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97. The intricate zone of hadith translations: navigating between translators, compilers, and intermediaries in Türkiye

Sema ÜSTÜN KÜLÜNK[1]

Abstract

This research aims to investigate the unique aspects of hadith translations in Türkiye. Hadiths, which are the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad, hold a significant role in Islamic teachings and provide guidance for understanding the Quran. Türkiye has a strong tradition of hadith scholarship, with notable individuals producing original texts, translations, compilations, simplifications, and annotated editions. This study aims to analyze the discourses of translatorial agents of the hadith field to comprehend preliminary principles and methods translators use when dealing with the complexities and challenges of translating hadiths. It also examines the consideration of authorship for compilers versus translators in the case of hadith translations where there is no written genuine original text or identifiable author. By utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis as a theoretical framework, this research analyzes the perspectives of selected hadith translators and explores the intricate nature of translatorial identity within various hadith contexts. Through shedding light on translators' strategies, challenges, and roles in hadith translations, this research aims to deepen our understanding of the dynamics involved in the process of hadith translations. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into translation practices, thus making a significant contribution to both Islamic studies and translation studies.

Keywords: Hadith translations, religious translation, translatorial authorship, critical discourse analysis

Hadis çevirilerinin karmaşık dünyası: Türkiye'de çevirmenler, derleyiciler ve aracılar arasında bir çeviri yolculuğu

Öz

Bu araştırma, Türkiye'de hadis çevirilerinin farklı yönlerini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Hadisler, Hz. Muhammed'in sözleri ve eylemleri olup İslam öğretilerinde önemli bir role sahiptir ve Kuran'ı anlama konusunda rehberlik sağlar. Türkiye, hadis ilimi alanında önemli araştırmacıların ürettiği orijinal metinler, çeviriler, derlemeler, sadeleştirmelere ve açıklamalı baskılar içeren güçlü bir geleneğe sahiptir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, hadis çevirisi alanındaki çevirmen söylemlerini analiz etmek ve hadis çevirileri dünyasına ilişkin karmaşıklık ve zorluklara ışık tutmak, aynı zamanda da çeviri sürecine ilişkin ipuçları sunmaktır. Ayrıca, hadis çevirilerinde yazılı bir orijinal metnin veya tanımlanabilir bir yazarın yokluğu durumu göz önüne alınarak derleyicilerle çevirmenler arasındaki yazarlık ikilemi de incelenmektedir. Teorik bir çerçeve olarak Eleştirel Söylem Analizi kullanılarak, seçilmiş hadis çevirmenlerinin bakış açıları analiz edilerek, farklı hadis bağlamlarında çevirmen kimliğinin karmaşık doğası araştırılmaktadır. Çevirmenlerin uyguladığı stratejilere ve üstlendikleri

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farklı rollere odaklanan bu araştırma, hadis çevirileri dünyasındaki dinamikleri ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Çalışmanın bulguları, dini metin cevirileri özelinde Çeviribilimin göz ardı edilen bir alanına katkı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Hadis çevirileri, dini çeviri, çevirmen yazarlık, söylem analizi

The intricate zone of hadith translations: navigating between translators, compilers, and intermediaries in Türkiye

1. Introduction

In Türkiye, there is a vibrant and significant field of translating hadiths. Hadiths refer to the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad, as recorded by his companions. They hold immense importance for Muslims and serve as a guide to help interpret the Quran. Consequently, the translations of these texts play a critical role in comprehending and clarifying Islamic teachings. Türkiye has a longstanding tradition of expertise in hadith scholarship, with numerous esteemed scholars making valuable contributions.[2] One notable aspect of hadith translations in Türkiye is the effort to make Islamic teachings accessible to Turkish-speaking individuals. These translations are compiled into books and easily available at bookstores nationwide. The widespread distribution of these translated texts enables a larger audience to connect with the teachings of the Prophet and fosters the spiritual growth of the Turkish-speaking Muslim community.

Hadith translations are important to bridge the gap between non-Arabic Muslims and the original teachings of Islam, ensuring a precise understanding. These translations are accompanied by commentary, contextual information, and explanations to aid interpretation. It is important to recognize that Türkiye has a diverse population, which may require different translations to suit the specific needs and nuances of various communities within the country. Some translations may prioritize literal accuracy, while others focus on conveying the intended meaning in a more easily understandable way. Additionally, as technology advances, digital platforms have become increasingly popular for accessing translations. Websites and mobile applications offer convenient ways for individuals to explore and study the extensive literature on hadiths. The world of hadith translations in Türkiye continues to grow and thrive, with scholars, experts, and enthusiasts working diligently to make the teachings of the Prophet more accessible to a wider audience through translation-oriented text production practices.

In Türkiye, some of the most widely recognized and popular collections of hadith include *Sahih al-Bukhari* by Muhammad al-Bukhari, *Sahih Muslim* by Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sunan Abu Dawud* compiled by Abu Dawud al-Sajastani, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* by Muhammad ibn Ishaq al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Nasai* by Ahmad ibn Ali al-Nasai. These collections are named after their respective compilers and are widely recognized for their importance in preserving and disseminating the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. These collections have been translated into numerous languages, including Turkish, to accommodate different linguistic communities.

When exploring the field of hadith translations in Türkiye, one comes across a diverse and complex translation landscape. This includes various strategies used in translation, such as assigning titles, the role of those who produce the texts, the visibility of translators, and the ongoing discussion surrounding

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[2]   For more detailed insights into the studies of hadiths and comprehensive bibliographies on this subject, refer to the works of Ünal, Yavuz (1997), Ürkmez Ahmed (2013), and Çakan, İsmail Lütfi (2008).

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these translations. Delving into this fascinating area of research helps shed light on the challenges and intricacies involved in translating hadiths. One of the main complexities arises from the absence of a written source text and the indefinite nature of the content, which comprises teachings and expressions attributed to the Prophet. As a result, translators must navigate this ambiguity while striving to provide accurate and faithful translations. One way to address this is by relying on established compilations like Sahih Bukhari, which serve as a foundation for their translations. Alternatively, translators may use unique compilations that focus on a selected number of hadiths, carefully chosen based on their perceived importance or relevance to a specific subject, such as compilations dedicated to forty hadiths on women.

The variety of the individuals involved in producing the texts makes the challenge of translating hadith more difficult. These individuals use different methods for translation. Some translate directly from the original Arabic sources, while others use previous translations as their starting point. However, even some translations based on previous works are presented as authentic translations, showing the complexities of the translation process. Additionally, relay translations use an intermediate language to connect the source and target languages. Furthermore, some translations within the same language are simplified or adapted versions of earlier translations, tailored to fit the linguistic and cultural context of the relevant time period.

This research aims to explore the fundamental principles governing the translation of hadiths, a field completely overlooked in Türkiye without any previous studies conducted. The objective is to examine how these principles influence the wide-ranging collection of hadith translations. The main focus is to understand the approach taken by translators and the specific authorship considerations associated with their translations. Additionally, the study investigates how translators position themselves as critical agents in shaping the conveyed meaning in texts. To accomplish this objective, the study carefully analyzes the perspectives of selected hadith translators to uncover the strategies they employ to accurately convey the intended meaning while taking into account cultural context, linguistic nuances, and the target audience.

Furthermore, the research provides insight into compilers' control over their translators in various languages. By examining this aspect, the study aims to examine the advantages and disadvantages of regarding compilers of hadith as authors of the original text, having the authority to govern and establish the intended interpretation. This investigation explores the connection between the original text and subsequent translations, emphasizing the impact exerted by the compilers on the translators and, ultimately, on the ultimate meaning conveyed in the translated works.

The study starts by analyzing the basics of Critical Discourse Analysis, which offers a theoretical framework for the following discussion. It also provides a short historical summary of translating hadiths into Turkish. The viewpoints of skilled hadith translators are subsequently explored, focusing on their perspectives regarding their own works. Finally, the study delves into the complexities of translator identity, which can vary in different situations. Through these investigations, the study aims to enhance our comprehension of the process of translating hadiths, emphasizing the vital role of translators as intermediary meaning-making agents.

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2. Critical discourse analysis (CDA): An analytical tool for exploring the particularities of hadith translations and translators

Discourse refers to the use of language in social settings. Its usage can vary depending on the situation. It includes both linguistic and non-linguistic elements (Fairclough, 1995). Discourse exists in all forms of communication, whether explicit or implicit and can encompass a range of topics, such as politics or economics. Its purpose is to convey specific ideas or concepts within a society, which is influenced by and influences the society it is a part of. Norman Fairclough (1995) argues that discourse plays a crucial role in reproducing and transforming sociocultural practices. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines discourse from various perspectives, including language, ideology, power relations, and sociocultural change. CDA can focus on repetition, predictability, replicating existing practices, or fostering creativity and innovation.

When it comes to translation, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be used to understand the power dynamics and ideologies present in the original text and how they are conveyed in the translated version. CDA allows for exploring and questioning dominant narratives, ideologies, and power imbalances that may exist in the source text. This widens the perspective of translation by considering the social, cultural, and political implications rather than just looking at it as a linguistic transfer. Norman Fairclough (1995) developed a model for discourse analysis that includes three dimensions: text, interaction, and social context. He argues that discourse is not simply a reflection of reality but rather a way of constructing reality (Fairclough, 1989, p. 12). In other words, how we talk about things shapes our understanding of them. According to Fairclough's three-dimensional paradigm (1995), discourse practice refers to the collection of discursive practices associated with a specific social domain or institution and the relationships and boundaries within that domain. This dimension is influenced by struggles that either maintain or transform the existing order of discourse. The second dimension focuses on how texts are produced, consumed, and distributed, while the third dimension examines the relationship between texts in a given context (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 12–13). Fairclough (1995) also emphasizes that discourse is inherently connected to power relations, and how we talk about things can either uphold or challenge existing power structures (pp. 7–8). His framework analyzes discourse in three dimensions to uncover how language is used to construct and reinforce power relations and social hierarchies. It is a practical tool and valuable resource for scholars and activists who aim to challenge and change current affairs. Various factors need to be considered in the context of hadith translation, including language, cultural context, technical terminology, ambiguities, variations, and literary style. Language plays a crucial role in accurately conveying the intended meaning, while cultural context ensures the preservation of the original text's significance.

In a similar vein, Teun A. van Dijk (2001) suggests that discourse is not merely a reflection of reality, but rather a tool that is used to shape and form reality (p. 6). He has developed a multidimensional discourse analysis model that considers its social, cognitive, and linguistic dimensions (van Dijk, 1997, p. 39). This model offers a comprehensive examination of discourse from various angles. The macrostructure of discourse pertains to the overall organization and the relationship between different parts of a text. Simultaneously, the microstructure of discourse delves into linguistic elements such as grammar, vocabulary, and rhetorical devices, to name a few.

Furthermore, the analysis takes into account the surrounding conversation and social environment in which a text is created and understood. Lastly, examining the language used in discourse is conducted to ascertain how a text reflects or continues the prevailing beliefs and values in society. Similarly, when

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examining the process of translating hadiths, a complex network of connections is introduced. This network complicates the power dynamics between the original text and the translated version. The examples of hadith translations illustrate the participation of different individuals, including (pseudo)authors, compilers, and translators, who have intricate relationships among themselves as they create the text.

Ruth Wodak (1996; 2001; and Reisigl, 2017) focuses on empirical studies in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that examine the use of language in relation to issues such as racism, discrimination, and social problems. She and her colleagues have developed a specific CDA approach, the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which looks at language's historical context and how it reflects and influences social, political, and cultural dynamics over time. Rather than viewing language as neutral, DHA recognizes its ties to power relations and its role as a social control and domination tool (Reisigl, 2017). One central concept in DHA is the idea of discursive formations, which refers to how dominant ideologies and narratives are created through language, and how these formations contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of societal power structures (Wodak, 2001). DHA also explores historical developments and how specific discourses have impacted societal changes. Intertextual analysis is a key aspect of CDA and DHA, as it examines the exchange of pragmatic and semiotic meanings between text creators and recipients. By considering the interdependence and interaction of elements within a specific context or system, we can identify the choices, purposes, conventions, and meanings conveyed through discourse (Hatim and Mason 1990, p. 120). The translations of hadiths draw attention to the complexities of authorship and the identification of source texts based on their historical representation. The lack of clear origins for hadith sources leads to inquiries about their influence on the transmitted texts. This highlights the importance of acknowledging the origins and individuals within the specific time and place they belong to. The utilization of CDA in the examination of paratextual materials (Genette, 1997) in Turkish hadith translations enables an analysis of the names, structures, and statements made by the individuals involved in the translation process. This approach takes into consideration aspects such as syntax, stylistics, rhetoric, genres, argumentation, and storytelling, as well as historical, social, and economic contexts. By examining the discourse embedded in paratextual features, we can uncover the codes, agencies, institutions, and cultural influences that shape and affect the processes and outcomes of translation. Furthermore, by scrutinizing the reception of translations via factors like reviews and criticisms from scholars, we can gain insights into the discourse within the given context, which is the main focus of this study.

3. Hadith translations in Türkiye: A historical glance over the field

Examining the Ottoman legacy, which served as the precursor to the Republic of Türkiye, it becomes apparent that the quantity and quality of hadith studies were comparatively lesser than in other regions of the Islamic world during the same period (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 202)[3]. A notable milestone in the historical accounts of hadith translations[4] in Turkish is the translation of *Buhârî Muhtasarı Tecrîd-i Sarîh Tercemesi ve Şerhi* [Concise Translation and Commentary of al-Bukhari] in 1928. This project, along with the translation and interpretation of the Qur'an, was sponsored by the state and initiated by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (abbreviated as TBMM in Turkish). Initially, the responsibility of translating and annotating this work was entrusted to Babanzâde Ahmed Naîm. However, after

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[3] The main reasons for Ottoman hadith professors not producing extensive and diverse works in the field of hadith science are attributed to the education system primarily being focused on jurisprudence and theology, the clergy class being predominantly prepared for administrative roles, and their reliance on teaching alone (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 202).

[4] For bibliographical studies on hadith translations see Ahatlı, 2013; Özkan, 2013.

publishing the first two volumes in Ottoman Turkish (using Arabic script) in 1928, Ahmed Naîm passed away in 1934. This task was completed by Kamil Miras, who also revised the drafts of the third volume prepared by Ahmed Naîm and published it under his name. He completed the remaining nine volumes, and the final work was published in 1948 (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 203). The Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* in Turkish) republished the work several times, with the second edition released in 1957 and the twelfth and final edition in 1993. This work holds significant importance as it sheds light on the strategy, concepts, and contextualization involved in the translation of hadith. In the fourth section, the reflections of Nâim on the discourse on hadith translations in Türkiye are examined in detail.

Apart from the publication of the *al-Bukhari* translation commissioned by TBMM, the period up to 1950 appears quite infertile in religious publishing and, naturally, hadith and hadith commentaries and translations. The first translated hadith manuscript of the period is *Ahâdîs-i Şerif ve Şerhi* (1951), belonging to Mehmed Kemal Pilavoğlu (1906-1977), the leader of Tijaniyyah sufi tariqa. Hasan Basri Çantay (1887-1964), renowned for his translation of the Qur'an into Turkish, compiled a work called *On Kere Kırk Hadis* [Ten Times Forty Hadiths] in 1958. The work includes selected hadiths organized into sections of forty hadiths, some of which are explained within the text.

The controversial compilation titled as *Binbir Hadîs-i Şerif Şerhi* [The Commentary on One-thousand and one Hadith] by Mehmed Ârif Bey was published in Cairo in 1901 in Ottoman Turkish in Arabic script. An updated book edition, published in Latin letters, was released in the late fifties to facilitate wider accessibility. This work is regarded as one of the finest examples of "commentary on society" (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 208).

The sixties witnessed notable advancements in the field of hadith commentary. Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen (1883-1971), a former President of Religious Affairs, authored a significant work entitled *Hikmet Gonceleri 500 Hadisi Şerif Tercümesi ve İzahı* (1962) [Sprouts of Wisdom- 500 Hadith Translation and Explanation]. Another important publication of that time was Ahmed Davudoğlu's four-volume work called Bülûğu'l-merâm *Tercümesi ve Şerhi Selâmet Yolları* which is considered one of the main hadith classics. This work, published in 1968, comprises the translation and commentary on Ibn Hajar al-Askalânî's famous book, *Bülüğu'l-merâm*, which compiles hadiths related to judgment. Notably, this work marks the first publication focusing on the commentary of classical hadith sources in almost two decades after Ahmed Naîm and Kamil Miras's Sahîh-i Bukhari translation (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 211).

During the 1970s, there was a notable surge in the diversity of publications, particularly in the field of hadith commentary. This period marked a significant momentum as commentaries of foreign Islamic figures began to be translated into Turkish. Previously, explanations were derived from classical hadith commentaries, and selected compilations were utilized to form the copyrighted material. (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 214). One notable work, *Kabesâtûn mine'r-Resûl* [Quotations from the Prophet] by Muhammad Qutb, translated into Turkish as *Peygamberden İktibaslar* [Quotations from the Prophet] (1972) by a group of translators including Akif Nuri, Kemal Sandıkçı, and Mehmet Süslü, exemplifies this trend. This work was also retranslated into Turkish by different translators under varying titles.

In the early 1980s, there was a significant emphasis on studying *Nevevi's al-Erbaûn* [Forty Hadith], one of Islamic history's most extensively annotated works. This era witnessed the publication of a translation titled *Hadis-i Erbain* [Forty Hadith] Original – Translation – Commentary (1980) by Abdulkadir Akçiçek (1933-1989), which garnered substantial attention. Akçiçek, had meticulously translated

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numerous works on sufi literature (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 217). These efforts contributed immensely to accumulating available resources and facilitated intellectual exploration and scholarly pursuits within the Islamic world. Although the early 1990s could be considered a stagnant period for hadith commentary, despite the increasing number of new publications across different branches of hadith science, there was a noticeable rise in the publication of articles related to hadith commentary (Ahatlı 2013, p. 218). This trend became even more apparent towards the end of the nineties. During this time, the work of Ali Nar, who specialized in translating Islamic works from Arabic, gained attention with the republication of his work titled *Kırk Hadisle Müslüman Kimliği* [Muslim Identity with Forty Hadiths] (1993).

The 2000s saw a continued influx of new works regarding hadith commentary. Notable among these publications was *Sahîh-i Buhârî İslamın İlk Yılları* [Sahih-i Bukhari: The First Years of Islam] (2000) by Muhammad Esed (1900-1992), a Muslim scholar and politician of Jewish origin. Esed is renowned for his book, considered a pivotal work in Türkiye, entitled Qur'anic Message Meal-Tafsir, his exploration of hadith further solidified his scholarly contributions. These developments demonstrate the sustained scholarly interest and dedication to the study of hadith commentary in recent decades.

The millennia witnessed the involvement of literary figures in the hadith commentary. An exemplary contribution to hadith annotation can be found in the work of İskender Pala, an expert in *Divan* literature. His publication titled *Nurundandır Bütün Nurlar, Kırk Güzeller Çeşmesi* (2007) [All Lights are from Your Light, The Fountain of Forty Beautiful Ones] showcases the author's dedication to enriching hadith interpretation. This work comprises literary explanations of forty selected hadiths, focusing on values such as courtesy, resignation, patience, contemplation, loyalty, prayer, contentment, and tears; Pala supports his explanations with poems and concise words, adding depth and nuance to the understanding of these teachings (Ahatlı 2013, p. 227).

During this period, the realm of hadith interpretation witnessed numerous other new works in book and article formats. Among the noteworthy publications was Bünyamin Erul's book, *Hadislerin Dili İlk Hadîs Belgesi Hemmâm'ın Sahîfesi –Tertip, Terceme, Yorum* (2011) [The Language of Hadiths, The First Hadith Document, Hemmâm's Page – Organization, Translation, and Commentary]. Erul (2011), after presenting the original text of each hadith and its translation, showcases the hadith's numbering and its place in the primary hadith sources from the respective era of narration, which is quite important considering the lack of precise source materials and authorial governance in the field of hadith translations. These meticulous details provide valuable reference points for scholars, deepen the understanding of the historical context of the hadith and reveal the particularities of hadith translation.

4. Exploring cases I: An analysis of the complexities of hadith translations

The translation of hadiths is a rich field that provides fruitful insights into translation practices and translators' experiences. It covers various aspects of how texts are created and the individuals responsible for producing them. When translating hadiths, there are several important factors to consider. Firstly, language plays a crucial role. Translators are supposed to carefully navigate the subtle differences and complexities of the original language and the language they translate into. This is necessary to ensure the communication is accurate and effective. Secondly, cultural context poses another significant challenge. Hadiths are deeply embedded in specific cultural contexts, and translators must take great care to consider these contexts to preserve the original text's intended meaning and significance. Thirdly, translating technical terminology within hadiths requires attention. Thus,

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translators need to comprehensively understand Islamic scholarship and terminology to accurately convey the intended meaning of the hadith.

Furthermore, hadiths frequently include unclear or differing elements, which pose challenges for translators in terms of interpretation. Translators must diligently analyze and make informed choices regarding how to approach these complexities without straying from the original text. Finally, it is crucial to take into account the literary style when translating hadiths. These writings often encompass distinctive rhetorical characteristics and linguistic techniques that must be faithfully recreated in the target language to guarantee an accurate representation of the original.

The experience of translating hadiths is also highly intricate, presenting various challenges. The following three hadith translations illustrate the complex net of relations among the text-producing agents of the relevant field. As demonstrated below, the designation of these texts and the number of individuals involved in the translation process vary greatly. This blurry and non-definite site vividly reveals the complexities of the field, even in three brief instances. The first translation is *Müttefakun Aleyh Hadisler: Buhârî ve Müslim'in İttifak Ettiği Hadisler* [The Hadiths Agreed Upon: The Hadiths That Bukhari and Muslim Agreed Upon] (2004) written by Muhammed Fuâd Abdülbâkî. The translation is done by Abdullah Feyzi Kocaer, who translates, categorizes, and annotates the original text.

In this case, Muhammed Fuâd Abdülbâkî is credited as the author, presenting a compilation of hadiths conveyed by Bukhari and Muslim, renowned Islamic scholars from the 7th and 8th centuries. However, it is worth noting that Abdülbâkî is not the actual author in this case. Instead, he selects specific hadiths written down by Bukhari and Muslim. He includes them in his book as a curated collection, focusing on the ones the compilers agree. Abdullah Feyzi Kocaer serves as the translator for this work. However, it is crucial to recognize that translator Kocaer not only translates the text but also modifies the categorization and order of the available texts and adds explanatory notes for further clarification. The approach of Kocaer highlights his involvement in shaping the presentation and interpretation of the hadiths. The translation process becomes collaborative, where the translator actively organizes and explains the selected hadiths from Bukhari and Muslim's works.

The second translation is by Ibrahim Canan titled as *Kütüb-i Sitte Muhtasarı Tercüme ve Şerhi* (1988) [A Summary of the Six Authentic Books of Hadith: Translation and Commentary]. This translation offers a concise version of the six significant hadith collections and commentary on their meaning and significance. In this instance, İbrahim Canan is mentioned as the book's author. However, upon reviewing the title, one can discern that it is, in fact, a translation of a compilation of six hadith books that are widely recognized for their consistency and reliability. In this regard, it should be noted that this translation represents a compilation, and we are not provided with specific information about the original authors of the included hadiths. By commenting on the meaning and significance of the selected hadiths, Canan adds further complexity to the translatorial profile.

The second translation is called *Kütüb-i Sitte Muhtasarı Tercüme ve Şerhi* (1988) [A Summary of the Six Authentic Books of Hadith: Translation and Commentary] by Ibrahim Canan. This translation provides a condensed version of the six important hadith collections and includes commentary on their meaning and importance. Although Ibrahim Canan is mentioned as the author of the book, the title suggests that it is a translation of a compilation of six hadith books widely recognized for their reliability. It should be noted that this translation is a compilation, and there is no specific information about the

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original authors of the included hadiths. By offering commentary on the meaning and significance of the selected hadiths, Canan adds further complexity to the translation.

The third translation is *Riyâzü's-sâlihîn Tercüme ve Şerhi* [The Gardens of the Righteous: A Translation and Commentary of Imam Nawawi's Riyad as-Saliheen] written by Imam Nawavi and translated by İhsan Özkes. At first glance, everything may seem to be in the natural order. However, there is more to consider. Nawawi lived in the 13th century, which makes it impossible for him to directly compile a hadith book on his own, as he did not have access to the Prophet and his companions during that time. Therefore, in this case, Nawawi has also compiled these hadiths and presented himself as the book's author, and Özkes translated and further commented on a non-original.

Examining these instances brings to light two significant matters concerning identifying authors and determining the source text within the realm of hadith translations. The authors are essentially compilers responsible for sorting, organizing, and modifying the collected hadiths through additions and omissions, and so are the translators, who, surprisingly, appear to be undertaking a similar role in certain instances. The original authorship of the teachings, which belonged to the Prophet and his companions, who conveyed and preserved them, becomes a precarious aspect in this field. Moreover, since the hadiths were transmitted through the memories of individuals (the companions), they may have (may be slightly) changed over time as they spread across distinct regions. Without the original author, the person compiling these hadiths often becomes the author, regardless of their involvement in creating the text, combining languages, modifying the original texts, excluding or adding parts, and subsequently translating them into different languages. This dilemma surrounding authorship in the translation of hadiths raises interesting questions about the role of translators, the extent of their influence on the transmitted texts, and the importance of acknowledging the sources and individuals involved in preserving and transmitting the teachings of the Prophet in the hadiths.

4. Exploring Cases II: A Discursive Analysis of Selected Hadith Translators

In this section, I will analyze the perspectives of well-known hadith translators regarding their profession and work. The study aims to explore how these translators view themselves as agents who create meaning. In this regard, components accompanying their hadith translations, such as book covers, commentaries, and forewords, will be analyzed. These additional textual elements, which Gerard Genette (1997) calls "paratextual elements," offer valuable insights into the translators' perspectives. Understanding these elements will enhance our interpretation and presentation of the translated hadiths.

4.1 Ahmed Nâim and Kamil Miras & *Sahîh-i Buhârî Muhtasarı Tecrîd-i Sarîh Tercemesi* (1928/1948): The translators of the first state-sponsored hadith translation in Türkiye

Ahmed Nâim is highly regarded as a pioneer in translating hadith in Türkiye and has established exceptional standards in this area. He is well-known for his extensive efforts in translating the book *et-Tecrîdü's-sarîh*, which was used as a partial translation in Sırât-ı Müstakîm in 1910. Ahatlı (2013) argues that the Directorate of Religious Affairs made the decision to publish his complete translation and commentary of *et-Tecrîdü's-sarîh*, likely due to the recognition and high quality of his previous translations. (p. 203).

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In his translation, Ahmed Nâim makes a significant effort to ensure the text is clear and easy to understand. He does this by using explanatory parentheses, footnotes, and marginal notes. These additions help to clarify any points that may be unclear, provide explanations for certain words and concepts, offer legal opinions, discuss differences in narrations and manuscripts, and give historical and biographical information. Nâim understands the importance of taking into account the time period in which the hadiths were spoken, as well as the challenges that come with their oral transmission. To assist readers in grasping the text, he introduces important individuals and provides context about their background, scholarly contributions, and historical significance. He only includes details that are relevant to the topic at hand.

Additionally, Nâim shares his experience with readers, explaining how he accepted the offer from the Directorate of Religious Affairs, after a decision by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, to undertake the translation of this hadith collection (Naîm, 1928, p. 4). Knowing the task's difficulty, which he considers beyond his capabilities, Nâim presents himself as a humble translator contributing his service to benefit Islam.

Another notable aspect of Ahmed Nâim's work is his emphasis on considering the historical context. He highlights three sources of history: tradition (*Merviyyât*), monuments (*Abidat*), and written accounts (*Mektubat*) (Nâim, 1928, p. 85). He explains how these sources can guide the interpretation and translation of hadiths. Nâim (1928) also addresses the challenges of written sources and their reliability within the context of hadiths. While dismissing monuments as irrelevant within mainstream Islamic views, this classification is crucial as it provides a contextual framework for understanding the work of hadith translation and the role of the translator within larger narratives. By commenting on and highlighting his translation's sacred nature and valuable contributions, Nâim establishes himself as a noteworthy and exceptional figure in the field of hadith translation. In summary, Ahmed Nâim's work as a hadith translator in Türkiye is remarkable due to his scrupulous attention to detail, dedication to clarity, and consideration of historical context. Through his translations, he aims to improve readers' comprehension while humbly offering his services for the betterment of Islam.

In the translation of this hadith book, the second translator was Kâmil Miras, who took over after the death of Nâim. In the foreword of the fourth volume, Miras's bibliographical information is provided, highlighting his personal qualifications, and enhancing his credibility as a translator. The foreword also mentions Miras's involvement in the commissioning of the Qur'an translation by the TBMM, emphasizing his role as an intermediary between institutions and other translators for significant translation tasks.

Miras emphasizes his translation strategy, emphasizing the importance of faithfulness to the original texts (Miras, 1948, p. 5). It is worth noting that he refers to "originals" in plural, acknowledging that he drew from multiple sources. This humbles the image of the translator as he admits his limitations in the face of the sacredness of the task at hand. Miras (1948) expresses his commitment to provide a word-for-word translation followed by explanations from various established sources (p. 7). In his descriptions of the hadiths, he primarily relies on Sahîh-i Buhârî and relevant verses from the Quran. Ayni's Umdetü'l-kârî serves as his most important source for commentaries on the hadiths and deriving legal rulings from them (Miras, 1948, p. 8).

Miras provides extensive explanations under various headings to aid readers' understanding, covering narrators, transmissions, jurisprudential rulings, social realities, moral principles, and linguistic

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nuances. Biographies of the narrators and mention of scholars, particularly companions, are included in the sections titled *Terceme-i Haller* (Interpretations of Expressions), sometimes appearing as footnotes. Additionally, Miras occasionally incorporates Arabic, Persian, and Turkish poems while explaining the hadiths. Miras generally adheres to traditional interpretations but deviates from the majority opinion in some matters of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). Interestingly, Miras (1948) does not shy away from expressing his views on controversial issues within his translation. This highlights the translator's freedom to act as an author during certain phases of the translation process. Miras goes beyond merely rendering the text, actively intervening and adding his insights. It is intriguing to note that Miras engages a wide spectrum of topics such as abortion, population growth, and the rabies disease, using his own words to inform society. This demonstrates the flexible boundaries of hadith translations, allowing translators to be visible and contribute actively to the text production process, producing semi-original content

4.2 Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen & *Hikmet Gonceleri 500 Hadisi Şerif Tercümesi ve İzahı* (1962): The pioneering hadith translator of the sixties

The scholarly work titled Hikmet Gonceleri *500 Hadisi Şerif Tercümesi ve İzahı*, authored by Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen from Erzurum, has gained recognition for its substantial contributions in the areas of Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh) and Quranic Exegesis (Tafsir). During its time, this work proved to be highly influential in understanding hadiths. Bilmen meticulously selected these hadiths primarily from *Suyuti's el-Câmi'u's-sağîr* and Abdurrauf Munawi's *Künûzu'l-hakâik min hadîsi hayri'l-halâik*.

Within his work, Bilmen described these chosen hadiths as "excellent guides" that shed light on our beliefs, worship, ethics, social existence, and the refinement of our souls. The author intended to provide explanations and elucidate the meanings of these hadiths. He included concise and lengthy explanations, drawing references from Fahreddin Razi's Tafsir, Mevlana's Masnavi, Ghazali's Ihya, and the works of Sadi Shirazi and some Western authors. Notably, Bilmen occasionally included Turkish, Arabic, and even Persian poems, adding a touch of literary pleasure to the text.

However, in the assessment, a significant problem arises when the task of simplification is undertaken by individuals needing more expertise. Unfortunately, in most instances, this leads to a distortion of the original essence of the work, causing notable deviations in meaning. As an illustrative example, consider the following expressions, with their original and simplified versions provided below: "However, Europeans, considering themselves as the protectors of humanity, have deprived a great part of humanity of many human rights simply because they belong to the black race" (Bilmen, 1962, p. 24). This sentence has been simplified as follows: "However, Europeans consider themselves as the sole owners of humanity"[5], exemplifying the diminution resulting in nuances.

4.3 İsmet Özel & *Kırk Hadis* (2004): The literary power of the translator meets hadith translations

In the 2000s, a notable trend emerged following the era of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, whereby poets, writers, and intellectuals contributed their own interpretations to the field of hadith through their literary works (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 227). Ismet Özel's book *Kırk Hadis* (2004) stands out as a work offering a distinct perspective in interpreting hadiths. The foundation of this book is built upon radio conversations held on Marmara FM, where the author expressed his independent and liberal thoughts

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[5]   The excerpts are originally in Turkish, here only their English translations are provided.

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on hadiths. Although the book sometimes presents ideas that deviate from the scholarly understanding of hadith, it also provides unique and insightful evaluations that traditional hadith scholars may not have previously contemplated (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 227). While these ideas may challenge established conventions, they offer fresh insights and provoke deep contemplation.

The introduction of Ismet Özel's book brings attention to the role of the hadith translator as an agent of change. Özel avoids drawing attention to himself individually and instead highlights the collective nature of being a Muslim under the ummah. He strongly emphasizes the significance of hadiths in the social engineering project he envisions for Muslims in Türkiye (Özel, 2004, p. 12). Özel focuses on the era in which he resides and argues that this time does not require new insights into hadiths. On the contrary, he criticizes attempts to introduce novel perspectives on established matters, accusing them of causing division among Muslims. According to Özel (2004), Muslims should unite against the disruptive influence of the West and firmly adhere to the origins of their belief system (p. 15). Özel's controversial and activist personality makes him an interesting translator who harnesses the power of his literary craftsmanship to convey significant ideas about hadith translations. In this way, we witness a translator profile that leverages personal capital to elevate their role as a translator/commentator. Özel feels free to strategically utilize translation-oriented text production practices to accomplish his ultimate objective: guiding the lost identity of Muslims in Türkiye.

4.4 Bünyamin Erul & *Hadislerin Dili İlk Hadîs Belgesi Hemmâm'ın Sahîfesi –Tertip, Terceme, Yorum* (2011): A translator going back to the very origins in translation

In recent research, Bünyamin Erul's work titled *Hadislerin Dili İlk Hadîs Belgesi Hemmâm'ın Sahîfesi – Tertip, Terceme, Yorum* (Ankara 2011) stands out as a noteworthy contribution. This book offers a fresh approach by presenting a new classification, translation, and commentary on a compilation of 138 hadiths known as Hemmâm's Sahîfe (Sahîfetü Hemmâm), which was transmitted by Hemmâm b. Münebbih, a disciple of Abu Hurayrah (ra) (Ahatlı, 2013, p. 237).

Erul's work provides the original text of each hadith and its translation, accompanied by references to the specific number of the hadith and its position in the foundational hadith sources. Additionally, a concise commentary is presented for each hadith. While explaining the proper understanding of the hadiths, the focus shifts toward deciphering their intended message. It is important to highlight that these hadiths are interpreted in light of contemporary issues, aiming to shed light on ongoing debates and contribute to discussions, especially on various topics currently under consideration within our country.

Erul's work traces the origins of the original hadiths, emphasizing their reliance on oral transmissions (Erul, 2009, p. 3). Intending to provide readers with a useful guide, Erul encourages them to engage in a dialogue between different translations of hadiths. This comparative reading experience aims to offer readers a fresh and comprehensive understanding of the hadiths. Erul (2009) also meticulously explains the translation process, following a step-by-step approach (p.4). He seeks to balance preserving the original words and capturing their intended meanings. Erul frequently highlights that errors in language and rhetoric can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the hadiths. Therefore, he asserts the importance of translating them in a way that resonates with the realities of the present day, allowing the readers to connect with the message ((Erul, 2009, p. 5). Erul strengthens his position in the field by offering critiques on existing Qur'an translations. Through his expressions, he presents himself as a

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motivated translator who aims to bring innovation to the existing repertoire of hadith translations in Türkiye.

5. Conclusion

The field of hadith translations in Türkiye holds significant importance in making Islamic teachings accessible to Turkish-speaking individuals. These translations have established a connection between non-Arabic Muslims and the authentic teachings of Islam, allowing a larger audience to access the wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad.

The process of translating hadiths presents several challenges. These include understanding the subtleties of language, taking into account cultural contexts, accurately translating technical terms, dealing with vague or differing details within the hadiths, and capturing the literary style. Nevertheless, despite these complexities, translators have a vital responsibility to faithfully convey the intended meaning and interpret the teachings of the Prophet in a way that corresponds with the cultural and linguistic context of Türkiye.

This research has investigated the principles that govern the translation of hadiths in Türkiye, the critical role of translators in shaping meaning, and the relationship between compilers and translators. It has explored the difficulties of translatorial identity and the challenges of accurately conveying the original meaning of the hadiths. The research has also provided insight into the intricate network of individuals involved in producing translated texts of hadiths. It has examined the relationship between translators and compilers of hadith collections, raising questions about the authority and influence exerted by compilers on subsequent translations and the conveyed meaning.

The study has also examined the discourses of various hadith translators and their approach to translating hadiths. Ahmed Nâim, a pioneer in hadith translations in Türkiye, emphasized clarity, comprehensibility, and historical context in his translations. He used paratextual elements such as footnotes and marginal notes to aid readers understanding. Kâmil Miras, who took over after Nâim's death, emphasized faithfulness to the original texts and provided extensive explanations under different headings. Miras also added his insights and opinions on controversial issues in his translations. Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen's work stood out for its contributions to Islamic Jurisprudence and Quranic Exegesis, carefully selecting hadiths and providing explanations and meanings. Ismet Özel's book brought a unique perspective to the field of hadiths, emphasizing literary craftsmanship and providing fresh interpretations. Özel highlighted the role of the translator as an agent of change and challenged established conventions, aiming to guide the lost identity of Muslims in Türkiye. Bünyamin Erul encouraged readers to engage in comparative reading to understand the hadiths comprehensively. He emphasized the importance of capturing the intended meanings while preserving the original words, and his work aimed to contribute to ongoing debates and discussions in Türkiye.

The discursive examination conducted in the overview has uncovered the diversity of translational methodologies and experiences. The intriguing aspect lies in the presence of notable translators who challenge the conventional norms associated with the translator's role. These norms typically entail traits such as invisibility, a secondary position vis-à-vis the author, a passive role as mere conveyors of meaning, and so forth. However, these prominent translators possess symbolic capital, encompassing their social standing, professional competencies, recognized intellectual acumen, and more. Their discourse vividly expresses this core divergence, wherein they depict translation as both a process and a

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final outcome. Their relatively elevated sense of empowerment significantly influences their translation approach and strategies, ultimately granting them a sense of authorial power.

The translation landscape of hadiths in Türkiye has offered a captivating glimpse into the diverse strategies, agents, and discourses involved in this field. The absence of a written source text and the dynamic nature of hadith content present initial complexities, prompting translators to rely on established compilations or curate specialized collections. The case studies have highlighted hadith translators' diverse approaches and insights, ranging from meticulous attention to detail and historical context to incorporating personal viewpoints and innovative interpretations. Understanding the different approaches of text-producing agents further enriches our comprehension of the complexities within hadith translation. Hopefully, it will contribute to the field of translation studies with a micro-study on an overlooked area.

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