all the Prophets' companions' names are fully transliterated; most of the culture-specific items in the ST are properly translated in the TL; except in very few cases, structure/syntactic and stylistic (e.g. repetitions) parallelisms are respected; so are also borrowings since the translators seem to favour this procedure as well as equivalents. The former, however, are sometimes retained between brackets. Explanatory parenthetical notes are sometimes added within the core of the TT. Two corrections can be pointed out, though; one, /الصدر/, which is inaccurately rendered as "breast" instead of "chest/heart"; two, /رواه/ is omitted in hadith No. 30.

4.2. The Study of the Translation Procedures

4.2.1. Hadiths with 1 to 3 Cultural Items

Table 1: Hadith No. 3

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أُمِّ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا، قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ" [رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ]، [وَمُسْلِمٌ] وَفِي رَوَايَةٍ لِمُسْلِمٍ: مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ.	On the authority of the mother of the faithful, Aisha (ra), who said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "He who innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) that is not of it will have it rejected (by Allah)." [Bukhari & Muslim] In another version in Muslim, it reads: "He who does an act which we have not commanded, will have it rejected (by Allah)".

This hadith warns against new worship practices that might be introduced to Islam. The word /أحدث/ is literally translated into "innovates", which is one of Vinay and Darbelnet's direct translation modules. This translation is too general, however, and does not specify or explain what it is that cannot be invented in Islam. Thus, Muslim readers may be led to think wrongly that "innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam)" extends to mean technological inventions that assist the sick and the elderly in their daily religious practices, such as ablutions or prayers. The phrase /أمرنا هذا/, too, is literally translated as "this matter of ours". However, in this instance, the translation is followed by a note in brackets to explain that the Islamic matter in question is not Islam itself. The addition helps the reader to understand better the Hadith and situate it in the worship context. The literal translation in the above text is extended to the rendering of the third culturally specific item, namely the phrase /فهو رد/, whose meaning is conveyed by "rejected", a passive form followed by a parenthetical note which mentions Allah as the agent of the rejection. This translation note clears every ambiguity regarding who will reject worship innovations. Without this added note, readers may think that the Prophet is the sentence's subject, which is obviously wrong from the perspective of the Islamic faith.

Table 2: Hadith No. 22

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: "أَنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: أَرَأَيْتَ إِذَا صَلَّيْتَ الْمَكْتُوباتِ، وَصُمْتَ رَمَضَانَ، وَأَحَلَّلتَ الْحَلَالَ، وَحَرَمْتَ الْحَرَامَ، وَلَمْ أزدْ عَلَى ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا؛ أَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ." [رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ].	On the authority of Abu Abdullah Jabir bin Abdullah al-Ansaree (may Allah be pleased with him) that: A man questioned the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "Do you think that if I perform the obligatory prayers, fast in Ramadhan, treat as lawful that which is halal, and treat as forbidden that which is haram, and do not increase upon that [in voluntary good deeds], then I shall enter Paradise?" He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, "Yes." [Muslim]

This hadith details the Muslim worship duties and explains the attitude toward them, thanks to the question of one of the Prophet's companions. One of the duties is the /المكتوبات/, modulated into "obligatory prayers." Adding the adjective "obligatory" distinguishes this form of prayer (Salat /صلاة/) from optional prayers. This is a necessary addition to ensure that the reader is aware that the prayers in question are the five obligatory ones that establish the second pillar of Islam. As for the translation of the second and third cultural items, /أحللت الحلال/ and /أحرمت الحرام/, the phrases are translated using multiple modules. First, /أحللت/ and /أحرمت/ are conveyed by the use of oblique translation. In this context, a literal translation would have been impossible due to the fact that there are no equivalent words in the target language. To overcome this translation difficulty, the translators describe the terms in English. Halal and Haram /حلال/ and /حرام/ are aspects of the Islamic law that determine what a Muslim should do or say; it is indeed a good choice to translate them as "treat as lawful" and "treat as forbidden," respectively. However, /حلال/ and /حرام/ are also borrowed into the English language within what comes next in the TT. The two borrowings are likely to leave readers who are not familiar with Arabic out.

Table 3: Hadith No. 32

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ سَعْدِ بْنِ مَالِكِ بْنِ سِنَانِ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "لَا ضَرَرَ وَلَا ضِرَارَ". حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ، رَوَاهُ ابْنُ مَاجَةَ [راجع رقم: 2341]، وَالدَّارَقُطْنِيُّ [رقم: 228/4]، وَغَيْرُهُمَا مُسْنَدًا.	On the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: There should be neither harming (darar) nor reciprocating harm (dirar). A hasan hadeeth related by Ibn Majah, ad-Daraqutnee and others as a musnad hadeeth.

The above Prophetic saying provides, in a terse and highly eloquent expression, one of the most important principles in the Muslim's social behaviour, toward self and others. The two culturally specific items in this hadith are conveyed via the oblique translation module, followed by in-text translation notes that translate them into English. In this case, oblique modulation conveys well the items that cannot be rendered word-to-word in the target language. However, according to Alothaymin's commentary (n.d.), the meaning of / ضرر / refers to unintentional harm inflicted on oneself or others, whereas / ضرار / refers to intentional harm. The plurality of the two concepts' meanings and their alliteration show that they belong to the category of the untranslatable. To overcome the impossibility of their direct translation, the translators could have included this information in the translation notes in order to clear any confusion or misunderstanding.

Table 4: Hadith No. 7

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ أَبِي رُقَيْبَةَ تَمِيمِ بْنِ أَوْسِ الدَّارِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "الَّذِينَ النَّصِيحَةَ". قُلْنَا: لِمَنْ؟ قَالَ: "لِلَّهِ، وَلِكِتَابِهِ، وَلِرَسُولِهِ، وَلِأَيْمَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ". [رواه مسلم]	On the authority of Tameem ibn Aus ad-Daree (ra): The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The deen (religion) is naseehah (advice, sincerity)." We said, "To whom?" He (ﷺ) said, "To Allah, His Book, His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk." [Muslim]

This hadith exhorts Muslims to / نصيحة / a social and moral virtue translated within a parenthetical note in terms of advice and sincerity. The first cultural word in the translation is / عامتهم /, conveyed by "their common folk", which arguably stands as a cultural equivalent. However, besides / عامتهم /, two other words are worth investigating in this hadith: / الدين / and / نصيحة /. Arguably, / الدين / translates as 'religion', its English equivalent. However, / نصيحة / has rich complications in the TL, and selecting the available equivalent, i.e., advice, would not convey the meanings embedded in the term. This might explain why the translators combine the procedures of borrowing and addition to overcome the problem of equivalence. In so doing, they ensure that the rich meaning of an important Islamic virtue, untranslatable in a single word, is fully transmitted to the reader.

Table 5: Hadith No. 31

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ أَبِي الْعَبَّاسِ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدِ السَّاعِدِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! دَلَّنِي عَلَى عَمَلٍ إِذَا عَمِلْتُهُ أَحَبَّنِي اللَّهُ وَأَحَبَّنِي النَّاسُ؛ فَقَالَ: "ارْزُقْ فِي الدُّنْيَا بِحُبِّكَ لِلَّهِ، وَارْزُقْ فِيمَا عِنْدَ النَّاسِ بِحُبِّكَ لِلنَّاسِ". حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ، رَوَاهُ ابْنُ مَاجَةَ [رقم: 4102]، وَغَيْرُهُ بِإِسْنَادٍ حَسَنَةٍ.	On the authority of Abu al-'Abbas Sahl bin Sa'ad as-Sa'idee (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, direct me to an act which, if I do it, [will cause] Allah to love me and the people to love me." So he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Renounce the world and Allah will love you, and renounce what the people possess, and the people will love you." A hasan hadeeth related by Ibn Majah and others with good chains of authorities.

This is another Prophetic advice, this time on the Muslims' relationships with others and how they should behave toward life's riches. The word / الزهد / is at the heart of the statement; in Arabic, it encompasses various meanings, most of which are related to disinterestedness in life's pleasures. In *Lesan Arab* / الزهد / is used in religious discourse only, especially against desire and "against life's all things" (See Maajim.com). For Alothaymin (2005), / الزهد / is higher than piety, which makes it a specific concept with rich complications that can't be found in the TL. Therefore, the translator's use of (renounce) can be viewed as a form of reformulation which selects the nearest TL equivalent to transfer the intended message of the SL term.

Table 6: Hadith No. 17

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ أَبِي يَعْلَى شَدَّادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْإِحْسَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، فَإِذَا قَتَلْتُمْ فَأُخْسِنُوا الْقَتْلَةَ، وَإِذَا ذَبَحْتُمْ فَأُخْسِنُوا الذَّبْحَةَ، وَلِئِذَا أَحَدَكُمْ شَفَرْتَهُ، وَلِئِذَا دَبَّحْتَهُ." [رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.]	On the authority of Abu Ya'la Shaddad bin Aws (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Verily Allah has prescribed Ihsan (proficiency, perfection) in all things. So if you kill, then kill well; and if you slaughter, then slaughter well. Let each one of you sharpen his blade and let him spare suffering to the animal he slaughters." [Muslim]

Like the majority of hadiths in this section, this one defines another Islamic virtue in a single, rich and complex concept, /الإحسان/. The importance of this concept and its absence in the target language has prompted the translator to transliterate it into English. In Islam, /إحسان/ is a polysemous concept, and one of its most common meanings is the act of performing good deeds (see *Almaany*). However, in the present context, it means performing something in an efficient and competent manner. It's an Islamic-specific item that carries various connotations. In the TL, there is no single term that corresponds semantically to /إحسان/. This is why the translator uses the borrowing procedure to compensate for the linguistic gap. In addition to borrowing, the translator adds two words between brackets (proficiency and perfection) that convey a more concrete meaning of the ST word. The three strategies harnessed to convey a single religious term demonstrate that /إحسان/ is a case of the untranslatable.

4.2.2. Hadiths with 4 to 6 Cultural Items

Table 7: Hadith No. 6

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ النَّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "إِنَّ الْخَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ، وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا أُمُورٌ مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ فَقَدْ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعَرْضِهِ، وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي الْحَرَامِ، كَالرَّاعِي يَرْعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَرْتَعَ فِيهِ، أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمَى، أَلَا وَإِنَّ حِمَى اللَّهِ مَحَارِمُهُ، أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ." [رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ]، [وَمُسْلِمٌ]	On the authority of an-Nu'man ibn Basheer (ra), who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, "That which is lawful is clear, and that which is unlawful is clear, and between the two of them are doubtful matters about which many people do not know. Thus he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honor, but he who falls into doubtful matters [eventually] falls into that which is unlawful, like the shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, all but grazing therein. Truly every king has a sanctuary, and truly Allah's sanctuary is His prohibitions. Truly in the body, there is a morsel of flesh, which, if it be whole, all the body is whole, and which, if it is diseased, all of [the body] is diseased. Truly, it is the heart." [Bukhari & Muslim]

To discriminate what is lawful in religion from what is not is the main theme of the above hadith. Using highly metaphorical language, the Prophet explains that the good heart is the source of all virtues because it allows the faithful to distinguish the good from the bad. The good is referred to as /الحلال/ in the ST and is modulated as "that which is lawful" in the TL. The same modulation procedure is used for the bad, referred to as /الحرام/, translated as "that which is unlawful". The Prophet calls the threshold zone between the good and the bad /مشتبهات/ and /الشبهات/, which are both translated obliquely as "doubtful matters", an adjectival phrase that cannot cover the rich semantic and figurative meanings of the two Arabic words. In what remains of the text, the translator modulates /استبرأ/ into "clears himself", literally translates /عرضه/ as "his honor", and uses "sanctuary" as the equivalent of /حِمى/. All in all, this hadith mobilizes most of Vinay and Darbelnet's translation procedures and testifies to the rhetorical proficiency of the Prophet's language.

Table 8: Hadith No. 27

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ النَّوَّاسِ بْنِ سَمْعَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ، وَالْإِثْمُ مَا خَاكَ فِي صَدْرِكَ، وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلِعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ" [رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ] وَعَنْ وَابِصَةَ بِنْتِ مَعْبِدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: "جِئْتِ سَأَلِ عَنِ الْبِرِّ؟ قُلْتُ: نَعَمْ. فَقَالَ: اسْتَفْتِ قَلْبَكَ، الْبِرُّ مَا اطْمَأْنَتْ	On the authority of an-Nawas bin Sam'an (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Righteousness is in good character, and wrongdoing is that which wavers in your soul, and which you dislike people finding out about. [Muslim] And on the authority of Wabisah bin Ma'bad (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "You have come to ask about righteousness." I said, "Yes." He (peace and blessings of

Source Text	Target Text
إِلَيْهِ النَّفْسُ، وَاطْمَأَنَّ إِلَيْهِ الْقَلْبُ، وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي النَّفْسِ وَتَرَدَّدَ فِي الصَّدْرِ، وَإِنْ أَفْتَاكَ النَّاسُ وَأَفْتَوْكَ. حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ، رَوَيْتَاهُ فِي مُسْنَدِي الْإِمَامَيْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ حَنْبَلٍ [رقم: 227/4]، وَالدَّارِمِيَّ [246/2] بِإِسْنَادٍ حَسَنٍ.	Allah be upon him) said, “Consult your heart. Righteousness is that about which the soul feels at ease, and the heart feels tranquil. And wrongdoing is that which weavers in the soul and causes uneasiness in the breast, even though people have repeatedly given their legal opinion [in its favour].” A good hadeeth transmitted from the Musnad of the two imams, Ahmed bin Hambal and Al- Darimi, with a good chain of authorities.

In the above hadith, the Prophet defines the subjective perception of *bi'r* / البر / in Islam by responding to a question from one of his companions. The translator transfers this term by the procedure of literal translation, as “Righteousness”. The same procedure is followed to render /أفتاك وأفتوك / into “have repeatedly given their legal opinion”. However, /الإثم / is obliquely translated into “wrongdoing”, whereas /حاك / is literally transferred as “weavers.” A more correct word for the latter, though, could have been itches.

Table 9: Hadith No. 30

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ أَبِي ثَعْلَبَةَ الْكُشَنِيِّ جُرْثُومِ بْنِ نَاشِرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى فَرَضَ فَرَائِضَ فَلَا تُضَيِّعُوهَا، وَحَدَّ حُدُودًا فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا، وَحَرَّمَ أَشْيَاءَ فَلَا تَنْتَهِكُوهَا، وَسَكَتَ عَنْ أَشْيَاءَ رَحْمَةً لَكُمْ غَيْرَ نِسْيَانٍ فَلَا تَبْحَثُوا عَنْهَا." حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ، رَوَاهُ الدَّارِقُطْنِيُّ "فِي سَنَنِهِ" [184/4]، وَغَيْرُهُ.	On the authority of Abu Tha'labah al-Kushanee — Jurthoom bin Nashir (may Allah be pleased with him) — that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Verily Allah ta'ala has laid down religious obligations (fara'id), so do not neglect them; and He has set limits, so do not overstep them; and He has forbidden some things, so do not violate them; and He has remained silent about some things, out of compassion for you, not forgetfulness — so do not seek after them. A hasan hadeeth narrated by ad-Daraqutnee and others.

This is a hadith which exhorts Muslims to follow the word of God and to put their trust in His omniscience and compassion. Like most previous ones, it is characterized by the use of figurative language, whereby rich semantic meanings are conveyed for the purpose of religious instruction. The translations of various religious concepts and culture-related words in the ST warrant some comment. “Religious obligations” literally translates /فرائض فرض / in the TT, as does “set limits” for /حَدَّ حُدُودًا / . “Laid down religious obligations”, however, is followed by a parenthetical note which borrows “fara'id” into English. “Forbidden”, on the other hand, is the TT equivalent of /حَرَّمَ /, and the sentence “He has forbidden some things” is a calque. Finally, the author returns to literal translation when he renders /تنتهكوها / as “do not violate them”.

4.2.3. Hadiths with more than 6 Cultural Items

Table 10: Hadith No. 23

Source Text	Target Text
عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْخَارِثِيِّ بْنِ عَاصِمِ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "الطَّهْرُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُ الْمِيزَانَ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُنِ -أَوْ: تَمْلَأُ- مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ نُورٌ، وَالصَّدَقَةُ بُرْهَانٌ، وَالصَّبْرُ ضِيَاءٌ، وَالْقُرْآنُ حُجَّةٌ لَكَ أَوْ عَلَيْكَ، كُلُّ النَّاسِ يَبْعُونَ، فَبَاعَ نَفْسَهُ فَمُعْتَقَتُهَا أَوْ مُوْبِقَتُهَا." [رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ].	On the authority of Abu Malik al-Harith bin Asim al-Asharee (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Purity is half of iman (faith). ‘Al-hamdu lillah (praise be to Allah)’ fills the scales, and ‘subhan-Allah (how far is Allah from every imperfection) and ‘Al-hamdulillah (praise be to Allah)’ fill that which is between heaven and earth. And the salah (prayer) is a light, and charity is a proof, and patience is illumination, and the Qur’an is a proof either for you or against you. Every person starts his day as a vendor of his soul, either freeing it or causing its ruin” [Muslim].

The above details the Muslim's daily incantations and their worth and exhorts them to the good deeds of charity and prayer. It concludes with a highly rhetorical statement that underscores the necessity to favour the immortal existence thereafter over life here and now. This hadith is full of words with rich and complex religious connotations, what makes it very difficult to translate. To begin with, /طهور / and /شطر / are literally translated as being “purity” and “part”, respectively. However, according to Salem (n.d), /طهور / means cleanliness, such as washing oneself before prayers, and also purity from worshipping deities other than God. Given this, one notices that the second part of the rich meaning is lost in the translation. In fact, instead of opting for an ambiguous full-equivalence, the translators could have addressed both meanings in a translation note in the way it is done in other hadiths. Both /برهان / and /حجة / are translated literally into “proof”. These cultural items are not synonyms and cannot be translated into the same English word. While it is acceptable to translate /برهان / into “proof”, the same cannot be used for /حجة /, which refers to the Noble Qur’an. On the Day of Judgment, the latter stands, the Prophet tells us, either as a testimony for the

Muslims who often read it or as evidence against them. The word “proof” is used in a positive context when someone is proven innocent; therefore, it cannot be used interchangeably in positive and negative situations. As for / بائع نفسه /, it is translated via calque. In this metaphor, the translation is accurate as the translation of the words following it gives more context into the poetic language used by the Prophet in the hadith. Finally, the translation of the culturally specific items / معتقها / and / موبقها / is both literal, which, as mentioned above, can be considered a proper translation because it suits the metaphoric language used in the hadith. However, the rhetoric of the hadith is very much lost in this translation.

Table 11: Hadith No. 28

Source Text	Target Text
<p>عَنْ أَبِي نَجِيحٍ الْعُرْبَانِيِّ بْنِ سَارِيَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: "وَعَظَّنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَوْعِظَةً وَجَلَّتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ، وَدَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ، فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! كَأَنَّهَا مَوْعِظَةٌ مُودِعٌ فَأَوْصِنَا، قَالَ: أَوْصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، وَالسَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ تَأَمَّرَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَبْدٌ، فَإِنَّهُ مِنْ يَعْشَنَ مِنْكُمْ فَسَيَرَى اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا، فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ، عَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِذِ، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُخَدَّنَاتِ الْأُمُورِ؛ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ." [رَوَاهُ أَبُو دَاوُدَ]، وَالتِّرْمِذِيُّ [رقم: 266] وَقَالَ: حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ</p>	<p>On the authority of Abu Najeeh al-'Irbaad ibn Saariyah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave us a sermon by which our hearts were filled with fear, and tears came to our eyes. So we said, "O Messenger of Allah! It is as though this is a farewell sermon, so counsel us." He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I counsel you to have taqwa (fear) of Allah and to listen and obey [your leader], even if a slave were to become your ameer. Verily he among you who lives long will see great controversy, so you must keep to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the Khulafa ar-Rashideen (the rightly guided caliphs), those who guide to the right way. Cling to it stubbornly [literally: with your molar teeth]. Beware of newly invented matters [in the religion], for verily every bidah (innovation) is misguidance." [Abu Dawud]. It was related by at-Tirmidhi, who said that it was a good and sound hadeeth.</p>

As stated by the narrator of the hadith, this is a farewell sermon, which foretells hard times to come for Muslims, and advocates steadfastness in the course of the Prophet's way and that of his guided Caliphs. Like all other hadiths, it is replete with cultural connotations and metaphorical contents. Taqwa, a key Islamic concept linked to one's sense of faith and behaviour, is borrowed. A translation of this word is also provided in the parenthetical note (fear). However, the note does not explicate enough the meaning because, as explained by Alothaymin (2005), the meaning of taqwa is "the obedience of God in doing [all] that he commands and avoiding [all] that he has forbidden". This means that taqwa encompasses various meanings in Islamic discourse, which are not covered by fear. In the case of / ارتأم /, the translator borrows and transliterates Ameer and assumes that its meaning is known to the English reader. However, borrowing alone does not ensure that the meaning is understood by all readers, especially those who are not cognizant with Arabic. In the next cultural expression, however, the item / الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين / is both transliterated into the "Khulafa ar-Rashideen" and translated within a parenthetical note (the rightly guided caliphs). A transposition is also used in this sentence, wherein the word / المهديين / is conveyed into a clause of some length, "those who guide to the right way".

5. Conclusion

This study was carried out in the light of the descriptive-analytical methods in translation studies in order to generate results that are likely to satisfy the research questions pertaining to the quality and procedures used by sunnah.com to convey the meanings of the Prophet's hadiths collected by Al-Nawawi in his *Forty Hadiths*. The analysis confirmed that a number of the Prophet's hadiths are challenging because some of their terms and concepts fall within the category of untranslatable. These items provided a good study sample, as they allowed the assessment of the target texts' merits and limitations.

Depending on the linguistic and cultural contexts pertaining to the ST, the translators in sunnah.com have had recourse to various procedures of translation. Outstanding among those procedures are borrowings, additions in the form of explanatory notes, and modulation. However, overall, their translation procedures are not consistent enough because they sometimes take it for granted that the reader is familiar with Islamic terminology and concepts. The lack of consistency in translation procedures might find its causes in two other reasons: one, the heterogeneity of English readership, made up of a majority of non-Muslims and an increasingly numerous community of Muslims living in the West; two, the absence of a unified translation of Arabic terms, an issue that can be explored in future research.

The imperfections in the translation of Al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths* by sunnah.com might also be linked to the mismatch and non-coincidence of idioms between the two different linguistic codes of Arabic and English. When they exist, lexical and syntactic matches between the two languages remain random, triggering unsystematic responses from the translators. This is the case of many religious terms and expressions, such as / إحصان / and / فرائض فرض /, which are rendered by long expressions only to be then borrowed between brackets.

Another probable source of the meaning deficit between the ST and TT in the translation of *Forty Hadiths* is the cultural obstacle, the fact that the studied items are anchored not only in the Arabic language but also in the Prophet's people's culture. Thus, old Arabs' general sense of a common heritage of uses, modes of thought and behaviour participating to a large extent in their identity was not accessible to the translators. This weakness can be addressed by further research about the Prophet's lifestyle and his people's value system, and how those aspects are reflected in the ST.

Finally, this study cannot be concluded without underscoring what many researchers have already underlined; even when the meaning of the Prophet's speech is properly conveyed in translation, his style is genuinely elevated by the means of rich and evocative imagery, as well as rhythmic and rhyming expressions, and is untranslatable. This means that much remains to be done in translation studies to make non-Arabic speakers enjoy the aesthetic, rhetorical, and semantic features of the Prophet's speech in their language. With the present-day translation revival in the Middle East, however, it is hoped that this challenge will soon be overcome.

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