

Effects of labelling and sustained attention on novel-word learning during parent-child interaction

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Background

- Object novelty impacts how parents interact with and talk about the object (Chen et al., 2021), and how children handle objects (Schatz et al., 2022).

Research gap

- Previous studies have examined interactions involving either all novel or all familiar objects.
- Naturalistic environments present a range of objects children are more or less familiar with.
- How do children interact with objects in the presence of both novel and familiar objects?
- Furthermore, most studies used made-up objects as their novel stimuli, hence, parents have little knowledge about these objects.
- However, in real life, objects novel to children are often familiar to adults.

Current study

- We examine features of parent-child interaction when they were playing with both novel and familiar toys.
- Parents were free to interact with and label the objects in any way they wanted.

Hypotheses

- H1:** We predict more instances of parent-led joint attention when the object was novel to the child
- H2:** We predict a higher frequency of object labelling behaviour during novel object play compared to familiar object play.
- H3:** We predict that children will show improved recognition of novel toys if these toys were frequently labelled when they were attending to the toys.

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References

- Chen, C. H., Houston, D. M., & Yu, C. (2021). Parent-child joint behaviours in novel object play create high-quality data for word learning. *Child Development, 92*(5), 1889-1905. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13620>
- Schatz, J. L., Suarez-Rivera, C., Kaplan, B. E., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. S. (2022). Infants' object interactions are long and complex during everyday joint engagement. *Developmental Science, 25*(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.13239>

Methods

Participants

- 31 parent-child dyads (German monolinguals)
- 14-23 months old

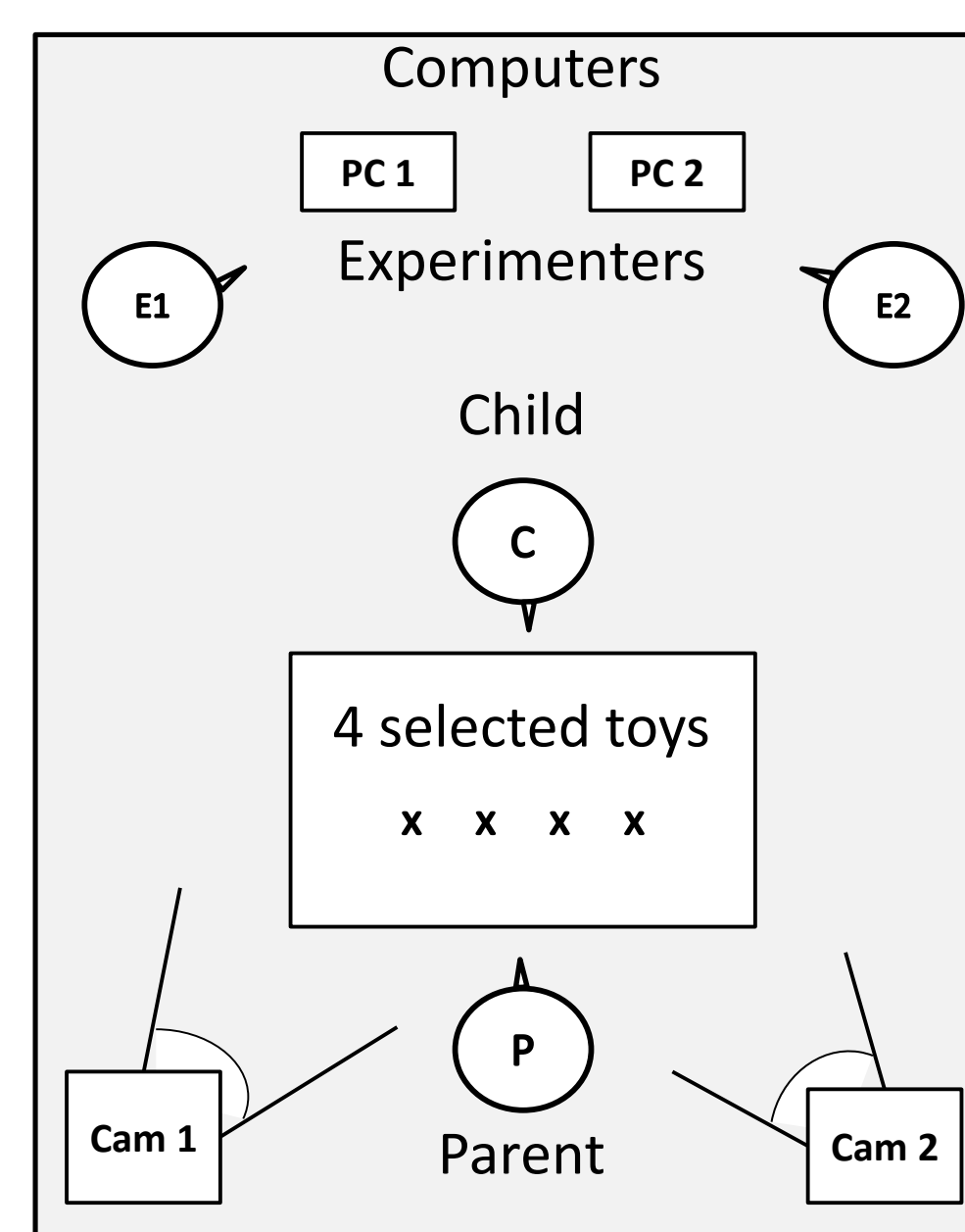
Procedure

- Play task
 - Parent-child dyads were allowed to play naturally with 4 toys for 6 minutes.
 - Gaze and hand manipulation were recorded.
- Word recognition task
 - 6 trials (2 familiar trials and 4 novel trials)
 - Two objects were presented and children were asked to choose the referent of a presented label

Materials

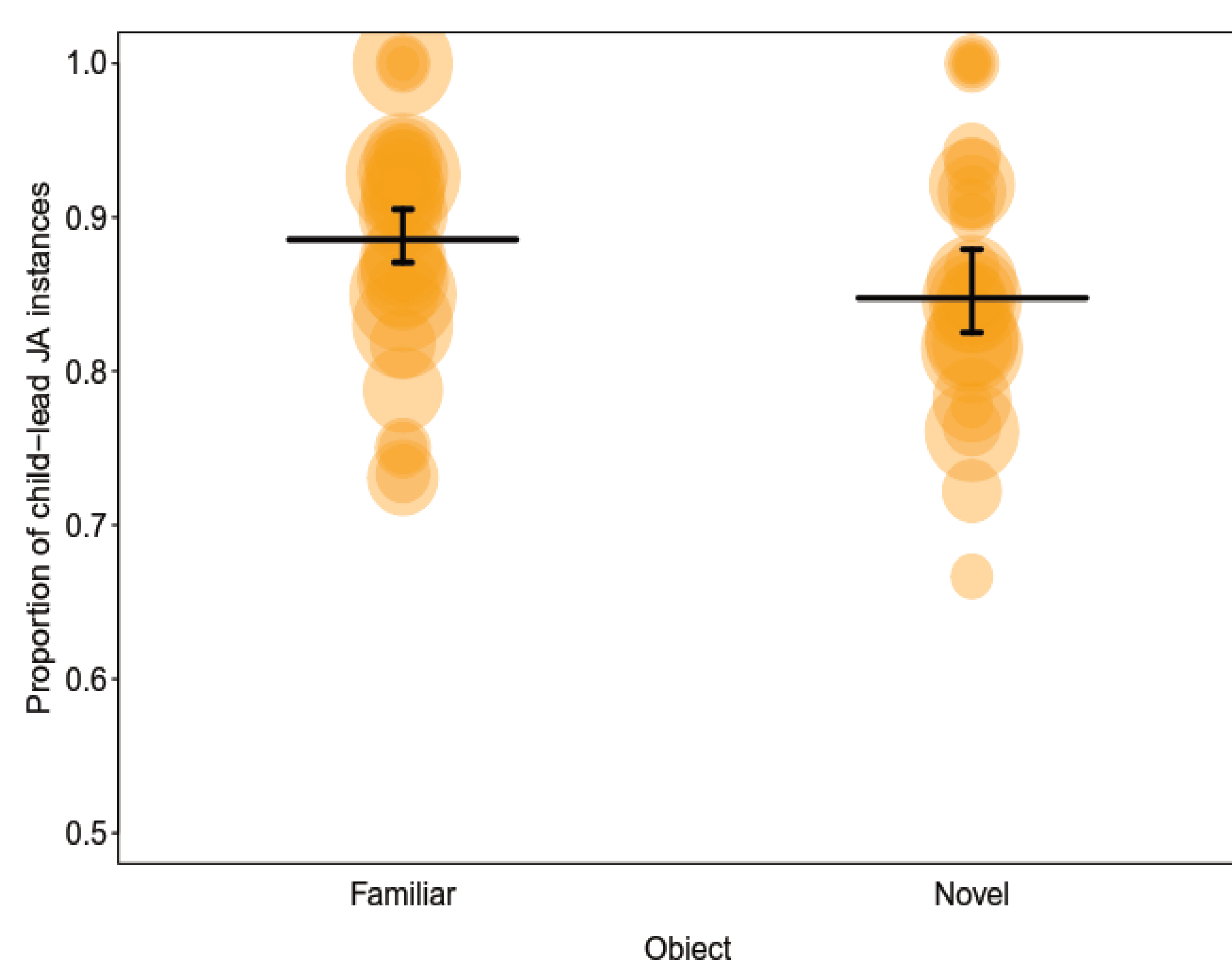


Setup of the play task



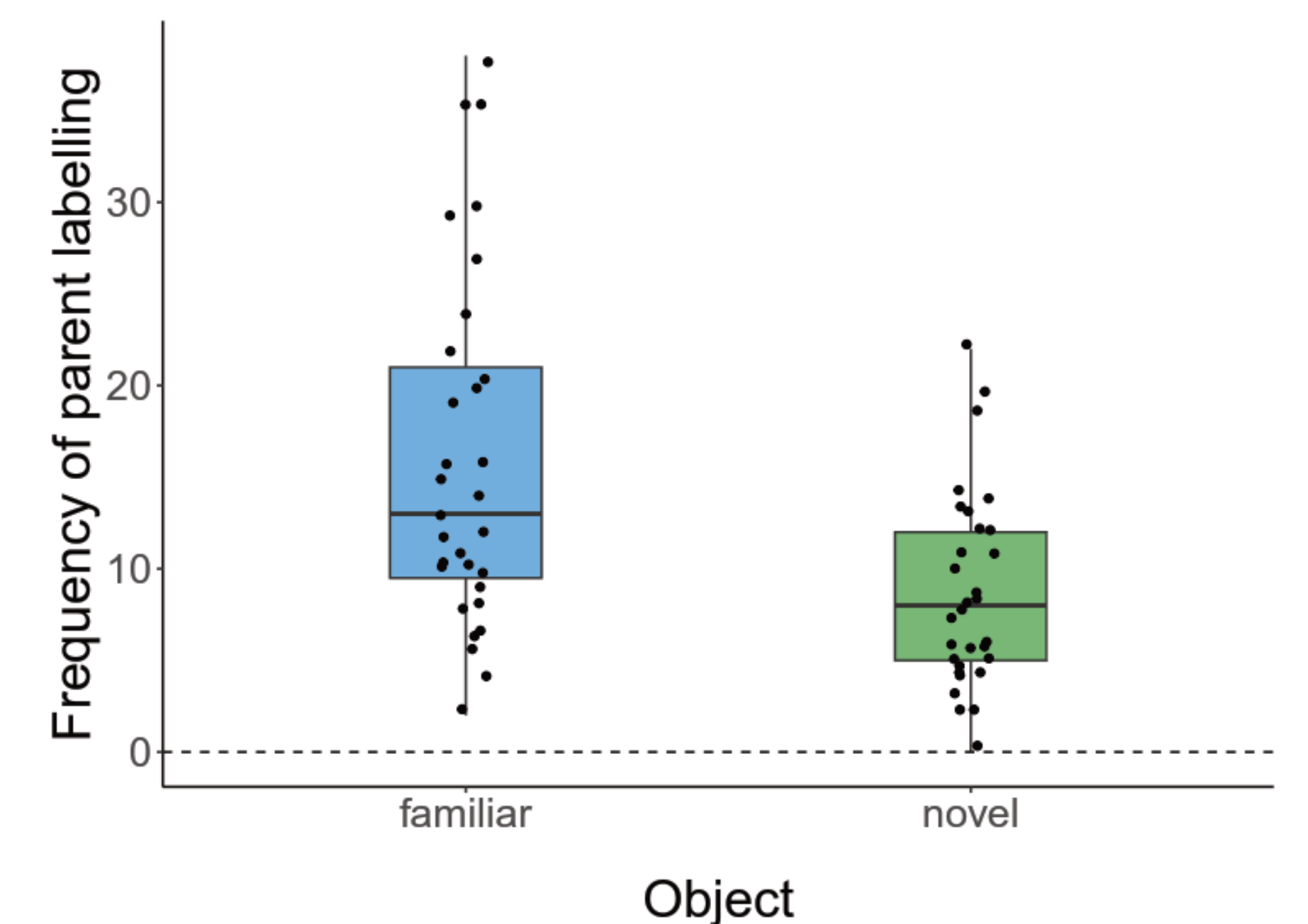
Results

H1: Parents lead more instances of joint attention when the object was novel to the child

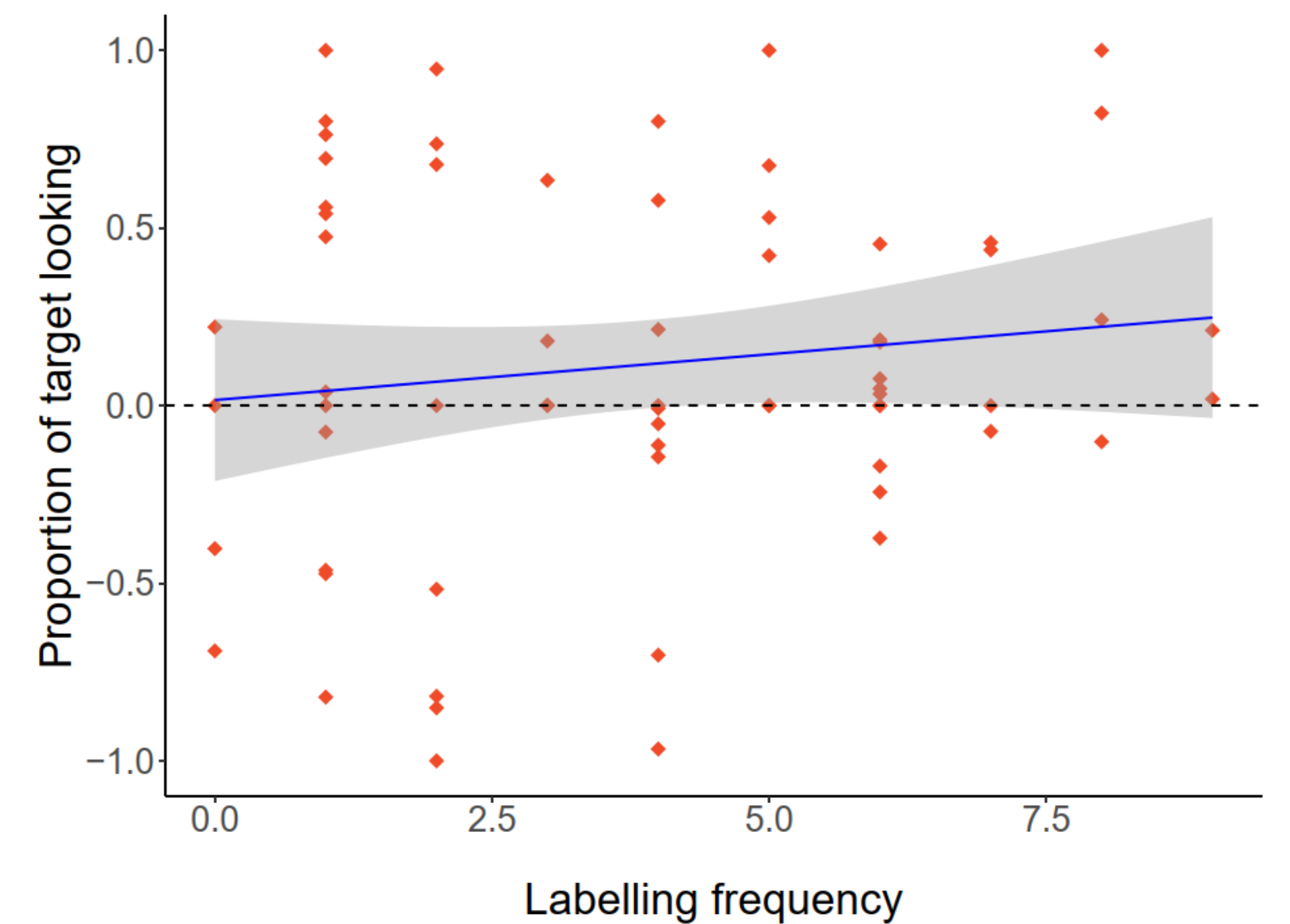


Results

H2: Parents label familiar objects more frequently than novel objects during play



H3: Children show no improved recognition of novel toys as a function of frequent labelling



Implications

- Contrary to lab-based experiments which reveal strong novelty preference in children, under more naturalistic situations where both novel and familiar objects are present, children actually show a familiarity bias.
- In line with Chen et al. (2021), we found that parents labelled familiar objects more often.
- We speculate that this finding is due to parents responding contingently to children's familiarity bias during play.

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OSF preregistration:
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