



Contemporary Axiological Approaches to Tolerant Communication in an Intercultural Context

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Abstract: Contemporary axiological approaches to tolerant communication in an intercultural context analyze the role of fundamental values in facilitating dialogue between individuals and communities belonging to different cultures. Axiology, as a theory of values, provides a conceptual framework for understanding how respect, human dignity, equality, empathy, and social responsibility influence communicative practices. In today's globalized societies, characterized by ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, tolerant communication is becoming an essential condition for peaceful coexistence and cooperation. Contemporary perspectives emphasize the need to overcome ethnocentrism and stereotypes through intercultural education and the development of communicators' axiological skills. Tolerant communication is seen not only as a technical skill, but as a valuable attitude based on recognizing otherness and accepting differences. At the same time, axiological approaches highlight the importance of open dialogue and negotiating meanings in the process of intercultural communication. In conclusion, tolerant communication contributes to reducing intercultural conflicts and strengthening social cohesion in a world marked by pluralism.

Keywords: intercultural communication; tolerance; axiology; cultural diversity; intercultural dialogue

The way we perceive reality is reality for us. A number of socio-cultural elements have an important and direct influence on how we develop our perception: system

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of beliefs, values, and attitudes, worldview, and social organization. To understand the actions of others, we must try to understand their perceptual frame of reference, the way they perceive the world.

Education is meant to be a transformative force that provides students with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to act as agents of peace in their communities (UNESCO, n.d.).

This ideal is based on the ability of education to reduce violence (Hughes, 2020). However, school violence is a pervasive and growing problem in many regions (UNESCO, 2025).

From the perspective of European integration, schools must aim to ensure the existential coherence and identity of individuals in conditions of social and intercultural efficiency. Identity and otherness are inseparable and co-evolutionary, and identity will constantly unravel and rebuild itself, depending on the circumstances in which the subject operates.

It is essential that individuals be empowered to manage these phenomena promptly and effectively. Intercultural education involves, on the one hand, ensuring authentic communication with oneself and becoming aware of one's own cultural identity and, on the other hand, communicating with another individual or group, which allows for the active construction of one's identity as a citizen of Europe and the world.

The conceptual framework of intercultural tolerance is structured, in its most rigorous form, around the principle of recognizing the equal dignity of the Other. In his interpretation (Darwall & Debes, 2017), this dignity is inseparable from the status of bearer of moral rights. The authors do not treat dignity as an inherent and immutable trait, but define it as a dynamic normative status that is actualized through concrete acts of interpersonal recognition. In an intercultural context, acknowledging the dignity of the interlocutor implies engaging in a "second person" relationship based on moral reciprocity. Anchoring communication in this shared ethical position allows us to move beyond formal or superficial interactions and gives the dialogue axiological depth.

The intercultural perspective requires us first and foremost to recognize that reality is plural, complex, and dynamic, and that interaction is an integral part of all lives and cultures. An intercultural perspective means ensuring mutual respect through such interaction and developing communities of individuals who support each other, eliminating relationships based on domination and rejection. Interculturality

involves openness, curiosity, and empathy towards people from other cultures and using the knowledge and awareness gained to evaluate one's own patterns of perception, thinking, feelings, and behaviors in order to achieve better self-knowledge and self-understanding.

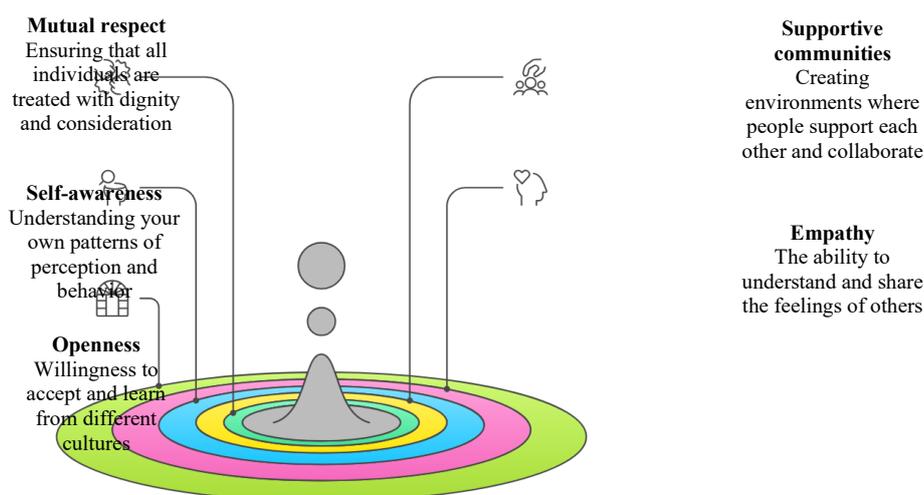


Figure 1. Benefits of an intercultural perspective

Interculturality brings with it a new matrix of communication, which involves a shift from tolerant and social communication to intercultural communication. The latter involves the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and value systems, cultivating an attitude of tolerance, openness, and permissiveness toward diversity. Learning to express yourself means learning to think, so communication in an intercultural perspective means giving up cultural monologue in favor of polyphonic cultural dialogue, and representing your otherness on the principle that we are all different, but all equal.

Globalization, increased population mobility, and intensified interactions between cultures have made intercultural communication an everyday reality.

Cultural, linguistic, and value differences can generate opportunities for mutual enrichment, but also tensions and conflicts. Tolerant communication appears to be a social and ethical necessity, designed to facilitate coexistence and cooperation in a culturally diverse space.

Tolerant communication in a multicultural context has its roots in the axiological systems that individuals carry with them. Values such as tolerance, respect, and

acceptance of difference are essential for facilitating intercultural dialogue. Contemporary education and social policies tend to integrate these values in order to prevent identity conflicts and promote equal opportunities (Carassa & Colombetti, 2014).

Therefore, tolerance functions as an essential condition for the recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity. According to the UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1995), tolerance in intercultural contexts is a fundamental principle of communication. It is defined as an active orientation of respect, acceptance, and appreciation of cultural diversity and diverse forms of human expression (UNESCO, 1995).

Intercultural communication, viewed from an axiological perspective, analyzes how values, beliefs, and moral codes interact in intercultural dialogue. Just as axiology studies the nature of values and how they guide human behavior, cultural axiology highlights that value systems differ from one culture to another and profoundly influence individuals' perceptions and attitudes.

Axiology is the branch of philosophy that studies the nature, structure, and hierarchy of values. In the social sciences, axiology provides an essential tool for understanding how values influence behaviors, attitudes, and relationships between individuals. Applied to communication, axiology highlights the fact that the act of communication is not neutral in terms of value. Any communication process involves moral choices, social norms, and axiological evaluations (Antonesei, 2002).

Intercultural education complements this by teaching students about different cultures and identities, emphasizing that diversity is an asset and that mutual respect is essential to avoid social division (UNESCO, 2019). Initiatives such as "Learning to Live Together" promote cultural diversity and non-violence, preparing learners to contribute to sustainable development and peace (Tarhouni & Schöfthaler, 2003). The concept of "learning to live together," one of the four pillars of education outlined in the Delors Report, addresses the fundamental challenge of living in harmony with others while respecting their distinct identities (cited in Hiang-Chu, 2024, p. 268).

Intercultural communication means direct interaction between people from different cultures. Intercultural communication involves much more than understanding the norms of a group; it requires acceptance and tolerance of differences.

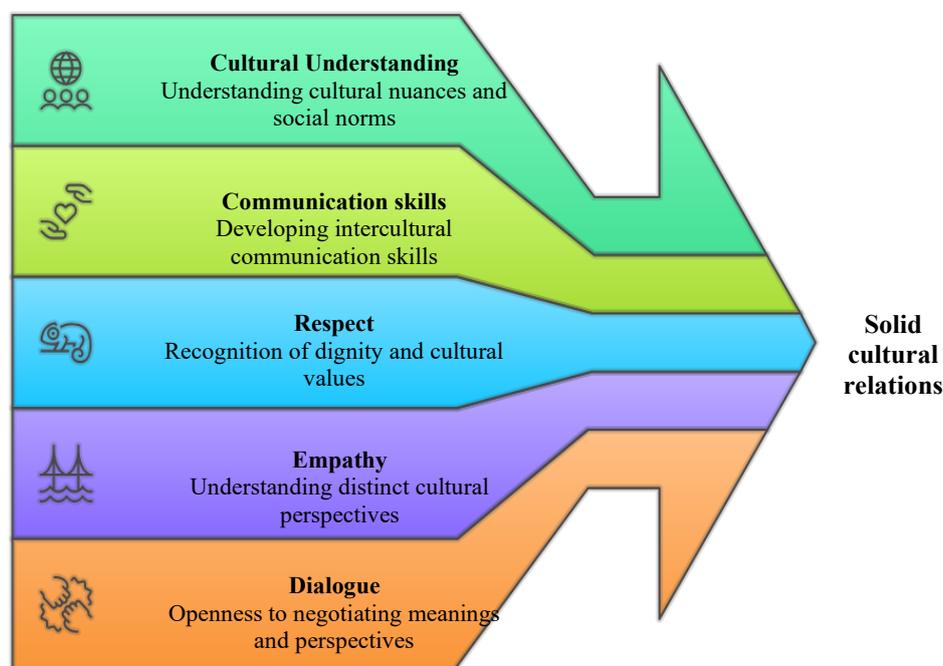


Figure 2. Fundamental elements of intercultural communication in building strong cultural relationships

Tolerant communication is an intersubjective process based on moral and social values, which involves respecting otherness, recognizing cultural differences, and assuming ethical responsibility for discourse in an intercultural context. Thus, intercultural communication challenges us to meet certain requirements: developing an attitude of learning and accepting diversity, respecting cultural partners, listening carefully to others, suspending discrimination and prejudice, and developing language skills.

Communication methods from an intercultural perspective refer to the formulation of the action, the formulation of the interlocutor's response, and the formulation of the interlocutor's preferred outcome, which lead to the development of intercultural competence.

In the view of researcher L. Țurcan, tolerance is defined not only as passive acceptance, but as an active attitude, manifested through respect, openness, and dialogue, especially in multicultural contexts (Țurcan, 2015, p. 41).

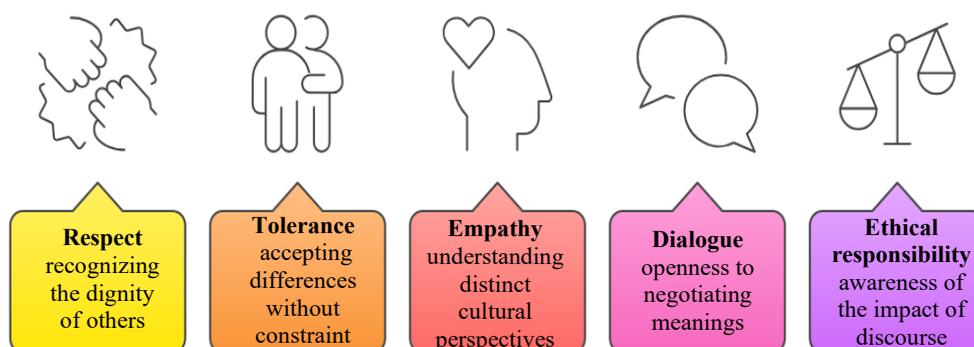


Figure 3. Axiological foundations or values of tolerant communication

Intercultural dialogue is a fundamental tool for tolerant communication, requiring active listening, openness, and a willingness to negotiate cultural meanings and significance. Therefore, negotiating meanings is a dynamic process in which communication participants adjust their interpretations and expectations to reach mutual understanding. From an axiological perspective, intercultural dialogue is an expression of respect and recognition of otherness.

The researcher emphasizes that intercultural communication processes are deeply influenced by the value systems of individuals and communities, and the lack of a common axiological basis can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings (Turcan, 2015, pp. 32–33).

Communication is not completed from the outset, but only after the communicative act has been fully completed (Jacob, 1998). The essential element in building an open and unobstructed dialogue is the individual, who gives value to the context of communication. The following conditions are necessary for an open dialogue:

- Clarity of message, which involves structuring content logically so that it can be easily understood, using appropriate vocabulary;
- Precision of expression, which involves using a varied lexicon capable of accurately conveying the desired meanings;
- Showing empathy in the communication process: the speaker must adopt an open attitude towards all participants in the dialogue and make an effort to understand their positions, demonstrating cordiality and openness;
- Authenticity in communication, which means avoiding rigidity and awkward behavior;

– Maintaining eye contact is essential in intercultural dialogue, as direct interaction is an indicator of credibility and openness to communication (Iacob, 1998).

Gudykunst and Kim develop the theory of “strangers” in their research *Communicating with strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*, 1995.

Intercultural communication: both the person in a new cultural environment and the members of the host culture have limited knowledge of each other’s norms, values, and rules. This lack of familiarity influences the way interaction takes place, as communication usually involves anticipating the other person’s reactions. The ability to predict responses is based on several reference levels: the general cultural framework, sociocultural information related to the individual’s social status and belonging, as well as psychocultural aspects related to personal traits.

The authors emphasize that interaction with strangers is often affected by a tendency to resort to generalizations, stereotypes, and prejudices. From this perspective, improving intercultural communication requires focusing on the individual characteristics of the interlocutor and greater awareness of one’s own behaviors and reactions in the act of communication. Since dialogue with strangers is marked by a high level of uncertainty caused by the difficulty of anticipating responses, this uncertainty can be reduced by expanding knowledge and experience. This process takes place through various strategies, such as indirect observation, actively seeking information from various sources, or direct interaction based on dialogue and asking questions.

The importance of tolerance in intercultural communication promotes:

- the development of a climate of mutual respect between people from different cultures;
- the reduction of prejudices, stereotypes, and conflicts generated by cultural differences;
- facilitating understanding of messages by accepting diversity in values, norms, and behaviors;
- increasing openness to dialogue and cooperation in multicultural contexts;
- strengthening interpersonal relationships based on empathy, balance, and trust;

- effectively adapting to new communication situations, avoiding misinterpretations and cultural tensions;
- promoting constructive communication that supports long-term integration and collaboration.

The problems of intercultural interaction and tolerance are complicated in any country regardless of its level of economic and social development, because there are practically no mono-ethnic states in the world.

The competent intercultural teacher has the following defining characteristics: self-expression, establishes a favorable climate, applies teaching and leadership strategies, organizes explicitly multicultural activities, and establishes effective partnerships.

The educational environment plays an important role in shaping an intercultural mindset, as it is the setting in which students can develop attitudes of tolerance, openness, and respect for diversity. The educational process must support students in naturally understanding the relationships between people from different ethnic groups, overcoming the perception of “the other” as a stranger, and appreciating cultural diversity on the basis of equality, not through superior-inferior hierarchies. Intercultural education involves teaching policies and strategies geared towards equity, transforming cultural differences into learning resources, and teachers play an essential role in this process.

Culture has been a central variable in all societies in the construction and implementation of macro-models of change, an indicator of their effectiveness and, in practice, the essence of general development. It has always had a dual status: as a resource for transmitting ways of thinking, behaviors, attitudes, etc., and as a source of change, creativity, autonomy, and freedom. For the society with which it is correlated and for its members, culture and recognition of cultural diversity signify confidence in one’s own potential, strength, energy, dynamism, power of action, individual and group identity, and the existence of a common language that makes communication with other members of society possible and real. Cultural pluralism asserts that each culture develops its own worldview with universal significance, based on its particular experience. In addition to defending diversity, cultural pluralism raises the issue of communicating about cultures that recognize that each contributes precisely through its specific differences to the cultivation of human experience (Ivanova, 2023).

Thus, teacher training must go beyond strictly disciplinary and psycho-pedagogical boundaries, including a solid socio-cultural component that allows for authentic intercultural dialogue relevant to the realities of contemporary society. Implementing effective intercultural education requires the ability to interpret and correlate various cultural symbols and to integrate students' cultural characteristics into teaching activities. However, at national and European level, there is often a lack of coherent approaches that treat interculturalism as a central element of education and social cohesion. This absence can lead to the formation of young people who are insufficiently prepared to understand the complexity of today's society, due to the neglect of the historical and social contexts that influence cultural identities.

Students should be actively involved in a variety of educational experiences that allow them to take on multiple roles, including that of leader or mediator, analyze power and authority relationships within their groups, and identify and respond responsibly to situations of abuse. Through adequate education, schools can contribute significantly to the development of attitudes of tolerance and solidarity, regardless of religion, culture, or social status, developing the intercultural skills necessary for active and responsible participation in contemporary society.

In conclusion, encouraging intercultural attitudes paves the way for dialogue and communication between cultural groups, with beneficial consequences for mutual understanding. By cultivating values such as respect for others, tolerance for diversity, and complementarity between values, schools are able to harness the potential richness of multiculturalism without negating the identity of any culture.

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