

## *Original Paper*

# Mapudungun, Interculturality and Inclusiveness in the Chilean Educational System

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### ***Abstract***

*Mapudungun is one of the heritages that defines the identity of the Mapuche people. Their survival over time is mainly due to the re-ethnification processes that have occurred in the last decade. However, it is necessary to follow the strategies briefly developed in this work, in order to maintain its validity and revitalization in the Chilean sociocultural context. A maintenance program for this indigenous language must have the proper state support to become a healthy and self-sufficient language. All this will allow the continuation of the way of life of its users, as well as the faithful reflection of their culture within the multicultural world.*

### ***Keywords***

*mapudungun, identity, interculturality*

## **1. Introduction**

The goal of Intercultural Education is respond to the cultural diversity that prevails in developed democratic societies. For this, it starts from approaches that respect cultural pluralism, as something inherent to current societies, valuing it as a source of wealth for all members of a society. From the pedagogical point of view, cultural differences are understood as an important educational resource. Intercultural Education proposes an educational practice that turns the cultural differences of individuals and societies into the focus of reflection and research.

It must not be forgotten that Intercultural Education is ultimately a form of attention to diversity. From this perspective, its contribution in the educational and social field is much better understood, since it constitutes the final stage in the process of acceptance and appreciation of cultural variables. To understand this better, it is necessary to know what are the existing models in the treatment of diversity, whatever it may be, including linguistic and cultural.

We live in a diverse world in which biodiversity has been talked about for a long time. On the other hand, diversity is one of the defining characteristics of humanity and, therefore, of our societies. The school is a reflection of this social variability and must treat all the diversities that come together in it, from cultural to physical or capacity. When dealing with this diversity, they have started from different budgets that attended to ideological and political wills. Traditionally, two theories have been based on: the deficit theory and the difference theory Arroyo González, M<sup>a</sup>José (2012). Both intend to attend to diversity, although from completely different approaches. Each one of them has given rise to different educational models to deal with this inherent diversity of people and societies.

The two theories are based on the close relationship between diversity and inequality, but they give completely different solutions to that relationship. The deficit theory proposes eliminating these differences through educational models based on assimilation and compensation, while the difference theory does not propose eliminating them, but rather proposes mutual enrichment by developing specific educational models: multicultural and intercultural. AS POINTED OUT by Tuts (2007, p. 34)

Intercultural education is too often confused with attention to immigrant students and the vehicular language prevails as an integration factor, forgetting its necessary transformation into a bonding language of communication. Respect for difference often borders on promoting cultural relativism, while coexistence is seen as a utopian situation. As for social cohesion, it is often confused with homogeneity, monolingualism or monoculturalism. Therefore, it seems that cultural and linguistic diversity tends to be disconcerting and suspicious.

Intercultural education and inclusion present multiple connections that can and should guide our educational practice. As we will analyze later, intercultural education is a way of doing school and educating.

## **2. Chile Context**

Currently, several indigenous groups in Chile still use their language, which constitutes one of the heritages that define their identity, including their way of life, their history, their rituals, their philosophy, and their customs.

Indigenous people in Chile face several linguistic challenges. When they are in the city or in environments where Spanish is exclusively spoken, they must adapt to this situation, leaving their native language to communicate sporadically with a member of their group who speaks the language at family gatherings or friends. The groups that reside in rural centers maintain their language and culture to a greater extent, which allows them to perpetuate some ancestral rituals. However, only the elderly speak the native language in many of these places, including the rural areas of Arauco, Malleco, Cautín, Mehuín and Panguipulli, mainly. There are also Mapuche people who speak their language in the cities to which a large number of them migrate as temporary or permanent workers, more specifically in Santiago, Concepción and Temuco.

Indigenous languages have been strong enough to survive over time, facing enormous assimilation pressures from Spanish as the official language. There is still a significant number of speakers of each of the languages that are still in force, such as Aymara, Rapanui and Mapudungun. The current process of re-ethnification has activated the development of the vitality of these languages in various communities, both rural and urban. Within this motivation, it is necessary to plan the resources available to guide all these efforts under the tutelage of a program with realistic goals and effective procedures. This means obtaining the necessary information to diagnose the conditions in which the language is found, and thus choose the appropriate intervention strategies leading to its revitalization. Approaches, resources, ideas and goals should be based on the experiences and knowledge of indigenous groups, as well as the theoretical and practical experiences and knowledge of linguists, educators, anthropologists and other social scientists.

### **3. Interculturality and Education**

Interculturality is a dimension that is not limited to the field of education, but is present in human relations in general as an alternative to authoritarianism, dogmatism and ethnocentrism. However, the search for more democratic and pluralistic societies supposes educational processes that affirm and provide experience of living in democracy and respect for diversity. As educators we have an inescapable responsibility.

Interculturality in education appears closely linked to the new spirit of equity and quality that inspire current educational proposals, thus overcoming the egalitarian vision that prevailed in the Latin American social scene since the arrival of the first liberal waves on the continent. Interculturality in education supposes a double path: inward and outward, and that one of the necessary directions to which an intercultural educational project should be directed, particularly when it comes to peoples who have been the object of cultural and linguistic oppression, (such as ours) is precisely towards the roots of one's own culture and one's own vision of the world, to structure or recompose a coherent universe on which one can, later, cement from a better position the dialogue and exchange with cultural elements that, if well alien, they are necessary both to survive in today's world and to achieve better living standards, taking advantage of those advances and scientific-technological developments that are considered necessary.

Intercultural education must be understood in a pedagogical process that involves various cultural systems. It stems from the individual and collective right of indigenous peoples, which entails not only enjoying the right to education like all citizens, but also the right to maintain and cultivate their own traditions, culture, values, but also the need to develop intercultural skills that allow any citizen from any part of the country, whether they belong to the hegemonic culture or not, to be able to coexist democratically with others.

Based on the experience accumulated in the first years of implementation of bilingual intercultural education in the Chilean educational system, and having clarity of the fundamental role of the indigenous

language for the recognition, valorization and respect of the culture, worldview and history of the peoples. natives, the challenge of converting the school into an educational space in which the opportunities for learning that language are guaranteed to its students is imposed, in a systematic and relevant way to their reality.

Thus, in 2009, the Chilean Ministry of Education established the Fundamental Objectives and Minimum Mandatory Contents for the creation of the Indigenous Language Sector in Basic Education; which allowed to begin the design of Study Programs for the Aymara, Mapuzugun, Quechua and Rapa Nui languages. The foregoing, considering at least three different realities of access to the indigenous language by girls and boys: those whose mother or family language is one of these four languages, those who hear the indigenous language only in their social environment, and those who only listen to it at school.

The Indigenous Language course, with four assigned hours per week, seeks to strengthen the cultural and linguistic knowledge of four indigenous peoples who still maintain their native language in force: Aymara, Mapuche, Quechua and Rapa Nui. For this, a pedagogical duo is formed, made up of a classroom teacher (who supports pedagogical aspects) and a traditional educator, the person in charge of imparting traditional knowledge, especially the indigenous language.

The teaching of the Aymara, Mapuzugun, Quechua and Rapa Nui languages was articulated around two axes, conceived as complementary:

- Orality: understood as a dynamic and contextual form of knowledge, and recognized as the traditional way of transmission and accumulation of knowledge of native peoples.
- Written communication: understood as highly complex for indigenous languages, due to the history of oral tradition in the transmission of knowledge. However, knowledge of the written code of the indigenous language is promoted through the Spanish graphemes.

The Indigenous Language subject has been implemented gradually, beginning in 2010 in the first year of basic education to reach 2018, the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages in eighth grade.

Additionally, schools can autonomously develop their own plans and programs around indigenous knowledge, which are incorporated into the school curriculum as subjects or as extracurricular workshops. These initiatives have allowed educational communities to generate content relevant to their territories and the particularities of their students.

By way of example, within the plans and programs that the establishments develop, there are workshops on ethnic cooking, interculturality and development, worldview and Mapuche-Huilliche language, Mapuche traditional medicine, and Chedungun language, among others.

The creation of this subject is based on the following laws and decrees:

- The indigenous law (1993) that favored the beginning of a systematic process for the teaching of native languages and cultures, by indicating the establishment of a programmatic unit that facilitates access to this knowledge.

- General Education Law (2009), which establishes obligations and principles, one of them being interculturality, which states: “The system must recognize and value the individual in their cultural and origin specificity, considering their language, worldview and history”. In articles 28, 29 and 30, it commits the teaching of the Indigenous Language in establishments with a high indigenous population for pre-school, basic and secondary education.
- Decree No. 280/2009, which incorporates the Fundamental Objectives and Minimum Mandatory Contents of the Indigenous Language Sector for the level of basic education and establishes the obligation to implement this subject in all establishments that have an enrollment of more than 20% of students’ natives.
- ILO Convention 169, ratified by Chile in September 2008. Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified in August 1990. Both normative instruments refer to the right of children belonging to indigenous peoples to receive education and respect their language and culture.

### *3.1 Interculturality for Everyone*

Interculturality allows us all to know each other, value each other and live with different cultural universes, enriching our experiences as people and as a society. In this sense, interculturality seeks to generate a reflection in the educational system that makes it possible to recognize, value and understand the richness of the diverse, questioning with it, for example, the imposition and hierarchization of a certain type of knowledge or the establishment of social relationships.

In terms of native peoples, from the recognition of their existence and social, cultural, spiritual, economic development, among others, as cultures that inhabit this territory centuries before colonization, the Mineduc (2015) in a process that aims to settle the historical debt that the State has towards these peoples, assumes the policy of revealing the languages, cultures, histories and worldviews of indigenous cultures in the processes of integral quality educational improvement of the country’s establishments, with the aim of promoting a citizenship intercultural. As of 2016, 223,087 indigenous students were identified in the school system in 9,335 educational establishments (79% of the total number of schools in the country, according to the State Statistics Institute (INE).

In the same way, the Ministry of Education has decided to develop its own concept of interculturality, seeking to reflect the reality and the environment in which we are immersed as a society: Interculturality is an ethical-political social horizon under construction, which emphasizes horizontal relationships between the individuals, groups, peoples, cultures, societies and with the State. It is based, among other things, on dialogue from otherness, facilitating a systemic and historical understanding of the present of the diverse people, groups and peoples who permanently interact in the different territorial spaces. Interculturality favors the creation of new forms of citizen coexistence among everyone, regardless of nationality or origin. For this, symmetrical dialogue is possible by recognizing and valuing the richness of linguistic-cultural, natural and spiritual diversity. In the case of native peoples, it reveals their characteristics and different systems that problematize, and at the same time, enrich the constructions of the world, ensuring the exercise of individual and collective rights.

### *3.2 Bilingual Intercultural Education*

Children and young people belonging to indigenous peoples have the right to learn in contexts of greater equality, in conditions that adjust to their cultural particularities, their language, and their way of seeing the world.

As in the rest of the countries of the region, our educational system assumed a role of cultural and linguistic homogenization that left out of the discourses of “national identity” an important part of the knowledge, values and ways of life of the original peoples. This pedagogical imbalance over time has had a negative influence on the identity and self-esteem of people belonging to the original peoples, as well as on the possibility of building a multicultural and multilingual country.

In this context, the State assumes the duty to generate the bases to enable an intercultural bilingual education that allows boys and girls to learn the language and culture of their peoples, through the incorporation, in the national curriculum, of the Language subject. Indigenous (currently in Aymara, Quechua, Mapuzugun and Rapa Nui) for basic education.

This subject, which aims to enable children from indigenous peoples to communicate in their vernacular language, is implemented in educational establishments that want to promote interculturality and in those that have an enrollment equal to or greater than 20% of indigenous students, and is developed by the traditional educator, the person responsible for transmitting cultural and linguistic knowledge to the students of the establishment.

The implementation of this subject is not the only way to transmit this knowledge; The school can also develop intercultural workshops, revitalization strategies for languages and cultures in danger of extinction, and linguistic immersion in specific contexts.

### *3.3 Training in Interculturality*

Teacher training is a key aspect in the implementation of intercultural education. Chile needs to train its teachers as mediators and facilitators of the development of schools that value and integrate the cultural wealth of native peoples into the learning experience of their students.

The Ministry of Education has developed a joint effort with two universities to strengthen a teacher training plan in Pedagogy of Bilingual Intercultural Basic Education. In this sense, it has established collaboration agreements with the Catholic University of Temuco (UCT) and with the Arturo Prat University (UAP) of Iquique.

In the case of the UCT, this plan has two target groups: Mapuche students from the Biobío, La Araucanía, Los Lagos and Los Ríos regions; and students of the Pedagogy career in Bilingual Intercultural Basic Education in a Mapuche context. Meanwhile, the initial training plan of the UAP of Iquique is aimed at Aymara, Licanantai and Quechua students from the regions of Tarapacá Arica and Parinacota, and Antofagasta.

Other activities are also included within the agreements such as: developing linguistic immersion activities for students; disseminate the career among young people in secondary education in municipal

establishments in communes with a high density of indigenous population; and hold reflection colloquiums with students from other careers and schools from other training disciplines, among others. In the same way, the Mineduc intends to strengthen the training in interculturality for teachers of subsidized municipal and private establishments through the development of a Postgraduate in Interculturality, and through a B-learning course, in charge of the Center for Improvement, Experimentation and Pedagogical Research (CPEIP).

On the other hand, the Ministry of Education provides support to traditional educators who implement the Indigenous Language subject or develop intercultural workshops through a Training Course whose objective is to provide tools in pedagogical, cultural, and linguistic aspects to promote learning. task of this figure within the schools.

### *3.4 Traditional Mapuche Educator*

The first lines of work of the Ministry of Education, in terms of bilingual intercultural education, were linked to community participation, in order to promote meetings and collect knowledge with a territorial approach, from the voice of traditional authorities, communities, families, and indigenous professionals. In the same way, it sought to identify current practices and knowledge in the communities, in order to replicate some of this knowledge in the training of children and children belonging to these educational communities.

It is in this context that the figure of the Community Cultural Advisor, now known as Educator or Traditional Educator (ET), arises and is normalized; which is governed at first as a binding actor between indigenous communities and educational establishments for the transmission of knowledge about their culture and language.

This figure has been strengthened in the educational communities, achieving among other things: recreating learning strategies of their communities, developing didactics for the teaching of indigenous languages, collecting oral stories, and systematizing knowledge associated with mathematics, sciences, cosmogony, among others.

In this context, and from the creation of the Indigenous Language subject, the ET becomes relevant as it is responsible for specifying the teaching of the Aymara, Quechua, Rapa Nui and Mapuzungun languages in establishments that have 20% of indigenous enrollment, or in those who want to promote interculturality through intercultural workshops, bilingualism, or cultural and linguistic revitalization.

Some aspects to consider in the fulfillment of their functions are the following:

- Accredited sufficient linguistic and cultural skills to perform in the teaching of the languages and cultural knowledge of the original peoples. Be validated by the Indigenous Communities or Associations linked to the educational establishment.
- Teaching preparation, understanding as such the ability to structure the teaching-learning process with learning objectives to be achieved in the students from the point of view of indigenous knowledge,

- Creation of an environment conducive to learning, that is, the ability to promote conditions in the use of multiple spaces and diverse methodologies, which favor intercultural learning,
- Teaching for learning of all students, that is, the ability to deliver linguistic and cultural knowledge in diverse realities to achieve learning objectives and propose strategies according to these.

### *3.5 Training and Accompaniment*

For more than fifteen years, community cultural advisors, in the first instance, and currently traditional educators, have received training through training courses and accompaniment in the linguistic, cultural and pedagogical, with emphasis on the development of competencies, both at the curricular and extracurricular level.

These training courses have as main objective to allow a better performance and an adequate and pertinent insertion on the part of the traditional educators in the educational system; and therefore, they acquire specific characteristics depending on the territory where they are carried out, respecting regional autonomy and promoting their own strategic development.

The trainings, carried out face-to-face and with an average duration of 150 hours, are financed by the Bilingual Intercultural Education Program and developed by three entities according to regional realities: a) universities together with organizations focused on indigenous languages, b) teams regional ministerial offices (Regional Ministerial Secretariats of Education), and c) consultants and/or independent professionals.

## **4. Current Challenge**

The rescue of native languages is of great importance, not only because it strengthens the culture and identity of the native peoples that inhabit Chile, but also because it gives our country an identity and allows us to project ourselves as a more democratic, inclusive and respectful society.

The current situation of the languages recognized by indigenous law is critical and represents a complex challenge that calls upon all of us, not only those who belong to a certain indigenous people, since society is responsible for the revaluation of the vernacular languages that we have been relegated to increasingly reduced spaces, to the point of endangering its existence.

The condition in which the different languages of the original peoples that inhabit Chile are found today is complex; Even though it is a multilingual and multicultural country, Spanish continues to be the language of communication, teaching, and regulations, which is why it has the greatest number of functions. The studies, investigations and reports consulted indicate that the main problems identified are the following:

*At the macro level:*

- Lack of status of languages: understood as the possibility of giving functionality to the language in the different institutions and media from which the minority or minoritized language has been excluded.



- Lack of language corpus: refers to a series of actions that are carried out with the aim of standardizing the language, such as defining a graphemary, creating dictionaries, grammars and creating specific entities that are in charge of the subject (academies), among others.
- In the context of speech and communication, lack of spaces for use and possibilities of use, functionality beyond the local or familiar.
- Spanish is the official language of communication and teaching; This can be seen in the hegemony of Spanish in the media and transmission of languages: texts, media, arts, among others. The same is true for formal and informal education.

At the micro level, the main obstacles refer to the attitude of the speakers, due to self- discrimination, lack of motivation to deliver knowledge about the mother tongue to the next generations, adverse local contexts, the decrease of communities or speaking people in a territory and lack of external support to promote the indigenous language because it is not part of the economy, work, professional training.

Another challenge in this matter is related to the lack of quantitative and qualitative data that allow us to know more precisely the situation of the languages and their speakers in Chile today. There are only two official sources with general information on the 9 indigenous peoples: CASEN (MIDEPLAN) and CENSO 2002 (INE).

The indigenous languages of Chile that maintain some degree of sociolinguistic vitality are Mapudungun, Aymara, Rapa Nui and Quechua. According to the 2009 CASEN Survey, only 24% of the population that belongs to these towns would have some degree of competence in their languages, with significant geographical and regional variations in terms of the number and proportion of speakers. (BCN Source)

Year	Speakers	Just understand	Does not speak or understand
2000	14%	13.8%	72%
2003	16.8%	18.9%	64.4%
2006	14.2%	14.1%	71.7%
2009	12%	10.6%	77.3%
2011	eleven%	10.4%	78.6%
2013	10.9%	10.4%	78.7%
2015	10.7%	10.7%	78.6%

Source: Casen

#### 4.1 Treatment of a Declining Language

When it is noticed that a language is in a state of decline, it is possible to develop a maintenance program for that language. This depends on the state it is in, the historical causes of its decline, access to funds and human and financial resources, and the interest of the community. In a first opportunity, many members of the group want to develop fluency in the use of the language, thinking that it will be easy to acquire the

ancestral linguistic code again. Unfortunately, this is not a task without difficulties, since most indigenous children speak Spanish as their first language and are barely familiar with their native cultural traditions.

Therefore, Spanish becomes the model of correctness or naturalness and learning another language causes difficulties in the production of new sounds or in the combination of words in patterns that are different from those of the first language learned. The researchers warn that, after the puberty stage, it is difficult to process information using different rules and structures in a second language.

Actually, the best way to keep a language alive is through communication with children, using the indigenous language in its first stage of language acquisition. The fact of handling two languages in the family environment allows the child to acquire two linguistic codes simultaneously and without difficulties. Certainly, parents have their own preferences regarding the use of one language over another. This can become rule-setting for children who perceive in which contexts they can speak the indigenous language or Spanish. They generally speak Mapudungun with their grandparents at home, but speak Spanish with their peers in other contexts. Finally, they prefer to use Spanish in all situations.

A language maintenance program should include the gradual increase in the number of speakers as a goal. This requires the participation and preparation of teachers who speak the language fluently and manage the difficulties involved in its teaching. It is advisable to locate some members of the indigenous community who are willing to collaborate and undergo an intense stage of preparation, to carry out this task in order to acquire formal knowledge in an assessment process within the community itself.

The indigenous language maintenance program must also measure the importance of Spanish and the indigenous language. Both languages are essential to the community. But one should not be neglected or favored to the detriment of the other. Even though Spanish is officially taught throughout the Chilean school system, there is some evidence that the type of Spanish spoken by indigenous communities differs from the formal dialect accepted in the official milieu. The two languages in contact have influenced each other over time.

The family dialect of Spanish, spoken by the adult generations in each indigenous group, has been transmitted from generation to generation, becoming a variety with phonological and grammatical features of the indigenous language. This requires a sociolinguistic study that can provide much insight into the difficulties indigenous students face when learning the standard variety of Spanish taught at school. Likewise, it can provide a guideline on the differences between the indigenous language and formal Spanish.

#### *4.2 Commitment of the Chilean Government and the Maintenance of Indigenous Languages*

Scholars agree that the ultimate goal of a maintenance program is to achieve fluency in the use of the indigenous language. If this is not possible, at least a feeling of appreciation of the language and its relevance as a means of maintaining cultural identity can be achieved. The factors that determine which goals are realistic and which are difficult to achieve can be learned through an objective assessment of the needs of each community.

It is known that any language suffers a decrease in its use, due to historical reasons of competition with the language of a group that expands its area of influence through the media and access to material goods. The first contacts between Spaniards and indigenous people were negatively aggressive, due to the purposes of the conquest that included the acquisition of new territories, discovery of precious metals, conversion to a new religious doctrine, and search for labor for forced labor. As a result of this, the indigenous people suffered the decrease of their population and the abuse of their culture that originated a feeling of frustration and of a conquered people that has hardly been overcome throughout Chilean history.

## 5. Final Reflection

Thinking about interculturality implies delving into the political approaches of the country that support the different intercultural and bilingual educational proposals that are generated from different social actors, among which appear national organizations and governments, regional education secretariats, CONADI, non- governmental organizations, civil associations., ethnic movements and organizations, among others.

Thus, Intercultural Education is not possible by copying and/or extra-logical adaptation of identity values and institutionalization devices of Western civilization, because, ultimately, they only tend to cover up the continuity of evangelization. socio-civilization, of the cultural control that they historically exercise over the diverse peoples of the world and that have made possible the conformation of the current global order; rather, on the contrary, they demand not only public recognition of the socio-cultural plurality that forms the very substrate of contemporary social systems, deconstructing the modern ideal of the monocultural Nation State, but also the historical affirmation of the values proper to the identity construction of each of the existing communities in the world and, therefore, of the values of intercultural interaction.

Legitimizing community existence and cultural identity based on the similarities that can be discovered, evidenced, assumed, and implanted in the development of particular historical events, with the values and devices for the civilizational affirmation of the dominant culture, strictly speaking, does not mean confirming the irrefutable presence of alterity, of the right to difference and, therefore, of the urgent need for Intercultural Education, quite the contrary, represents the self-deception of camouflaging oneself as one's peer, as a neighbor, as an authentic being, that is, illegitimate projection of civilized, developed society, which for this very reason requires cultural evangelization so that it can fully develop. Thinking about the possibility of Intercultural Education, then, entails the unavoidable requirement of building new educational concepts that do not disguise the evangelizing claims of the dominant culture.

This has been a small reflection on Intercultural Education as a path towards educational inclusion. The aim throughout the article has been to show how both concepts share a multitude of ideas, and deep down allow for very specific ways of learning and teaching in the classroom. The great challenge at this time in

school is to contribute to an interculturally inclusive education, as defined by Garc ía and Goenechea (2009, p. 35).

The recognition of social diversity and multiculturalism demands the emerging transformation of contemporary educational processes, towards the appropriation of the values of identity construction of the context in which individuals develop, so that they can build their personal life project, in addition to participate significantly in the socio-cultural and political-economic transformation of their community of life, without neglecting the interaction in the order of global society. Insofar as contemporary societies are constituted in the recognition of onto-historical alterity, therefore, an education is required that not only respects, but also promotes identity diversity, within a framework of intercultural dialogue, where all individuals and communities have the right to appropriate their own cultural values, as well as the cultural capital available in today's knowledge society.

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