Toward an Intercultural Understanding between the Orient and the Occident: A Narrative Approach to Translating Jihād Concept into English

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Abstract
Translating religious terms and expressions, particularly polysemous concepts like Jihād, is an intriguing area of research, since non-Muslim perceptions of Islam and Muslims are largely contingent upon their understanding of these translations. A translator’s presuppositions exercise considerable influence on his/her rendition of religious concepts. At heart, the greatest issue in translating the religious text hinges on whether it may be considered conceptually untranslatable. An important issue regarding the translation of jihād is that religious expressions and terms are components of ancient and classical texts ‘travelling’ from the past to the present; this alone brings about a number of significant problems in their understanding, interpretation, and translation. It has not yet been established whether religious terms like jihād preserve their meanings unchanged across time and space, or whether they are transformative and changeable. Therefore, the proposed study aims to address the issue of translating jihād concept into English through applying Baker’s narrative approach.

Keywords: Jihād, Narrative theory, Islamic Tradition, Intercultural Understanding,
Toward an Intercultural Understanding between the Orient and the Occident: A Narrative Approach to Translating Jihād Concept into English

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Introduction

The greatest issue in translating religious terms like jihād hinges on whether it may be considered conceptually untranslatable. Proponents of this stance include von Humboldt, Virginia Woolf, Willard Quine, and Jacques Derrida. The concept of jihād can be subjected to a number of translation approaches including: corresponding equivalence; dynamic equivalence; cultural translation; domestication and foreignization; polysystem theory; and narrative theory. Benjamin (1969) argues that a “sacred text is untranslatable […] because the meaning and the letter cannot be dissociated” (84). An approach based on finding out a corresponding equivalence seeks an identical, definite, and explicit meaning in the target text; however, this may be an unachievable task with religious terms, which often have more than one meaning embedded in a single term. In the same vein, dynamic equivalence is based on the idea that the translation of religious texts and concepts has to be adapted to the culture of the receptor, who is unable to fill in the cultural and theological gap between source and target texts. The cultural approach may be unfit for rendering religious terms since it is unable to cross over the cultural differences between the source and target texts.

Statement of the Problems

Translating religious terms and expressions, particularly polysemous concepts like Jihād, is an intriguing area of research. Narrativity has a double impact on the translation of Jihād. First, it may misrepresent the concept to a receptor who has his/her own set of presuppositions and biases. Second, a translator may not consider the importance of narratives in his/her translation, focusing only on rendering a narrow linguistic equivalence of the term.

Given that jihād has multiple meanings, how can a translator transfer this multiplicity of meaning clearly and comprehensibly into a foreign lexicon? The multiple meanings inherent in the concept of jihād can bring about different interpretations, sometimes even contradictory meanings, particularly when it is examined by scholars from different cultural and religious backgrounds. An important issue regarding the translation of jihād is that religious expressions and terms are elements of ancient and classical texts ‘travelling’ from the past to the present; this alone results in a number of significant problems in their understanding, interpretation, and translation. It has not yet been established whether religious terms like jihād preserve their meanings unchanged across time and space, or whether they are transformative and changeable.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer three main questions.

First, how is the concept of jihād perceived in the source Islamic culture?

Second, how do the oriental translators render the translation of jihād into English?
Third, how do the occidental translators render the translation of *jihād* into English?

**Methodology**

Quantitative and qualitative analyses are combined to study the intercultural understanding of *jihād* concept in the original Arabic holy text and in its English translations. With regard to the quantitative analysis, a corpus-driven extract of the concordance of the word *jihād* is retrieved. After the pre-processing of the corpus (normalization, cleaning and stemming) to be ready for use, it is composed of 106,789 tokens. The quantitative analysis generated 37 concordance lines (Appendix 1). Selective examples are then contrasted to the available English translations for measuring the intercultural understanding of *jihād* concept among the oriental and the occidental translators. A qualitative intercultural narrative approach is then used to address the (mis)conceptualization of *jihād*.

**Review of the Literature**

Sharifian (2007) shows how culturally constructed concepts, such as *jihād* and ‘compromise’ are subject to significant influence from the socio-political contexts in which they are used. The author conclude that mistakes in translating such socio-culturally loaded conceptualizations could have unintended consequences that, in turn, could bring about damage to human life and spirit. Taibi, and Martin (2012) reiterate the same conclusion. They argue that constructing a narrative may serve its interests — either through indoctrinated translators or blatant manipulation.

Focusing on the narrative elements of setting, characterization and emplotment, Pfeifer and Spencer (2018) illustrate a possible ushering of *jihād*, as a concept which contains classical elements of a romantic story in which the everyday person is forced to become a hero in a legitimate struggle against an unjust order, towards radicalizing youth as well as justifying fighting and violence. Selective translations of *jihād* are viewed within Baker’s narrative framework.

**Theoretical Background**

Through the use of Baker’s narrative theory, narratives of the occidental conceptualization of *jihād*, which includes biblical narratives, traditional orientalists’ narratives and modern orientalists’ narratives, are viewed. All are then contrasted to the modern Islamic narrative on *jihād* as well as to that of the major *fiqh* schools.

**Baker’s Narrative Theory**

Berge (2017) argues that accomplishing an accurate understanding of an Islamic religious text is a complicated and intricate issue because of the historical gap between the time of revelation and the time of compiling the revelation as a text. He writes: “Yet, an examination of these accounts and theories shows that the situation in early Islam was more complex, and more skeptical theories suggest those accounts are not just inaccurate, but were fabricated” (37). Therefore, translating *jihād* not only requires one to reconstruct the original historical context of a text, but also to invent methods to verify whether a reconstructed account is true or false. Narrative theory is proposed as an approach to disclose whether the translation of religious concepts like *jihād* is precise and accurate: it not only involves the reconstruction of ancient accounts and their narratives, but also traces the development of these narratives and their influence on contemporary understanding of ancient and religious verses.
I suggest Baker’s narrative approach is an appropriate method for analyzing the interpretations and the translations of jihād concept into English. Baker’s narrative theory (2006) is an approach that uses narratives to analyze and verify the accounts and the translations addressing the concept of jihād to reach more accurate translation: “Narrative theory […] allows us to piece together and analyze a narrative that is not fully traceable to any specific stretch of text but has to be constructed from a range of sources, including non-verbal material” (Baker, 2006: 3). Narrativity relies heavily on piecing together texts from various fragmentary sources and evaluating them as part of a larger integrated textual and contextual unit.

The core idea of such a narrative rests on its function, which may help reveal the ambiguity that conceals meaning and confuses the reader, but also on “shaping people’s views of rationality, of objectivity, of morality, and of their conceptions of themselves and others” (Bennett & Edelman, 1985: 159). Therefore, the translation of jihād should be analyzed, examined and interpreted by drawing together a number of disparate threads that trace its development through narratives across time and space, in order to generate its true meaning. This process includes both past and present narratives.

Applying Baker’s narrativity approach requires a number of steps: i) critically examine jihād narrative in the Western culture; ii) critically study the narrative addressing the interpretation of jihād in the sayings of the Prophet iii) critically inspect the concept of jihād in the four major Fiqh schools; iv) study the narratives presented in the work of prominent Islamic scholars from both the past and present; v) reconsider the translation of certain verses on jihād in light of these narratives and Baker’s narrative theory.

Narratives of the English Mind on Jihād

Indeed, it is difficult to cover the whole heterogenous and varied western narratives addressing jihād concept in such a brief study. The narratives of the English mind under examination are primarily derived from the biblical studies, the narratives on Crusade and just war theory, the Orientalists’ narratives and so on. These selected types of narratives shape the mainstream western narratives on Jihād. Orientalists have made a remarkable contribution to the study of Jihād; they have examined it from both theological and cultural perspectives (Gibb, 1945; Renan, 2015; Nöldeke, 2013; Crone & Hinds, 2003; De Long-Bas, 2007; Peters, 1979). The study of jihād has found new relevance in the work of some Western contemporary writers (Lewis, 1995; Spencer, 2007; Pipes, 2002; Patai, 2014). However, these studies have not addressed the problems of translating jihād and the impact of intercultural misunderstanding as a result of flawed rendition of this concept—their studies have focused on presenting the various contemporary interpretations.

The Biblical Narratives

Jesus’s sermons on the Mount provide a platform for mapping out the Westerners’ narratives on the concept of Jihād. Jesus said: “But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. … love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:3, New International Version).” It is crystal clear
that the teachings of Christianity are absolutely pacifist, and order its followers to love all humanity regardless of their faith or culture. They represent a fertile soil for disseminating the seeds of the interreligious dialogue. Therefore, Christianity does not promote violence or fighting for spreading the word of God. It teaches its people to love their enemies and pray for them. This contributes largely to constituting the Westerners' presuppositions on the concept of Jihād.

In Christianity, the concept of fighting for spreading the word of God is almost non-existent. However, it has been claimed by many scholars that the Crusades adopt the concept of Holy war in order to justify its war against Muslims. It seems that the term jihād has its resonances for Westerners in the ways in which it epitomizes the concept of Holy war. Therefore, Westerners' presuppositions of jihād may be derived from their understanding of the Crusades. Lewis (1995) elaborates further on this issue in the following:

Even the Christian crusade, often compared with the Muslim Jihād, was itself delayed and limited response to the jihād and in part also an imitation. But unlike the Jihād, it was concerned primarily with the defense or re-conquest of threatened or lost Christian territory....The Muslim jihād, in contrast, was perceived as unlimited, as a religious obligation that would continue until all the world had either adopted the Muslim faith or submitted to the Muslim rule...The object of jihād is to bring the whole world under Islamic law (233-234).

Lewis explains that crusade was a response to jihād and aimed to stop the Islamic expansion in the Christian world and recover the Christian lands conquered and occupied by Muslims. It did not aim to convert Muslims to Christianity, nor even to spread Christian faith. It was a defensive war rather than an expansive war. However, jihād is unlimited and continued Islamic obligation, the objective of which is to convert Christians and their countries to Islam or pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.

The Westerners' set of presuppositions and preconceptions of the concept of war and peace, which are primarily derived from the scripture, the concept of holy war and the just war theory, represents the starting point for elaborate accounts concerning jihād concept. Therefore, translators who culturally and religiously belong to the West would inevitably encounter a serious problem of translation when rendering the concept of jihād into English due to the lack of cultural and religious concepts in the target language.

The Traditional Orientalists' Narratives on Jihād

Gibb (1949) explains that Islam expansion was realized through a skillful government and through strong armies. He writes: "these astonishing victories, the precursors of still wider conquests ... confirmed the character of Islam as a strong, self-confident, conquering faith"(3). According to Gibb, Islam was characterized by conquering faith, and it was fueled by the religious teachings of fighting for the cause of Allah. However, this conquering faith laid the groundwork for incorporating the Islamic culture and religion into the conquered lands. Though Gibb claims that Islam spread by conquering the world, he admitted that it managed to assimilate the conquered land and its people into the Islamic culture. It seems that Gibb's understanding of the concept of jihād in Islam was influenced by the just war theory which is largely a Christian philosophy that lays a moral groundwork for war, as he conceded that
"Islam emerged into the civilized outer world…as a moral force that commanded respect" (3).

Modern Orientalist's Narrative on Jihād

Heck (2004) writes:

If Jihād—struggle in the path of God (jihād fi sabil allah)—is taken to be struggle for Islamic hegemony (privileging Islam over other religions and the interests of Muslims over non-Muslims within the socio-political order), it will be impossible for non-Muslims to embrace it, and the use of force to establish such hegemony will result in the identification of Islam with violence. (This is not to take from Muslims the right to build up and nurture their religious community and to consider such a work a struggle for God's cause, but rather to recognize that jihād—a concept specific to a particular religious community—is meant to serve a public purpose.) If, alternatively, jihād is taken to be a struggle to form and defend a moral society, it will be possible for the non-Muslim to participate alongside the Muslim in jihād, if the goal is clearly defined as the good, even to the extent of using force to achieve such a goal. (96)

It is clear that Heck's understanding and interpretation of jihād is largely influenced by his own set of presuppositions that resulted from the biblical narratives and the just war theory. This would be reflected in his argument entailing that the accurate understanding of jihād rests upon perceiving whether its goal is ethical or unethical. However, the Quranic use of jihād term may conceal more than it reveals, as the receiver, whose cultural and religious backgrounds do not belong to Islam, may be unable to distinguish between the ethical and unethical meanings embedded in such a polysemous term. Rather, he unconsciously perceives it in terms of his cultural presuppositions and preconceptions. Knapp (2003) explains “that the word “jihād” means “struggle” or “striving” (in the way of God) or to work for a noble cause with determination.

Cook (2005) argues that the concept of jihād refers to a physical warfare. He expounds that the idea of spiritual struggle or struggle against evil desires can be seen as a lesser form of jihād. He further argues that Quran adopts an aggressive doctrine of jihād (2005: 2-3). He holds that the Western scholars invested too much in the concept of the spiritual jihād which was primarily reintroduced by Al-Ghazali who died in the beginning of the twelfth century (37). This casts doubts upon the authenticity of the hadith propagating a pacifist concept of Jihād, namely the spiritual struggle, since "there is usually a significant gap of decades, even centuries, between the time the words were first spoken, recited, sung, composed, and/or written and the time they became encapsulated within a text" (Berg, 2017: 37)

Crone (2012) explains that jihād is a kind of war, which is not secular but religious. However, she distinguishes between what Quran has to say about jihād and the rules derived by the Muslim jurists on the concept of Jihād. She writes: “What the Quran has to say on the subject is a different question: the rules it presupposes seem to be a good deal more pacifist than those developed by the jurists and exegetes.”

It seems that the Western narratives on jihād are largely influenced by the biblical teachings, the concept of the holy war and the just war theory in Christianity. These
major points represent the starting point in perceiving the concept of jihād. They were largely influenced by their presuppositions in understanding such a concept and they often tend to regard it as a pacifist concept. Among non-Muslims, the concept of jihād often refers to holy war, to strive, just war, or at least a physical warfare.

Islamic Narrative on Jihād

Examining the Islamic narratives on jihād is essential since it offers the Islamic historical experience of jihād that contributes largely to constituting Muslims' presuppositions and assumptions on the concept itself. However, I focus on examining the Sunni narratives simply because 90% of the World Muslim population belongs to Sunni Islam, whose understanding and interpretations of Islam are mainly derived from Quran, Hadith and four major Fiqh schools. In addition, Sunni Muslim scholars, both traditional and contemporary, have categorically rejected all methods of interpreting the Quran outside the confines of its text and that of the prophetic Hadiths and the major Fiqh schools.

In Lesān āl-‘rab Dictionary, the term jihād is derived from Al-jūhd, exerting energy and power, and jīhād, undergoing hardship and painful experience. Al-Mātrizī (1979) explains that jihād is mainly concerned with the idea of fighting an enemy. When one encounters an enemy, one has to endure the consequences of fighting it. In the Islamic Sharia (legal) tradition, however, it generally refers to fighting disbelievers (171, my translation). Al-Dūkši (1988) argues that the concept of Jihād, as referred to in the Quran, is a holistic term that can be defined as ‘doing one’s best for the sake of Allah,’ whether this is done through spending one’s own wealth or sacrificing one’s life. Jihād can be considered the individual duty of Muslims when they are attacked by an enemy or face aggression, and a collective duty when Muslims feel secure (172, my translation). In other words, jihād is mainly related to the concept of fighting and it is always put in force whether Muslim's lands are attacked or not. Therefore, it is used as a kind of discourse that aims to impose a global Islamic worldview upon other nations. The Islamic Sharia divides the concept of jihād into general and specific forms; these, however, overlap and intertwine to varying degrees.

Examples of Modern Islamic Narrative on Jihād

Al-Banna (2002) argues that Muslims have been humiliated and colonized by infidels, their lands occupied, their privacy violated, their enemies have control over their affairs, and their religious rites have been suspended in their own homes. In addition, they have been stopped from spreading Islam. Therefore, jihād has become an absolutely individual obligation and everyone must be prepared to engage in jihād at the first opportunity.

Qutb (1983) regards contemporary Muslim society to be jāhilī or ignorant, and Muslims to be following similar norms and values to the pre-Islamic period or jahilīyyāh. He also adds that the true enemies are jāhilī governments and expressly calls for their eradication through Jihād. Here, jihād means fighting against jāhilī regimes in Muslim countries, which are still following a pre-Islamic lifestyle, and replacing them with an Islamic system of government. This shifts the focus of the concept of jihād from a purely religious one of fighting for Allah to a kind of secular resistance tinged with Islam.

Albouti (1993) tends to promote a pacifist concept of Jihād. He explains that
the core idea of jihād is to argue logically with polytheists; to distinguish truth from falsity; to reveal suspicion; and to assist Muslims in doing good works. That is to say, jihād on the personal level is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve more ambitious goals of individual betterment. He favors the concept of jihād adopted in the Meccan Surahs that propagates pacifism. He states that the Meccan concept of jihād represents the mainstream narrative in Islam and it is the origin and the foundation of jihād in Islam. He supported his claim by restoring to the following hadith: ‘What is the greater Jihād?’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘It is someone’s resistance against his evil desires. In this way, jihād concept in Islam is mainly a pacifist concept, which is known as the resistance of one’s own evil desires.

Alqaradwi (2014) argues that jihād refers to one’s own inner-self struggle, struggle against Satan, promoting virtue and preventing vice, speaking truth to tyrants, and so on and it also includes the concept of fighting for the cause of Allah. (2014:Author’s trans., 67). He further argues that the idea of fighting is not only confined to the infidels but also to those who rebel against carrying out the pillars of Islam like prayer, and zakat. According to him, jihād in Islamic sharia refers to fighting and it is made up of two major categories: defensive fighting and expansive fighting (My translation, 68). Defensive fighting refers to resisting the enemy if he invades the abode of Islam. The second type is the expansive jihād as Muslims have to attack the enemy in his homeland for expanding the land of Islam and securing the Islamic borders, which has recently been known as the preemptive war.

In modern times, the concept of jihād has changed to signify a kind of revolution: “Jihād refers to that revolutionary struggle and utmost exertion which the Islamic Nation/Party brings into play to achieve this objective” (Al-Mawdūdī, 1930: 2). Jihād is considered a kind of war waged for the prosperity and welfare of the entirety of humanity and solely in the cause of Allah.

The Concept of jihād in the Major Fiqhī Schools

Zada (1998) states in Mūgma al-anhur (Rivers’ Collection) the rules of jihād in the HanaFI school:

Jihād literally means ‘exerting one’s own best’ including sayings and actions. In sharia, it means fighting unbelievers and their like which includes actions such as hitting them, plundering their resources, destroying their temples and breaking their idols.” (My translation, 632-633).

Al-Sawī (1995), a traditional jurist, writes about the Maliki School’s understanding of Jihād:

Jihād for the cause of Allah is a collective duty, that is, if some Muslims are involved in it, the remaining shall be exempted. It can be enforced as an individual duty, like fasting and prayer, upon the request of the Imam or when Muslims are attacked in their homeland. (My translation, 198-208)

Al-Shirbīnī (2000), a traditional Jurist, writes about the Shafi vision of jihād as follows:

Jihād during the life of the Prophet was a collective obligation; others have said that it was an individual obligation. (My translation., 3-22).

Ibn Qudāma(1999) writes about the Hanbalī concept of Jihād
The issue of *jihād* is a collective duty when some people are involved in it; it is no longer an individual duty. *Jihād* must be an individual duty if one of the following three conditions is to be fulfilled: two fighting armies face one another; infidels invade a Muslim country; an *Imam* orders Muslims to fight. *Jihād* must be conducted once annually in the worst cases. (My translation, 6-13)

Passing a critical eye over the narratives on the concept of *jihād* in the major fiqhī schools, one can see that they agree that the concept of *jihād* definitely refers to fighting for the cause of Allah. Therefore, it is necessary to shift the focus on the concept of *jihād* in the Sunnah.

**The Concept of jihād in the Sunnah**

The Sunnah abounds with hadiths that explain the meaning of *jihād*. Among these sayings are the following:

Abu Hurairah (*May Allah be pleased with him*) reported:

> The Messenger of Allah said, ‘The gates of Jannah are under the shades of the swords.’ A man with a shaggy appearance got up and said, ‘O Abu Musa! Did you hear the Messenger of Allah say that in person?’ Abu Musa replied in the affirmative; so he returned to his companions and said: ‘I tender you farewell greetings.” Then he broke the scabbard of his sword and threw it away. He rushed towards the enemy with his sword and fought with it till he was martyred” (Muslim: Book 12, Hadith 1302).

Al-Khāṭīb Al-Būghdādī narrated this Hadith with the following words, ‘We have come back from the lesser *jihād* to the greater one. They said, ‘What is the greater *Jihād?’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘It is someone’s resistance against his evil desires.’ (13/523-524)

The majority admit that *jihād* refers to fighting for the cause of Allah. A few hadiths state that *Jihād*, in its full manifestation, also implies resisting one’s own desires. This contradiction can easily be revealed when verifying which narrative is rather authentic. *Ibn Baz*, a well-known, modern Saudi jurist, explains that the hadith that states “we have come back from the lesser *jihād* to the greater one” is inauthentic. In his Fatwa, *Ibn Baz* writes:

> ‘We have come back from the lesser *jihād* to the greater one,’ it is groundless and none of those who are known for being acquainted with the words and actions of the Prophet related it” (Book on Hadith Mawdu’, Part No. 26, p.381).

Examining the narrative articulated around *jihād* pays dividends: those who claim that the concept of *jihād* refers to the struggle of the inner-self and against the devil have constructed their judgment from an inauthentic prophetic saying that contradicts the mainstream narrative of *jihād* identified with fighting. Indeed, these sayings that have identified *jihād* as the resistance of desire and struggle against the devil and with the inner-self are inauthentic and baseless according to the authentication of the Prophet’s sayings. Critically tracing the narrative in which *jihād* is embedded, one reaches the unmistakable judgment that it generally referred to fighting for Allah’s cause in the past and refers to a kind of Islamic revolutionary act or Islamic resistance to jāhilī societies in the present (seen to be Muslim in name only, but considered secular and un-Islamic in practice). This represents a starting point for fighting against all non-Muslims to spread the word of God.
Analysis: Intercultural/Interreligious Understanding Between the Orient and the Occident.

In English, *jihād*, has two senses. *Jihād* is defined as a holy war waged by Muslims against infidels (fighting). *Jihād* is also defined as a holy striving by a Muslim for a moral or spiritual or political goal. The focus of analysis of the following translations is on how *jihād* concept is translated. The translation analysis is divided into two categories, the first category renders it as "striving" and the second category renders it as "fighting." The translators are religiously and culturally grouped. The first group is made up of those translators who belong to the Western culture and believe in Christianity or those who have Christian background. This categorization is made intentionally in order to stress how cultural and religious impact is necessary for shaping translators' understanding and perception of *jihād* concept. In other words, the grouping can explain clearly the major role of the translator's religious and cultural presuppositions in constituting his views and consciousness of the external realities, as his translation would inevitably be governed by his preconceived ideas, his cultural and religious values. These external influences cannot be either consciously or unconsciously suppressed or neutralized when translating, and may result in producing a prejudiced translation. Therefore, the intercultural and interreligious understanding may help in deconstructing the translator's set of presuppositions and his prejudice. Indeed, the translator is embedded in his narrative that builds up his presuppositions, assumptions and prejudiced thinking and constitutes his translation choices.

The original transliterated verse reads:

\[
\text{Laa yastawil qaa'iidoona Minal mu'mineena ghairu ulid darari walmujaahidoona fi sabeelil laahi bi amwaalihim wa anfusihim; faddalal laahul mujaahideena bi am waalihim wa anfusihim 'alalqaa'ideena darajat; wa kulanw waadal laahul husnaa; wa faddalal laahul mujaahideena 'alal qaa'ideena ajran 'azeemaa. (an-Nisa-95).}
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Example #1: Occidental Translators of Originally Christian Background:

Translation of *Jihād* as ‘Striving’

1. George Sale (1697-1736) is a Christian orientalist who was well-versed in the Islamic culture. His translation of Quran has been reprinted in modern times. His translation was praised by many orientalists.

   Sale (1734) translates *jihād* as “who employ their fortune and their persons for the religion of God.”

2. John Medows Rodwell (1808-1900) was an English clergyman of the Church of England. The Koran was first published in 1861. According to Jones (1994), his translation has much better cross-referencing to biblical texts, which is "crucial to one's understanding if the Qur'an".

   Rodwell (1861) translates *jihād* as “those who do valiantly in the cause of God with their substance and their persons.”

3. Edward Henry Palmer (1840-1882) was an English orientalist and explorer. He produced his translation of Quran in 1880.

   Palmer (1880) translates *jihād* as “who are strenuous in God’s way with their wealth and their persons.”

4. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (1875 -1936) was a Western Islamic scholar noted for his English
translation of the Qur'an (1930). He was a convert from Christianity.

Pickthall (1930) translates jihād as "who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives"

Oriental Translators of Islamic and Middle Eastern Background

Translation of Jihād as 'Fighting'

1. Yusuf Abdullah Ali (1872–1953) is a British-Indian Muslim scholar. He was born in India where he spent his formative years. Later, he converted from being a Shiite Muslim to be a Sunni Muslim. His translation of the Qur'an into English is one of the most widely known and used in the English-speaking world.

Ali (1934) translates jihād as “who strive and fight in the cause of God.”

2. Nessim Joseph Dawood (1927–2014) was born in Baghdad to a Jewish family. He came to England as an Iraqi state scholar in 1945, and studied English Literature and Classical Arabic at the University of London. His translation of the Quran is considered one of the best-selling English language versions – it has been reprinted at least 70 times.

Dawood (1956) renders jihād as "those who fight for the cause of God with their goods and their persons."

3. Ahmed Ali (1910–1994) is a Pakistani novelist, poet, critic, translator, diplomat and scholar. Al-Quran, A Contemporary Translation (Princeton University Press, Oxford University Press & Akrash) is the most outstanding contribution in the field of translation. Approved by eminent Islamic scholars, it has come to be recognized as the best existing translations of the holy Quran.


4. Sayyid Ali Quli Qarai is an Indian-born Shia scholar and his translation was produced by the Iranian Centre for Translation of the Holy Qur'an.

Qarai (2005) translates jihād as “those who wage jihād in the way of Allah with their possession and their persons.”

5. Ali Ünal was born in 1955 in Uşak, province of Turkey. He is a Turkish author. He is often associated with the Gülen Movement, an Islamic group in Turkey. Ali Ünal's translation uses contemporary English, which makes it more readable than some classical Quran translations.

Ünal (2006) renders jihād as as “who strive and fight in the cause of God.”

6. Muhammad Muhsin Khan was born 1927 in Pakistan. He belongs to Pashtun origin, most notable for his English translations of Sahih al-Bukhari and the Qur'an, entitled The Noble Qur'an.

Khan (2008) translates jihād as “those who strive hard and fight in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their live.”

Example #2: Oriental Translators of Islamic and Middle Eastern Background

The original transliterated verse: Infirū Khifāfāan Wa Thiqālāan Wa Jāhidū Bi'amwālikum Wa 'Anfusikum Fī Sabīli Allāhi Dhālikum Khayrun Lakum 'In Kuntum Ta'lamūna (42, al-Tauba).

Dr. Muhammad Mahmoud Ghali was born in 1920 in Egypt. He was a professor of Linguistics and Islamic Studies at Al-Azhar University (Cairo, Egypt.) Dr. Ghali
has spent 20 years interpreting the meanings of the Quran into English.

Dr. Ghali (1997) translates jihād as: “March out, light and heavy! And strive with your riches and yourselves in the way of Allah. That is most charitable for you, in case you know (42, al-Tauba).”

The translator oversimplifies the meaning of Khifāfāan wa Thiqālāan as “light and heavy.” The phrase “light and heavy” offers open-ended meanings. For example, it can be interpreted as ‘healthy and sick’ and ‘rich or poor’ and represents an irrevocable divine order that jihād is an individual duty that has to be imposed on every Muslim regardless of his sex, age, healthy conditions, social status. However, this interpretation contradicts the principle that jihād is a collective duty, which, if it is performed by some people, those remaining are exempted from it. It turns jihād into an absolutely individual duty that must be imposed on every Muslim.

Moreover, this translation contradicts a following verse which was claimed to have abrogated it: “There is no blame on those who are infirm, or ill, or who find no resources to spend (on the cause), if they are sincere (in duty) to Allah and His Messenger: no ground (of complaint) can there be against such as do right: and Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful” (At-Tawba: 91).

In addition, this verse was revealed to the prophet during the conquest of Tabuk: some men and women did not join the Muslim army in this invasion and were not criticized by the Prophet. Therefore, if it is translated as “light and heavy,” the meaning of the verse contradicts the Sunnah and other verses of the Quran itself. Therefore, translating it as “light and heavy” requires the translator to render Wa Jāhidū as “to fight” rather than “to strive.” Indeed, with such an abrogated verse that contradicting the mainstream narrative of the hadith, revealing the suppressed narrative is a priority for a translator to offer an accurate and precise translation. According to the principle entailing that jihād is a collective duty, if this verse is abrogated by translating it as “light and heavy” it is a misleading translation that suppresses the narrative of the Sunnah and other Qurnaic verses. The translator accentuates that the concept of jihād may have other senses different from “to fight” and these senses can be deduced by the reader. Here, a particular translation is accentuated representing a particular ideology at the expense of providing an accurate and clear translation.

Discussion

The translations under examination and analysis are selected in relation to the following criteria: First, the set of presuppositions of each individual translators, his/her cultural and religious backgrounds and their effect on the translated concept are to be taken into consideration. Second, this cultural and religious effect can be easily accomplished by subjecting the translated text to a selective appropriation of textual material, which traces “the patterns of omission and addition designed to suppress, accentuate or elaborate particular aspects of a narrative encoded in the source text or utterance, or aspects of the larger narrative(s) in which it is embedded” (Baker,2006:114). Third, the historical period in which a translation was produced. Fourth, the credibility and the trustworthiness of the translator who produced the translation. Third, the credibility of the translation and its approval by eminent scholars. Finally, the translations should be widely readable.

As for the translation of Jihād concept as striving, translations were chronologically traced as these translations
were produced during the 18th and the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. They were translated by Christian English orientalists and a Western Islamic scholar of a Christian background, whose set of presuppositions and assumptions are mainly derived from their cultural and religious narratives.

The translators have switched between translating Jihād as “to strive to,” “to do valiantly,” or “employ their fortunes and their persons for the religion of God.” They have suppressed the verb “to fight” and have replaced it with “strive with their lives for the cause of Allah.” These translations were largely affected by the mainstream narratives in their own culture derived from their biblical studies which do not have the corresponding equivalence of such a term. Their set of presuppositions of the concept vary from the original concept in the source language, which makes their translations contradict the authentic narratives of the hadith and the opinions of trustworthy jurists who have stated that the concept of jihād refers to fighting in the cause of Allah. What is accentuated is a narrative confirming that the concept of jihād has little to do with the concept of fighting. Most of the older translations of the Quran, with a few exceptions, tended to translate the concept of jihād as “to strive in Allah’s cause.”

Historically, an extended period of time did not witness the Islamic revival, the proliferation of terrorist attacks and the widely spread discourse of fanatical Islamism. In this period, the Islamic discourse tended to be pacifist, which partly explains why the idea of translating jihād as fighting was generally avoided in the early translations of the Quran; the orientalists who made these translations have always been accused by scholars as biased and prejudiced against Islam. For example, Sale translates it as “and those who employ their fortunes and their persons for the religion of God.”

This translation represents a very pacifist meaning of Jihād. Its aggressive tone has been accentuated slightly in the translation of Rodwell, who translated it as “who do valiantly in the cause of God with their substance and their persons.” The connotation of fighting valiantly is kept to a minimum. The fighting tone was reflected in the translation of Palmer to a greater degree, who rendered it as “who are strenuous in God’s way with their wealth and their persons.” At the beginning of the twentieth century, jihād started to be translated as a ‘to struggle and strive,’ the relatively more warlike connotation of which is noticeable.

With regard to the translations of jihād as fighting, it seems that this conceptualization became a predominant trend since the start of the twenty-first century when the shifting realities of terrorism and fanaticism have the consciousness of the translator’s concept of fighting and reconsidered it in terms of contemporary and traditional narratives since then it has become the norm with many translators to render it as ‘fighting’. The translators do not suppress the direct meaning of jihād as equivalent to fighting. It is crystal-clear that those translations of jihād as fighting in Allah’s cause have been largely influenced by the Islamic revival that has emerged since 1970. This fueled the theory of Islamic expansion, the negative consequence of which was the sparking of the terrorist attacks across the world culminating in the destruction of the World Trade Center in 2001 and the emergence of ISIS. These issues have unconsciously affected those who are engaged in translating the Quran, particularly with the concept of Jihād. In
this way, translation is congruent with circumstantial reality.

It is also obvious that the backgrounds, presuppositions and assumptions of the translators have largely influenced their understanding and their translations of jihād concept. Most of the translators who render jihād as “fighting for Allah’s cause,” grow up in Islamic countries in the Middle East, India and Pakistan where Sunni interpretations of the religious text prevailed, which unconsciously affects the mind of the translators. The translators render jihād as “fighting for Allah’s cause,” which is also largely consistent with the authentic narratives of the hadith and the opinions of trustworthy jurists and contrary to the pacifist concept of Jihād. Indeed, the translator is embedded into the narrative of his source text and this unconsciously guides his translation.

Jihād in example #2 is best rendered as “to fight” for the following reasons. The traditional Sunni narrative on the concept is a ‘coherence narrative’ reflecting that jihād refers to “fighting for the cause of Allah” as there is an “internal consistency of the narrative—whether or not it reveals contradictions within itself in form or reasoning” (Fisher, 1997: 315). Jihād is regarded as an inner struggle with the self in Sufism. The Sunni narrative goes against this by stating that which was not originally articulated by the Prophet is classified as inauthentic. In addition, a great deal of Sunni material representing the concept of Jihād, from both the present and the past, shows material coherence as a narrative on jihād and it “relates to other narratives that have a bearing on the same issue with which we are familiar” (Baker, 2006: 168).

The opinions and narratives of jihād used in this study reflect a characterological coherence that “assumes that the reliability of any narrative depends, to a significant extent, on the credibility of its main characters, whether narrators or actors within the narrative” (Baker, 2006; 165). The narrative introduced in this study, drawn from hadith and the opinions of jurists, is based on credible sources and trusted narrators. Elements reflective of contradiction or proving inconsistent are excluded after being highlighted and discussed. The second step after making sure that the narrative used shows a clear material coherence is to verify that this narrative shows fidelity: “Fidelity … is assessed by applying the logic of good reason, which requires a narrative to be examined with reference to ‘the soundness of its reasoning and the value of its values’” (Fisher, 1987: 88).

The narrative used in this study has been logically assessed: elements that are expected to show logical fallacies or contradictions are excluded after being clearly highlighted. In this sense, a number of translations of jihād and the various types of narratives on jihād are logically assessed and views and opinions considered logically inconsistent are excluded. The understanding, interpreting, and translation of the concept of jihād rely heavily on the contextual elements surrounding the text and conformity with contemporary realities. If the translated verse does not fit well with contemporary realities and modern readership, it is characterized as an unfaithful translation. This would be reflected in those translations that tend to promote a more pacifist concept, which goes against contemporary realities.

In addition, the value of the narrative to the world and humanity is another important element of narrative fidelity: “a value is valuable not because it is tied to a reason or is expressed by a reasonable person per se, but because it makes a
pragmatic difference in one’s life and in one’s community” (Fisher 1987: 111; emphasis in the original). Therefore, examining the narratives on jihād can be considered to offer an important insight in providing an accurate and precise translation and encouraging intercultural and interreligious understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Conclusion

The Islamic mainstream narratives on jihād promote the concept of fighting for the cause of Allah, which is clearly reflected in the authentic hadith, the opinions of the notable jurists, and the four Fiqh schools. Additionally, the translations of jihād concept examined in the study, which were produced by oriental translators, render it as a fighting for the cause of Allah. This explains the impact of the narratives on the mind of the translators. The Occidental mainstream narrative examined in the study was heterogeneous and it almost depicts jihād as a pacifist concept, the meanings of which range from "striving, holy war to just war". The translations examined in this study, which were produced by Western Christian translators or Western Muslim translators, render it as to strive or ‘struggle’. The significance of narrative theory for the translation of jihād rests upon filling in the interreligious gaps that accompany the development of the concept. The narrative theory in translating jihād concept gives translators an access to comprehend the concept of jihād clearly and reconsider its repercussions on the Muslims' minds.
References


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Appendix 1.

Concordance of the word ‘jihād’ in a tagged corpus of Quran (in Arabic)
و صبروا ان ربك من بعد ها ل غفور رحيم يوم ثانى كل نفس
ترادل عن نفسها وتوفي كل
ف ا لله حق هجدهو احتباكم ما جعل عليكم من حرج مليه أبيكم ابراهيم
فيه لنهديهم سيتلا و أن الله مع المحسنين يلمع الرحيمن الجاهرين.

يا بنو إسرائيل احترمو الهدى من أصلامهم هوم أنت لهم دليل و
ل الصالحين المتين. يسمعون كلم الله و يطيعونه و أن الله هو الحكيم العليم

لا حرمون ها في الآخرة هم الباطئون ثم أن ربك ل الذين
هاروا على ما ف تلو ثم
الذين اسروا اركعوا و استعدوا و اعدوا كم و اختلفوا الغير
علي الله كتابا أو كتب بالحق ل ما جاءوت في جهاد هم.
ل الكفارين و الذين

لا يوسف غور راحا المؤمنون الذين امنوا بالله و رسوله ثم
لم ينداكلوا و
الفرتان و لو شنوا ل بعتنا في كل قريه نذيرا ف لا تطم
الكافرين و جاهد هم به
بما جاء من الحق يخرجون الرسول و ايا كمن اتبعوا الله
رب كم ان كنتم خرجت
و اعدوا و اعدوا كم و اختلفوا الخير على كم فطنوا و
بيعوا في الله حق

لا يصبروا أن ها في السبيل أولئك هم الصادقون قال
أتباعهم كم يرثوا و هم الفائزون في الدنيا و
الاخر ان

لا يصبروا ان ها في السبيل أولئك هم الصادقون قال
أتباعهم كم يرثوا و هم الفائزون في الدنيا و
الاخر ان

لا يندمdecrypt error in high-precision text encoding