

## TOWARDS ADABIC INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Che Mahzan Ahmad<sup>1</sup>  
Shafizan Mohamed<sup>2</sup>  
Aini Maznina A.Manaf<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Communication, Kulliyah Of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (E-mail: chemahzan@iium.edu.my)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Communication, Kulliyah Of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (E-mail: shafizan@iium.edu.my)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Communication, Kulliyah Of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (E-mail: maznina@iium.edu.my)

### Article history

**Received date** : 26-4-2020

**Revised date** : 27-4-2020

**Accepted date** : 2-10-2020

**Published date** : 6-10-2020

### To cite this document:

Ahmad, C. M., Mohamed, S., Manaf, A. M. A. (2020).  
Towards *Adabic* Intercultural Communication. *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED)*, 5(31), 35 - 49.

---

**Abstract:** - *The Islamic communication can be seen and studied through the teachings of the Quran and the exemplary practices of the prophet Muhammad S.A.W. Unfortunately it is yet to be noticed nor accepted mainly because of how Muslim scholars are unable to put communication into context and materialize it into a proper scholarly discipline in the ways that the western scholars have been able to do through their development of models, theories, ideas and even ethics for communication. This article attempts to fill in this gap in the study of Islamic communication by highlighting an area very relevant in this contemporary time that is intercultural communication. More than simply discussing about it, this article proposes an Islamic model that can expand the study of ICC by offering an alternative that can improve and even complement the existing approaches that are inherently secular and western-centric.*

**Keywords:** *Intercultural Communication, Adabic, Islamic Communication, Bakhtin, Secularism*

---

## Introduction

Intercultural communication or in short 'ICC' is probably one of the most heavily researched areas in contemporary media studies. It has been argued that as much as communication is a reflector of cultural values and norms, it is also an expression of culture (Mohamed, 2020).

According to Khalil (2016, p:30):

“The universality of Prophet Mohammed’s mission (Peace is upon him) has been clearly confirmed by the Qur’an; it is a logical consequence of the finality of his Prophet Hood. A prophet after whom there was to be no other, had to be a guide and leader for all men and for all ages. God has provided through him the complete code that man needs to follow the right path, and this is in itself supports the concept of finality, since without completeness the need for other prophets would remain”.

Islam is *ad-din* or a way of life. As such it is not simply a spiritual belief but rather, it covers and completes all the aspects of life, from the start of human existence until the end of time. Islam guides all matters that are spiritual, material, political, economic, social, moral, intellectual, or aesthetic (Mowlana, 2007). This means that Islam dictates the rules that make the basis of social, cultural relationship, economic, judicial, and political dealings, even in the matters war, diplomacy, and international affairs (Mohamed, 2018).

The integral value that Islam stresses in intercultural communication is the ideas of equality and brotherhood of all mankind. The prophet Muhammad S.A.W was among the earliest to spread the message of equality and fairness. He propagated that humans are all the same in the eyes of God. It is not the race, wealth or skin colors that determine nobility. The differences among people with regard to physical qualities are only secondary and less significant. They do not affect the status of individuals in the sight of Allah. Rather superiority is only determined by one’s faith and submission to Allah. Simply said, the only division among human beings, which Allah recognizes is the difference in *taqwa* (piety); meanwhile the only criterion which Allah applies, is the criterion of goodness and spiritual excellence. In the Quran, Allah Almighty says (what means): "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female, and have made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Indeed the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted" [Quran 49:13]

Humans are simply servants of God. In addition, there is no distinction between private and public conduct in Islam. The same moral code applies to all spheres of life. This encompassing moral value and universal law also pertain to every institution of society and government. Islam also does not recognize any division between the temporal and the spiritual since man’s desire to propitiate God and follow His commands permeates every fiber of human activity (Khalil, 2016).

Therefore, it is undeniable that Communication is an integral part of Islam. The Islamic communication can be seen and studied through the teachings of the Quran and the exemplary practices of the prophet Muhammad S.A.W. Unfortunately it is yet to be noticed nor accepted mainly because of how Muslim scholars are unable to put communication into context and materialize it into a proper scholarly discipline in the ways that the western scholars have been

able to do through their development of models, theories, ideas and even ethics for communication.

This article attempts to fill in this gap in the study of Islamic communication by highlighting an area very relevant in this contemporary time that is intercultural communication. With the rise of *Islamophobia*, the refugee crises and even the clash of ideologies that often left Islam misunderstood as evil and rigid, it is probably never been more important for Muslims to put forward the Islamic way of dealing with other cultures. More than simply discussing about it, this article proposes an Islamic model that can expand the study of ICC by offering an alternative that can improve and even complement the existing approaches that are inherently secular and western-centric.

To do this, the article will be divided into four main parts. In the first part, the conventional model for studying ICC will be generally outlined. This is to provide a background to understanding how ICC is being contextualized according to western ideas and how it has subsequently limited the discipline to a monolithic understanding of ICC. The second part of the article will look into contemporary criticism on the theoretical approach to ICC that proposes for ICC to be less mechanical and more dialogic. The third part of the paper will expand the ideas of dialogism according to the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin. In the last part, the article will offer an Islamic representation to the study of ICC by incorporating the ideas of Bakhtin's dialogism and the Islamic worldviews.

### **Part 1: The Conventional Conceptualization Of ICC**

Intercultural communication generally is conceptualised as communication between people from different cultures with different emphasis on relational types. Some scholars limit it to face-to-face, inter-group or interracial/interethnic communication. As a subject, intercultural communication is often identified with oversimplification, overgeneralization, and exaggeration (Hall, 2002) on the cultural Other. Awareness of these hazards surely help to keep a balanced perspective on how to deal with differences or 'strangeness' in that relationship. Perhaps such maladies are arising from the historical foundation of the subject itself.

Edward T. Hall was acknowledged to be the founding father of this scholarly field during 1951-1955 period. Hall's original paradigm for intercultural communication was linked to his experiences working with Indians Navajo and Hopi reservations and anthropological job at the Foreign Services Institute. Scholarly, Hall intercultural approach was influenced by cultural anthropology, linguistics, ethology, the study of animal behaviour, and Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Hall's anthropological practices was on 'foreignness/outsider' of the Other in relation to the 'insider' [Americans diplomats] (Murray, 1994).

Linguistically, Hall was exposed to the Whorfian concept of linguistic relativity whereby language influences human thought and meaning (Whorf, 1940/1956). From ethology, upon observing animal behaviour, Hall developed map of culture on time and space. Hall's belief in the role of the unconsciousness was highly noted (Hall, 1959). Rogers, Hart and Miike (2002) noted that Hall was not influenced by Georg Simmel's theory of stranger nor Darwin's facial expressions, two important roots of intercultural communication (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984/1992/1997). Edward T. Hall seminal foundation on intercultural communication can be found in *The Silent Language* (Hall, 1959). A point to note, Simmel's notion of strangers and

strangership continue to permeate intercultural communication curricula in colleges and universities.

With reference to the above, axioms of intercultural communication as taught in classes are resting on ideas related to cultural contrast/diversity, attraction or cohesion/rejection or exclusion, closeness/distances, marginal/mainstream man, Simply said, intercultural communication is a study on differences on and about the Other.

Epistemologically speaking, knowledge making in intercultural communication is living with a kind of imperialism (Leach, 1982); “anthropology, [the basis of intercultural communication], has turned out to be not the study of man but [works of colonialism] whereby the colonized [or the Other] is inferior and of not similar stature (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992). From this hangover from the history of colonialism, ethnocentrism is the horse in the stable. Intercultural communication of this sort often mirrors a Western and white perspective. Othering in the above sense is being guided by cultural determinism. Hence, human behaviour is being dictated by cultural factors. In addition, then the ideology of understanding is positivism that entails functionalism at work. Culture as a whole is seen as static, formal mental states. Similarly, assuming and accepting universals and pretend to be culturally innocent are thriving.

Today, the Hofstedeian model that banked mostly on cultural differences is gripping intercultural communication classrooms. Here, Geert Hofstede plotted the differences in culture between countries via five dimensions, namely power distance, masculinity vs. femininity, long-term orientation vs. short-term thinking, individualism vs. collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. Semiotically, in all maps of differences the West is at the centre while the rest of the world is in the periphery or the margin. Jensen (2015) accused Hofstede of creating ‘fairy tale’ that mesmerised scholars who believe in statistical truth of answers and solution based upon IBM’s respondents!

Contextually, intercultural communication epistemology or knowledge making is very much Anglo-Saxonic in nature. At the same time, it could be the subject is resting on fatigue communication theories. Ciro Marcondes Filho (2008, p. 51) states that:

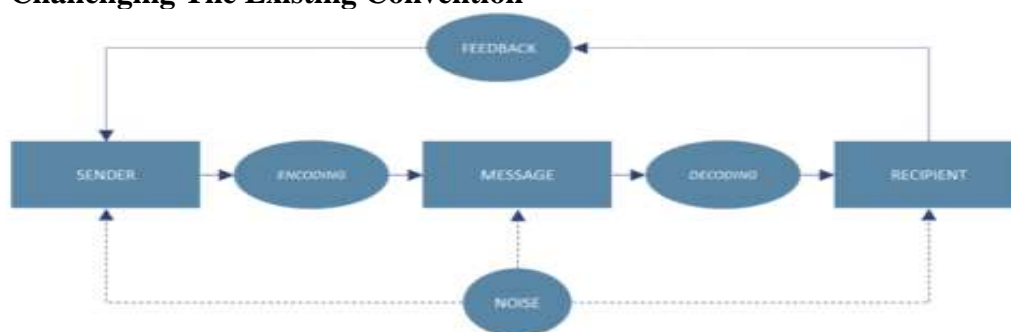
The theories of communication are tired. Have been used so much that they are forever repeating the same clichés serving at all times despite wear, the same arguments, the same tests, the same researchers who not get tired of reprises them. As a way forward, in this age of globalization it is sensible to rethink on how intercultural communication should be addressed by scholars and students alike. For example, the functionalist theories seem to be unable to answer questions faced by professional practitioners in multi-ethnic societies, noted Jensen (2004). Indeed misunderstanding with the cultural Other often revolves around three basic manifestations of culture that often integral in textbooks. The three are worldviews (beliefs and assumptions), values, and norms

At this juncture, it is worth to take Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggestions about the need to take new perspective/theorizing rather than being bogged down or entrapped with the canonical views. Basically, both scholars posited that it is an act of quality theorizing to make a distinction on what is a ‘real world’ and a ‘determined’ state. Gudykunst (2005) observed that theories of intercultural communication can be divided into five categories, not necessarily exclusive:

theories focusing on accommodation or adaption, on effective outcomes, on identity management or negotiation, on networks or relationships, and on adjustment or acculturation. For Barbara Czarniawska (1997), Burrell and Morgan is instigating a rebellion for an insatiable curiosity (Barbara Czarniawska, 1997) for the sake of shaking off the body from the flies of elephantine problem (Waldo, 1961), at least. Besides the old world [knowledge] is cracking. Perhaps, it is time to consume knowledges from non-Anglo Saxon repositories too. Jensen (2004) noted that researchers from various disciplines have worked in the past, basically from their own perspectives. In general, they have not learned to complement other approaches, and hardly any dialogue between different orientations. Hence, actual ‘intercultural’ communication between various disciplines has often been problematic, with each of them claiming its legacy in the field; alive with silos! In this light, Burrell and Morgan quest for venturing into other realm of knowledge is enlightening.

Realizing deficiencies, as mentioned above, in ‘conducting’/understanding intercultural communication in complex multi-ethnic societies, this chapter attempts to benefit from the wisdom of linguistic turn in human sciences. In general, this philosophical turn brought the view that language construct the reality. Another turn of interest that to be imbued in this work is the hermeneutical turn, primarily focusing on Hans Georg Gadamer’s work. In addition points from dialogical turn are included. As works on intercultural communication are vast and wide, this chapter attempts to look into Iben Jensen and Mikhail Bakhtin works that related to the area of study. Iben Jensen is one of the leading postcultural researchers that aim to destabilize the notion that differences is always given privilege in intercultural communication, which is a dominant statement in functionalist approach (Jense, 2015). In postcultural perspective, culture is seen as meaning constructed in relations between people, not homogenous but always in the state of change. Hence, culture is in the practice. Here, culture as ‘nets of meaning people spun around themselves’ (Geertz, 1973: 5) is highly celebrated. Meanwhile appropriating Bakhtin is to provide an alternative strategy in studying intercultural communication (Min, 2010). Bakhtin’s ideas on relating with the cultural Other is not yet explicitly explored by intercultural communication scholars. Surely, the epistemology of intercultural communication as seen in Jensen’s and Bakhtin’s are couched in non-Islamic traditions. As this work is exploratory in nature, some aspects of Jensen’s and Bakhtin’s will be appropriated with Islamic inputs on knowledge making.

## Part 2: Challenging The Existing Convention



**Diagram 1: The linear model of the communication process**

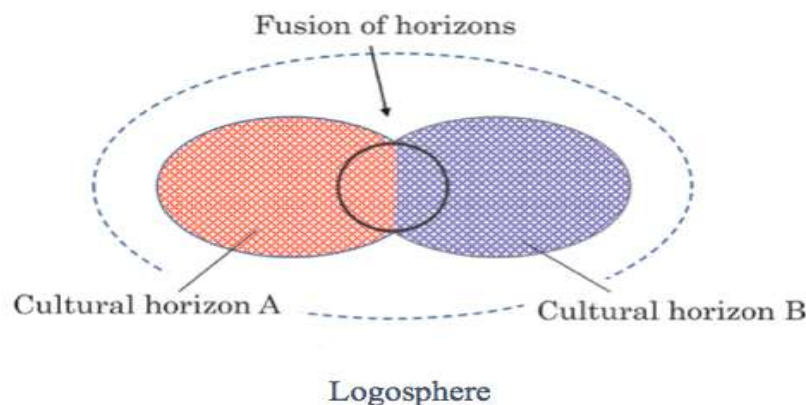


For a long time, communication process is being tied to S-C-M-R model. It is a linear engagement where someone (the sender- S) is sending a message (the message- M) via a channel (C) to a receiver (R). The Channel in this regard can be a problem or a saviour of making the connection between the S and the R. If the C is having hiccups, it gives noises, and the communication process is unstable. In this model noises must be reduced, marginalized or even eliminated. In the context of intercultural communication process, the above noises can be translated as 'differences' or 'strangeness', be it Hofstedeian dimensions or Simmel's insider/native categorical spaces. In this approach of intercultural communication, *culture as a barrier* as noise, a force against effective communication is being promoted (Samovar, Porter and Jain, 1981). Indeed, it is a carry-on legacy of Hall's cultural determinism.

Since late 1990's there is a movement to look and understand intercultural communication as 'the practice'. This practice theory is based upon assumption that social action, practice is the starting point, not the subject. Commonly understood, a practice is interconnected rays of activities (or arrangements), which most often are routinized (Jense, 2015). According to Theodore Schatzki (2001), practice is our doings and sayings, tied together by understandings, formal and informal rules, a teleoaffective structure, (aiming towards a goal) and general understandings (p. 53). Earlier, Shotter's (1993) in *Conversational Realities* posited that conversants in their practices 'act as practical authors of their social realities' (p. 148-59). One of the leading scholars in taking practice theory is Iben Jensen. He developed a new model of intercultural communication that emphasizes on interconnectedness or relatedness of parties as authors/practitioners in a 'cultural' engagement; culture as system and culture as practice as complementary concept hence practice implies system and hence system implies practice (Finch and Nynas, 2011).

In detail, Jensen's model is to let the practitioner think intercultural communication process as a series of authoring that involves positions of experiences, cultural presuppositions, cultural self-perception, and cultural fix points. If we take Shotter's explanation on authorship, it is about a practice of attempt to construct a sense who they are, create a shared sense of features of the situations or contexts, and how they may move others to act through dialogical practices. In this authoring, authors construct self, realities and meaning.

Jensen views of intercultural communication are about celebrating differences, diversity and otherness. In essence, Jensen emphasises on the importance of positions of experiences of both authors for othering engagement. In explaining the above idea, Jensen dig deeper into social constructionism of Berger and Luckmann (1986); experiences construct, creates and shapes authors' world. Simply said, experience is central. In a similar vein, Jensen looks toward Hans Georg Gadamer in elaborating points on experiences. Hermeneutically, positions of experience lies in the horizon of experience (Gadamer, 1989)



**Diagram 2: Gadamer's model of the horizon of experience**

The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. Understanding is based upon experience. We understand the world on the basis of our own experiences, and our experience of the world is limited by our vantage point (p. 302).

With reference to the above, Jensen posited that we cannot only see cultural differences as the only differentiation to interpretation, but we have to take the horizon into account. Indeed it is not about differences of the social space of the actor/author but also about differences arising out different 'positioning'. Here, Jensen is taking ideas from the social constructionists Davies and Harré (1990). Specifically, positioning is the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines. This positioning can be interactive positioning in which what one person says positions over the Other, and there can be reflexive positioning in which one positions oneself. In sum, positions of experiences gives: 1) an awareness of how different positions are crucial to the interpretation of the communication, 2) a reflection that persons in intercultural communication always have different opportunities to give different positions of themselves. Essentially, intercultural communication is perspectival to the point that social positions and experiences are not floating in space, but are created in social structures. 3) The individual differences is interconnected with structural differences such as ethnic background. In authoring, there is always an issue of negotiation.

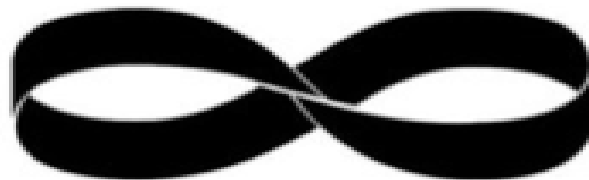
Jensen also suggested cultural presuppositions/pre-understandings as integral to his model. This Gadamerian hermeneutical element of *vorurteil* has been translated as prejudices. Basically, these presuppositions' refers to knowledge, experience, feelings and opinions we have towards the Other of which we do not regard as members of the cultural communities or logosphere that we identify ourselves with. Presuppositions are living in an universe known as logosphere. In communication, logosphere is the interpretation of words' meanings based on language and context. The word is derived from its Greek roots: *logos* the word and *sphere* here in the meaning of the universe. The universe of words as in universe of information. Generally, this prejudice is a particular of knowledge about a topic that often constructed in a certain way with a particular discourse, or utterances. It is a formation of practice in sociological everyday life. Jensen's peculiarity on everyday life is drawn from Berger and Luckman (1966). "[Everyday] life is dominated by the pragmatic motive' (p.42). Similarly,

everyday life is a space of habitualised action, where meanings are embedded as routines in a general stock of knowledge (Bender, 1998: 189). In the context of cultural presuppositions/vorurteils/prejudices, Jense explains,

The intention of the concept of ‘cultural presuppositions’ is to create awareness about the ordinary process that people outside our own social community often are characterised (negatively) on the basis of our own values. This explains why ‘they’ (very often) are described as ‘the inadequate others’ while our own culture is idealised. While the actors’ understandings are constructed on the basis of discourses in society, cultural presuppositions could be described as the actors’ or [authors] actual use of discourses in society.

In addition to position of experiences and cultural ‘prejudices’, Jensen model of practice also includes cultural self-perception and cultural fix points. In this perceptive-taking, the actor/author acts or expresses as what expected by his/her cultural community or cosmopolis. It is an act of construction about ourselves in response to the Other. Here, seeing or understanding our own culture in the light of comparing the Other cultures. Cultural fix points are the focal points that arise in the communication between two actors/authors who both feel/think/identify they represent a certain topic. These points are related to time and space (chronotope). Often they are related to demands of actual situations that culminates in agreements or disagreements/ conflict or cohesion.

Simply said, Jense’s model of practice views intercultural process is/as a kind of ‘double swing’ experiential action whereby both parties/authors are both addresse and addressed. Visually, the model is a sign of infinity; ‘to be correct it is a Mobius band, twisted around once and put together in a shape’ (Jensen 2004: 5).



**Diagram 3: The mobius band**

Desmond (2013) noted that the spirit of a Mobius is dialogical. Indeed, going dialogical has been touted as the way forward, and it should be the social practice of intercultural communication of the future (Gao, 2017). Having said that, it is worth to visit Bakhtin theory of dialogism. Mikhail Bakhtin is known to be one of the best luminaries on dialogism of this century; a Russian polymath re-discovered personality in the wake of dialogical turn in human sciences.

### **Part 3: Dialogism And Readressing ICC**

Mikhail Bakhtin works were primarily in the context of literary criticism. However, his ideas on dialogic imagination can be transferred into the field of intercultural communication. A point to note, dialogue is the basic of culture and also human existence (Gurevitch, 1992: 90). Scholars that appropriated Bakhtin’s in studying intercultural communication, among others, are Xu (2013) and Reid (2013).



Basically, Bakhtinian dialogism moves with his idea on language that emphasized on word [slovo]. This Russian slovo that signifying both an individual word and a method of using it. Important elements in dialogism, among others, are utterance, addressivity and answerability.

Utterances or speech acts are all present in slovo, and they are specifically social, historical, concrete and dialogized. According to Bakhtin, utterance is an expression in a living context of exchange between parties. The slovo is formed via a relationship with the Other people and their otherness (other's words and expressions, other's living time, cultural world context and experiences). In this understanding, a word is an artefact living in a certain historical moments of social interactions. Whatever, speech acts concern with ideas on performative utterances and intention of speakers/actors. Speech acts/utterances are always about the interaction of the addressee and the addressed in the cultural space of engagement (Croft, 1984). Simply, an utterance is always in the state of historicity or positioned within/inseparable from a certain operation .

In light of the above, an utterance is always addressed to someone. As such an utterance is living in the state of addressivity. Therefore an utterance is always addressed to someone and it anticipates, generates, responses, and expects an answer. Simply, utterances live and move with the force of responsivity. Contextually, an utterance is a unit of communication.

### **Addressivity**

Addressivity is the constitutive feature of the utterance; without it the utterance does not and cannot exist (Bakhtin, 1986:99). Addressivity is always oriented to a listener, and listeners do not just respond to an utterance after it is made; they also shape it while it is being made. Addressivity also includes an utterance's implicit dialogue with earlier utterances on the same topic. Words 'remember' their contexts.. Here is an open collaboration when both parties respect each other and have a joint activity or engagement. Hence, both parties are authors of utterances. Simply said there is no monologism as both are learners; each learns from the other. Indeed, "I live in a world of others' words." (Bakhtin, 1984:143). Similarly, "any understanding of live speech, a live utterance, is inherently responsive... [any] utterance is a link in the chain of communication." (Bakhtin, 1986: 68, 84). Thus, "the word lives, as it were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context." (1981:284). In addressivity there is a consciously constructed relationship between the speaker and the addressee. Here, there is no "I"; there is only "we", as the "I" that speaks based upon social situations. A point to note, the above idea is glued to Bakhtin's idea on words. "Any word exists for the speaker in three aspects; as a neutral word of a language belonging to nobody; as an other's word which belong to another person that filled with echoes of other's utterances; my word as imbued in my expression' (Bakhtin, 1986: 88). Simply, in dialogism addressivity is the regulative idea of dialogue and logosphere ( Jol Yung, 1998:101).

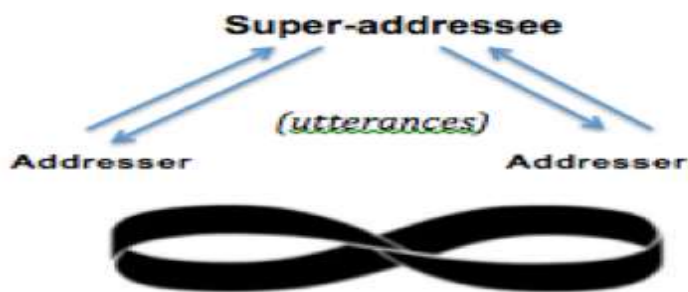
### **Answerability**

In relation to the above, addressivity is always in tandem with answerability where one needs to response and anticipates with the aesthetic act that embraces certain morality. Authors, according to Bakhtin, has the duty to perform aesthetic activity that encapsulated within overlapping motifs, namely the per personalist ethics of Being yourself, the aesthetics of the self-Other. For Bakhtin normative action should be on 'how I act', not because of Kantian deontological ideas on rules and duty.' How should I act given the subjectivity of another who

can answer me back --- however different that subjectivity might be from my own' (Nielsen, 1998: 214). This normative action is an act of moral privileging of the Other as both individual stranger and potential collective friend; an act of emotionally and volitionally oriented toward another axiological position this Other 'I' that can answer back (ibid). Surely in this authoring of act, balancing between self-Other, inner and outer body, soul and spirit, and individual and community must be achieved. It is act embedded within a certain responsibility; individual responsibility of being oneself and being in relation with another. In this position authors are living with overlapping tensions, differences and correlation of values, completion and closure of openness with and toward the Other. Indeed, this is Bakhtin's dialogics difference is all about where there is no final foreclosure or unfinalizable (Bakhtin, 1986). Yol Jung (1998: 100) elaborates the idea,

Differentiation is not distinctness and separateness, but a particular way of being connected to others. [This is] basic to the recognition of the Other as self, and [the self as an Other].

Contextually, the intercultural communication in this configuration of answerability is being organized on the basis of universalism and particularism, and it is a world of unitary, like yin-yang, in content (Bakhtin, 1993). A point to note, in addressivity there is super-addressee who overlooks both parties. 'Superaddressee,' an imagined perfect listener who would understand perfectly. Contextually, the morality guide could be coming from the superaddressee. The notion of addressivity and answerability are intimately related to the super-addressee. All elements can be said are connected by utterances.



**Diagram 4: Bakhtin's model of Dialogism**

### Behind the scene

Dialogism is an epistemology put forward by Bakhtin, noted Holquist (1981), and it is being elaborated widely by Krasny (2002). Having said the above, it is important to realise 'what is behind the scene' of this epistemology', namely knowledge making in intercultural communication especially in the wake of going dialogical. What type of knowledge-making is at work? What is the essence? If we take Bakhtin's model as the blueprint we need to be careful though. Bakhtin ideas were deeply influenced by 'I and Thou' principle as espoused by Martin Buber. This figure was said to be identifying himself with Judaism, but he was also said to be enlightened by Christianity. Hermann Cohen and Kagan also coloured Bakhtin's relationship with Judeo-Christian theological concepts. Bakhtin grew up in a religious Russian Orthodox family. Thus it is surprising to see Bakhtin's works full of Judeo-Christian metaphors and theological concepts (Coates, 1998). Indeed, Bakhtin emphasis on special relationship with the Other is based upon Christianity. Indeed, Bakhtin acknowledged that interrelationship of

humans and their ideas, as a dialogue with God, “a heavenly father who is above me and who may justify and love me where I from within myself cannot love and justify myself in principle. What I must be for the other, God is for me” (Bakhtin, 1990; Bagshaw, 2016). “Only religion can bring about completely unlimited freedom of thought,” Kozhinov recalls Bakhtin saying, “because a human being absolutely cannot exist without some kind of faith. The absence of faith in God inevitably turns into idolatry” (Rzhevsky, 1994; Felch, 20010). Indeed, [the Christian ]God is present through and through in any dialogical activity as super-addressee (Patterson, 1988), the third listener. Explicitly, Arts and Answerability (Bakhtin, 1990) is a testament of Bakhtin high degree of relatedness with Christianity. Coates (1998) writes,

Bakhtin conceives Christ as the most self-aware example of aesthetic activity, consciously dividing humanity into ‘himself, the lover, and others, the beloved, himself, the Saviour, and all the others, the saved, himself, the one who takes himself the burden of sin and atonement, and all the others, the ones that set free from that burden and atoned for (p. 26). Coates also noted that incarnational view of truth coloured the philosophy of act of humans. In this view there is no such things as abstract values of Man (p.32).

#### Part 4: Readdressing With Islamic Inputs

Indeed, Islam is against of all forms of racism, discrimination, prejudice and all forms of differences based on physical traits of human beings. Rather Islam highly emphasises on unity and equality among people. People are born equal in the sight of Allah and the only characteristics that differentites one person from another is the level of *taqwa* (piety). Allah creates people from different races and tribes so that they can get to know and learn from one. Allah highlights it clearly in the following Quranic verses:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted  
(Al Quran, Surah Al Hujurat, 13).

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافَ اللَّسَانِ وَالْوَالِدَاتِ وَالْأَلْوَانِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo! herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge  
(Al Quran, Surah Ar Rum, Verse 22)

At this juncture, it is worth to theorize ideas from Jensen and Bakhtin and incorporate them with Islamic inputs, that is a beginning of Islamic intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is a ‘Western’ discipline. Islamically speaking, it is a study about knowing one another/the Other. The thread in this relationship is on knowing the other or *ta’aruf* whereby forms diversity is being recognized as His creation, Allah the Maker (*AlBarii*). It is a sign (*ayat*) of His knowledge as the All Knowing, the Omniscient (*AlHayyu*). The Qur’anic concept of *ta’aruf* is about celebrating and embracing differences of the other whereby one must honour

the dignity of all human beings. In this context, all information (*qawl*) given must follow the adabic principle, that is doing justice to one's own and the Other in the light of *hablum min nas wa min Allah* (an agreement of relationship based upon rights appropriate for human beings and an agreement of relationship with rights of Allah being observed as stipulated in Al-Qur'an and al-Hadeeth). In managing *ta'aruf*, the framework of relationship between the addresser and the addressee should and must be couched with *akhlaqul karimah* (noble attitude/character). Rights of Allah can be summarised as revealed in Surah al-Ikhlās: Say: He is Allah, the One!, Allah, the eternally Besought of all!, He begetteth not nor was begotten, And there is none comparable unto Him. In practice, both parties should and adhere to the Prophet Muhammad characters:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And indeed, you (Prophet Muhammad) are of a great moral character  
 (Al-Quran, Surah Al-Qalam: 4).

In *ta'aruf*, 'words' or *qawl* (speech/narratives/discourses) must and should be delivered straightforwardly and honesty, no exaggeration or fabrication, responsible and sincere. In this light, the Other is the compassionate Other whereby he/she should be showered with *rahmah*, a term covers the qualities of love, benevolence and generosity. Ahmad posited that *qawl ma'ruf* is fundamental in any engagement. Here, he takes Al-Tabari (2005: 539), in interpreting 'ayah 5 in surah al-Nisa'. 'The phrase *qawl ma'ruf* refers to all words which encourage and lead people to all that is commanded and to avoid all that is forbidden. This apparently shows that Muslims are moulded as persons who are always calling people to the Right Path, doing welfare and charity, and preventing others from doing wrong' (p. 44). Surely, in *ta'aruf*, utterances should and must have the deepest meanings, rational and mature, clear to the heart for a response in term of right action. Ahmad phrased it as *qawl baligh* (Surah An-Nisaa: 63). In tandem, *qawl layyin* should and must be incorporated. *Layyin* refers to anything which is soft, tender or gentle (Surah Ta-Haa: 44). Contextually, all 'words' should and must be kind; disagreement must be respected. Thus parties must be connected easily (*maysur*), not embedded in falsehood, appropriately and accordingly in order to receive His blessings.

In elaboration on *ta'aruf*, Ahmad (2012) noted that the concept must be read beyond two individuals but should include the society. Thus he adds *tafahum*, *takaful* and *ta'awun* as fundamentals. *Tafahum* is crucial in sciences of relating with the Other at the societal level. With reference to al-Banna (1980-373), the concept of *tafahum* refers to the habit of mutual understanding on or about something which originates from unity of thought (*wihdah al-fikr*). Implicitly, this act could stimulate a high degree of unity of hearts that uplift differences of jahilly kind of nature. When everybody in a group understands their goal, objectives and duties, they can generate ideas and act accordingly to achieve them. In Islam, the central element in mutual understanding must be based on the religion (*din*) or accord (*`ahd*), the core of which is of course belief in Allah --- *iman* (Ahmad, 2012:46), *ta'awun* is about group effort and encouragement of mutual aid and collaboration/cooperation for goodness, physically and spiritually. Truly, parties must share their responsibility in ensuring such good goodness prevailed. This is *takaful*, a 'speech-act' of empathy. In practice, *ta'aruf* encourages learning from past lessons, observations of signs, as revealed in the Qur'an and life/universe/logosphere.

### Conclusion: Going *Adabic*

Having said about *ta'aruf* as the basis for 'islamised' intercultural communication, fundamentals of Islamic education as the umbrella should not be forgotten. Otherwise the whole project of Islamization of this subject becoming a faulty business and non-adabic in nature. Syed Naguib Al-Attas (1973) works on adab and Islamic education, says:

An educated man is a good man, and by 'good' he means a man possessing adab in its full inclusive sense. A man of adab (*insan adabi*) is defined as the one who is sincerely conscious of his responsibilities towards the true God; who understands and fulfills his obligations to himself and others in his society with justice, and who constantly strives to improve every aspect of himself towards perfection as a man of adab [*insan adabi*] (p. 54).

In a similar vein, Wan Mod Nor (1995) in Chapter Three of his book elaborates:

Since adab is an integral part of wisdom and justice, the loss of adab would naturally entail the prevalence of injustice, and stupidity, and even madness. Injustice is of course a condition where things are not in their right places. Stupidity (*humq*), is the deployment of wrong methods to arrive at right goals or ends, while madness (*junun*) is the struggle to attain false or wrong aims or goals. It is indeed a madness if the very purpose of seeking knowledge is other than the attainment of true happiness or the love of God (*mahabbah*) in this world according to the dictates of the true religion, and the attainment of His vision (*ru'yatullah*) in the Hereafter. Similarly, it is utter stupidity to attempt to attain happiness in this world and in the next without the right kind of knowledge and practice.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَىٰ أَعْجَمِيٍّ وَلَا لِعَجَمِيٍّ عَلَىٰ عَرَبِيٍّ وَلَا لِأَحْمَرَ عَلَىٰ أَسْوَدَ وَلَا أَسْوَدَ عَلَىٰ أَحْمَرَ إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَىٰ أَبْلَغْتُ

Ahmad (22978) narrated from Abu Nadrah: Someone who heard the khutbah of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) on the second of the days of at-Tashreeq told me that he said: "O people, verily your Lord is One and your father is one. Verily there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab or of a non-Arab over an Arab, or of a red man over a black man, or of a black man over a red man, except in terms of taqwa. Have I conveyed the message?" They said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) has conveyed the message. (This hadeeth is being reported in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi, and it being classed as saheeh by al-Albaani).



## References

- Ahmad, S. (2012). Generic skills from Qur'anic perspective. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, Vol.1 (June): 43-53
- Ali, M.Y. (2005). *The Holy Qur'an – English Translation and Commentary*. Marksfield: Islamic Foundation
- A-Attas, S.M.N. (1978). *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC).
- Ayish M., I., (2003) Beyond Western- Oriented Communication Theories: A Normative Arab Islamic Perspective, 10 (2), 79 -9<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Bagshaw, H. B. P. (2016). *Religion in the Thought of Bakhtin*. Abingdon: Routledge
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press
- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Bakhtin, M. (1986). *Speech Genres and Late Essays*. Austin: UTP
- Bakhtin, M. (1990). *Arts and Answerability*. Austin: UTP
- Bakhtin, M. (1993). *Towards the Philosophy of Act*. Austin: UTP
- Barbara, C. (1992). *Exploring Complex Organizations*. Newbury Park: Sage
- Bender, C. (1998). 'Kitchen works', PhD dissertation, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
- Berger, P. and Luckmann, T. (1986). *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Doubleday
- Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms*. Aldershot: Heinemann
- Coates, R. (1998). Christianity in Bakhtin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Coates, R. (1998). Two of a small fraternity?. In David Sheperd (ed.), *The Contexts of Bakhtin*. Amsterdam: Harwood
- Davies, B. and Harre, R. (1990/2007). 'Positioning', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20 (1): 43-63
- Czarniawska- Joerges, B. (1992). *Exploring Complex Organizations: A Cultural Perspective*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Felch, S. and Contino, P.J. (2010). *Bakhtin and Religion*. Evanston: The Northwestern University Press
- Filho, C.M. (2008). *Comunicacao*. Teresina: EDUFPI
- Finch, J. and Nynas, P. (2011). *Transforming Otherness*. New Brunswick: Transaction
- Gadamer, H. G. (1975/1989). *Truth and Method*. London: Continuum
- Gao, Y. (2017). *Introduction: Dialogical perspective on intercultural communication*. Vol 17(1): 1-6
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books
- Gudykunst, W. B. (2005). *Theorizing about Intercultural Communication*. Newbury Park: Sage
- Gudykunst, William B. & Kim, Young Yun (1984/1992/1997). *Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Galander, M. (2002) Communication in the Early Islamic Era: A Social and Historical Analysis, *Intellectual Discourse*, Vol 10, No 1, 61-75.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Hall, E.T. (1959). *The Silent Language*. New York: Doubleday
- Hall, B. T. (2002). *Among Cultures*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth
- Hofstede, G. (1991). *The Software of Mind*. New York: McGrawHill
- Holquist, M. (1990). *Dialogism and His World*. London: Routledge
- Jensen, I., Nynas, P. and Dahl, O. (2006). *Bridges of Understanding*. Oslo: Oslo Academic Press

- Jensen, I. (2004). The practice of intercultural communication. In Gavan Titley (ed.), *Resituating Culture*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, pp. 81-92
- Jensen, I. (2015). 'Post-cultural communication'. *Nordicum-Mediterranean*, Vol. 10(2).
- Jol Jung, H. (1998). 'Bakhtin's dialogical body politics'. In Michael Bell and Michael Gardiner (eds.), *Bakhtin and Human Sciences*, London:Sage, pp.95-111.
- Khalil, A. I. A. E. F. (2016). *The Islamic Perspective of Interpersonal Communication*. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 4(2), 22-37.
- Krasny, K.A. (2002). *Dialogic spaces*. Master of Education thesis. University of Manitoba, Manitoba, Canada.
- Leach, E. (1982). *Social Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Min, E. (2001). Bakhtinian perspectives on the study of intercultural communication. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 22(1): 5-18.
- Mohamed, S. (2018) The Islamization of the Malaysian media: a Complex Interaction Of Religion, Class And Commercialization. *Intellectual Discourse* , 26 (2): 635-658
- Mohamed, S. (2020) New media, cultural imperialism and the Malay muslim society in Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development*, 5 (29): 19-33.
- Mowlana, H (2013) Communication and Cultural Settings: an Islamic Perspective in Asante, M. K., Miike, Y., & Yin, J. (Eds.). (2013). *The Global Intercultural Communication Reader*. Routledge.
- Mowlana H. (2007) Theoretical Perspectives on Islam and Communication. *China Media Research*, 3(4), retrieved from <http://www.chinamediaresearch.net>
- Murray, Stephen D. (1994). *Theory Groups and the Study of Language in North America: A Social History*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Nakayama, T.K. and Halualani, R. T. (2010). *The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell
- Nielsen, G. (1998). 'The norms of answerability'. In Michael Bell and Michael Gardiner (eds.), *Bakhtin and Human Sciences*, London:Sage
- Patterson, D. (1988). *Literature and Spirit*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.
- Reid, D. (2013). Bakhtin on the nature of dialogue. *The Finnish Society for the Study of Religion*, Vol. 49(1): 65-82
- Rzhevsky, N.(1994). Kozhinov on Bakhtin. *New Literary History*, 25 (2), Spring: 429-444
- Schatzki, T. (ed.)(2001). *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. London:Routledge
- Shotter, J. (1993). *Conversational Realities*. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Rogers, Everett M. & Hart, William B. (2001). "The Histories of Intercultural, International, and Development Communication." In William B. Gudykunst & Bella MODY (eds.), *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication*, Third Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 1-18.
- Samovar, L.A., Porter, R.E., & Jain, N.C. (1981). *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. Wadsworth Publishing Company
- Schatzki, T. (ed.)(2001). *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. London:Routledge
- Waldo, D. (1961). "Organization Theory: An Elephantine Problem," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. XXI, No. 4 (Autumn 1961), 210-225.
- Wan Mohd Nor (1998). *The Educational Philosophy and Practices of SMN Al-Attas*, Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC
- Whorf, Benjamin Lee (1940/1956). *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. John B. Carroll (ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.