



# From Listening to Resonating: Testing Novel Behavioral Coding Schemes of High-Quality Listening and Markers of Social Connection in Conversations with Strangers

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## Introduction

- High-quality listening is a process driven by the interaction between the speaker and the listener that encompasses the observable qualities of attention, comprehension, and positive intention (Itzchakov, 2021).
- Positivity Resonance reflects a marker of the emotional quality of social connection and occurs when two or more people experience shared positive affect and caring non-verbal and biological synchrony (Fredrickson, 2016).

**RQ1: Are high-quality listening behaviors associated with positivity resonance?**

**RQ2: Can a social connectedness intervention increase listening behaviors?**

## Methods

**High Quality Listening was behaviorally coded in 30 second bins by a team of independent coders. Independent coders scores were averaged for each listening behavior, and showed high reliability (ICC > .80)**

- **Verbal Validation:** frequency participants validated the speaker or showed understanding such as reflecting/paraphrasing or offering support
- **Follow-Up Questions:** frequency participants asked a question to learn more or further understand the topic/speaker
- **Global Evaluation (sample 2 only):** listening was coded for on a scale from 0 to 4 based on overall degree verbal and non verbal cues of listening were present

## Positivity Resonance

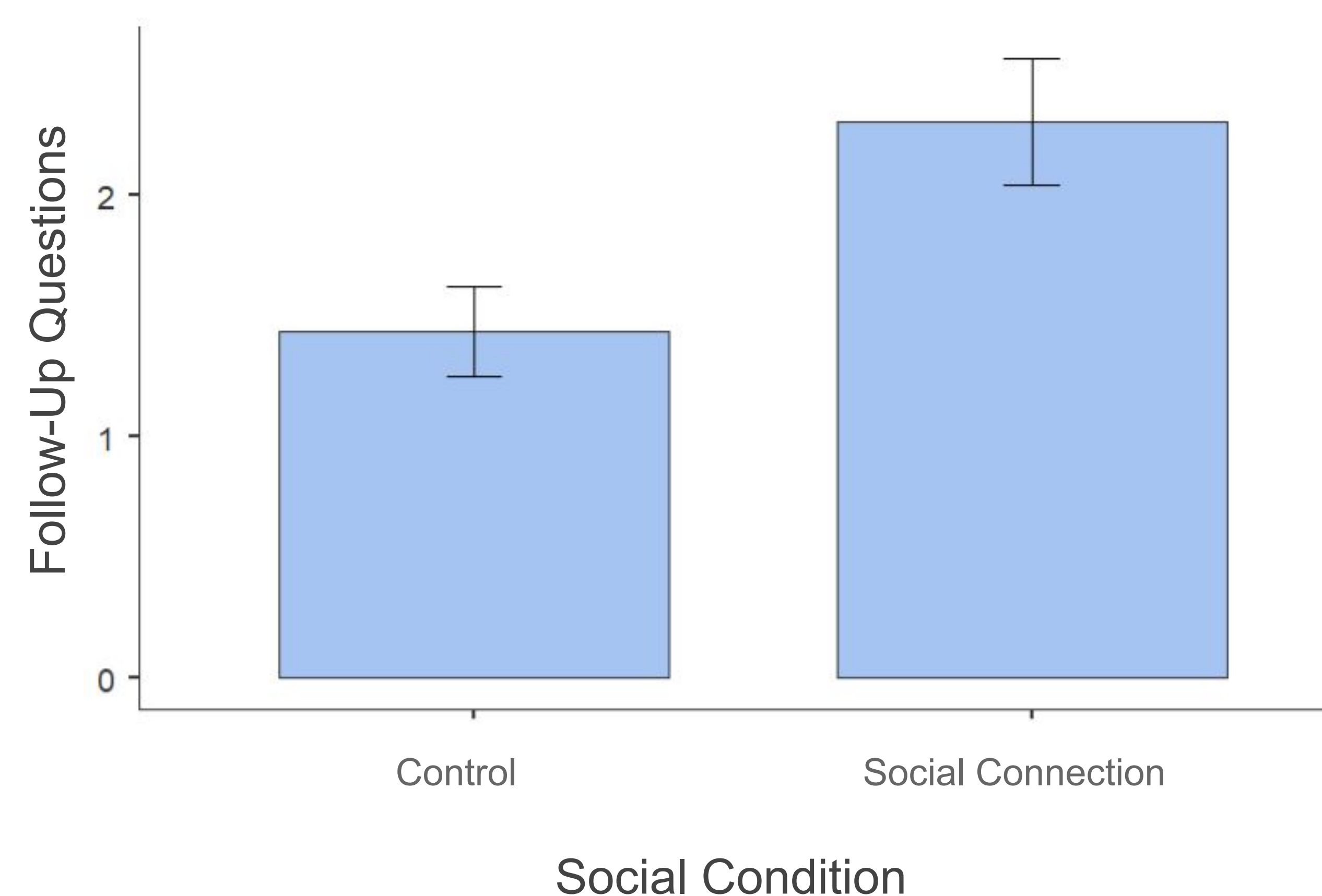
- Behavioral Indicators of Positivity Resonance (BIPR; Otero et al., 2021). Coded for shared smiles and synchrony in 30 second bins
- Confederate self-reported Positivity Resonance Scale (Major et al., 2018)

## Results

### 10 Minute Structured Conversation

Sample 1:  $N = 285$ ; randomized to social connectedness condition or active control for a brief 24 hour intervention, followed by an in-lab "fast friends" task.

	Follow-Up Questions	Verbal Validation	BIPR	Confederate Pos Res
Follow-Up Questions				
Verbal Validation	0.508 ***			
BIPR	0.175 **	0.327 ***		
Confederate Pos Res	0.145 *	0.256 ***	0.309 ***	



We found people in the social connection condition asked significantly more follow-up questions ( $b = 0.155, p = 0.009$ ) than people in the active control group. No other listening behaviors increased.

### < 5 Minute Small Talk

Sample 2:  $N = 346$ ; 35 day intervention with participants randomized to general social connectedness condition, stranger/acquaintance connection condition, mindfulness or control. Video-taped brief small talk with experimenter.

	Follow-Up Questions	Verbal Validation	BIPR	Lab Pos Res	Globals
Follow-Up Questions					
Verbal Validation	0.288 ***				
BIPR	-0.021	0.166 **			
Lab Pos Res	0.089	0.276 ***	0.207 ***		
Globals	0.416 ***	0.629 ***	0.342 ***	0.111	

Lab pos res refers to the positivity resonance self-reported by study experimenter

As in Sample 1, We found people in the social connection condition asked significantly more follow-up questions ( $b = 0.149, p = 0.032$ ) compared to the control group.

## Takeaway

High-quality listening behaviors were associated with positivity resonance whether in deep conversations or small talk. Both social connectedness interventions increased the frequency of follow up questions that reflected listening by the participant. In your next conversation, remember **listening matters** for connection!