

The Effects of Parental Gender on Book Reading to Preschoolers



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Background:

- ❖ Parents do not take opportunities to point out rhymes when reading to children (Stadler & McEvoy, 2003).
- ❖ Phonological awareness is not an easy early literacy skill for parents to teach (Purcell-Gates, 2000).
- ❖ Phonological awareness is highly related to early reading achievement because of its part in decoding (Speece, Roth, Cooper, & De La Paz, 1999).

Research Questions and Hypotheses:

- 1) What is the effect of written parent training on strategies used to teach and call attention to rhyming?
 - ❖ According to past research, parent training does have the potential to improve child literacy during book reading (Reese, Sparks, & Leyva, 2010). Additionally, research has indicated an increase in the parental use of targeted strategies while reading to their children after receiving training (Sylva, Scott, Totsika, Ereky-Stevens, & Crook, 2008).
- 2) Is there a parental gender difference in preschool reading interactions? If so, what is it?
 - ❖ We believe mothers will be more likely to use any strategy than fathers (Roberts, Jurgen, & Burchinal, 2005) and fathers will use more interactive strategies based on their role as play partners (Grossmann, et al, 2002).

Participants:

- ❖ Six mothers
- ❖ Five fathers
- ❖ Four daughters
- ❖ Two sons
- ❖ Child age range of 3 years, 6 months to 4 years, 4 months

Methods:

- ❖ One page instructional handout
 - Defined phonological awareness
 - Explained phonological awareness link to successful reading
 - Suggested reading interaction strategies included pointing out rhyming words, interactive responses like clapping when hearing rhymes, and thinking of additional rhyming words
 - Explained benefits for children learning rhyming including recognizing patterns in print, sound differentiation, letter representation of sounds, and oral language skill improvement
- ❖ Digital voice recorder

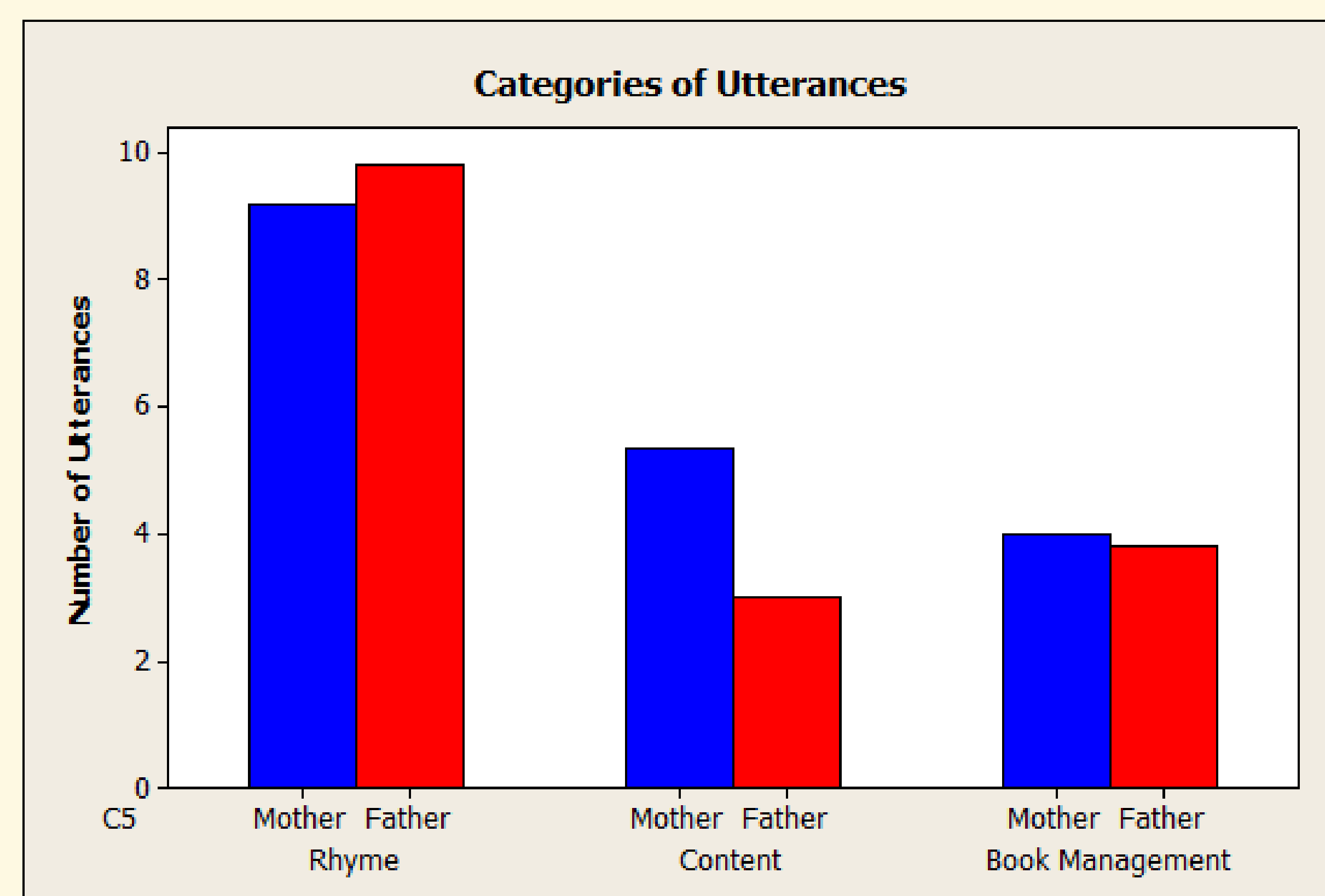
Methods (Continued):

- ❖ Home environment
- ❖ Random book assignment by parental gender

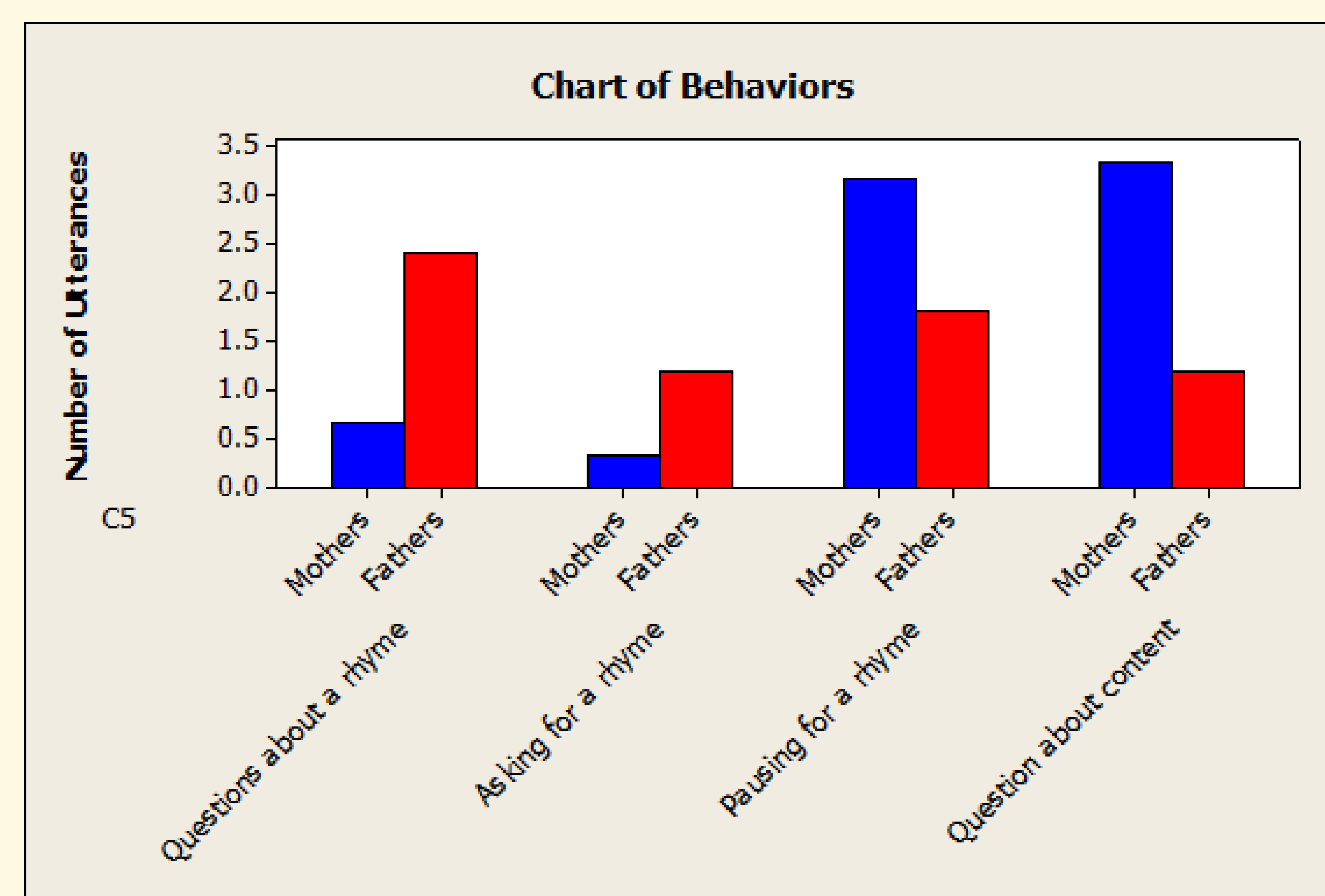
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Results:

- ❖ Transcripts were coded for utterances relating to rhyme, semantic content, and book management.



- 1) Both mothers and fathers talked more about rhyme than semantic content or book management. This leads us to believe that the training did affect parental teaching of phonological awareness.



- 2) Fathers asked if words rhymed and for the child to give a rhyme more often than mothers. Mothers paused for the child to fill in the rhyme and asked more questions about semantic content than fathers. This suggests there are parental gender differences in book reading interactions.

Implications:

- ❖ Written parental guidance about phonological awareness can increase parents' use of teaching strategies.
- ❖ Parents can be a valuable resource for teaching their children phonological awareness through book reading interactions.
- ❖ Speech-language pathologists should understand and utilize the parental gender differences during shared book reading.

Future Directions:

- ❖ Larger sample size
- ❖ Longitudinal study to determine lasting effects
- ❖ Visual recording

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