Chapter 2
Intercultural Dialogue as Constructive and Positive Communication:
From Intercultural Communication to Global Peace-Building

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ABSTRACT
This chapter conceptually highlights an important role intercultural dialogue plays in international relations as constructive and positive communication to achieve intercultural understanding and global peace-building. It also reflects on how conflicts are caused and how they could be managed across cultural boundaries. This is apparently becoming increasingly urgent as there are many intercultural conflicts, ranging from politics to diverse cultural practices. All these issues combined make intercultural relations at country level tense and in turn cause instability in some regions around the world. There are many reasons behind the situation, but one of the major reasons is lack of sufficient intercultural communication at an equal footing. It is worth reflecting on history as a guide to the present and future. Only when consistent democracy and equal rights are implemented for international community to participate in intercultural dialogue and intercultural communication in a constructive and positive manner is it conducive to international stability and global peace-building.

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INTRODUCTION

The world has never been free from various kinds of distressing contentions such as political interference (Hofmeier, 1991), economic sanctions (Cooper Drury & Li, 2006), attempts at cultural hegemony (Artz & Murphy, 2000), territorial disputes (Frazier, 2006; Huth, 1998), religious prosecution (Murphy, 2001), racial discrimination (O’Hara, Gibbons, Weng, Gerrard, & Simons, 2012), and military invasions (Sullivan, 2007). Despite this wide and diverse array of conflicts, contending cultures are involved in all of them. Within or across boundaries, intercultural issues and disagreements are becoming rampant and thus, likely to escalate and cause consequences. Consequently, both intracultural and intercultural dialogues are becoming increasingly urgent. One of the major reasons behind this unfavorable development is the lack of sufficient intercultural communication and the failure to understand intercultural differences. Intercultural communication cannot occur without genuine cultural understanding and it has a better chance of succeeding when equality between cultures and diversity are taken into consideration (Baryshnikov, 2014; Ter-Minasova, 2014).

This chapter uses a cultural-linguistic approach to critically analyze how intercultural differences can be approached in intercultural dialogue. The study observes how one culture views the world in one way while another culture in a different way, anchoring such differences in the respective unique sociocultural context in which each of the two cultural entities are nurtured. Such cultural diversity defined as “the observation of the existence of different cultures, as contrary to cultural uniformity” (Kozymka, 2014, p. 11), is currently jeopardized by the dynamics of globalization. Even countries who keep cultural diversity policy might still experience challenging intercultural tensions, for example, in politics (Layman, 2001), business (Feldman, 2013), and interfaith relations (Ojo & Lateju, 2010). The latter has spurred its own stream of studies on interreligious conflict resolution for peacebuilding (Abu-Nimer, 2001); calls for interfaith dialogue (Neufeldt, 2011), and interfaith dialogue at peace museums (Gachanga & Mutisya, 2015). Intercultural education has played its useful role in teaching students to manage intercultural conflicts constructively (Johnson, 1998) and using museums as a pedagogical strategy and instrument for peace education (Tamashiro & Furnari, 2015). Museums emphasize history as a guide to the present and future, and thus help reflect on what happened in the past and understand why we fail to manage intercultural conflicts. Interreligious and interfaith dialogues are important for intercultural understanding and harmony (Abu-Nimer & Smith, 2016).

Cultural diversity is exhibited in varying degrees, from kindred cultures such as the Chinese and Taiwanese to vastly dissimilar ones such as Chinese and the American. However, no matter what the extent of cultural differences, they should all
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