

"Active listening" as a key competence in intercultural communication education – an academic classroom example with conceptual and theoretical embedding

Abstract:

Awareness of social tolerance and intercultural bridge-building can be raised by communication training that focuses on active listening competences. In humanistic psychology, 'Active Listening' is understood as a technical term developed by C. R. Rogers (1942, 1951, 1961, 2004) that describes a specific form of attentiveness helpful in different types of professional conversations. This attitude and technique promote highly attentive listeners who are advised to mirror back what has been understood without adding their own viewpoints. When fully realised and appropriately applied, this attitude is much more effective than might be expected. Reasons are reflected on the basis of 'the dialectic of social recognition' by A. Honneth (1990, 1992). 'Active Listening' opens a royal road to real interest in the counterpart and a deeper understanding of the self and the other, in addition to trust building and fresh insights for both parties during a communicative event. As a course of action, it is successfully applied by therapists, counsellors, leadership personnel, in social and pastoral work, etc. In this paper, the author introduces the cornerstones of the theory behind this communication method and explains how to conduct an exercise of 'Active Listening' for students in university seminars. It concludes with a proposal on how to position this approach in the discourse of intercultural communication education, underpinned by the studies in applied linguistics of A. Holliday (2013, 2016, 2018), and taking into consideration the effects of 'Active Listening'. It becomes evident that in professional and intercultural communication 'Active Listening' can be valuable and describes how it can be conveyed.

Keywords: *Active listening in controlled dialogue; Awareness training; Personal growth; Tertiary didactic; Intercultural communication education.*