
Intercultural Communication in the Construction of Islamic Teaching

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Abstract

Communication is understood as a process of interaction between two or more individuals exchanging information using symbols so there is a mutual understanding between them. Every communication phenomenon requires a relationship between individuals or more who exchange information with the aim of conveying a message so each of the involved parties can understand each other. Thus, intercultural dialogue refers to a fact of communication in which participants with different cultural backgrounds are involved in a contact with one another, either directly or indirectly. The teachings of Islam as a religion that loves peace also recognize the existence of cultural diversity as a necessary thing. So Islam teaches its people to always build deep interactions (lita'arafu) between different cultural elements. It is, a dialogical attitude, an attitude of openness to build communication to all cultural elements that surround it. Nation, tribe and ethnicity, beside to religion, is one of the cultural elements that confirms the identity of human groups. These three cultural elements make people feel as part of a certain group and at the same time it makes them feel different from certain groups. Surah al-Hujurat verse 13 acknowledges human diversity. Even though we are both Adam's children and grandchildren, born from the same ancestor, we are aware that we are different both as a nation, ethnicity, race, and as part of a certain religion. Humans by nature always attach their identity to certain groups of people because of the similarity of characteristics. For example, the similarity of language, tribe, race, ethnicity, religion, history and residence. For this reason, the surah al-Hujurat verse 13 recognizes cultural diversity. As humans are culturally diverse, humans must know each other (li taarafu) or build a dialogical attitude on the top of the diversity that surrounds them.

Keywords: *Islam; Communication; Culture.*

INTRODUCTION

Cultural diversity is nothing but a fact about the existence of many different cultures, which can be distinguished based on ethnographic observations. The awareness of this diversity is increasingly felt today because to the global communication and increased intercultural contact. Although greater awareness is not a guarantee for the preservation of cultural diversity, it does make this topic increasingly prominent. Cultural diversity is not only an asset that must be protected but a resource that must be promoted (Unesco, 2017).

Cultural diversity is a necessity that cannot be avoided in human socio-cultural life. The diversity is a blessing for humans, but that diversity can also lead to conflict between cultures. Conflicts usually occur because intercultural communication does not go well, or it can also be due to the closed communication space between cultures, causing misunderstanding or distrust between one cultural entity and another.

In the context of globalization as well as the increasing migration and urbanization, the interrelated challenges of protecting cultural identities, preserving cultural diversity, and promoting intercultural communication are becoming increasingly important and urgent. Intercultural communication has an important role in bridging various cultural differences, while simultaneously maintaining a variety of cultural expressions through various processes of interaction, mutual support, and empowering one another (Unesco, 2017).

Currently, the study of intercultural dialogue is quite interesting if we refer to the condition of Indonesia as a nation. Considering that Indonesia has a very diverse and even very complex cultural wealth, so that cultural complexity requires awareness of each existing cultural entity to develop intercultural dialogue so that cultural diversity does not lead this nation into social conflict but how each cultural group is constructively active in dialogue to lead this nation into a life of peace and prosperity. Thus, these dialogical attitudes are expected to be able to encourage the people from different cultural groups to jointly create an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect in the midst of these various national life conditions.

Therefore, this study focuses on the discourse of intercultural dialogue in the perspective of Islamic teaching, in this case making surah al-Hujurat verse 13 a starting point in providing an explanation of the facts of human cultural diversity both theologically and philosophically as well as socio-culturally. Substantially, surah al-Hujurat verse 13 is very relevant in discourse intercultural dialogue, this verse becomes the theological basis and the basic for the awareness of Muslims in seeing the existence of cultural diversity as something real and even undoubtedly in every phase of human life history. This verse

affirms the fact of human cultural diversity, in which diversity is assumed to be constantly moving on two opposing sides of possibility. On one hand it can move towards social conflict when communication is not going well, on the other hand it can also move towards social balance.

The study of intercultural dialogue in the perspective of surah al-Hujurat verse 13 is not the first and only study carried out by the researcher, but in the literature observation conducted by the researcher, it is found that this study has also been carried out by other researchers. Like Asriadi's study, a student of the master of communication and Islamic broadcasting program at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. The study discusses surah al-Hujurat verse 13 in general in the context of intercultural dialogue. Likewise the researcher also examines the discourse of intercultural communication in the perspective of surah al-Hujurat verse 13. Specifically, the researcher focuses on the word *lita'arafu* contained in the verse pieces. The word *lita'aarafu* means 'getting to know each other', which can be interpreted as a form of intersubjective dialogue, namely dialogue between two different cultural subjects or more reciprocally.

Therefore, this study attempts to broaden the existing study perspectives by using a socio-philosophical approach to interpretation. Socio-philosophical interpretation is a conceptual term that refers to a form of interpretation of a text - both texts that come from scriptures and social texts without depending on existing explanations and meanings, but interpreters will interpret the text freely-philosophically with the aim of producing meaning. -New meanings that have never existed before and have not even been thought of by other interpreters with due regard to ethical principles of humanity. In addition, the socio-philosophical interpretive approach looks at words and terms that exist in a particular text with a conceptual framework that comes from social science. Key words that are considered important in a text, such as scriptures and other texts, are interpreted by basing themselves on theoretical concepts derived from social science. So the socio-philosophical interpretation moves in freedom as well as in structure, namely trying to construct new meanings with free-philosophical thinking, but structurally it also relies on the theoretical concepts of social science in explaining the meaning of a text. Conceptually, the socio-philosophical interpretation approach can be related to Derrida's hermeneutics of deconstruction which views the meaning of a text as unstable. A text or meaning is viewed in the framework of perspectives, that every meaning or text is a perspective, and that perspective is always open to research, criticism and even deconstruction (dismantling) to produce new perspectives that have not been thought of by other interpreters or reviewers.

Therefore, reading a text is the same as giving birth to a new text, it can even break down the existing conceptual framework of the text with the aim of giving birth to a different conceptual framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Concept of Intercultural Communication

In general, communication is understood as a process of interaction between two or more individuals who exchange information using symbols so that there is a mutual understanding between them. It means every communication phenomenon requires a relationship between individuals or more who exchange information with the aim of conveying a message so that each of the parties involved understanding one another.

The same thing was also expressed by Everett M. Rogers and Lawrence Kincaid in Wiryanto, that communication is an act in which two or more people exchange information between one person and another, in order to create deep mutual understanding (Wiryanto, 2004).

Then what is meant by intercultural communication? According Maletzke in the Haryadi and Silvana, intercultural dialogue (intercultural communication) is the process of exchange of ideas and meanings between people of different cultures (Edi Haryadi & Ana Silvana, 2013). According to Young Yung Kim in Suranto, as quoted by Marselina, intercultural dialogue shows a communication phenomenon in which participants with different cultural backgrounds are involved in a contact with one another, either directly or indirectly. (Marselina Lagu, 2016).

The concept of intercultural communication is generally used widely for all forms of communication between people who come from different groups, besides it is also used more narrowly which includes communication between different cultures (Heryadi and Silvana, 2013). The Intercultural communication is the process and act of exchanging thoughts and meanings between people of different cultures. When communication occurs between people of different nationalities, racial groups, or language communities, this communication is called intercultural communication (Heryadi and Silvana, 2013). In this case, if there is communication between people who come from different cultures, then that's when intercultural communication occurs (Lubis, 2019).

From the definitions above, it can be understood that intercultural communication is an attitude of openness in building constructive communication between various cultural entities that come from different cultural backgrounds. Obviously, this openness attitude

must be supported by the awareness of each cultural group that cultural diversity is something that is indispensable and cannot be denied. Through the awareness, each cultural group is expected to actively build communication by prioritizing tolerant attitudes and upholding the dignity of each cultural group that encompasses its existence both as individuals and as social beings

Therefore, intercultural dialogue is only possible if the relationship formed between the parties having the dialogue is a subject-to-subject relation (intersubject), not a subject-to-object relationship, such as a relationship in a patriarchal society that views women as objects of male hegemony as a subject. Therefore, treatment of humans clearly cannot be equated with treatment of objects or objects. When dealing with an object, humans as subjects acquire knowledge about that object based on the objectivity of knowledge. However, when dealing with a human being as another subject, humans as a subject not only gain knowledge, but - more deeply, getting mutual understanding and comprehending(reciprocal) about the subject as a human being who have feelings, aspirations, and desires (Yasraf, 2005).

Intercultural dialogue is highly dependent on intercultural competence, which is defined as a combination of the various abilities needed to interact naturally with those who are different from the individual. This ability is primarily communicative, but it also involves revisiting our view and understanding of the world; because in fact it is not a culture that is involved in the dialogue process but humans as individuals and groups, with all their complexities and commitments to various groups. What determines the success of intercultural dialogue is the basic ability to listen, cognitive flexibility, empathy, humility, and friendliness(Unesco, 2017).

According to Yasraf A. Piliang, various prolonged social conflicts can be seen as a result of poor communication between various plural cultures within a nation, which often leads to various forms of misunderstanding, misunderstanding, and misjudgment. Due to inter-cultural communication breakdowns, various conflict issues that should have been resolved in a democratic dialogue or debate discourse were allowed to develop into various forms of misunderstanding or misunderstanding, disinformation, which led to various forms of suspicion, anxiety, fear, and even hatred. Conflicts that lead to levels of physical violence are the result of allowing these misunderstandings without being able to provide rational and objective explanations of various conflict-causing problems (Yasraf, 2015).

B. Intercultural Communication from Islamic Perspective

Then how does Islam view diversity and cultural dialogue? In surah al-Hujurat verse 13 Allah says:

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

Translation:

O people! Indeed, We have created you from a man and a woman, then We made you nations and tribes so that you would know each other. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious. Truly, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Meticulous.

Historically in the context (*asbabun nuzul*), the surah al-Hujuran verse 13 was descended regarding the events of the *fatuh of Mecca* (liberation of the City of Mecca) from the hands of the Quraish infidels. Where the time when Rasulullah conquered the city of Mecca, Bilal bin Raba was then ordered by the Messenger of Allah to say the call to prayer above the Ka'bah, but then received a racist utterance from the lack of the population of Mecca. They said, "Did Rasulullah not find anyone other than this black crow to say the call to prayer above the Ka'bah?" Then comes Surah al-Hujurant verse 13 as a form of direct refutation from Allah that all humans are essentially the same before Allah, and the measure of a person's glory is not because he is born from a certain nation, nor because of wealth and position but because of his devotion before Allah SWT.

The verse emphasizes that differences in skin color, ethnicity and nation are aimed at getting to know each other. The diversity of cultures, ethnicities and nations is not intended to sharpen conflicts or excellence with each other, but rather these differences are intended to cooperate with each other, mutual cooperation in carrying out the common interest. The principle of knowing each other is used as the basis for the relationship between the social environment, because from this introduction mutual understanding will emerge which is the base of the cooperation needed in an effort to foster mutually beneficial relationships. This is aimed at creating benefit, living in peace, justice and prosperity (Asriadi, 2019).

If the term *Li taarafu* in the surah al-Hujurat verse 13 above is translated into social science conceptual terms, the word can be interpreted as social interaction or in Habermas's term it is called deliberative dialogue, which is deep and open dialogue between groups of different cultural background. It can also be understood as a dialogical attitude, an attitude in which everyone is open to building constructive communication with others. A dialogical

attitude is very important in the midst of a society that is plural in terms of culture, because cultural diversity dynamically always leads to two opposite sides of possibility, on the one hand diversity moves towards balance, but on the other hand diversity can also move towards conflict. This is where the importance of openness - a dialogical attitude to see others as equal dialogue partners and not as opponents who must be opposed and eliminated. For this reason, the act of *litaarafu* - intercultural dialogue based on a dialogical attitude is important to continue to be built in this pluralistic community life so that people's life always leads to equilibrium, and that there is always a productive relationship between the community amid the social and cultural diversity that surrounds it.

Theoretically within the framework of social science, society will be integrated so as to form communities and groups on a large scale called a nation. At first they are united by certain values, so that from the values they live in, they develop a common identity and create solidarity among their members. This value system then becomes the basis for the emergence of a feeling of togetherness as a group or nation (Setiadi dan Kolip, 2013). So the existence of a nation is a necessity, as well as the plurality of nations and cultures as an inherent part of human socio-cultural life. The Al Quran itself recognizes the plurality of nations and cultures, and views it as a way to cooperate with one another.

The meaning of the above verse is very modern: humans were created in different ethnic groups to know each other. It means, this diversity is a means for the advancement of civilization. If we are only born in our tribal environment, never know other people's cultures, never have interactions with various kinds of children of the nation, and our knowledge is limited only to those around us, then our attitudes and behavior are like frogs in a shell. We cannot choose what religious parents were born to, or whose descendants or where. In this sense the diversity is not intended to terrorize, force or kill one another. The Qur'an introduces an extraordinary concept: it is with this diversity that we get to know each other and cooperate with one another. By knowing each other's differences, we can learn to build civilizations. By knowing the differences between us, we will be more tolerant. We get a chance to learn from each other. Misunderstandings often occur because we don't know each other's diversity (Nadirsyah Hosen, 2020).

The plurality of society, both in the context of culture and belief, must be understood as the true connection of plurality in social, cultural, civilization and society relations. On the basis of that understanding, the concept of pluralism becomes a positive factor and means goodness that spreads peace and love instead of being a frightening form - giving birth to conflict and violence, but a supporting factor for the survival of human life as

mentioned in QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13 above. Therefore, pluralism must be viewed from the positive side and not used as an excuse as a divisive person for society (Nadirsyah Hosen, 2020).

Every religious people and ethnic elements in Indonesia must be aware of the inevitability of this plurality, so that each party is able to respect each other, be tolerant in facing the plurality of beliefs, and uphold the dignity and dignity of each existing cultural entity, even though it is different from the internal culture where they tie themselves up. One of the causes of horizontal conflicts within the nation is often triggered by religious issues as well as racial issues. The first factor is usually caused by fanaticism or superficiality in understanding religion so that young people discriminate against followers of other religions. While the second factor is usually based on narcissism, feeling that the nation and ethnicity are the best and superior to other nations, tribes and ethnicities. So that each of these cultural groups is absorbed in boasting about themselves - praising themselves, thus burying the attitude of dialogue that should be brought to life in the context of a society that is indeed plural like the Indonesian nation.

Nation and ethnicity, besides religion, is one of the cultural elements that confirms the identity of human groups. These three cultural elements make people feel part of a certain group and at the same time make them feel different from certain groups. Surah al-Hujurat verse 13 above acknowledges human diversity. Even though we are both Adam's children and grandchildren, born from the same ancestor, we are aware that we are different both as a nation, ethnicity, race, and as part of a certain religion. Humans by nature always attach their identity to certain groups of people because of the similarity of characteristics. For example, the similarity of language, ethnicity, race, ethnicity, religion, history and area of residence.

The human soul feels peaceful, calm, and at ease when it is in the midst of its group. On the contrary, humans feel anxious, socially isolated, and even feel threatened when they are in the middle of a social group that is not part of the group. Thus ontologically, in essence, all human beings are the same, that is, they are both servants and creatures of Allah SWT. However, in socio-cultural terms, humans find themselves different or diverse from one another. For this reason, the above word of God acknowledges human diversity. Because humans are culturally diverse, people must know each other (*Li ta'arafu*) within the diversity that surrounds them.

Thus Mikhail Bakhtin in Yasraf, said, "Life is dialogical. Living life means engaging in dialogue, asking, listening, answering, agreeing..." (Yasraf, 2015).

That statement invites us to make peace with others by understanding that humans are subjects who each have 'feelings'. Humans cannot be seen as objects just like things, but as subjects who have feelings, aspirations, and desires. So that peace with others will be manifested in an attitude of dialogism through communication between subject and subject (intersubjective), not subject-object (monological). So it is not enough just to be heard, but we also have to hear, it is not enough just to be understood but also to understand others. That is a dialogical attitude, namely the attitude of opening oneself to 'getting to know each other' (mutual understanding, mutual understanding, mutual dialogue - *Li taarafu*) between subjects. It is a subject who really realizes that each of them has a feeling to be guarded, an aspiration to be heard, and a desire that must be given space to be manifested in the social context in which they are located.

It is from that attitude of dialogue that is manifested the *verstehen*, which is a deep understanding of other cultural groups outside of ourselves. Cultural diversity is no longer seen as a threat, but is seen as a material for evaluating the internal of one's own culture, while considering other cultures for the internal development of our own culture. So the interaction between cultures is carried out with the logic of dialogue between cultures and not the logic of a clash of civilizations. With this logic we will see the other (the other) as friends to build constructive cooperation, and not be considered as enemies.

It is true what Sartre, a philosopher of existentialism, is saying, that all human relations are in 'conflict' because the subject will always object to another subject. But what if we change the proposition, that, "the whole human relationship is likely to be in 'peace' if we see ourselves as subjects and others as subjects. Of course, the emphasis here is as a subject that each has feelings, aspirations, and desires. "

However, it must be admitted that the current discourse of cultural communication often experiences a deadlock due to the loss of dialogism in our pluralistic nation. Diverse cultural entities do not encourage us. In order to revive an attitude of dialogism, we are trapped in narcissism, which is an attitude of exaggerating pride in our own cultural identity. So that we fail to see the goodness of other cultural groups, this narcissism leads to cynicism, as well as racist attitudes that are always underestimating other cultural groups outside our cultural group. We are engrossed in our own group and forgetting the cultural world outside ourselves. Even though openness to other cultures will enrich our perspectives and cultural insights, we will get many lessons and experiences that can make us wise in addressing cultural plurality before us.

Samuel P. Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis assumes that the current and future conflicts are no longer caused by political factors, nor economic factors as Marxian logic. However, conflicts arise because of cultural factors or differences in civilization which according to him are full of religious dimensions, especially by confronting Islam and the West and between one nation and another. This thesis is true at a certain level, but also wrong, because the progress of a civilization is not only due to a clash of civilizations but the result of a dialogical attitude - the result of the mutual absorption of one element of civilization with another. For example, the progress of western civilization today is not something that just happened, or is an authentic result of the efforts of the western nations themselves, but the achievement of this progress is also the result of absorption of elements of Ancient Greek, Roman, and Islamic civilizations.

It should be underlined that it was Islam that contributed greatly to connecting Ancient Greek civilization with the West, so that the West was able to achieve the advancement of civilization as it is today. The West has also absorbed a lot of Islamic philosophical traditions in addition to Greek traditions so that the West has emerged as the holder of its current glory. That means there is no civilization that stands alone without being influenced by elements of other civilizations outside of itself. It must also be admitted that the interaction between one civilization and another civilization allows a transition of civilization progress, and what is very possible is the transition of civilization progress from the West to the East. East can refer to China, it can also refer to India, and it is possible to refer to Indonesia. Therefore, in the author's opinion, this open, connected and plural world should be seen as a way to advance civilization by mutual transfer of culture and knowledge, not as a threat or a field of conflict.

Thus, as a religious follower, as well as a believer, it must be realized that theologically - the measure of a person's faith is not only measured by belief in God Almighty, but the extent to which everyone - every element of culture is able to benefit people who are around him regardless of differences in belief and culture. Besides sowing love between fellow humans. Because Allah SWT, does not judge our good looks and wealth - nor does we see the measure of our glory because we were born from a certain nation and ethnicity, but Allah looks more at the piety (achievement) of each of his servants. As Rasulullah SAW. said: "There is no believer until he loves his brother as he loves himself"..

The words of the brothers in the words of the Prophet above, can be interpreted broadly - we can be siblings because of blood relations, friendship and residential relations -

and we can be brothers because of one religion, one country and one nation, and we can also be brothers because we are the creation of Allah SWT, who was born from the same ancestor, Adam and Eve. So it is obligatory for us to love all human beings, both black and white, red and brown people. Because all humans, regardless of nation and ethnicity, are all creatures that come from the same creator, Allah SWT. Also comes from the same ancestor, Adam and Eve. That is love based on universal human brotherhood. So what prevents us from having good relationships with others? Aren't we all brothers? Isn't our God and Ancestor the same? then why be hostile, if peace is so much better? Please think about it with the deepest nature of each of you!

CONCLUSION

Islam is a religion that recognizes cultural diversity and provides a theological foundation for its adherents to always be good to anyone regardless of differences in ethnicity, nation, race, ethnicity and religion. Even the al-Quran surah al-Hujurat verse 13 laid the foundation for the understanding of the Islamic ummah that ontologically all human beings are essentially the same (equal), that is, both are servants as well as creatures created by Allah SWT. Every human being is equally a child and grandson of Adam, born from the same ancestor. However, socio-culturally, humans find themselves different or diverse from one another either as a nation, ethnicity, race, or as part of adherents of a certain religion. Humans by nature always attach their identity to certain groups of people because of the similarity of characteristics. For example, the similarity of language, ethnicity, race, ethnicity, religion, history and area of residence. Surah al-Hujurat ayat 13 is uch discoursing the intercultural dialogue, the verse can be a basic theology as well as the basic awareness of Islamic people in seeing the existence cultural diversity as a real object even surely in every phase of humans' history. Thus, Allah's saying above recognize the human diversity. As humans are diverse culturally, then they must know each other (*li taarafu*) or making dialogic attitude above their diversity.

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