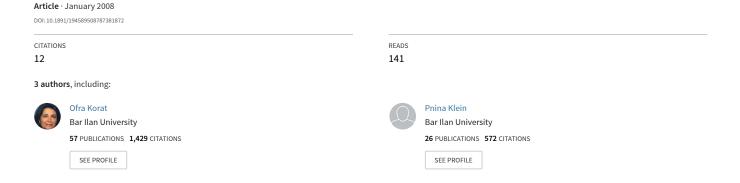# Cognitive Mediation and Emotional Support of Fathers and Mothers to Their Children During Shared Book-Reading in Two Different SES Groups

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Cognitive Mediation and Emotional Support of Fathers and Mothers to Their Children During Shared Book-Reading in Two Different SES Groups

Abstract

This study was designed to investigate the cognitive and emotional nature of the book-reading mediation of fathers and mothers to their preschool children. Thirty-nine families (each including a mother, a father, and their kindergarten child) participated in this study: 19 of low SES (LSES) and 20 of middle SES (MSES). The mothers' and fathers' interactions while reading an unfamiliar book were videotaped and their verbal expressions were coded for extracting the parental mediation level. The results demonstrated that mothers encouraged their children and discussed topics not related to the story more than fathers. Fathers used higher cognitive levels of mediation than mothers mainly by discussing issues that are beyond the text, whereas mothers also used paraphrasing mediation. Similarly, MSES parents presented a higher level of cognitive mediation than LSES parents, mediating issues beyond the text, whereas LSES parents also used paraphrasing. The mothers and fathers presented different emotional support to their children. A significant correlation was found between cognitive and emotional support ($r = .41$) among fathers across SES groups. The results are discussed in terms of the families' SES background and parental gender. Implications for researchers and educational practices are discussed.

Key words: cognitive mediation, emotional support, SES, shared book-reading

The importance of shared book-reading in the family context as a mediation for children's literacy development and its relation to socioeconomic strata (SES) is well documented (e.g., Bus, van IJzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Heath, 1983; Snow & Ninio, 1986). However, there is still much to learn about the nature of this activity in the family context regarding parental gender, parental SES, and broader child development aspects. In the current research we focused on the cognitive and emotional nature of the book-reading mediation of Israeli fathers and mothers to their young children from low- and middle-SES groups. Israel is a society with huge differences in children's literacy levels related to their SES level (Douglas, 2000; PISA, 2002). It seems crucial, therefore, to carry out an in-depth study of the nature of the shared book-reading activity as a source for future family intervention programs, in order to maximize children's literacy growth.

Reading Books to Young Children

Reading books to young children is considered an important activity that is well thought-out with reference to the children's language and literacy development (Birr-Moje et al., 2004). Parents use this event as a context for expanding their young children's cognitive development, focusing on general world knowledge, vocabulary, and awareness of books and print. This mutual activity is used also by many parents to express their affection and warmth towards their children, thus supporting their socio-emotional well-being (Bergin, 2001; Bus, Belsky, IJzendoorn, & Crnic, 1997).

Shared storybook reading is considered an activity that most often takes place between mothers and their young children (Pellegrini, Galda, Shokley, & Stahl, 1994). Consequently, most studies on this event have focused on mothers (Bus et al., 1995; DeTemple & Snow, 1996; Reese, 1995) and only few investigated fathers (Bus et al., 1997; Gallimore, Reese, Balzano, Benson, & Goldenberg, 1991; Korat, Klein & Segal-Drori, 2007). A recent search in the ERIC and PSYINFO sites' research literature supports this notion.

In the last three decades, evidence has accumulated on the growing involvement of fathers in their children's lives and education (Lamb, 1997; Shannon, Tamis Le-Monda, London & Cabrera, 2002). It is claimed that fathers are involved with their children in different activities today; including shared book-reading (Bus et al., 1997; Galimore et al., 1991).

Two important issues have been addressed when investigating parents' behaviors with their children: the quantity and the quality of the interaction time. The amount of time fathers spend with their young children may be on the increase. Nonetheless, mothers still spend more time with their children than fathers (Sayers, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004; Yogman, Kindlon, & Earls, 1995). However, the quality of the parent-child interaction is as important as the quantity (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000; Conner, Knight, & Cross, 1997). Since parents' reports on the frequency of book-reading may be influenced by social desirability (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Sénéchal, LeFevre, Hudson, & Lawson, 1996), and since there exists only limited information on fathers' mediation in book-reading events (Blake, Macdonald, Bayami, Agosta & Milian, 2006; Bus et al., 1997), we aimed to research the quality of the fathers' cognitive and affective mediation in this activity.

Our study was based also on the assumption that the nature of a father's behavior with his child is part of a more complex family context (Parke et al., 2005); similarly to the belief that mothers' behavior is better appreciated within the family system (Cox & Paley, 1977; Parke et al., 2004). For example, mothers may behave in a compensatory protective manner towards their children compared to the harsh disciplinary tactics of the fathers (Parke et al., 2005). For these reasons, we focused in this study on the quality of fathers' and mothers' mediation when reading a storybook to their young children.

This study represents the first attempt to use mediated learning theory (Feuerstein, Rand, & Hoffman, 1979; Feuerstein, Klein, & Tennanbaum, 1991; Tzuriel, 1999; Tzuriel & Klein, 1998) to identify and explain basic characteristics of the adult-child interaction as

expressed during a book-reading activity. We used the Observing Mediational Interaction (OMI) model (Klein, Weider, & Greenspan, 1987*)*. This model employs a coding system that measures the frequencies of adult behaviors that represent basic criteria of adult-child communication and teaching behaviors during caregiver-child or teacher-child interactions. It includes five measures that are based on empirical studies (Klein*,* 1996; Klein & Alony, 1993; Tzuriel, 1999): focusing (intentionality and reciprocity), affecting (exciting), expanding/instructing (transcendence), encouraging (mediated feelings of competence) and regulating (mediated regulation of behavior).

Parental Cognitive Mediation

Previous studies on fathers and mothers that focused on the cognitive mediation they gave to their young children (aged 1 year to 4) in different activities (e.g., storytelling, building blocks, mealtime) generally indicated a similarity in both parents' behavior. Both parents adjusted their mediation to their child, aiming at the child's developmental and cognitive level (Belsky, Gilstrap, & Rovine, 1984; Crawley & Sherrod, 1984; Pratt, Kering, & Cowen, 1988). Some researchers noted that, although fathers and mothers behave in a similar manner with their children, they also use some different patterns. These researchers found that fathers are more cognitively challenging and demanding than mothers. For example, Rondal (1980), who researched children 1:6 to 3:0 years old in storytelling, free play, and mealtime contexts, found that fathers were more demanding and asked for more clarifications than mothers. Similarly, McLaughlin, White, McDevitt and Raskin (1983) found that fathers used more wh- questions (who, where, why) than mothers in free play with children 1:6 to 3:6 years old. Some evidence supporting these results was reported also for school children (aged 8 to 10 years) in a teaching task as well as in an information conveying task. Two explanations were suggested for this phenomenon, which is called the "differential experience hypothesis" (Bernstein-Ratner, 1988; Gleason, 1975). One explanation was attributed to the less extensive paternal contact with the child in the traditional family structure. Another explanation was that fathers tend to behave in this manner in order to expand their children's linguistic and experimental knowledge. More specifically, this style of interaction may "pressure" the child to more mature language expression in order to be understood by a less familiar partner (Mannle & Tomasello, 1987). In the current study, we aimed at identifying paternal and maternal behaviors in the mutual activity of reading a non-familiar book to their 5- to 6-year-old children, including an investigation of whether and the extent to which they challenge their child cognitively.

Parental Emotional Support

Emotional characteristics of parent-child interactions such as warmth and sensitivity to their child during specific engagements are considered vital aspects of parental involvement. Mother-child interaction studies have demonstrated that the children of parents who tended to support their children by verbal encouragement, physical contact, or by being sensitive to their children's needs exhibited better development in oral language skills (Klein & Subleman-Rosenthal, 2002) and inferential thinking (Tzuriel & Weiss, 1998). Other studies emphasized the general good atmosphere in the parent-child activity, including supportive intonation, verbal encouragement, and refraining from negative comments of parents toward their children as being related to the children's

accomplishments in cognitive tasks (e.g., phonological awareness, emergent reading or writing) (Aram, Korat & Levin, 2006; Bergin, 2001).

Parental affective support and its relation to the child's development usually has been researched among mothers and became more recognized in recent decades regarding fathers as well. For example, a recent study on American LSES fathers of 24-month-old children revealed that fathers with high scores of responsive/didactic behavior toward their children (including responsiveness, emotional regulations, and communication) were nearly five times more likely to have children within the normal developmental range including memory, problem solving, early number concepts, language, and social skills than other fathers (Shanon, Tamis-LeMonda, London, & Cabrera, 2002). Parental affective support was reported to be related to their cognitive mediation. For example, mothers who exhibited supportive closeness in reading storybooks to their children were also those who tended to challenge their children with a more distancing talk (Bergin, 2001). We found no studies comparing fathers' and mothers' emotional support to their child during a mutual activity or on the relations between fathers' cognitive and affective mediation.

Parents' Reading to Their Children

Fathers' and mothers' reading behavior to their young children has not received much attention. The few studies that focused on the cognitive mediation that both parents give to their young children (aged 1 to 4 years) in the book-reading activity showed different results. Some reported similar behavior of fathers and mothers who presented cognitive demands such as questioning (Pellegrini, Brody, & Sigel, 1985), labeling, and commenting (Blake et al., 2006), while others reported different behavior. For example, Schwartz (2004) found that mothers of children 1:1 to 3:10 years old used higher cognitive demands that appeared as contexts for deeper child understanding than did fathers. Conner, Knight, & Cross (1997) reported that fathers tended to focus their 2-year-old children on the goal of reading the story and made an effort to keep them on the task more than did mothers.

As for parental emotional support, we found some evidence that fathers and mothers behaved similarly in the book-reading event in terms of the encouragement and praise they gave to their children (Pellegrini et al., 1985; Schwartz, 2004). It should be noted that, in this study as in others, dyads were from middle- and low-SES families. Very little information is available regarding comparison between fathers' and mothers' behavior in book-reading events with reference to their SES level.

Shared Book-Reading in the Low-SES Group

The importance of investigating how LSES parents behave towards their children in the shared reading event stems from the compelling evidence that LSES children are at greater risk for poor development of literacy competencies and for school failure as a function of the literacy practices in their homes than are children from MSES families (Adams, 1990; Philips & Lonigan, 2005).

The relationship between shared book-reading activities and the SES of the child's family has been the subject of many investigations in the last few decades (e.g., Bus, Leseman, & Keultjes, 2000; DeTemple & Snow, 1996) and almost all have focused on the mothers' reading. For example, Ninio (1980) found that Israeli LSES mothers used more labeling and descriptive types of talk and focused mainly on pictures, whereas Israeli MSES mothers used a higher level of talk related to the text in the book and to the children's own experiences, drew inferences from the text's meaning to other issues, and evaluated what was read. Similarly, DeTemple and Snow (1996) found that more than 80% of the talk of less educated mothers with their young children during a book-reading event was related only to "concrete immediately available information" (p. 54). On the other hand, researchers who focused on the book-reading activities of more educated mothers with their young children reported that these mothers included more non-immediate talk (Wheeler, 1983). Furthermore, LSES mothers engaged in more labeling and describing pictures than the MSES mothers, who used a higher level of interaction by relating the text to the children's own experience, making inferences from text meaning to other issues, evaluating what was read, and focusing on the printed text (Korat, Klien & Segal-Drori, 2007).

To the best of our knowledge, there is only one study that focused on LSES mothers' affective behavior during book-reading events (Bus et al., 2000). This study, carried out with Dutch families, found that mothers who were more responsive and emotionally supportive of their children (4-year-olds) accompanied their reading with a high-cognitive demands behavior talk, namely a talk that went beyond the text.

The only known study that resembles our research included mothers and fathers from American LSES and MSES families in a book-reading activity (Bus et al., 1997). The researchers found a positive relationship between the quality of attachment and the quality of the read-aloud mother-child interaction. Interestingly, this pattern appeared, but only for the mothers. The researchers' explanation for this phenomenon is that, although the fathers reported reading to their children to the same extent as the mothers, they may actually have been less experienced in reading to their children and their reading style may have been determined by situational factors more than by a long history of reading to the child.

Focus of This Study

In the present study, fathers' and mothers' behavior while reading to their children was investigated. We focused on fathers' and mothers' reading, since the quality of the father-child reading behavior was rarely investigated by itself or as related to the mothers' behavior, and since the little evidence that existed on the parents' gender behavior in this activity was not consistent. Furthermore, it seemed that analysis of the parents' SES characteristics was crucial, especially with reference to the potential relationships between the parents' mediation and the children's literacy development (Bornstein, Hahn, Suwalsky, & Haynes, 2003). This study was designed, therefore, to elucidate how fathers and mothers from low- and middle-high-SES families mediate cognitively and emotionally to their children in an important literacy activity. This research may serve as a link between research and policy makers by suggesting some general guidelines for family literacy programs, in addition to its theoretical contribution to the understanding

of the nature of fathers' and mothers' behavior in a shared book-reading activity within the family context.

Based on the literature presented above, and taking into consideration the similarities and differences that appeared regarding parental cognitive mediation of their children in a mutual activity, we hypothesized that (a) fathers and mothers will cognitively mediate their children in the shared reading activity by following the "differential experience hypothesis" (i.e., fathers will present some more cognitive challenging behavior); (b) MSES fathers and mothers will afford better cognitive and emotional support for their children than LSES parents; (c) parental cognitive mediation will be correlated with their affective support. Since we had no data on parental gender and their emotional support to their children, we also asked whether fathers and mothers differ in this behavior when reading to their children.

Method

Participants

A total of 39 5- to 6-year-old children, 20 from MSES (boys = 9, girls = 11) and 19 from LSES families (boys = 10, girls = 9), their mothers and their fathers participated in this study. The children's age ranged from 5:3 to 6:4 and their mean age was 5-11. They were recruited from 22 kindergarten classes located in urban neighborhoods in the greater Tel-Aviv area, Israel, which differed in their SES level.   Ten of the 22 kindergarten classes were located in MSES neighborhoods and 12 were located in LSES neighborhoods. Between 1 and 3 children from each of the 22 kindergartens participated in the study. All children came from Jewish Hebrew-speaking homes. They were solicited by letters sent to their parents, and excluded new immigrants and children with language and learning disabilities. This letter from the researchers was distributed via the school and included information on the study's aims (learning about children's academic development) as well as its importance. Families in which both the father and the mother gave their consent participated in the study with their child. A similar response rate was found for the MSES (9%) and LSES (8.7%) families. The families were given a children's book and an educational game as compensation for their participation.

A seven-factor index was used to calculate the families' SES levels. This index took into account the father and mother's education level, profession, and occupation and the family's income level. We added three factors (i.e., fathers' and mothers' profession and the family income level) (see Duncan & Magnuson, 2003) to the well-known Hollingshead (1975) index, which includes four factors (fathers' and mothers' education and occupation level). These measures seemed important to us since many parents in Israel do not work in the profession for which they were trained. Family income appears to be another important measure in the general picture of SES in Israel (Korat, Klien & Segal-Drori, 2007), as was found in other countries.

The data provided by the mothers about education, profession, and occupation were transformed to a 5-point scale (from 1 = low to 5 = high). The parents' education scale ranged from 1 (6 or less years of school) to 5 (20 or more years of school). The professional qualification and current occupation scale ranged from 1 (unskilled workers

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and menial industrial laborers) to 5 (higher executives and major professionals). The family's income level was based on the mother's ranking of the family income compared to the established average in Israel during the research period (this information was given to the mothers). The mothers' rankings ranged from 1 (much below the national average) to 5 (much above the national average).

A z score was used to calculate the mean for the SES variable (range 1-5; $\alpha = .90$). All families with a score above and below the median were categorized as middle- SES (MSES) ($n = 19$) and middle-low SES (LSES) ($n = 21$), respectively. In Israel, a LSES typically characterizes the Jewish population of Middle Eastern and North African origin and a MSES those with European origins (Cohen, 1999; Samooha & Kraus, 1986). This was the case in our study as well. All families in both groups were intact. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the two SES groups.

Table 1. Family Demographic Characteristics in the Low (LSES) and Middle (MSES) SES Groups

	SES Group				
	LSES Families		MSES Families		
	($n = 19$)		($n = 20$)		
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*
Family income[a]	2.70	1.00	3.90	.80	4.05*
School level[a]					
Mothers	2.25	.90	4.50	.80	8.48*
Fathers	1.80	.75	4.00	.95	7.85*
Professional level[a]					
Mothers	3.25	.90	4.90	.30	7.30*
Fathers	3.05	1.00	4.80	.50	6.70*
Occupational level[a]					
Mothers	3.00	1.55	4.75	.90	5.40**
Fathers	2.60	1.05	4.80	.50	8.10*

[a]Range = 1 to 5.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 1 shows that the fathers' and mothers' educational, professional, and occupational levels were significantly higher in the MSES families than in the LSES groups. These

MSES family advantages also apply to family income.

Instruments

Books

A nonfamiliar rather than a familiar book was chosen for two reasons: (a) to avoid the possibility of different levels of previous exposure to the book, and (b) the expectation that a new book might present a greater challenge to the parent to elaborate on the book's content (DeTemple & Snow, 1996; Haden, Reese, & Fivush, 1996; van Kleeck, Gillam, Hamilton, & McGrath, 1997).

The following three books were chosen for reading: *Frog and a Very Special Day*, *Frog is a Frog* and *Frog is a Hero*, by Max Velthuijs (2000a, 2000b, 2000c). The familiarity with these books was examined in order to control the variable of the parents' or the child's prior familiarity with the book, which may affect the quality and nature of the reading. Lack of familiarity was ensured by preliminary questioning of the parents and the kindergarten teachers.

These books each contain about 30 pages and comprise part of a series with common heroes. Each page has a big colorful drawing and text. All books have the structure of a classical story which contains exposition, presentation of figures, and presentation of a problem and its solution. The books present problems that often occupy kindergartners. The book *Frog and a Very Special Day* tells of a frog that is insulted because its friends are avoiding it. When the frog discovers that they disappeared in order to prepare a birthday party for it the frog again feels wanted and loved. The book *Frog is a Frog* tells about a frog that is not satisfied with itself and makes several failed attempts at resembling its friends. These failing attempts on the one hand and its friends' mediation on the other hand, help the frog understand that it will feel better if it accepts itself as it is. The third book, *Frog is a Hero*, tells about a flood that involves the houses of frog, duck, and pig. They find refuge in rabbit's house and live there until they have only one loaf of bread left. With frog's resourcefulness and mouse's loyal friendship, they manage to survive.

All three books were examined by four experts on children's literature, each of whom have master's degrees, and were found to be very good for work with children in the following aspects: content, linguistic complexity, structure, design, and editing. The experts' content evaluation did not find any differences between the books in these aspects.

All the fathers received the book *Frog is a Frog* and all the mothers received the book *Frog and a Very Special Day*. The book *Frog is a Hero* served as a substitute in case one of the other books was familiar to the parent or the child. The parent and the child were asked whether the book they were given was familiar to them before beginning the observation. Use of the alternative book was made in only two cases in which the child said that he/she knew the book. After the father or mother was given the book they were told: "Read this book to your child as you usually do when you read to him/her."

OMI- L Scale

Criteria for parents' mediation talk included focusing (intentionality and reciprocity), affecting (exciting), expanding (transcendence), encouraging (mediated feelings of competence), regulating (mediated regulation of behavior), and out-of-task topics. The observations were analyzed using the Observing Mediational Interaction (OMI) scale (Klein, 1996; Klein & Alony, 1993; Tzuriel, 1999) adapted to the domain of literacy (OMI-L; Korat & Klein, 2004). All inter-rater reliabilities in this study were calculated by two graduate students. They were all trained in the code system by the principal researcher of this study. Inter-rater reliability measured by Cohen's Kappa ranged between $k = .88$ ($p < .001$) and $k = .97$ ($p < .001$) for each of the observation variables.

Cognitive Talk: Expanding

Since the majority of the parents' talk fell in the category of expanding we analyzed all content units relating to this type of talk to several levels. The interaction was segmented into verbal units (see examples in Table 4). A verbal unit constitutes the smallest unit of meaning and is usually comprised of sentences. This method was used previously by Bus et al. (2000). Content was coded only when a new subject was added to the previous discourse. Topic units were classified into eight levels of content categories, from low (1) to high (8), as follows: (1) relating to objects in illustrations, (2) relating text to illustrations, (3) relating to details in illustrations not in text, (4) promoting text comprehension via paraphrasing, (5) word meaning, (6) relating to personal experience, (7) promoting text comprehension via distancing and (8) relating to language or print. The hierarchy of the levels was determined by "moving from concrete immediately available information" (DeTemple & Snow, 1996, p. 54) to higher cognitive or abstraction processes, called "distancing" by Sigel (1982). Examples of each of the eight content categories, as transcribed from the videotaped parent-child reading interactions, are presented in Table 2.

Each unit was coded into only one of the eight categories. In the few cases in which a unit referred to more than one category, a decision was made by the two raters after a discussion on the category to which it seemed to fit better. This coding system was based on work carried out by Bus et al. (2000) and was modified for the purposes of the current study. We added the category "word meaning" and distinguished it from "paraphrasing" in order to differentiate between these two behaviors which seemed to us different. In addition, we placed the category "promoting text comprehension via distancing" as a higher level of cognitive mediation than "promoting text comprehension via paraphrasing."

Each verbal unit that could be classified into the 8 content categories was given a score ranging from 1 = low (naming of characters and objects) to 8 = high (relating to language or the written system in the book). Inter-rater reliability estimates, similarly to all other measures, were obtained using two independent raters. Inter-judge reliabilities for sorting content units were computed based on a random selection of 10% of the dyads. Reliability for the overall scale measured by Cohen's Kappa was $k = .86$, $p < .001$ (range $k = .81$, $p < .001$ to $.90$, $p < .001$).

Table 2. Examples of Parents' Instruction Levels While Book-Reading With Their Children

Mediation Level[a]	Example
1. Relating to objects in illustration	P: (Points to the picture) Look at the frog. C: (The child points to the tree). It is big. P: Yes, it is a big frog.
2. Relating text to illustrations	P: (Reads) The rabbit walked angrily towards the frog to tell him exactly what he thought of him. P: Look he looks very angry (points to the illustration of the rabbit).
3. Relating to details in illustrations not in text	P: And what is this? Do you know? C: This is a jar of milk (not mentioned in the story).
4. Promoting text comprehension via Paraphrasing	P: The frog sat down and was all tears. P: Look, he is crying, he is so sad. P: What kind of friends does he have, that do not him to their party?
5. Word meaning	P: (Reads) And what is it, anyway, a special day pondered the frog. P: Do you know what is "pondered"? C: No. P: Thought … the frog thought.
6. Relating to personal experience	P: (Read) Today is a special day for me. P: What is your special day besides your birthday? C: I don't know. P: Maybe the day when you and daddy went shopping together? Remember? C: Yes, that was fun.
7. Promoting text comprehension via Distancing	P: He is lucky that he fell down on the water (laugh). C: Imagine that he had fallen down on the ground? He could break his bottom.
8. Relating to language or print	P: Yes, the ground is solid, so it is much harder. P: (Reads) A frog has a special day. P: What letters are in the word "frog"? C: Zadik, Phe, Reish, Daled, and Ayin (the Hebrew letters of the word)

[a]From Level 1 = lowest to Level 8 = highest.

Parents' Emotional Support Scale

Three parental mediation parameters were added in order to expand our research perspective on this domain, in addition to the encouragement behavior used in the OMI-L scale: general atmosphere (1 = criticizing tone, 2 = changing tone from criticizing to neutral and vice versa, 3 = neutral tone, 4 = mediational tone), physical mediation (from 1 = no physical mediation at all to 4 = full physical mediation), and refraining from negative comments. Refraining from negative comments relates to the frequency of the parent's negative remarks on the child and her/his behavior. The following scoring system was applied: 1 for 13 or more negative comments, 2 for between 6 and 13 negative comments, 3 for 3 to 5 negative comments, 4 for 1 to 2 negative comments, and 5 for no negative comments throughout the interaction (see similar criteria in Bergin, 2001). In

contradistinction to the cognitive talk, in this analysis there was no division into sub-units of the interaction. Reliability for each measure using 25% of the children who participated in the study yielded a reliability of Cohen's Kappa .89 ($p < .001$) for general atmosphere, 92 ($p < .001$) for physical mediation, and .78 ($p < .001$) for refraining from negative comments.

Procedure

Data were collected in two sessions. In the first session, mother-child and father-child dyads were involved in a joint storybook-reading activity in their homes. In the second session, demographic information was gathered from the mothers. Each SES group was divided into sub-groups (fathers and mothers). In the first session, the researcher met the father and the child and the mother and the child. In half of the cases the mothers read a book to the child first and then the fathers. In the other half the fathers read to the child first and then the mothers. Only the parent who read the book to the child was present in the room. The researcher gave the parent a book that was not familiar to the parent or the child and asked the parent to read it to the child as they would read any other book. A VHS camcorder placed at the far end of the room videotaped the session. The researcher left the room before the parent and the child began their task.

The parent-child book-reading interaction took place in the participants' chosen place at home (the living room, the child's room, or the kitchen). Each interaction lasted, on average, about 15 minutes ($M = 15$ minutes; range = 10-25 minutes). Videotapes of the dyadic interactions were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were used to code the interactions. The second session was two to four days after the videotaping session. A self-report questionnaire on demographic data was administered to the mother in a personal interview format.

Results

Parents' Mediation Behavior Measured by the OMI-L

The frequencies of the mothers' and fathers' mediation behavior measured by the OMI-L while book-reading to their children in each SES group are presented in Table 3.

A MANOVA of the type of behavior according SES (between variables) and parental gender (within variable) with repeated measures for parental gender was performed for analyzing the differences between the frequencies of the mothers' and fathers' mediation behavior. A 2-way ANOVA analysis for each parental behavior for SES x Gender (2 x 2) with repeated measures for parental gender was carried out in order to examine univariate effects.

A MANOVA analysis of the OMI-L categories reveled significant differences for gender, $F(6, 33) = 5.53$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .50$; no significant main effect for SES, $F(6, 33) = .61$, $p > .05$; and no interaction $F(6, 33) = 1.30$, $p > .05$. Table 4 presents the results of the one-way analysis of each meditational behavior according to SES and parental gender.

Table 3. Frequencies of Mothers' and Fathers' Mediation Behavior While Book-Reading to Their Children: Low (LSES) Versus Middle (MSES) SES Groups

| Mediation Criteria | Mothers ($n = 39$) | | | | Fathers ($n = 39$) | | | |
| | LSES | | MSES | | LSES | | MSES | |
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1. Focusing	2.20	3.58	2.60	2.76	4.42	7.41	3.47	4.58
2. Affecting	.80	1.50	2.04	2.39	2.21	4.70	2.57	4.06
3. Expanding	13.36	14.94	14.47	8.50	12.78	10.19	11.61	8.27
4. Encouraging	4.68	6.32	3.33	2.76	2.57	4.35	2.47	2.52
5. Regulating	4.52	5.63	8.71	11.30	7.20	8.09	5.71	7.64
6. Out of task	5.63	5.97	9.07	10.70	2.17	4.60	2.29	3.90

Table 4. Results of Parental Meditational Behavior According to SES and Parental Gender

	SES *F*(1, 38)	Gender *F*(1, 38)	SES x Gender *F*(1, 38)
1. Focusing	.05	3.06	.60
2. Affecting	.97	1.68	.34
3. Expanding	.00	.97	.43
4. Encouraging	.42	4.30 *	.77
5. Regulating	.54	.01	.09
6. Out of task	1.28	10.36 **	1.22

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Tests of within-subjects contrasts revealed significant differences between mothers and fathers in two categories: encouragement, $F(1, 38) = 4.30$, $p < .04$, $\eta^2 = .10$ and discussing issues out of task, $F(1, 38) = 10.36$, $p < .003$, $\eta^2 = .21$. As shown in Table 4, the mothers expressed more encouragement to their children ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 4.47$) than the fathers ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 4.45$). Similarly, the mothers led out-of-task discussions ($M = 7.44$, $SD = 8.85$) more than the fathers ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 4.18$) .

Cognitive Talk: Expanding

The frequencies of the mothers' and fathers' mediation by expanding talk behavior while book-reading to their children in each SES group are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Mothers' and Fathers' Cognitive Talk While Book-Reading to Their Children in Low- Versus Middle-SES Groups

	Mothers (*n* = 39)				Fathers (*n* = 39)			
	LSES		MSES		LSES		MSES	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1. Relating to objects in illustration	.47	1.12	.38	.66	1.26	2.18	.23	.62
2. Relating text to illustrations	.68	.88	.33	.73	1.68	1.52	.42	.67
3. Relating to details in illustrations not in text	1.15	1.21	2.57	2.87	.73	1.19	.90	.99
4. Paraphrasing	3.78	5.13	2.90	3.30	2.42	2.45	0.95	1.90
5. Word meaning	.78	1.22	.38	.74	1.00	1.52	0.76	1.13
6. Relating to personal experience	.63	1.60	.57	1.43	.36	.68	.33	.65
7. Distancing	5.00	5.85	6.52	3.72	4.05	3.77	5.38	4.35
8. Relating to language or print	.84	1.60	.80	1.32	1.26	1.29	2.60	2.49

A three-way repeated measures ANOVA of Parent Gender x SES group (LSES vs. MSES) x Parental Cognitive Talk Levels (2 x 2 x 8) revealed a significant main effect for cognitive talk level, $F(1, 7) = 44.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .53$. The main effect was modified by two significant interactions of Cognitive Talk Level x SES, $F(1, 7) = 3.40$, $p < .002$ $\eta^2 = .08$ and Cognitive Talk Level x Gender, $F(1, 7) = 4.85.04$, $p < .001$ $\eta^2 = .11$.

Regarding differences between the cognitive talk levels, multivariate tests showed that the paraphrasing level ($M = 2.51$, $SD = .22$) appeared more frequently than relating to objects in illustrations ($M = .58$, $SD = .14$) and relating text to illustrations ($M = .78$, $SD = .12$). Relating to details in illustrations not in the text appeared more frequently ($M = 1.34$, $SD = .22$) than relating to objects in illustrations ($M = .60$, $SD = .14$). Promoting text comprehension via distancing ($M = 5.23$, $SD = .54$) appeared more frequently than relating to objects in illustrations ($M = .60$, $SD = .14$) and relating text to illustrations ($M = .78$ $SD = .12$).

As for the interaction between cognitive talk level and SES, multivariate tests showed that LSES parents used promoting text comprehension via distancing ($M = 4.52$, $SD = .79$) more frequently than all other levels--i.e., relating to objects in illustrations ($M = .86$, $SD = .21$), relating text to illustrations ($M = 1.18$, $SD = .18$), relating to details in illustrations not in the text ($M = .94$, $SD = .32$), word meaning ($M = .90$, $SD = .21$), relating to personal experience ($M = .50$, $SD = .19$), and relating to language or print ($M =$

1.05, $SD = .31$). Only paraphrasing ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .63$) did not differ in frequencies than promoting text comprehension via distancing in the LSES group. MSES parents used promoting text comprehension via distancing talk ($M = 5.95$, $SD = .75$) more frequently than all other levels.

The analysis of the interaction between the cognitive talk level and parental gender showed that the mothers used paraphrasing talk more frequently ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .67$) than the fathers ($M = 1.68$, $SD = .34$). The mothers ($M = 5.76$, $SD = .76$) and the fathers ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .68$) exhibited the behavior of promoting text comprehension via distancing more than all other levels. However, the mothers also used paraphrasing behavior ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .68$) more frequently than almost all other behavior--i.e., relating to objects in illustrations ($M = .42$, $SD = .14$), relating the text to illustrations ($M = .50$, $SD = .12$), relating to details in illustrations not in the text ($M = 1.86$, $SD = .35$), word meaning ($M = .60$, $SD = .24$), relating to personal experience ($M = .50$, $SD = .19$), and relating to language or print ($M = .82$, $SD = .23$), except for promoting text comprehension via distancing. For mothers only, promoting text comprehension via distancing ($M = 5.76$, $SD = .76$) was a more frequent behavior than paraphrasing ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .68$).

Parents' Emotional Support

The frequencies of the mothers' and fathers' emotional support while book-reading to their children in each SES group are presented in Table 6.

As in the case of the OMI-L, we first executed a MANOVA of type of emotional support according to SES (between variables) and parental gender (within variable) with repeated measures for parental gender. A 2-way ANOVA for each parental support for SES x Gender (2 x 2) with repeated measures for parental gender was carried out in order to examine the univariate effects.

Table 6. Fathers' and Mothers' Emotional Support While Book-Reading to Their Children in Low (LSES) Versus Middle (MSES) SES Groups[a]

	Mothers ($n = 39$)				Fathers ($n = 39$)			
	LSES		MSES		LSES		MSES	
Mediation level	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Closeness	3.32	.19	3.62	.18	4.30	.21	4.66	.20
Intonation	3.10	.28	4.30	.26	3.20	.24	3.72	.30
No negative comments	4.80	.16	4.60	.15	3.55	.21	3.70	.20

[a]Scores' range 1-5.

Differences were found for parental gender, $F(3,36) = 24.80$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .67$, but not for SES, $F(3, 36) = 2.45$, $p > .05$, with no significant interaction between variables, $F(3,36) = 2.48$, $p > .05$. Table 7 presents the results of the one-way analysis of each meditational behavior according to SES and parental gender.

Table 7. Results of Parental Emotional Support According to SES and Parental Gender

	SES $F(1, 38)$	Gender $F(1, 38)$	SES x Gender $F(1, 38)$
Closeness	2.76	26.14 ***	.02
Intonation	6.75 *	2.34	5.42 *
Refraining from negative comments	. 05	41.75 ***	1.27

*$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$.

A 2-way ANOVA of Parent's Gender (mothers vs. fathers) x SES groups (LSES vs. MSES) was conducted for each criterion separately. Significant differences in the parents' intonation were found between the SES groups, $F(1, 38) = 6.75$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .15$. In addition, interaction between SES and gender results showed that maternal intonation in the MSES ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .26$) was higher than in the LSES ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .27$) and higher than the intonation of fathers from LSES ($M = 3.20$, $SD = .24$).

Parents from the MSES group exhibited a higher level of supportive intonation ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .22$) than LSES parents ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .23$). In addition, differences appeared between parental gender for mediation closeness, $F(1, 38) = 26.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .40$) and for refraining from negative comments, $F(1, 38) = 41.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .52$). Fathers showed greater closeness ($M = 4.48$, $SD = .14$) than mothers ($M = 3.46$, $SD=.13$), whereas mothers showed more refraining from negative comments ($M = 4.67$, $SD = .11$) than fathers ($M = 3.62$, $SD = .15$).

Correlations Between Cognitive and Emotional Support

The correlations between these variables across SES and in each SES separately were examined in order to elucidate the relations between the cognitive and the emotional support of mothers and fathers while reading to their children. One general score for the three variables of emotional support was computed. The alpha Cronbach of this new measure was .83, thus supporting the one combined measure.

Significant correlations were found between the fathers' cognitive and emotional support ($r = .41$, $p < .01$). No other correlations were found across and within each SES group, indicating that fathers who tend to afford high cognitive mediation to their children while reading usually tend to give them emotional support, and vice versa. This tendency was not found for mothers.

Discussion

The present research focused on two components of the book-reading event, the parents' gender and their SES level, and analyzed their cognitive mediation and emotional support. These variables had not been examined simultaneously in the same study to date. Analysis of the cognitive talk level showed that, in general, parents of kindergarten

children tended to use the higher levels of the scale more than the low levels. This is clearly apparent by their use of the paraphrasing level (level 4) more frequently than relating to objects in illustrations (level 1) and relating the text to illustrations (level 2). The data also showed that relating to details in illustrations that do not appear in the text (level 3) appeared more frequently than relating to objects in illustrations (level 1). Furthermore, promoting text comprehension via distancing (level 7) appeared more frequently than relating to objects in illustrations (level 1) and more than relating the text to illustrations (level 2). These results might imply that, in general, Israeli parents of children aged 5 to 6 are sensitive to their children's level across gender and SES level and that they tend to use sophisticated levels of mediation.

Our findings show that the fathers used a higher cognitive level of expanding than the mothers mainly by discussing issues that are beyond the text, whereas the mothers used paraphrasing, which is considered a lower level of expanding, to a similar extent. These results confirmed our hypothesis that fathers and mothers will cognitively support their children, although fathers will present a more cognitive challenging behavior. Our findings support the general notion presented in previous studies that fathers and mothers tend to afford similar cognitive support to their children; for example in play activities (Belsky, Gilstrap, & Rovine, 1984, Crawley & Sherrod, 1984; Power, 1985) or in a reading event (Pellegrini, Broady, & Sigel, 1985). However, some differences between mothers and fathers were observed. The fathers (across SES groups) tended to use mainly the high level of expanding talk, promoting text comprehension via distancing (for example, "What will happen next?" or "What is the difference between falling on water and falling on the ground?"), whereas the mothers tended to use paraphrasing talk, which is considered a lower level than distancing, to a similar extent.

These results are compatible with the findings of Gleason (1975) and others (McLaughlin et al., 1983; Rondal, 1980) that indicate that fathers use more challenging talk than mothers when playing with their young children, and that their talk to their children is more demanding. Two possible explanations were raised in previous studies regarding fathers' challenging behavior (Bernstein-Ratner, 1988; Gleason, 1975). One explanation relates to the fathers' less extensive experience with their young children's activities, including book-reading, which leads fathers to relate to the book more as a teaching event and less as a source for experience and pleasure. Another explanation is that fathers aim to expand the children's knowledge, by "pressuring" the children toward the next step in their entrance to school. The fact that the children in our study were about 3 months before entering school might support this explanation. A similar explanation for the parents' talk was presented by Mannle and Tomasello (1987). Our results add to the exciting literature in that the fathers' challenging behavior appeared not only in the middle SES group, as reported in previous studies, but also in the LSES group.

Analysis of the OMI-L scale demonstrated that mothers discussed issues not part of the story reading and more of daily life more than the fathers (e.g., "What did you do in kindergarten today?", or "When are you going to visit your friend Sara"?). These findings clearly support evidence by Conner et al. (1997) suggesting that fathers behave differently than mothers in the reading event by focusing their children on the goal of reading the story and making more attempts to keep them on the task. Conner et al.'s explanation for their findings are similar to the explanation for our results (i.e., that

mothers are more comfortable in the reading event since they are usually the main person to read stories to the young child at home). Thus, they can afford greater balance to the child's literacy behavior by relating to other topics in their children's everyday life. Another option is that fathers might reveal more "task-oriented" behavior and try to focus on the book content, whereas mothers present more "child-oriented" behavior focusing not only on the story but also on other parts of the child's life in the context of book-reading. The fathers' and mothers' behavior while reading to the child may indicate that both parents behave in a compensatory manner regarding the children (see, e.g., Parke et al., 2005). The mother protects the child from focusing only on the book content by dealing with her/his activities and concern, and the father protects the child from losing his/her interest in the book.

LSES parents used promoting text comprehension via distancing about four times more frequently in a story-reading event than all other levels. However, they used paraphrasing mediation, which is a lower level of mediation, to an extent similar to distancing. MSES parents used mainly the promoting text comprehension via distancing. This well-known result replicates several previous studies (e.g., Bus et al., 2000; DeTemple & Snow, 1996; Ninio, 1980; Korat, Klein & Segal-Drori 2007). It is important to note that the LSES parents used mainly these two levels of cognitive talk and used the lower levels, such as relating to objects in illustrations, relating text to illustrations, and relating to details in illustrations or word meaning, to a lesser extent. These results might be related to the children's age, which was only a few months before first grade, and to the general awareness that LSES parents have regarding what they are expected to do when reading to their children. Still, the gap in mediation level exists: MSES parents use a higher level of extending than do LSES parents.

Our study shows that mothers encouraged their children more than fathers during the story reading. We found also that mothers refrained from expressing negative comments to their children in the reading event more than fathers.

Furthermore, MSES mothers used a more supportive intonation while reading to their children than both LSES parents, mothers and fathers. Still, fathers across SES groups were found with a better supportive closeness to their children than the mothers, (i.e., they were more physically supportive to the children by sitting closer to them and touching and hugging them).

These findings show that mothers have some advantages over fathers in terms of verbal emotional support, including encouragements and refraining from negative comments, while fathers have their own way of showing affect to their children by being close to them. It is also possible that mothers tend to be more child-orientated and to support their children's wellbeing in the reading event than fathers who are more task-oriented. Since we have almost no data on these behaviors comparing fathers and mothers, more research is needed in order to learn the extent to which this phenomenon is specific to this research or whether it is more general.

MSES mothers' more supportive intonation than LSES fathers and mothers is a new finding, which deserves an explanation. The ability to lead a positive and supporting atmosphere while reading to the young child might demand former positive experience,

which MSES mothers have, according to the literature, and their beliefs on the importance of book-reading. In addition, the MSES mothers' professional background, as it appeared in our study (i.e., teachers, psychologists, social workers, and art therapists), might also contribute to a more supportive and relaxed intonation while reading to the child.

More in-depth research is necessary, which will focus not only on parents' behavior but also on their occupations and their perception of their role as educators for their young children, especially on matters of literacy. Previous studies that did not focus on literacy activities indicated that fathers' emotional support has a very positive effect on the child's behavior and development (Amato & Rejac, 1994) including in LSES group (Shannon et al., 2002). Future studies focusing on literacy activities should be carried out in order to elucidate the relations between mothers' and fathers' emotional support and children's literacy development in the early years.

The only significant correlations that emerged between the instructive and the emotional support that parents gave their children in the reading event were among fathers. This means that fathers who supported their children by being physically close to them, and who used supportive intonation and refrained from negative comments toward their children, were also the fathers who afforded more cognitive mediation. It should be noted that this was true for fathers from both SES groups. Mothers, on the other hand, who gave their children cognitive support tended to offer less emotional support and vice versa. These results may point to the possibility that mothers tend to use their mediation talk (cognitive and emotional) as two different systems, whereas fathers do not differentiate between them and are either high or low in these two aspects. This implies that sensitive fathers present cognitive as well as emotional support. It should be noted that the only study that compared fathers' and mothers' reading activity with their young children was carried out on American families and found consistency in cognitive and emotional support only among the mothers and not among the fathers (Bus et al.,1997). These results support a previous study with Dutch families (Bus et al., 2000), in which the researchers found a positive relationship between the quality of attachment and the quality of read-aloud mother-child interactions. Mothers who were identified as an insecure-avoidant type tended to initiate less discourse with their children and were more inclined to read the text and not discuss the pictures or the text with them. However, this research did not supply any information on the parents' SES or their behavior (although the parents were from different SES groups). Furthermore, only boys participated in this study. Given the complex results reported above, it seems that these findings deserve additional research to examine the relationship between parents' cognitive and emotional support while interacting with their young children in different activities, including book-reading.

Some limitations of this study, briefly noted below, should be taken into consideration in future studies. The parents' mediation levels were based on one observation of the fathers and one of the mothers reading a storybook to their child. Data based on multiple observations could provide stronger evidence of typical parent behavior. The possible option of confounding between parental gender and book-reading to the child could be resolved in future studies by using a counter-balancing design of books for mothers and fathers. We are also aware that SES variations in Israel (as might be the case in other

countries as well), are confounded with culture and ethnicity (Cohen, 1999; Samooha & Kraus, 1986). A more careful investigation should be carried out taking all these variables into account. Furthermore, a more complete picture of the relationships between children's family literacy environment, parental beliefs on early literacy mediation, joint parent-child book-reading activities and children's literacy achievements is necessary. A bigger sample size, including ethnic comparisons and adding the above-mentioned variables should be carried out, in order to achieve broader generalization of the findings.

In conclusion, our study supports the general notion that fathers know how to support their children when interacting with them and use cognitive and emotional support. Our results also present some supportive evidence for the notion that fathers' and mothers' behavior with their children is part of a more complex family context (Cox & Paley, 1977; Parke et al., 2004). Mothers and fathers presented several behaviors towards their children that can be regarded as compensatory: mothers as protective and fathers as challenging (Parke et al., 2005). We should also look at fathers and mothers as members of a family system that is itself embedded in a wider socio-cultural system or as a community of a specific SES group. LSES fathers and mothers used a lower level of cognitive mediation to their children than did fathers and mothers from MSES families.

Our study focused on book-reading activity of Israeli fathers compare to mothers a topic that was inadequately investigated. The results seem generally to support previous evidence on the similarities between fathers' and mothers' behaviors, as was found for American and European parents. Finally, this research might have a theoretical contribution to the understanding of the nature of fathers' and mothers' behavior in a shared book-reading activity within the family context, and may also serve as a link between research and policy makers. Our findings can serve as general guidelines for family literacy programs, taking fathers' and mothers' similar and different behavior while interacting with their young children into consideration.

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Reśumé

Médiation cognitive et support émotionnel apportés par des pères et des mères à leur enfant au cours d'une « lecture de livre partagée » dans deux groupes de milieux sociaux différents

Cette étude a été conçue pour examiner la nature cognitive et émotionnelle de la médiation mise en œuvre autour d'un livre utilisée par des pères et des mères pour leurs enfants d'âge préscolaire. Trente-neuf familles (chacune incluant une mère, un père et leur jeune enfant) ont participé à cette étude : 19 de milieux économiques et sociaux faibles (LSES) et 20 de milieux économiques et sociaux moyens (MMES). Les interactions des mères et des pères lisant un nouveau livre à leur enfant ont été filmées ; leurs énoncés verbaux ont été codés pour extraire le niveau de médiation parental. Les résultats démontrent que les mères ont plus encouragé leurs enfants et ont plus discuté de sujets qui ne sont pas directement en lien avec l'histoire que les pères. Ces derniers ont utilisé des niveaux cognitifs de médiation plus élevés que ceux utilisés par les mères

essentiellement en discutant de questions qui allaient au-delà du texte, là où les mères ont plutôt utilisé la paraphrase. De même, les parents de milieux économiques et sociaux moyens ont présenté un plus haut niveau de médiation cognitive que des parents de milieux économiques et sociaux faibles, en traitant de questions qui dépassent le texte. Les parents de milieux économiques et sociaux faibles ont plutôt utilisé la paraphrase. Les mères et les pères ont aussi présenté un appui émotionnel différent à leur enfant. Une corrélation significative a été trouvée entre l'appui cognitif et émotionnel (r = .41) parmi des pères selon les milieux économiques et sociaux. Les résultats sont discutés selon l'origine économique et sociale des familles et le genre des parents. Les implications pour les chercheurs et les pratiques éducatives sont discutées.

Resumen

La mediación cognitiva y el soporte emocional aportados por los padres y las madres a sus hijos en el transcurso de una lectura compartida de libros en dos grupos pertenecientes a medios sociales diferentes

Este estudio pretendía indagar la naturaleza cognitiva y emocional de la mediación, puesta en práctica por padres y madres con respecto a sus hijos de edad preescolar. Participaron 39 familias (cada una estaba integrada por el padre, la madre y su hijo), de las que 19 pertenecían a medios sociales bajos (LSES) y las otras 20 a medios de tipo medio (MMES). Las interacciones que se producían entre los padres cuando estaban leyendo un libro a su hijo fueron filmadas y sus enunciados verbales fueron codificados para poder extraer el nivel de mediación parental. Los resultados mostraron que las madres interaccionan más que los padres y debaten temas que no están directamente ligados con la historia del libro leído. En cambio, los padres utilizan un nivel de mediación cognitiva más elevado que el de las madres, esencialmente cuando discuten temas que van más allá del texto; en este ámbito las madres utilizan prioritariamente parafrases. Asimismo, los padres procedentes de medios económicos y sociales de tipo medio presentan un más alto nivel de mediación cognitiva que el de los padres procedentes del medio social bajo, cuando tratan cuestiones que sobrepasan al texto. Los padres de medios sociales bajos utilizan prioritariamente parafrases. Las madres y los padres han presentado un apoyo emocional diferente a sus hijos. Los resultados muestran una correlación significativa entre el apoyo cognitivo y el emocional (*r* = .41), pero diferente según el medio económico y social de procedencia. Los resultados son discutidos según el origen social y económico de las familias y el género de los progenitores. Igualmente, se discuten las implicaciones del estudio para los investigadores y para las prácticas educativas.

Zusammenfassung

Kongitive Mediation und emotionale Unterstützung von Vätern und Müttern für ihre Kinder beim gemeinsamen Bücherlesen in zwei Gruppen mit unterschiedlichem sozio-ökonomischen Niveau

Diese Studie zielte auf die Untersuchung der kognitiven und emotionalen Natur der Mediation beim Lesen eines Buches, die Väter und Mütter ihren Vorschulkindern vermitteln. 39 Familien (jede bestehend aus Mutter, Vater und ihrem Kindergartenkind)

nahmen an der Studie teil: 19 mit niedrigem sozioökonomischem Status (LSES) und 20 mit mittlerem Status (MSES). Die interaktiven Verhaltensweisen der Mütter und Väter während des Lesens eines unbekannten Buches wurden per Video aufgenommen und ihre verbalen Ausdrücke wurden für die Herausarbeitung des elterlichen Mediationsniveaus kodiert. Die Ergebnisse zeigten, dass Mütter ihre Kinder stärker als die Väter unterstützten und mehr Themen, die nicht auf die Geschichte bezogen waren, mit ihnen besprachen. Die Väter verwendeten höhere kognitive Mediationsniveaus als die Mütter vor allem bei Themen außerhalb des Textes, während Mütter auch paraphrasierende Mediation nutzten. Ebenfalls zeigten MSES-Eltern eine höhere kognitive Mediation als LSES-Eltern und mediierten Themen außerhalb des Textes, während LSES-Eltern ebenfalls Paraphrasieren verwendete. Väter und Mütter zeigten unterschiedliche emotionale Unterstützung für die Kinder. Eine signifikante Korrelation zeigte sich zwischen kognitiver und emotionaler Unterstützung bei Vätern über die SES-Gruppen hinweg ($r = .41$). Die Ergebnisse werden im Hinblick auf den sozioökonomischen Hintergrund der Familien und das Geschlecht der Eltern sowie auf Implikationen für Forschung und Erziehungspraxis diskutiert.

Abstract Italiano

La mediazione cognitiva ed il supporto emotivo di padri e madri verso i propri figli durante la lettura condivisa dei libri, in due gruppi con situazioni socio economiche differenti

Lo studio voleva indagare la natura cognitiva ed emotiva della mediazione attraverso la lettura del libro da parte di padri e madri di bambini in età prescolare. Hanno partecipato allo studio 39 famiglie (ciascuna composta da madre, padre ed il figlio in età di scuola d'infanzia): 19 famiglie con una situazione socio-economica bassa (LSES) e 20 con una situazione socio-economica media (MSES). Le interazioni delle madri e dei padri durante la lettura di un libro non conosciuto sono state video-registrate e le loro espressioni verbali sono state codificate per ricavare il livello di mediazione genitoriale. I risultati hanno dimostrato che le madri incoraggiavano i propri figli e discutevano di argomenti non legati alla storia più dei padri. I padri usavano livelli cognitivi di mediazione più elevati rispetto alle madri, per lo più discutendo di problematiche che vanno oltre al testo, mentre le madri usavano la parafrasi come mediazione. Allo stesso modo i genitori del gruppo MSES presentavano un livello di mediazione cognitiva più alta rispetto a quelli del gruppo LSES, mediando le problematiche al di là del testo, mentre anche i genitori LSES usavano la mediazione della parafrasi. Le madri e i padri presentavano un sostegno emotivo differente per i loro figli. È stata trovata una correlazione significativa tra sostegno emotivo e cognitivo ($r=.41$) tra i padri dei gruppi SES. I risultati vengono discussi in termini di background socio-economico delle famiglie e di genere dei genitori. Vengono discusse le implicazioni per i ricercatori e le pratiche educative.