



# BASIC THEORIES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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**Abstract:** *This article reveals the main theories of intercultural communication that explain the dynamics of interaction between representatives of different cultures. It analyses key concepts describing cultural values, behaviour patterns and ways of interpreting messages in different social and cultural contexts. Particular attention is paid to the influence of cultural differences on communication processes, the emergence of communication barriers, and strategies for overcoming them. The work emphasizes the importance of developing intercultural competence and draws on contemporary theoretical approaches that form the basis for further research in the field of global interaction.*

**Key words:** *intercultural communication, conflict, perception, constructive, behavior*

## INTRODUCTION.

The modern process of globalization of the economy, science, and education, international contacts have become a part of everyday life. The need to establish and strengthen international ties is driven by the expansion of cultural boundaries and has become a pressing necessity. However, in the process of intercultural interaction, business people encounter a number of difficulties, among which language differences are far from the only ones. Edward T. Hall said: “Most of the information exchanged in human interaction is implicit and taken for granted.” [7]. Supports the idea that communication always contains some ambiguity. Discrepancies in the perception of the surrounding world by speakers of different cultures lead to misunderstanding and conflict. A number of theories of intercultural communication have been developed for the systematic analysis of these processes. They explain the nature of cultural differences, the mechanisms of forming intercultural competencies, and the factors that determine the success or failure of communication. Examining the main theoretical approaches allows us to understand how intercultural dialogue is constructed, what models of interaction exist, and what strategies are most effective in conditions of cultural diversity.

Y. Kim's theory of adaptation. Adaptation is a complex process with many components, during which a person gradually, through a series of interactions, undergoes what is called the dynamics of stress-adaptive growth. It occurs according to the principle of ‘two steps forward and one step back.’ Periodic setbacks that prolong the adaptation process are associated with intercultural crises. Several conditions are necessary for successful adaptation. These include communication with the new environment (frequency of contact, positive attitude), knowledge of a foreign language, positive motivation, participation in various activities, and access to the media [10].

Coordinated meaning management and rule theory. Human communication is inherently imperfect, so perfect and complete mutual understanding is an unattainable ideal. Since not all acts of communication have a specific purpose, achieving mutual understanding becomes entirely optional. The goal becomes coordination, which is possible through interaction that is understandable to its participants. At the same time, in a specific context, meaning is managed and individually interpreted. What is important is not how social the rules accepted in a given communication are, but how these rules are agreed upon in the minds of each participant in the communication. W. Barnett Pearce and Vernon Cronen, views communication as a dynamic process in which people co-construct their social worlds through interaction. As Pearce emphasizes, “persons-in-



conversation co-construct their social realities and are simultaneously shaped by them.” This perspective is vital for intercultural communication because cultural backgrounds strongly influence how individuals interpret events, perceive intentions, and assign meaning to messages[11] . Rhetorical theory allows us to analyse not only individual differences, but also the properties of large groups. Part of this theory is also the analysis of the subconscious adaptation of messages in relation to specific communication situations. Constructivist theory. All people have a special cognitive system that allows them to interpret the words and actions of others quite accurately and precisely. But since culture influences an individual's development, representatives of different cultures form different views and perceptions. Jerome Bruner stated: “Learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current and past knowledge.” Through enculturation, a person acquires a view of the world that differs from that of a representative of another culture. This shapes a person's cognitive awareness, which can be simple or complex, and in turn influences individual communicative behavior and adaptation strategies.

The theory of social categories and circumstances highlights the role of social positions, preconceived notions, and behavioral frameworks in shaping communicative interaction. These factors constitute the cognitive mechanisms through which individuals interpret one another and construct shared social awareness. This awareness is grounded in the process of categorizing people into groups, which typically results in favorable evaluations of one's own group and less positive perceptions of outsiders. An individual's sense of self, largely influenced by group affiliation, plays a significant part in this dynamic. During encounters with members of different groups, individuals engage in communicative accommodation—an adjustment of one's manner of interaction to align with the conversational partner. Such adaptation is guided by pre-existing cognitive models and social preconceptions. The way a speaker evaluates their counterpart determines the linguistic approach they adopt, including the register, communicative behavior, and the range of subjects considered appropriate for discussion [ 1].

Conflict theory considers conflicts to be normal behavior, a form of social action regulated by the norms of each culture. Thus, each culture has its own models of conflict. Lewis Coser stated, “Conflict is not only a normal component of social relationships but, under certain conditions, contributes to the strengthening of social ties” [2] . There are cultures whose representatives pay great attention to the causes of conflict, are sensitive to violations of rights, and often rely on intuition when resolving conflict. These are collectivist cultures. Individualistic cultures prefer a direct method of smoothing out conflicts.

#### **Axioms of Intercultural Communication**

One of the central axiom's states that the greater the degree of mutual trust between interlocutors, the more value is attributed to the information exchanged during interaction. Trust serves as a catalyst for openness, reduces psychological barriers, and enhances the effectiveness of communication in multicultural contexts. Another essential premise is that any communicative act inherently contains a certain level of ambiguity or uncertainty. No message is ever fully explicit, and a significant portion of meaning must be inferred. To navigate this ambiguity, societies develop conventionalised gestures, norms, and communicative rituals that facilitate shared understanding. These expected behavioral patterns help participants interpret messages and anticipate the actions of their partners, thereby reducing miscommunication. ‘Mutual scanning’ is taking place. Most strategies for reducing uncertainty involve extracting information through non-verbal channels. At the initial stage of contact, in the first minutes of verbal interaction, a first impression of the interlocutor is formed [5]. There is a belief that the decision to continue or terminate contact is made in the first four minutes of conversation. Already in the first two minutes, we draw conclusions about whether we like this person, whether they understand us, and whether we are wasting our time.

Communication systems in different cultures are passed down from generation to generation and learned through enculturation. Each culture has its own acceptable stages of communication. It is necessary to develop quick thinking and the ability to express your thoughts in different ways, i.e. to explain the same idea in different ways. Success in interacting with people should be viewed as success in completing an individual task. The ability to mediate between people, to correctly introduce interlocutors to each other, to say the right word in



the right situation — is an invaluable skill for intercultural communication.

By examining how values, norms, cognitive patterns, and communicative rules influence perception and behavior, these theoretical models help explain the sources of misunderstanding, ethnocentric judgments, and communication breakdowns. At the same time, they highlight the potential for adaptation, cooperation, and the development of intercultural competence. A theoretically informed understanding of intercultural communication enables individuals to engage more effectively across cultural boundaries by anticipating differences, interpreting signals more accurately, and coordinating meaning through dialogue.

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