

# COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION AND THE QUALITY OF INTERPERSONAL RELATION BUCHAREST STUDENTS BEHAVIOURAL PATTERNS IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Elena NEDELUCU \*

## Abstract

*The first part of this paper will deal with the quality of interpersonal communication in a world in full process of technologization – globalisation. Without underestimating the benefits of information technology and “plethoric” communication we outline the unwanted impact they have when used excessively and exclusively in interpersonal communication. In the second part, we will talk about the connections between the quality of interpersonal relation and the behavioural options of the interlocutors in communication. We will show that achieving a high relational coefficient is an aspect conditioned by practicing comprehensive communication, and empathic listening. The third part synthesises the results of a social survey based on questionnaire. The survey’s goal was to find the behaviours of Bucharest students in their interpersonal communication and to find the way they perceive the quality of communication in Romanian society. It emphasises that in Romanian society the un-comprehensive behaviours are at all levels of society, which limits, blocks, distorts communication, maintaining a general low relational coefficient. Bucharest students experience an emphasised feeling of limitation. This restricts their freedom of expression, suffocating their aspiration to profound first-rate communication.*

**Key words:** „tautism”, interpersonal communication, relation coefficient, comprehensive communication, empathic listening

## Introduction

### Communication from Explosion to Implosion / Are We Happier in the “Society of Communication”?

Society, as the sum of human interactions, of intricate networks cannot be imagined outside communication. Human relations are possible and negotiated through communication. Special studies show that out of the 24 hours, we communicate for 11 hours<sup>1</sup>. We could say that we exist through each other as we communicate. We are constantly facing various problems and in order to solve them we must communicate.

No matter what the frame of reference in communication is, the quality of the inter-human relations relies quite a great deal upon the quality of communication. Too often used to explain the successes and failures of interactions, communication created the illusion that it is a universal cure-all. Thus, we fail to see the importance of other factors (economic, psychological, and cultural) in shaping the human interactions.

---

\* Lecturer Ph. D. “Nicolae Titulescu” University Social and Administrative Sciences Faculty (email: doina.nedelcu@yahoo.com)

<sup>1</sup> Giblin, Leslie, *The Art of Human Relations Development*, Curtea Veche Publishing House, 2005, p.28

On the other hand, even if it is not a universal cure-all, the importance of the quality of communication shouldn't be underestimated: it plays a major role in personal development as well as society. That is exactly why the analysis of the way in which the quality of communication evolved was of interest for many researchers.

To what extent we can talk about an increase in the quality of communication in today's society compared to traditional society is a question that raised numerous polemics. Contemporary society is facing two apparently paradoxical phenomena: on the one hand, the boom of communication forms and technologies, the emergence of new dimensions in communication, new global dimensions, and on the other hand, a deficit in the quality of interpersonal relations which often remain embryonic, superficial, conventional. Authors like L. Sfez, A. Mehrabian, M. Wiener associate the plethoric character of contemporary communication with superficiality. The development of communication, technologies in general, and communication technologies in particular, was not doubled by increasing quality, authenticity of the interpersonal human interaction. The information society filled with its technologies has contradictory effects on the personal development of individuals: it facilitates communication at global level but it steals the time and diminishes the capacity to interact in a sustainable qualitative way. The French sociologist L. Sfez diagnosed with "tautism" this society oversaturated by information and means of communication, but poor in relational nutrients<sup>2</sup> He created the concept of "tautism" by combining the meanings of the two words – "Tautology" (the useless repetition of the same idea, but in different words) and "autism" (the pathological state characterized by losing touch with reality). Tautism is the disease of a world in which a lot is being said, but less and less is understood. It is a world in which the technological boom in communications is also responsible for the implosion of communication.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, although today's social actors have more instruments to communicate with, and even if they communicate more than ever before, the depth of the dialogue and the quality of the relations have considerably deteriorated. The multitude of communication instruments feed the idea that we are free like never before to communicate. In reality, these mediums are limited and limiting.

Television, for instance, with its variety of means of communication has created the illusion that it is an objective observer of reality. The audience, seduced by the TV image, has identified itself with the fragmented message transmitted by television, becoming just as limited as the message. (L. Sfez, 1988). Moreover, one of the first drawbacks of mass communication is that it significantly reduces the non-verbal dimension of communication.

The modern means of communication (phone, internet, etc.) have limited means for non-verbal communication. This leads to more talking, but with less information transmitted, thus making relations more superficial. The above-mentioned thinkers consider that the internet and online communication tend to distort the relations and to isolate individual<sup>4</sup>

By significantly reducing the non-verbal dimension of communication, the intermediate technologies impoverish and limit the human interaction. The artificial communication is more superficial, lacking a certain amount of savour and picturesqueness. On the other hand, superficiality and lack of consistency in communication is also due to an increase in difficulty when it comes to building common meanings in such a diverse world. Today's society is not just a society of diversity and individuality, but also one of confusion and disorientation. When talking about the confusion of values *Lucien Sfez* was bemoaning the destruction of consensus and of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Sfez, L., *Critique de la communication*, Seuil Publishing House, Paris, 1988. ,

<sup>3</sup> Sfez, L., *Comunicarea*, Institutul European, 2002, p.19

<sup>4</sup> Mehrabian, A. & Wiener, M., "Decoding of inconsistent communications", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, SUA, 1967*

fusion of the *historical* and the *emotional* in today's world. (Lucien Sfez, 2002) Gianni Vattimo outruns L. Sfez. He emphasizes and salutes the present explosion of rationalities and differences which have an indisputable liberating role and which makes impossible the idea of a unique, homogenous reality. The variety of communication technologies gives birth to a multiplicity of interpretations, and points of view.

“There aren't only one or two interpreters like in the Middle Ages, when there were only the Pope and the King. Today we have CNN, but also Fox, and various other TV channels, newspapers (...). This multiplicity (chaos) contributes to the destruction of absolutism. The human dialogue replaces the *absolutes*.” The condition is to face a real multiplicity, not a fake one<sup>3</sup>

In Vattimo's opinion, postmodernism represents a period of transition from unity to plurality. It is the product of communication development, which led to the discovery of historicity and the contingency of the value systems, and this *disorientation*, instead of being perceived as a deadlock should be considered the premise of freedom itself.<sup>4</sup> Going back to L. Sfez, we must admit that the stake of his book, “A Critique of Communication”, is very up-to-date: genuine communication - which should ensure social cohesion - is threatened today by artificial communication, lacking content and presenting a sterile theoretical discourse. Lucien Sfez considers that the solution lies in a return to the humanist hermeneutics: “Against technological, artificial, transnational, and faceless communication there is only interpretation. So, let's practice together translation, commentary, searching critique. Let's interpret.” (L. Sfez, 2002). The humanistic approach to communication can explain the human being's need for real and profound communication, the need to develop quality inter-human relations.

## 2. The Quality of the Relation, Behavioural Options in Communication, and Empathic Listening

### 2.1. What is RQ (quality of relation/ relation coefficient)?

Paradoxically, the so-called “society of communication” has created a system of relations which does not answer the human being's need for profound and genuine communication. J. Salomé notices that “the relational system which dominates our culture and which is called the SAPPE system, favours the dominant/dominated relations thus inciting to regaining the power or to complying. It leads to oppositions and confrontations, cultivates dependence, mistrust and even doubt/suspicion of each other.

Against all moralising attempts coming from religion, socio-cultural codes or personal ethics, most of the time, this system pours a lot of violence and self-inflicted violence. In most so-called civilized countries it looks like there is an implicit culture of non-communication and human relations which does not favour the development of a high coefficient of relation for most individuals neither on family - school education level, nor social life.”<sup>5</sup>

In such a society the individual's chances to have a high RQ are reduced as long as neither school, nor society don't prepare him for vivid, healthy relations. The above-mentioned author considers that under these circumstances the RQ could actually be developed through a personal

<sup>3</sup> Andrei Marga in *Dialogue with Gianni Vattimo*, Verso, cultural by-monthly magazine, 15 March -15 April 2007

<sup>4</sup> *Il pensiero debole et la fin de la métaphysique*, Une interview avec Gianni Vattimo par Marin Mincu, Paradigma, Nr.2-3, June-July 1993, according to Ovidiu MORAR, Postmodernism: Two Operational Concepts?

<sup>5</sup> Jacques Salomé, *Minuscules aperçus sur la difficulté d'enseigner*, Editions Albin Michel, 2004, ISBN: 2-226-15337-3

step towards raising awareness and through an effort to go deeply into the personal relational dynamics. What is actually RQ?

RQ is a new concept which shouldn't be mistaken for IQ or EQ. Maryse Legrand - the French clinical psychologist – considers that there is relational intelligence RQ, different from both rational (IQ) as well as emotional (EQ) intelligence, and can be evaluated in two directions: in relation to the self and in relation to the others. A quality relation, with a high RQ presupposes the intrinsic presence (existence) of cordiality, goodwill which make possible the respect for the other's alterity no matter who that is.

RQ is connected to the individual's more or less developed capacity to propose for himself or for the others, relations that actively contribute to the growth and development of both. We could say about an individual that has an increased RQ when we notice that it causes and develops energetic relations that are creative and stimulating for the others and for self. We could say that RQ is low when it triggers infantile relations, energetivore /toxic messages, alienating for the other and for the self.<sup>6</sup>

RQ is the art of creating mutual rewarding relations. Within a quality relationship we can see the human being's need to be accepted, to express himself in his singularity, to be recognised in his oneness and alterity, the need to feel appreciated. It is that kind of relation that ensures the development, the fulfilment, and the openness of the human being. At the same time, according to the French writer Olivier Clerc, RQ is about the personal capacity to manage disagreements and conflictual situations other than with violence.

In such a relation, our physical, affective and relational needs can be recognised/accepted and heard – which doesn't mean they are fulfilled. Our need for relations refer to our need to express ourselves, to be listened to, to get attention, to be appreciated (to feel useful), to be intimate with somebody (to be able to share personal secrets), to belong (to feel you are accepted in a group), to influence (to contribute to the creation of something new).

„The quality relation evolves within those positive meetings that tend to consolidate personal security, the feeling of a dignified existence and the certainty of personal value. At the same time, such a relation will stimulate openness, interest, curiosity (“the taste”) for the others. RQ will value the desire to be oneself when meeting another person, thus being interested to give the best.”<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2. The Comprehension Behaviour and the Quality of Interpersonal Communication

The quality of interpersonal relation is built upon the attitudes the speakers have when communicating. Some attitudes also favour attitudes that hinder the increase of the relational coefficient.

For communication the optimal situation is when “the one that expresses himself does not feel judged, analysed, interpreted, guided by tips, manipulated, harassed by questions, but feels just listened to”<sup>8</sup>. This is an essential condition for the increase of RQ.

In defining it, we can distinguish five fundamental principles: *the principle of non-interpretation, non-evaluation, non-counselling or of the no-help, non-systematic questioning*<sup>9</sup>. In other words, if a person wishes to allow the interlocutor to express himself in a genuine manner, he should avoid interpretations, judgement, advice, interrogation.

These attitudes narrow and minimise the speaker's expression or even more, they channel the discourse, belittle and manipulate it. They generate interactions based on “status differences”,

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Salomé, *Mimuscules aperçus sur la difficulté d'enseigner*, Editions Albin Michel, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> J. Salomé, *Relation d'aide et formation l'entretien*, Septentrion, p. 27

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Claude Abric, *Psihologia comunicarii*, Polirom, 2002, p. 49

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Claude Abric, *op. cit.*, p.41-49

on unequal status (interpreter-interpreted, evaluator-evaluated, counsellor –counselled, investigator-investigated) blocking communication or giving birth to counterattack and aggressive behaviour. These are attitudes that deteriorate the quality of the relation, thus the low RQ. The relations created in such manner are ignorance, dependence, or inferiority relations. These relations favour only one of the interlocutors in the detriment of the other. Or, as we've shown before, a quality relation is a positive relation which answers the human being's need to express oneself, to be listened to, to get attention, respect, to be valued. Unfortunately, most of the time, these needs are not satisfied.

C. Rogers noticed that in interpersonal mutual communication there is a natural tendency to judge, approve, disapprove, tendency that can intensify in situations that are loaded affectively and emotionally. The stronger the feelings, the lower the possibility of a real feedback between interlocutors; there will be only two ideas, two feelings, two parallel judgements which psychologically do not meet. They will reunite (meet) and the tendency to judge will be avoided only within comprehensive listening, through the assimilation of the frame of reference and by entering the other person's universe.<sup>10</sup>

Comprehension behaviour means that one manifests interest for what the other says. It means that one tries to understand, not to judge, evaluate, and interpret. Understanding is the only type of attitude that focuses on the interlocutor, which creates a favourable relational atmosphere, ideal for profound communication. Understanding the other's words is not easy. Often we mistake understanding for interpretation. Or understanding doesn't mean interpreting, only deciphering, decoding the other's words, looking for the reasons he's pursuing. So, let us learn to listen!

"God gave us two ears and one mouth so that we listen twice and speak once." Thus, by paraphrasing Marshall B. Rosenberg - the founder of non-violent communication – let us give up "the jackal's ears for the giraffe's". While giraffe's ears are big, attentive, open, they know how to decipher the need behind the words, the jackal only hears critiques and answers to them with the same coin leading to violence.

The jackal's language is the expression of a biased relation – considers the author – it is a relation based on waiting, control and guiltiness. So, let us go for the giraffe's language, a language of goodwill, of non-judgement/labelling, of empathy through which the real, deep needs of the interlocutor are heard.<sup>11</sup> For this to happen we must show more interest in the other, we must try to understand from his position, to discover what facts, words, events mean for him. This presupposes an effort to overcome the self, to forget about the self at least for a few minutes, and to focus on the other person.

Experience shows us that we know more about how to speak, and less about how to listen. While the interlocutor talks, we do not think of what he tells us but what we will tell him, how we will impress, convince, seduce. If we happen to listen, we do it through the filter of our own values, feelings, principles, personal experience.

Comprehensive communication - considers C. Rogers – refers to our attempt to create communication bridges which allow the others to share their feelings, to share with us their universe as they understand it.

I try to reduce my fears, anxiety and need for protection, in this way allowing the members of the group to express themselves freely. I try to adopt an understanding attitude sensitive enough to see the other as he sees himself, according to his perceptions and feelings. Moreover, I'm ready to admit what is real in me and in the other without wishing to arrange things at all costs. To listen

<sup>10</sup> Carl Rogers, *Le développement de la personne*, Dunod, Paris, 2005, ISBN 2100492381, p. 215-221

<sup>11</sup> Marshall B. Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, Elena Francisc Publishing, www.efpublishing.ro

to myself and to listen without feeling the need to set things right, to place individuals in a pattern, to encourage them to take the way I see them walking on.<sup>12</sup>

The psychological and morale premises of comprehension are self-acceptance, courage, and generosity, abandonment of self-defence mechanisms by every interlocutor, or at least some of them. The comprehension behaviour has a double dimension: one refers to the connection with the self, the other to the connection to the others. In order to accept the others and to have quality relations with them, firstly one must be honest to oneself, accept and value oneself. The one who is unhappy with oneself cannot accept and understand the others either. The one who underestimates himself, “the complicated one, is a hungry ego, wicked, he’s like a bad dog that bites”<sup>13</sup>. We cannot expect him to be generous with the others, to understand the others. Or, as J.Salome noticed, to be a good partner, one must first of all be a good partner to oneself.<sup>14</sup> We will never know how to change and how to relate to the others as long as we cannot accept ourselves in a profound manner. This is the only way to make relations grow and evolve easily. My intervention is more efficient when I listen to myself and I accept myself and I can be myself. Under these circumstances, the individual feels more free in expressing himself and tends to abandon all forms of protection<sup>15</sup>. Practicing comprehension needs a lot of courage and generosity: courage because by entering another’s universe there is the chance to be influenced by his perspective and to change yourself; generosity because, in order to understand the other one needs to forget at least a bit about oneself and to devote oneself to the other.

Comprehension brings immeasurable benefits to communication, personal development and quality of relation. The defensive distortions of communication (dishonesty, exaggerations, lies, hypocrisies) – considers C. Rogers – stops with an amazing rapidity when people realise that the interlocutor only purpose of is to be understood, not judged, criticised, interpreted, etc.

When one of the parts abandons the defensive attitude, it opens the door for the other part to do the same thing next time, thus making progress in genuine communication. This procedure gradually leads to real mutual communication, to a situation where I get to see that you perceive things just as well as I do, and you see that I perceive the problem just as well as you understand it from your perspective. (C. Rogers, 2004, p.220)

In one way or another, this comprehension enriches me, giving birth inside me to changes that make me a different person. At the same time, the fact that I understand the other allows him to change. When somebody understands deeply another person’s feelings, it makes it possible for this one to accept them inside. Feelings change inside that person too. (C. Rogers, 2004, p.16) Paradoxically, the more I would be myself in all complex life issues, the more I would try to understand and to accept what is real in my person and in the other’s, the more changes will happen.

I am convinced that an individual, the better understood and accepted he is, the more he would give up the false protection he used to face life with and engage oneself in a progressive evolution. (C.Rogers, p. 23)

The same author concludes that in order to create the optimal structure of communication - which implicitly presupposes active listening or non-directive orientation – it is essential to have a special relational atmosphere, based on the following four components<sup>16</sup>.

*The other’s unconditional acceptance* is about the refusal of any kind of judgement regarding what the other expresses and the acceptance of a possible silence of the other, the

<sup>12</sup> C. Rogers, *Le développement de la personne*, Dunod, Paris, 2005, ISBN 2100492381, p. 215-221

<sup>13</sup> L. Giblin, *The Art of Human Relations Development*, Curtea Veche Publishing House, 2005 p.48

<sup>14</sup> J. Salome, *If I would listen to myself, I would understand myself*, Curtea Veche Publishing House, 2002

<sup>15</sup> C. Rogers, *Le développement de la personne*, apud. R. Muchielli, *L’entretien de face a face dans la relation d’aide*, ESF editeur, Paris, 2004, p.14-15

<sup>16</sup> Jean-Claude ABRIC, 2002, *The Psychology of Communication, Polirom*, Iasi, pp. 51-53

acceptance of his words, the manner in which he expressed them or the fact that he doesn't want to show a certain feeling.

*The affable neutrality* does not presuppose a passive attitude and cannot be built on the investigator's refusal to get involved. This person must get involved in communication without judging, and his involvement must be positive and based on attention shown to the other, a kind of disinterested interest.

*Authenticity* is an essential condition for the development of a favourable climate; the interviewer (therapist) must be truly interested in what the speaker has to say. The authenticity of the interest shown to the other makes us available for him, responsive to what he says. It is a *sine qua non* condition of comprehensive listening.

*Empathy* is about sinking into the subjective world of the communication partner in order to see the situation with his eyes. It is not necessary to transport yourself into the other's shoes, it is sufficient to feel in the same way as the other. Empathy is defined by two components: receptivity to the other's feelings and the verbal capacity to communicate this comprehension.

By mentally situating ourselves in the speaker's shoes, it allows us to better understand the motivation, the objectives, the mentality, and to react with full knowledge of the case. In order to avoid confusions, J. C. Abric separated the concept of empathy by that of "laissez-faire". Empathy – unlike "laissez-faire" – characterises non-directivity and comprehensive listening in communication, and these are "active positions which need interior and exterior, verbal and nonverbal complex activity from those who use them."

### **3. Bucharest Students' Behaviours in Interpersonal Communication, and their Perception of the Quality of Communication in Romanian Society**

While studying the students behaviours in interpersonal communication and the perception of the quality of communication in Romanian society we used our social survey with the help of a questionnaire and focus group. There was a random sample of 300 students found in the University premises and in the campus of the "Nicolae Titulescu" University (it houses students from more universities in Bucharest). Subjects interviews and the data collection and processing was made by a group of students from second year International Relations, under the supervision of coordinators at the Centre for Information, Counselling and Professional Orientation of the "Nicolae Titulescu" University.

The meaning students give to quality communication within a focus group (15 International Relations students) was identified. The principles for such communication are dignity, respect for the person/interlocutor, acceptance and encouragement of freedom of speech. Declarations/affirmations regarding the quality of communication relation with various social categories (educators, colleagues, acquaintances) were looked into.

At the same time, the present study took into consideration and compared certain data resulted from other studies such as The Study regarding the Situation of Youth and Its Expectations. Diagnosis 2007 - ANSIT, TEJACO Project – made by ISE, Leo Youth Project about youth lifestyle in big cities, The Study about the situation of the youth in Romania-Pro-Youth (ASUB), etc.

The present study will analyse the extent to which the valorisation of communication by young people - Bucharest students - is accompanied by the adoption of comprehension behaviour in communication and a positive perception of the quality of communication in Romanian society.

Sociological studies (ANSIT, 2007)\* show that young Romanians give a lot of importance to communication, and relations with their peers. Thus, 80% consider that their relations with the family are very important and 18,8% are quite important. When talking about relations with friends, 43% consider them very important, and 44,6% pretty important. From the interactions with the others, young people expect communication.

Bucharest students (see the “Nicolae Titulescu” University social study) consider that, in their life, communication plays a major role. Most (86, 60%) of them value the quality of the relation, comprehensive communication, considering that it is important (30%), even very important (56, 6%), to understand their peers and, in return, to be understood by them (Table 1).

I. On how important is for students that their peers understand their feelings, ideas, experiences:

Very important	Important	Not that important	Unimportant
56,60%	30%	13,4%	0

During a conversation, 93% of the interviewed students feel they are listened to with a lot of attention by members of family, 86% by friends, 45% by colleagues, and 35% by acquaintances. Most of the students (91%) consider that family members and friends encourage them to express their feelings and thoughts more than their colleagues and acquaintances. (Table II)

II. The degree to which interlocutors listen carefully

	Very high degree	High degree	Low degree	No degree
Friends	40%	46%	14%	0
Family members	60%	33%	7%	0
Colleagues	8%	37%	51%	4%
Acquaintances	2%	33%	62%	3%

A big percentage of students declare that they are interested in developing some empathic attitudes in communication with their peers. Thus, 68% of the students intend – to a high and very high degree – to understand the interlocutor’s perspective, his experiences, in other words, to experience the empathic dialogue. A significant percentage, 24% of the students, try only at times to set themselves in the interlocutor’s shoes (to understand the other’s position), and 8% don not do it at all. (Table III)

III. The frequency with which students manage to set themselves in the interlocutor’s place / to understand their perspective from their position:

Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
23%	45%	24%	8%

Most students declare that they listen to their interlocutor with a high and very high degree of attention and encourage them to express their feelings and thoughts: family members (92%), friends (89%), colleagues (71,5%), and even acquaintances (62%). (Table III.1)

III.1. The degree to which Bucharest students declare that they listen to their interlocutors / encourage them to express themselves:

	Very high	High	Low	No degree
Friends	60%	29 %	11%	0
Family members	68%	24%	8 %	0
Colleagues	16,5%	55%	28%	0,5%
Acquaintances	10,5%	51,5%	31%	7 %



Bucharest students consider that in Romanian society most people (62%) show little interest or no interest at all in empathizing with their peers. They consider that only in approximately 38% of their dialogues they tried to guess the other's mood, to understand their position by trying to take their place. (Table IV)

IV. The frequency with which students feel that their interlocutors manage to guess their mood:

Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
18%	20%	54%	8%

In conclusion, *students perceive themselves as more empathic than many of the people they talk to*. They feel that they understand their peers more than their peers understand them: 70% of them consider that they listen carefully or very carefully to their colleagues; less than half of the students feel that their colleagues and acquaintances listen to them.

On the other hand, we notice the existence of a *significant difference* between *the students' aspiration towards comprehensive communication and practicing comprehensive communication*. Although 68% of the students declare that they are preoccupied with the practice and the development of active attitudes, comprehensive in dialogue, there is still a large percentage (43,9%) who manifest, to a certain extent, judgemental attitude, the need to label, condemn/encourage in their relation to the interlocutors. 50,4% are used to judging people to a little extent, and only 5,7% declare that they never do this. (Table V)

V. The frequency with which Bucharest students judge/condemn the words/actions of the interlocutor:

Very high	High	Low	Never
11,5%	32,4%	50,4%	5,7%

Bucharest students consider that they judge their interlocutors less than their peers do it. In conversations, they feel judged, classified/analysed to a high and very high degree by all categories of interlocutors: especially by family (58% of them), and by friends (46%), but also by colleagues (35,5%) and educators (24%). (Table VI)

If we keep in mind that they feel less judged by educators than the other interlocutors, we might think that they have a better relation of communication with them. However, after talking to the students from "Nicolae Titulescu" University- International Relationship Faculty within a focus group, we draw some different conclusions: their relations to the educators are most of them professional, formal-official, cold, distant. By the nature of the relations they have with the students, educators follow the scientific and educational performances of their students, and they do not do any other kind of evaluation.

Most of them do not get involved in friendly, personal talks with the students. The frequency of such discussions is very low. Although some think these talks might help, students are reluctant to starting such conversations with their educators. Students do not really perceive their educators as friends or colleagues with more professional and life experience. They consider the relation to their educators as a distant professional relation. The shorter the distance perceived in connection to the others, the more they feel judged. Students consider that they are labelled, and evaluated, more often in their informal relations rather than in the formal ones. In other words, in relation to them, the others are indifferent. They do not care (as a rule in formal relations), or if they care (family, friends) they do not know how to show it, do not know how to communicate in

a comprehensive way: they judge them, label them, condemn, proposing them an unequal relation, which is detrimental to them. Alternatively, in such a situation, the possible consequences would be the blockage of communication or the orientation by selection of the interlocutor's speech. (C. Rogers, Mucchielli, Salome, J.C. Abric) If they are harshly judged they feel offended and do not speak anymore. So, communication is blocked. When it comes to positive evaluation, because they do not want to disappoint their dialogue partner there is a so-called "orientation by selection" of the interlocutor's discourse.

***In conclusion, students feel encouraged to freely express their opinions, feelings, experiences*** (restricted in their intention to communicate in a profound manner) both in formal relations, within which they are faced with cold/indifferent attitudes, and in informal relations, within which they are faced with evaluative/judgemental attitudes. In other words, students ***suffer from the existence of a great deficit in quality of their relation, and communication, at all levels.***

VI. The degree to which Bucharest students feel judged by various categories of interlocutors:

	Very high	High	Low	No
Family	30%	28%	28,5%	13,5%
Friends	12,5%	33%	40%	19,5%
Colleagues	8,5%	27 %	55%	9,5%
Educators	4%	20%	35 %	41%

Students consider that most of their interlocutors, be it family members, friends or colleagues, all interpret their opinions, feelings, decisions, by sharing with them their own meaning. (Table VII)

Interlocutors do not put forward or do not manage to understand what significance, what meaning, what importance some things, events have for students. They do not manage to understand the perspective they see things from.

Most students (74%) consider that friends sometimes interpret their gestures and assertions to a very high and high degree. 65% of the students consider that family has the same attitude; 54,5% of those interviewed blame their colleagues for interpretation, and 46%, their educators. Students consider that in Romanian society most people are prisoners of cultural stereotypes, mentalities, ways of thinking, and lifestyles that they cannot transcend in order to empathize with the others.

VII. The degree to which students consider that their messages are interpreted (as interlocutors they give personal meaning):

	Very high	High	Low	No
65% Family	31,5%	33,5%	17,5%	17,5%
74% Friends	18,5%	55,5%	22%	4%
54,5% Colleagues	10%	44,5%	33,5%	12%
46% Educators	12,5%	33,5%	33,5%	20,5%

We notice that there are meaningful differences regarding the perception of the relation of communication between the students with good educational achievement and the students with lower educational achievement. If we compare the low educational achievement students with the good achievement students we notice that a significant percentage of the latter tend to feel less judged and interpreted by their interlocutors. In other words, they have a better perception of the quality of the communication with the others.

Thus, more students with low educational achievement (61%) feel judged by family compared to the students with good educational achievement (55%). While 52% of the students with low educational achievement declare that friends tend to judge them, only 40% of the students with good achievement think the same. While 40% of the students with low educational achievement consider themselves judged by their colleagues, only 30% of the students with good achievement are in the same situation. There are significant differences between the two categories of students when it comes to the perception of the interpretation behaviour of the various interlocutors. The ones with good achievement feel less interpreted in relational communication than others. (See Tables VIII and IX)

VIII. The extent to which students consider that their messages are interpreted / Group of students with good educational achievement:

	Very High	High	Low	No
56,% Family	10 (33.33%)	8 (22.66%)	9 (30%)	2 (6.66%)
70% Friends	7 (23.33%)	14 (46.66%)	8 (22.66%)	0
53% Colleagues	2 (6.66%)	14 (46.66%)	10 (33.33%)	2 (6.66%)
50% Educators	5 (16.66%)	10 (33.33%)	11 (36.66%)	4 (13.33%)

IX. The extent to which students consider that their messages are interpreted / Group of students with low educational achievement:

	Very high	High	Low	No
74% Family	7 (30.43%)	10 (43.47%)	1 (4.34%)	3 (13.04%)
78% Friends	3 (13.04%)	15 (65.21%)	5 (21.73%)	0
56,5% Colleagues	3 (13.04%)	10 (43.47%)	8 (34.78%)	2 (8.69%)
43,5% Educators	2 (8.69%)	8 (34.78%)	7 (30.43%)	6 (26.08%)

When it comes to the habit of giving advice, or solutions to the dialogue partners, we notice that there are big differences between the categories of interlocutors: 80,5% of the students declare that family, and 74% declare that friends are in the habit of giving them advice, to a high and very high degree. Only 36 % of the students declare that their colleagues are in the habit of giving advice. (Table X)

We notice that parents and friends feel most entitled to give advice.

X. The extent to which interlocutors are in the habit of giving advice/solutions:

	Very high	High	Low	No
80,5% Family	35%	45,5%	8%	3,5%
74% Friends	31%	43%	23,5%	2,5%
36% Colleagues	6%	30%	44,5%	19,5%
22% Educators	0	22%	50,2%	27,8%

Between 65% and 60% of the students feel that during conversations they are not allowed to express freely, that both family members and friends are in the habit of directing, channeling the discourse. (Table XI)

XI. The extent to which the interlocutors intend to redirect the conversation (in a direction of their choice):

	Very high	High	Low	No
Family 65%	25%	40%	35%	0
Friends 60%	13%	47%	29%	11%
Colleagues 33%	4%	29%	48%	19%
Educators 42%	10%	32%	36,5%	19,5%

The paradox is that most students trust, feel listened to and understood by family members, but at the same time they feel judged, interpreted, rechanneled by them. 65% of the interviewed students declare that, within conversations with family, they feel interpreted to a high and very high extent. 58% of them feel judged to a high or very high degree. 65% consider that their discourse is redirected to a high or very high degree, and 81% consider that they are given advice-solutions from family to a very high and high degree.

Because they trust and perceive family as having good intentions, that's the place students feel listen to and understood. Yet, in most cases, it's about a different kind of understanding, different from the comprehensive one, an type of understanding automatically given, understanding as symbiosis of love and good intentions of the family for its members.

It is about understanding that allows judgement, interpretation, counselling, and rechanneling of the interlocutor because it is well-intentioned.

There are solid preconceptions in Romanian culture about what it means to educate, to communicate, and to relate to in a family. Understanding the young people is often mistaken for helping them, supporting them all their life, giving advice, even rechanneling them. According to Romanian mentality, perpetuated from one generation to another, giving advice/solutions to one's own children, even judging them is a form of permitted moral support, even welcome proof of love.

This explains the fact that young people have a higher degree of acceptance when it comes to interpretation, judgement and counselling from family, as opposed to other social categories. These are attitudes often considered somehow normal, being the result of care, love, and best intentions.

On the other hand, these are attitudes and mentalities which raise the risk for development of dependence relations between child-parent, and point the child in a wrong disadvantageous direction.

## Conclusions

The main conclusion of the first part of the present paper is the existence of a correlation between the quality of the relation (RQ) and the behavioural options in communication. More accurate, the growth of the relational coefficient, of the quality of the interpersonal relation asks for the adoption of an honest, open, comprehensive attitude in the process of communication at least by one of the interlocutors.

Regarding Bucharest students attitudes in communication and the way in which they perceive the quality of communication in Romania, we can draw the following conclusions: Most Bucharest students (86, 60%) value the quality of the relation, and comprehensive communication. They consider that it is important (30%), even very important (56,6%) to have a sincere and profound communication, to understand their peers and, in return, to be understood by them. On the other hand, the study identifies the existence of a significant discrepancy between the aspirations of the students towards comprehensive communication and putting into practice the

requirements of comprehensive communication. Although most students (approximately 70%) declare that they want to practice and to develop active, comprehensive attitudes in dialogue, a significant percentage of them admit that, in practice, they don't manage to do it. Thus, only 5,7% declare themselves comprehensive, asserting that they are not in the habit to judge, interpret, channel their interlocutors, while 50,4% state that they are in the habit of doing this to a little extent.

There is a large percentage of students (43,9%) who admit that in effective communication they show to a greater or lower extent uncomprehensive judgemental, labelling, condemning/gratifying attitudes in relation to their interlocutors.

But over 30% of the students don't intend to communicate comprehensively and almost 44% would like to, but fail, which is not a happy situation. Still, in comparison with their interlocutors, irrespective of the social category they belong to, the interviewed students perceive themselves as being more interested, preoccupied with comprehensive communication. They have the feeling that they understand their peers more than their peers understand them: 70% of them declare that they are in the habit of showing attention to a high and very high degree to their colleagues. Less than half of the students feel that their colleagues and acquaintances listened to them.

Bucharest students perceive the existence of low quality of communication in Romanian society, at all levels, both formal, and informal. They feel the existence of an important deficit in quality of communication in school, in the street, at work, as well as in the family or in the group of friends.

They think that communication based on empathy, respect for dignity, appreciation of individual, encouragement of freedom of speech is missing in most cases. Students also consider that most people (62%) show little interest or no interest at all in empathising with their peers, and declare that in only approximately 38% of the communication relations, the interlocutors showed an active listening attitude. They tried to guess the state of mind, to understand their position by taking their place.

Uncomprehensive behaviours are ubiquitous in Romanian society and people come across them in most relations of communication. Students feel discouraged in freely expressing their opinions, feelings, experiences both in formal, cold, indifferent relations, and in informal, warm, close relation, but unfortunately impregnated with the habit of judging, channelling, interpreting. They experience an emphasised feeling of limitation, restriction of freedom of speech, and suppressing of aspiration towards profound quality communication. Although they show family most trust considering that they understand them better than anybody else, comprehensive listening is not very often encountered here either. But they show a higher degree of acceptance of the uncomprehensive behaviour of the family compared to that of other social categories.

In the end, we can say that this study demonstrates once more the need for constant and greater involvement of the agents of socialisation in delivering and putting into practice the active comprehensive non-violent communication techniques in interpersonal relations. By taking into account the fact that empathic comprehensive listening abilities can be learnt - if not inborn -, then the educational process should set as central goal the shaping of these abilities.

## References

- Abric, Jean-Claude, *The Psychology of Communication*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2002
- *Andrei Marga in dialogue with Gianni Vattimo*, in Verso bimonthly cultural magazine, 15 March - 15 April, 2007
- Chiru, Irena, *Interpersonal Communication*, Tritonic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003
- Dinu, Mihai, *The Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication*, All Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004

- Giblin, Leslie, *The Art of Human Relations Development*, Curtea veche Publishing House, 2006
  - Hartley, Peter, *Interpersonal communication*, second edition, Routledge Publishing House, London, 1999
  - Marinescu, Valentina, *Introduction in Communication Theory*, Tritonic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003
  - Mehrabian, A. & Wiener, M., "*Decoding of Inconsistent Communications*", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, SUA, 1967
  - Mucchielli, Alex, *The Art of Communication*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2005
  - Mucchielli, Rogers, *L'entretien de face a face dans la relation d'aide*, ESF Editeur, Paris, 2004
  - Paus, Viorica Aura, *Communication and Human Resources*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2006
  - Popa, Mariana, *Communication: General and Particular Aspects*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006
  - Rosenberg, Marshall B., *Nonviolent Communication, a Language of Life*, Elena Francisc Publishing, www.efpublishing.ro
  - Rogers, Carl, *Le developpement de la personne*, (1961) Dunod, Paris, 2005, ISBN 2100492381
  - Salome, Jacques, *Relation d'aide et formation l'entretien*, Septentrion
  - Salomé, Jacques, *Minuscules aperçus sur la difficulté d'enseigner*, Editions Albin Michel, 2004
  - Salomé, Jacques, *If I would listen to me, I would understand*, Curtea veche Publishing House, 2002
  - Sfez, Lucien, *Communication*, European Institute Publishing, 2002
  - Sfez, Lucien, *Critique de la communication*, Seuil Publishing, Paris, 1988
  - O'Sullivan, Tim, Hartley, John, Saunders, Danny, Montgomery, Martin, Fiske, John, *Fundamental Concepts in Communication Sciences and Cultural Studies*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2001
- Websites:**
- [http://www.pedagopsy.eu/livre\\_enseigner\\_salome.htm](http://www.pedagopsy.eu/livre_enseigner_salome.htm)
  - <http://www.asub.ro/documents/14.pdf> (Study on the Situation of the Youth in Romania - ProYouth)
  - <http://www.mts.gov.ro> (The State of the Youth and Its Expectations. Diagnosis 2007 - ANSIT)
  - <http://www.ise.> Project TEJACO/ ISE