Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională
ISSN: 2066-7329 | e-ISSN: 2067-9270
Abstracting & Indexing | Clarivate Analytics - Web of Science (WoS); EBSCO; Google Scholar; ICI Journals Master List - Index Copernicus; Ideas RePeC; Econpapers; Socionet; CEEOL; Philpapers; KVK; WorldCat; CrossRef; J-GATE

2025, Volume 17, Issue 4, pages: 223-242 | https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/17.4/1055
Submitted: August 13, 2025 | *Accepted for publication:* December 1, 2025

Small Routines, Big Social Effects: How a Listening-Focused Intervention Shapes Classroom Cohesion

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Abstract: *This article examines the link between listening attitudes displayed in interpersonal communication and peer preferential status in primary classrooms, as well as the effects of a brief listening-centered pedagogical intervention. We test the premise that didactic strategies designed to optimize listening can act as protective factors, reducing peer rejection and strengthening classroom cohesion. We conducted a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent groups, pretest–posttest study with 151 second-grade pupils (urban), assigned to an experimental group (n = 75) and a control group (n = 76). The instrument was a sociometric test with three positive and three negative nominations explicitly anchored in listening criteria ("listens patiently and attentively" / "does not have the patience to listen / is not attentive"). We computed a Listening Preference Score (LPS) for each pupil—a class-adjusted index based on 3–2–1 weighted positive and negative peer nominations—and assigned pupils to listening-based preferential status categories (very popular / popular / accepted / rejected).*
Findings suggest that simple, consistent listening routines can reconfigure peer perceptions and reduce marginalization in small-group activities even at early ages, thereby contributing to classroom cohesion. Conversely, in the absence of listening-focused pedagogical routines, marginalization may intensify over time.

Keywords: *listening; attitudes; sociometry; primary education; pedagogical intervention; peer status; inclusion.*

How to cite: Scîntei, L., & Marin, S. (2025). Small routines, big social effects: how a listening-focused intervention shapes classroom cohesion. *Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională, 17*(4), 223-242. https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/17.4/1055

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Introduction: Why teaching children to listen matters

Youth social exclusion is a complex process fueled by a web of factors that emerge in school and extend into later social life. The literature highlights how institutional barriers (rigid curricula, standardized assessments, tacit cultural norms) intertwine with socio-economic obstacles (poverty, housing insecurity, limited access to educational resources) and identity-based discrimination (ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability) to create fertile ground for marginalization (Council of Europe, 2018). Youth-work perspectives further show that exclusion is not only the product of external conditions but also of relational dynamics within micro-groups and informal spaces. Analyses in T-Kit 8: Social Inclusion document how subtle processes of labeling and self-exclusion unfold through language and peer power hierarchies, consolidating feelings of isolation (Council of Europe, 2017).

An often-underestimated element in these processes is interpersonal listening—the capacity to receive, interpret, and validate the other's talk in everyday interactions. The above works suggest that predominantly evaluative or competitive listening styles, compounded by social noise (biases, stereotypes, performance pressures), can turn communication into a mechanism of marginalization: minority voices are interrupted, ignored, or silenced, and participants self-censor to avoid rejection. Thus, listening becomes a structural driver of exclusion, not a mere epiphenomenon of verbal exchanges.

This study combines a listening-focused intervention designed to strengthen attitudes that support listening among second-grade pupils with peer sociometric nominations explicitly anchored in listening behaviors (patience, attention, encouragement) to capture change. We also aim to show that didactic strategies that optimize listening can function as protective factors, reducing peer rejection and increasing classroom cohesion.

Listening is not only a cornerstone of effective interpersonal relations; it is also a life skill that helps pupils navigate both school and everyday contexts. By enabling pupils to understand others' viewpoints and feelings, listening fosters empathy within the group. When pupils feel listened to, they are more willing to be open and to share their own thoughts and emotions, which strengthens peer connections. Attentive listening to each other's concerns helps identify solutions that address everyone's needs, prevents conflict escalation, supports a positive classroom climate, and contributes to a cohesive learning community.

Theoretical framework: attitudes that shape listening and their peer perception in the classroom

Current Romanian curricula highlight three dimensions of listening competence: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A competent listener can receive oral language, mobilize knowledge and cognitive processes to understand it, and remain aware of the personal attitudes that facilitate reception. In interpersonal listening, performance depends not only on what pupils "know how to do" but also on the attitudes they bring into interaction; research on listening styles points to relatively stable preferences (people-, action-, content-, or time-oriented) that influence goals, the selection of relevant cues, and how pupils respond to interlocutors (Watson et al., 1995). Listening profiles are also context-sensitive (school, family, peers) and task-dependent, calling for activities that calibrate situational objectives and expectations (Imhof, 2004).

The affective component of listening has been analyzed extensively by Wolvin and Coakley, who, in *Listening Education in the 21st Century*, conceptualize listening competence as a cognitive–affective–behavioral triad, emphasizing that listeners' emotional and attitudinal dispositions set the tone for effective oral reception (Wolvin & Coakley, 2000). Bodie and Jones further identify four categories of affective components: (1) internal states—thoughts and emotions about the listening task; (2) beliefs about listening—assumptions about the nature and value of listening; (3) motivations to listen in a given situation; and (4) situational goals, such as understanding, evaluation, appreciation, or empathy (Bodie & Jones, 2017).

Following Allport (Allport, 1935), attitudes are experience-organized states that prepare and direct responses to relevant situations and objects. Applied to classroom interpersonal listening, this "readiness" shapes which auditory and relational cues are selected, how messages are interpreted, and which responses are preferred (approach/validation vs. avoidance/defensive evaluation). Attitudes' favorable/unfavorable polarity anticipates tendencies to approach or reject the speaker, clarifying why pre-activating target attitudes before listening tasks (e.g., an orientation to understanding) increases attitude–behavior consistency.

In educational settings, frequently activated attitudes tend to become more stable, organize around central values (e.g., respect, empathy), and, when retrieved prior to the task, enhance attitude–behavior consistency in interpersonal listening. They can be shaped by persuasive communication and strengthened through instrumental conditioning (social approval from significant others), mechanisms synthesized in reference works (Larousse, 2006). In the Theory of Reasoned Action, attitude toward the behavior and

subjective norms (perceived expectations of significant others) forecast intentions and, implicitly, pupils' engagement in listening (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) explains how and when attitudes change in response to messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986):

- Central route: careful scrutiny of arguments and evidence; occurs when motivation and ability are high; yields more stable, resistant, and behavior-predictive attitudes.
- Peripheral route: reliance on cues such as source credibility/attractiveness, consensus, or message length; occurs when motivation/ability are low; yields more fragile attitudes.

Route selection is driven by motivation (personal relevance, need for cognition, proximal goals), ability (prior knowledge, available attention, time, distractions/cognitive load), and the quality of arguments alongside available peripheral cues. Instructional implications for developing listening competence include: creating central-route conditions (relevant tasks, sufficient time, reduced noise/distractions, explicit rationales for practices like brief paraphrasing or turn-taking); using ethical peripheral cues (teacher modeling, simple visual rules, positive peer feedback) merely to ignite attention, then shifting quickly to elaboration via questions, paraphrases, and short reflections; and pre-activating pro-listening attitudes (e.g., "I listen patiently") to strengthen subsequent message effects.

If attitudes prepare responses (Allport, 1935) and shape intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), Abric's typology helps clarify how these attitudes manifest in dialogue (Abric, 2022). In interpersonal communication, Abric describes six stances interlocutors tend to adopt: evaluation (judging the other), interpretation (attributing hidden motives/causes), support/help (comforting, reassuring), investigation (questioning that steers expression), advice/suggestion (offering solutions, prescriptions), and comprehension/understanding (empathic reformulation centered on the other's message). Of these, only comprehension is truly non-directive and fosters free expression; the others, if applied uncritically, can elicit defensiveness (evaluation), resistance (interpretation), an interrogation feel (investigation), or a shift of control to the adviser (advice). Accordingly, Abric's "optimal communication situation" is one in which the interlocutor does not feel judged, interpreted, advised, or interrogated, but listened to and understood—conditions that support relationship quality, participation, and lower the risk of marginalization.

Building on this typology, classroom practice should operationalize listening behaviors that cultivate comprehension and limit defensive-inducing practices. Comprehensive communication (Mucchielli, 2015, p.

246) is considered the form of authentic human interaction. It is based on trust and on recognizing personal value. Fostering an affective commitment to listening entails promoting attitudes anchored in values such as respect, openness, understanding, tolerance, and integrity—key in an educational culture that prioritizes inclusion. Pupils need guidance to listen with responsibility and availability, demonstrating a genuine willingness to understand the interlocutor's perspective.

Methodology: A second-grade quasi-experiment focused on peers' perceptions of listening attitudes

Building on the above theoretical grounds, we examine whether a brief listening-centered intervention is reflected in classmates' positive/negative sociometric nominations and can reduce marginalization within the class. Given our focus on oral message reception, we use a sociometric technique to capture affective–preferential relations grounded in listening during interpersonal communication.

Design and participants: We conducted a quasi-experimental, pretest–posttest design with a control group. The study ran across the 2023–2024 school year, with pretest in September 2023 and posttest in June 2024. The sample comprised 151 second-grade pupils (urban): experimental group (n = 75) and control group (n = 76). Participation in the study was voluntary. The study was conducted with the approval of the school administration and with parental and teacher consent. The questionnaires were anonymized, and each participant was assigned a code.

Aims and hypothesis: We measured peers' perceptions of each pupil's listening attitude at pretest and posttest; estimated the intervention's effect on sociometric indices derived from these perceptions (increase in positive choices; decrease in rejections); and examined the link between perceived listening attitude and sociometric status (preference/rejection). We hypothesized that the intervention would increase positive nominations "*because s/he listens patiently and attentively*" and decrease negative nominations, thus improving sociometric status.

Sociometric approach: Originating with J. L. Moreno, sociometry measures affective–preferential interpersonal relations and clarifies individuals' roles in the dynamics of small groups such as school classes (Zlate & Zlate, 1982). Although it addresses subjective phenomena (liking, disliking, indifference), choices are not purely affective; they involve evaluative operations—analysis, comparison, ranking (Mihu, 1967). In this study we used the sociometric test, the sociomatrix, and derived sociometric indices. In the small-group literature, three types of relations are typically

investigated via sociometry: communication, sociometric preference/rejection, and power/hierarchy (Mihu, 1967). We applied the technique to investigate peers' perceptions of each pupil's listening attitude, expressed through positive and negative nominations at class level.

Administration and instructions: The test emphasized confidentiality and rank-ordering of preferences. Pupils knew one another well (second grade is the third year of Romanian primary school). The class teacher administered the test, selecting a suitable time (calm, receptive atmosphere). To support ecological validity, criterion clarity, and lower anxiety, the practical purpose was made explicit:

"*Next week we will arrange the desks differently to work in groups. You will do a project where it is important to share your ideas and to listen to your classmates. I need to know everyone's preferences so I can seat you to work as well as possible*…"

Instrument (items). Two sets of items, each with three ordered nominations (first = most important):

- Positive choices (pro-listening attitude): "*With whom would you like to work in a group because s/he listens to you patiently and attentively and you feel encouraged to speak?*" (three nominations: 1, 2, 3).
- Rejections (anti-listening attitude): "*With whom would you not like to work because s/he does not have the patience to listen / is not attentive when you speak, and you feel discouraged?*" (three nominations: 1, 2, 3).

Sociomatrix and scoring: The sociomatrix is a two-way table listing all pupils, with choices (+) and rejections (−) given (rows) and received (columns). Following Zlate & Zlate (1982), ordered nominations were weighted 3–2–1 (first, second, third choice; first, second, third rejection as −3, −2, −1). Row totals index expansiveness (nominations given), while column totals indicate each pupil's position in the group—here, classmates' perception of listening attitude.

Indices. From each class sociomatrix we computed, for every pupil, a Listening Preference Score (LPS): $LPS_i = |(\text{weighted positive choices}_i - \text{weighted rejections}_i)| / N-1$, where weighting followed 3–2–1 and $N-1$ is the maximum number of potential nominators (all classmates except self). By construction, LPS ranges from −3 to +3, enabling an intuitive interpretation of each pupil's position within their own class, independent of class size.

Based on LPS, we assigned pupils to four listening-based preferential status categories (adapted from Zlate & Zlate, 1982): very popular, popular, accepted, and rejected.

Table 1. Listening-Based Preferential Status in Interpersonal Communication
Source: Author's own conception

LPS_i	Value of Listening-Based Preferential Status	Interpretation of the value
$LPS_i \geq 0,5$	Very Popular Listeners	Students who received the highest number of positive nominations and very few rejections; their peers perceive them as models of patience, attentiveness, and encouragement in interpersonal listening.
$0,5 > LPS_i \geq 0,2$	Popular Listeners	They receive more positive than negative nominations; they are considered reliable interlocutors.
$0,2 > LPS_i \geq 0$	Accepted Listeners	The numbers of positive nominations and rejections are balanced; peers do not reject them but do not particularly seek them out for their listening qualities.
$LPS_i < 0$	Rejected Listeners	They receive more rejections than nominations; peers perceive them as having low patience and limited attentiveness in interpersonal communication.

The two groups' pretest results on the Listening Preference Score (LPS) and the listening-based preferential status are similar.

Table 2. Pretest (T1) Results
Source: Author's own conception

Value of Listening-Based Preferential Status	Experimental group	Range of LPS_i values in the experimental group	Control group	Range of LPS_i values in the control group
Very Popular Listeners	6	0,75 → 0,50	6	0,72 → 0,52
Popular Listeners	23	0,46 → 0,13	30	0,48 → 0,12
Accepted Listeners	16	0,08 → 0	11	0,08 → 0
Rejected Listeners	30	-0,04 → - 1,29	29	-0,04 → - 1,16

The range of LPS values in the experimental sample was between +0.75 and −1.29, reflecting substantial variation in children's peer perceptions of classmates' listening attitudes during group-work activities. Higher positive values (e.g., +0.75) indicate that a child is perceived positively by many peers—as a good listener and a valuable team member. Negative values (e.g., −1.29) suggest that a child is perceived unfavorably—as a listener showing low attention and patience, and difficult to work with in a team.

From attitude to behavior: the pedagogical intervention program for optimizing interpersonal listening

"In the foundational acquisition cycle, listening influences school success more than reading or writing, which justifies early, listening-centered interventions in group activities." (Scîntei, 2023). Listening is associated with a set of values around which listeners' positive or negative attitudes polarize. In our study we first synthesized the main values implicated in interpersonal communication and identified, for each value, the corresponding positive and negative attitudes. We compiled the RITID set of universal human values—Respect, Understanding, Tolerance, Integrity, and Openness (Respect, Înţelegere, Toleranţă, Integritate Deschidere). These values and attitudes served as scientific anchors in designing and implementing the instructional activities, helping refine the strategies, interpret pupils' perceptions, and adapt methods to maximize learning and engagement.

Table 3. Values and attitudes in interpersonal listening
Source: Author's own conception

Value: **Respect**	
Positive attitudes:	*Negative attitudes*:
Empathy—*attentive listening and cognitive–affective effort to understand the speaker's perspective;*	***Indifference***—*lack of interest (verbal/nonverbal) in what the speaker says;*
Consideration—*listening without interrupting;*	***Lack of consideration***—*interrupting, talking "over" the other;*
Non-judgment—*giving time and attention to the other.*	***Judgment***—*abruptly cutting off the conversation.*
Value: **Understanding**	
Positive attitudes:	*Negative attitudes*:
Curiosity—*willingness to grasp the other's viewpoint in depth;*	***Prejudice***—*assuming from the outset that the other's view lacks value;*
Clarification—*asking questions to secure shared understanding;*	***Ignoring***—*displaying disinterest toward the speaker;*
Paraphrasing—*restating the main idea to check accurate comprehension.*	***Distortion***—*subjective, intentional misinterpretation.*
Value: **Tolerance**	
Positive attitudes:	*Negative attitudes*:
Patience—*waiting calmly until the other finishes;*	***Impatience***—*rushing the other, refusing to listen;*
Calmness—*maintaining a composed, patient stance;*	***Irritability***—*showing annoyance or agitation;*
Appropriate pace—*keeping a measured speaking tempo.*	***Haste***—*speeding up speech.*
Value: **Integrity**	
Positive attitudes:	*Negative attitudes*:
Honesty—*listening sincerely and responding truthfully;*	***Lying***—*intentionally offering false responses;*
Consistency—*stable reactions and behaviors;*	***Inconsistency***—*changing one's discourse opportunistically;*
Confidentiality—*keeping sensitive information private.*	***Breach of confidentiality***—*revealing private details without permission.*
Value: **Openness**	
Positive attitudes:	*Negative attitudes*:
Acceptance—*receiving ideas without undue reservation;*	***Non-acceptance***—*refusal to consider alternative viewpoints;*
Flexibility—*willingness to adjust one's view in light of new information;*	***Rigidity***—*inability to adapt during conversation;*
Support—*withholding immediate criticism/judgment.*	***Criticism***—*harsh, immediate evaluation of the other's ideas.*

Implementing listening-based strategies is central to our approach: the aim is to shape positive listening attitudes in interpersonal communication to optimize social integration. For second-grade pupils, the independent variables introduced were didactic games, routines, and rituals, chosen for their potential to develop competent listeners in the spirit of the RITID value set by cultivating positive attitudes and encouraging desirable behaviors. In this way, forming the competent listener becomes a cross-curricular goal throughout the school day.

Didactic games optimize interpersonal communication: their success depends on reciprocal listening, which creates a positive, inclusive learning climate.

Example—didactic game to strengthen listening: **"*Blindfolded Guide*" ("*Baba-Oarba*")**

Objective: practice attentive listening to follow precise instructions. By alternating roles, pupils directly experience both the responsibility to listen and to deliver clear messages, consolidating interpersonal communication skills.

Procedure: pupils work in pairs. In the classroom (or outdoors) a small obstacle course is set up. One child wears a blindfold; the partner is the guide, giving clear commands (number of steps, direction, pace) so the classmate can complete the course without touching obstacles. Roles switch halfway through. Each obstacle successfully passed earns a point; totals are compared at the end. The circuit can be made more challenging by adding obstacles.

Brief guided reflection closes the activity to turn play into learning, e.g., "What did you discover about *how* instructions should be formulated—and *how* they should be listened to?", "What will you do differently next time? How can you use what you learned in another teamwork situation?"

Routines and rituals help build a classroom communication culture, sustaining a climate of listening and understanding. While not formal "learning situations" for all children, they support socialization, learning, and classroom communication. In Romanian practice and curriculum documents, the terms often overlap, with "routines" preferred. *The Early Education Curriculum* (Annex to OMEN no. 4694/2019) defines routines as anchor activities across the day, conducted at the same times with the same structure/content and recommended for children's global development. These activities, oriented toward personal development, aim to shape habitual behaviors and autonomy, and they also allow addressing communication skills, cooperation, relationships, decision-making, self-knowledge, conflict resolution, and empathy—especially during the morning meeting.

By purpose, we distinguish politeness routines, transition routines, passing routines, social/functional routines, end-of-day routines, cultural routines, and traditional routines (Catalano & Albulescu, 2022). In the francophone literature (Meirieu, 2018; Amez-Droz, 2022), scholars differentiate two repetitive action types in school practice:

- Routines: structure time, foster automatisms, and facilitate classroom management.
- Rituals: support culturalization, socialization, and interpersonal communication; are institutionally endorsed, accepted by every pupil, and shape perceptions of school. Unlike routines, rituals are diverse, evolving, differentiated, and adapted.

Routines and rituals fulfill three main functions—social, learning, and language (Bertrand & Merri, 2015, as cited in Amez-Droz, 2022, p.8):

- Social function: acceptance of social order and classroom rules, role obligations, control of posture and facial expressions, and overall classroom management (discipline, communication, engagement).
- Learning function: joint, evolving processes involving personal, interpersonal, and community participation. Personally, new learning creates a cognitive conflict that triggers change; interpersonally, pupils communicate, cooperate, and coordinate around shared goals, with the teacher managing interactions and rotating roles; at community level, all are influenced by the school's cultural values and the class's shared habits.
- Language function: routines and rituals help children transition from family language to school-adapted language.

The morning meeting is a routine with a specific structure and a strong participatory character, centered on communication and socialization. In primary education it is mandatory in the preparatory grade and optional in grades I–IV. It supports the development of speaking and listening, following instructions, decision-making, and problem-solving. Its components typically include a greeting, attendance, calendar, news of the day, and a group activity aligned with the current learning unit and democratic values.

Example of a group activity in the morning meeting (Grade 2): "***Circle of listeners***"

Objective: practice attention to peers' ideas and reflection on them. Frequency: once a week. How it works: pupils sit in a circle (chairs or carpet) so they can see one another. Soft background sound may create a calm climate. The teacher introduces a "speaking object" (e.g., a special pencil, toy microphone) that circulates. Only the child holding the object may speak; peers listen actively. Each pupil shares an idea on the day's theme (a riddle to solve, a

news comment, an open question). The object is then passed along; the next pupil may ask a question, make a brief connection to what was heard, or continue the idea. The teacher ensures everyone gets a turn and offers feedback on listening quality and respect for differing opinions. The routine ends with a shared gesture (e.g., a group "appreciation sign"). Questions should be transdisciplinary, open, and thought-provoking (e.g., "Where do writers find inspiration?", "What would you change in our city if you were mayor for a day?", "How do you know you are truly listening to someone?"). Through this routine, speaking and listening become shared responsibilities in the class.

"***The Minute of Classical Music"*** cultivates listening skills in an artistic context, promoting positive attitudes such as curiosity, patience, openness, and acceptance. It runs once a week during the long break, for 5–6 minutes. Introduced while pupils have their snack (a daily routine), the ritual brings children closer to classical music and influences perception, attention, and patience. Age-appropriate pieces were selected (e.g., Haydn—*Toy Symphony*; Flaherty—*Once Upon a December*; Mozart—*Alla Turca*; Chopin—*Spring Waltz*; Beethoven—*Ode to Joy*; Strauss—*The Blue Danube*). Pupils are invited to listen "with the curious ear": no talking, just noticing instruments, sounds, and their effects on mood. Immediately after the music stops, each pupil turns to a desk mate for 30 seconds to describe what they liked or felt (Pair-Share), then roles reverse. Rule: during those 30 seconds the partner only listens, without interrupting.

In the second grade, simple rules can be formulated and gradually introduced, following reflection on listening activities as a strategy for self-regulating listener behavior. Reminding these rules before group work encourages positive behaviors.

Table 4. Rules and behaviors in interpersonal communication
Source: Author's own conception

The rule	The behaviors in interpersonal communication
Show that you want to listen!	Turn your body toward your partner. Use facial expression and gestures to show interest in the topic.
Minimize other activities!	Side activities can cause inattention or hinder understanding; the speaker may read them as disinterest or disrespect.
Be patient until the speaker finishes!	Listen without interrupting; you can encourage the speaker with a nod or a smile.
Manage your emotions!	Opposing views may tempt you to interrupt; hold back and keep listening.
Ask clarification questions!	Ask to make sure you have understood the message correctly.

In sum, brief, simple strategies that cultivate listening as both value and practice can measurably shift peer perceptions in early primary classrooms—reducing rejection and strengthening cohesion—pointing to a promising path for inclusive pedagogy.

Results and discussion

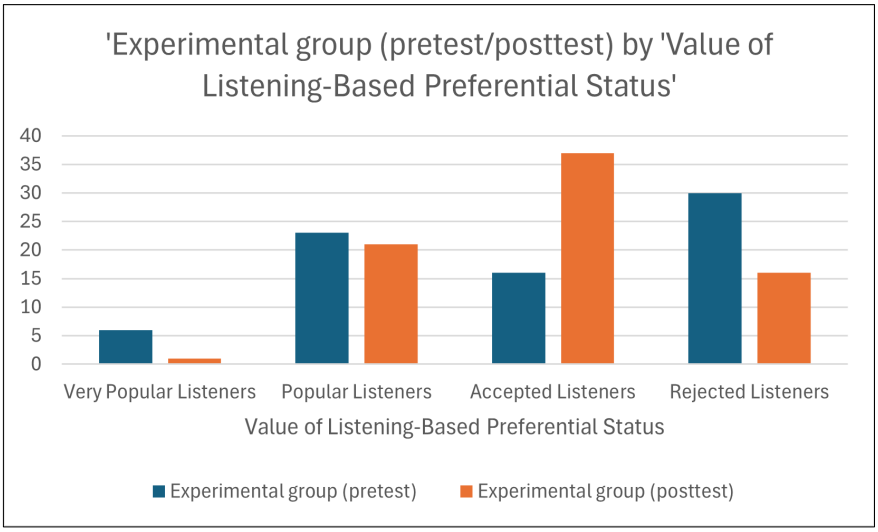
In the post-experimental stage, the same sociometric test was administered. Sociomatrices were compiled for both groups, and—based on peers' positive and negative perceptions—the Listening Preference Score (LPS_i) and the listening-based preferential status (Zlate & Zlate, 1982) were calculated. The posttest results for the two groups are presented in the tables below:

Table 5. T2 Results (Posttest)
Source: Author's own conception

Value of Listening-Based Preferential Status	Experimental group	Range of LPS_i values in the experimental group	Control group	Range of LPS_i values in the control group
Very Popular Listeners	1	0,58	6	0,88 → 0,52
Popular Listeners	21	0,50 → 0,13	19	0,48 → 0,12
Accepted Listeners	37	0,08 → 0	21	0,08 → 0,04
Rejected Listeners	16	-0,08 → - 0,79	30	-0,04 → - 2,12

In the experimental group, the number of pupils rejected on the basis of their listening-as-receiver attitudes in group work decreased from 30 to 24—a pattern not observed in the control sample. To reach a Listening Preference Score (LPS) of approximately −0.50, a pupil typically accrues about 5–8 rejections. In the experimental group at posttest, of the 16 pupils rejected on explicitly listening-based negative peer perceptions, 7 have LPS between −0.79 and −0.50.

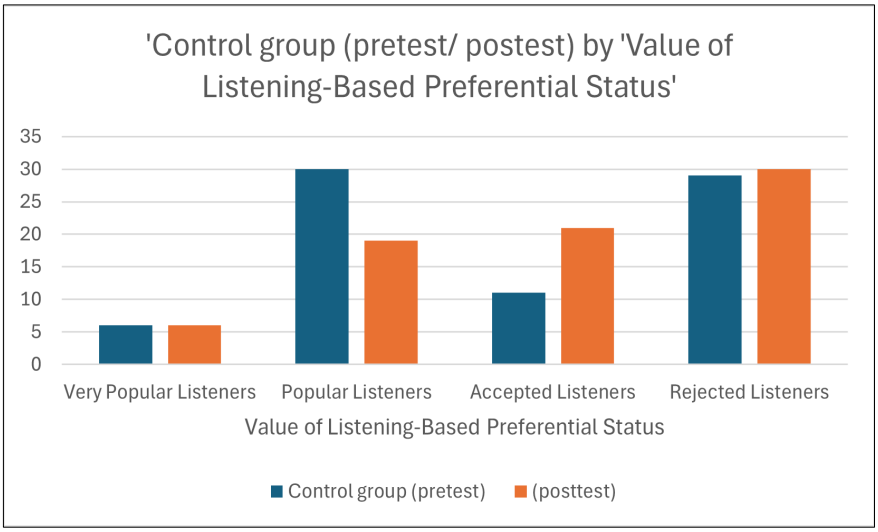
Figure 1: Experimental Group



In the control group at posttest, there are 11 strongly rejected pupils, with LPS between −2.12 and −0.50. Thus:

- Fewer extreme negative values indicate that the interventions were effective in reducing problematic listening behaviors;
- Very large negative extremes signal processes of rejection/marginalization based on the attitudes and behaviors enacted as listeners in interpersonal communication.

Figure 2: Control Group



With regard to the statistical analysis procedures, the Jamovi software was used (*The Jamovi Project*, 2025, version 2.6). To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, two paired-samples t-tests were conducted, comparing pre-test and post-test scores within the experimental group and the control group. The results are also presented in tabular form.

Table 6. Independent Samples t-test

Independent Samples t-test							*95% Confidence Interval*		
			indice	***df***	***p***		***d***	**Lower**	**Upper**
xp_pre	**xp_post**		-2.022	72.0	0.047		-0.2366	-0.468	-0.00323
C_pre	**C_post**		0.125	72.0	0.901		0.0146	-0.215	0.24399

Note. H_a: μVariable 1 – μVariable 2 ≠ 0; xp_pre = experimental group pre-intervention; xp_post = experimental group post-intervention; C_pre = control group pre-intervention; C_post = control group post-intervention; d = effect size (Cohen's d).

In the experimental group, the analysis indicated a statistically significant increase from pre-test to post-test, t(72) = –2.02, p = .047, d = –.24, 95% CI [–.47, –.00].

Although the effect size is small, it suggests that the participants who received the intervention showed a measurable improvement. The negative value of the effect size reflects the fact that post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores, given the order in which the variables were entered in the analysis (pre − post). This result indicates that the intervention had a positive and statistically significant impact on participants' performance.

In contrast, for the control group, no significant change was observed between pre-test and post-test, t(72) = .13, p = .901, d = .01, 95% CI [–.22, .24]. The practically null effect size confirms that participants who did not receive the intervention showed no meaningful change over time. This suggests that natural variation, task familiarization, or other external factors cannot account for the improvement observed in the experimental group.

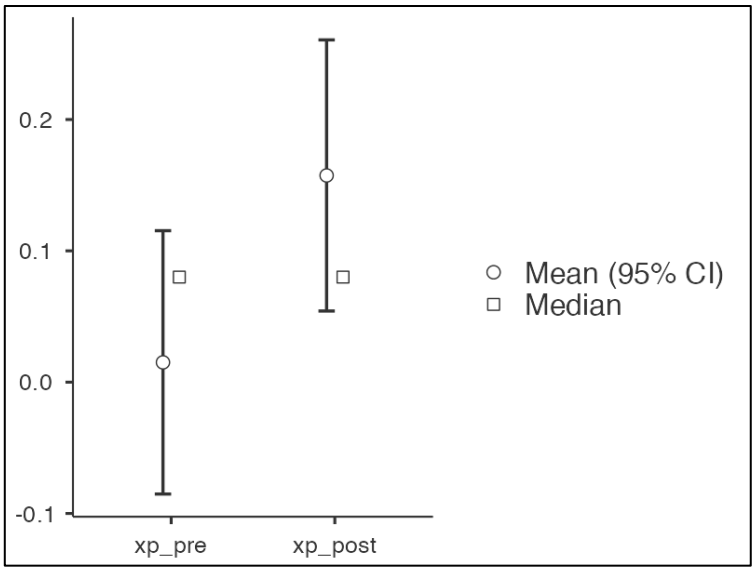
Overall, the results indicate that only the experimental group showed significant progress, supporting the effectiveness of the implemented intervention. The absence of improvement in the control group reinforces the conclusion that the observed gains are due to the intervention and not to learning effects, out-of-school interactions, or the mere passage of time.

The results are also illustrated visually in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

Figure 3 shows the scores obtained by participants in the experimental group at the pre-test and post-test moments, including both means and medians, along with the 95% confidence intervals for the reported means. A clear increase in values from pre-test to post-test can be observed, highlighted by a higher mean and a median maintained at a higher

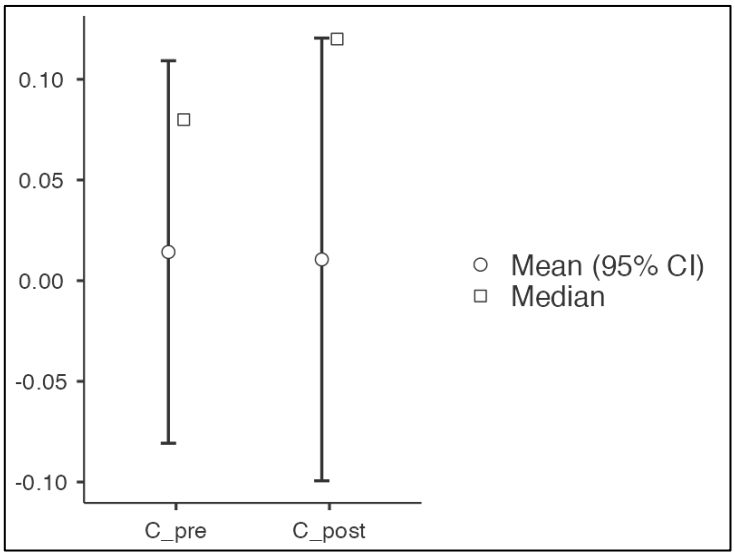
level in the post-test stage. Moreover, the confidence intervals of the means do not substantially overlap, suggesting a consistent difference between the two measurement moments. This visual trend is consistent with the results of the paired-samples t-test, which indicated a significant improvement in performance following the intervention.

Figure 3: Mean and Median Values for the Experimental Group



Similarly, Figure 4 presents the distribution of pre-test and post-test values for participants in the control group, including both means and medians, accompanied by 95% confidence intervals for the estimated means. Unlike the experimental group, the values in the control group remain relatively stable across the two measurement points, with no clear upward or downward trend. The confidence intervals largely overlap, suggesting that there is no systematic variation between the pre-test and post-test.

Figure 4: Mean and Median Values for the Control Group



This visual representation is consistent with the results of the paired-samples t-test, which did not identify significant differences between the two moments ($p = .901$). Therefore, the figure supports the conclusion that, in the absence of the intervention, participants' performance remained unchanged over time.

Comparing pretest and posttest results, the experimental group shows a narrowing of the range—from +0.75 and −1.29 at the pre-experimental stage to +0.58 and −0.79 at the post-experimental stage. This suggests a reduction in discrepancies in pupils' perceptions. In the experimental group, 27 distinct values were recorded at posttest within this range. As children began to develop more balanced listening skills, their classmates' perceptions became more homogeneous.

In the control group, the range expanded from +0.72 and −1.16 at pre-experimental to +0.88 and −2.12 at post-experimental. At posttest, 41 distinct values were recorded within this range.

- A shorter value range indicates greater consistency in pupils' listening behaviors—put differently, pupils behaved more uniformly in group work, helping create a more predictable and comfortable working climate.
- The tendency to cluster around mid-range values suggests a leveling of perceptions and a stabilization of listening behaviors in the group—signs that pupils are converging toward a common standard of listening, which can facilitate interpersonal communication.

Conclusion

Cultivating a positive attitude toward listening improves the capacity for interpersonal communication. The sociometric results reflect a positive shift in children's perceptions of their classmates with respect to listening during group activities. The narrowing of the range and the clustering around mid-range values suggest greater cohesion and uniformity in listening behaviors, indicating that the educational interventions were effective. This contributes to a collaborative, harmonious classroom climate. In the absence of interventions centered on values such as respect, understanding, tolerance, integrity, and openness—and on positive attitudes—processes of marginalization intensify within the group, as observed in the analysis of the control group results. From a practical standpoint, simple interventions based on didactic games, group activities, routines, and rituals can be integrated into the daily schedule without major time costs.

Focusing on positive values and attitudes, such as respect, tolerance, understanding, didactic games, as well as listening routines and rituals, can reconfigure peer perceptions and reduce marginalization in small group activities even at early ages, thus contributing to classroom cohesion. In the absence of educational strategies focused on listening, marginalization can intensify over time.

Limitations and future directions

The data support the view that training listening attitudes and behaviors is an accessible route to reducing marginalization and increasing cohesion in primary classrooms. At the same time, teachers' own listening competencies act as moderating variables in such research; therefore, the values promoted among pupils—respect, understanding, tolerance, integrity, and openness—should be well understood and internalized by teachers. The socio-cultural environment from which pupils come also operates as a moderator, which explains why the results obtained in each experimental class are slightly different.

Because our indicators rely on peer perceptions and the design was quasi-experimental, we recommend periodic monitoring through listening-focused sociometry and, where possible, triangulation with teacher observations.

Despite these limitations, we can state that small, listening-focused routines yield large social effects: they help optimize classroom cohesion and reduce the number of pupils who are excluded based on the attitudes they enact as listeners in group activities

Statement on the Use of AI Tools | *The authors declares that the AI tool ChatGPT 4.1 was used exclusively for translating certain text fragments from Romanian into English during the manuscript writing process. No artificial intelligence tools were used for data analysis or interpretation of research data.*

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