

Initial Pilot Findings

March 2019

Summary

- Google piloted the Bolo app in 200 villages in 3 blocks of Unnao district, UP India from Oct'18 to Jan'19 with the help of operational support from the ASER Centre
- Early results are encouraging, and we have found that 64% of pilot participants with access to the app showed an improvement in reading proficiency
- We're interested in researching the broader applicability of Bolo. We're releasing the app on the Play Store & expanding pilots with more partners across different regions
- We welcome additional partnerships to test Bolo in different settings and to study its impact. For inquiries, please contact us at bolo-feedback@google.com



About Bolo

Bolo is a speech-based reading app designed to help primary grade kids learn to read - anytime, anywhere - just using their voice. See g.co/bolo for details

Pilot Details

Note

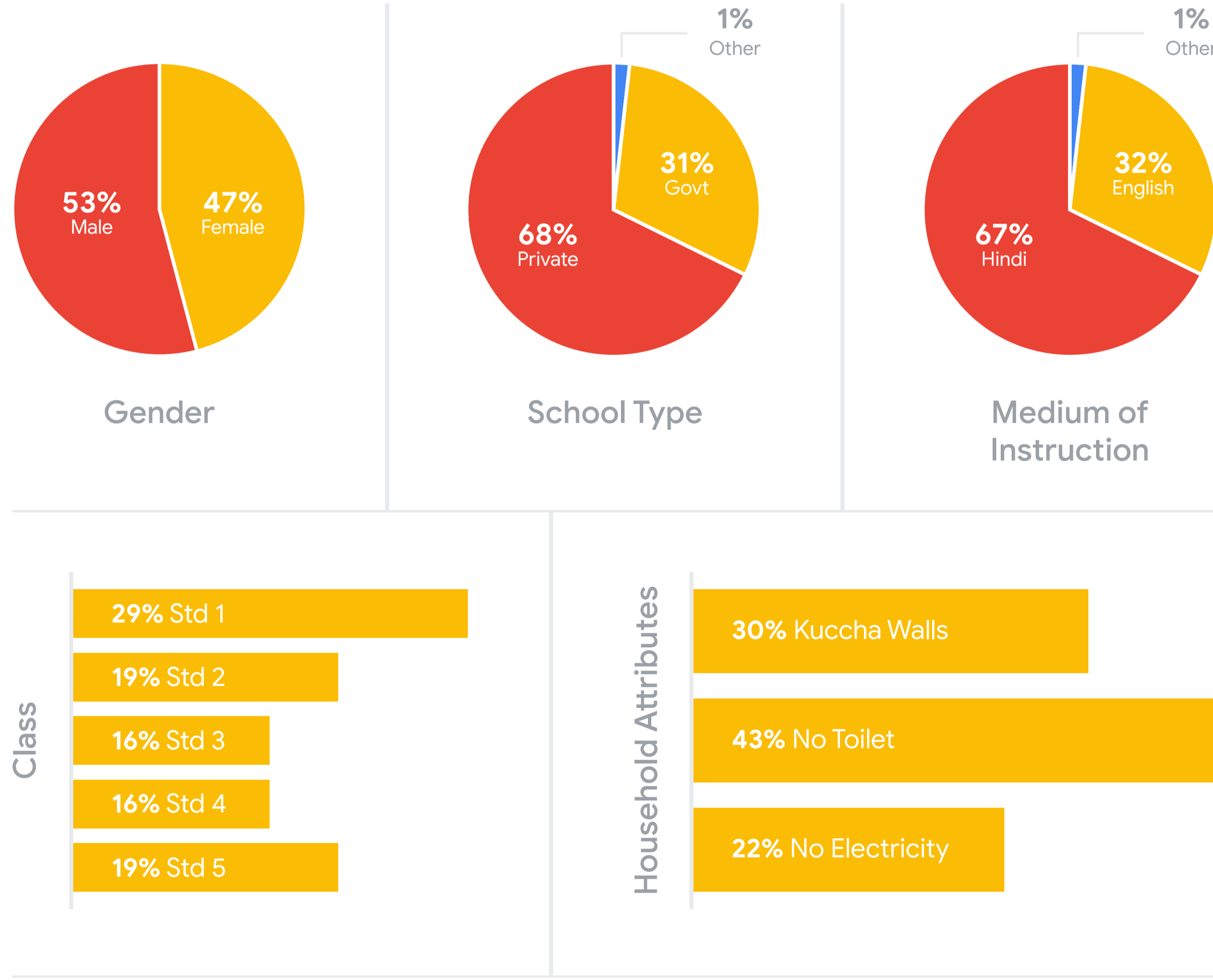
More research should be done to validate the broader applicability and impact of Bolo, as this pilot was:

- Limited scale with ~1500 children
- In only one region of India (Unnao) and in a rural setting
- Spanned across a 3 month time period
- The intervention (app use) was unsupervised
- Used an older version of the app

Pilot Approach

- Participants were recruited from a household census in 200 villages in 3 blocks in Unnao and children in grades 1 to 5 with access to an Android phone at home were selected
- 920 children were placed in a treatment group with the app installed
- 600 children were placed in a control group who did not get the app
- Trained surveyors of the ASER Centre conducted Hindi reading assessment* for all children (in both groups) at the start of the study (baseline), after 45 days (midline), and after 90 days (endline)
- A brief demonstration of the app was given to the children & their families at the time of app installation, thereafter the app usage was completely self driven. No additional incentives were given
- At the end of the study, children & parents in the treatment group were also asked a set of survey questions

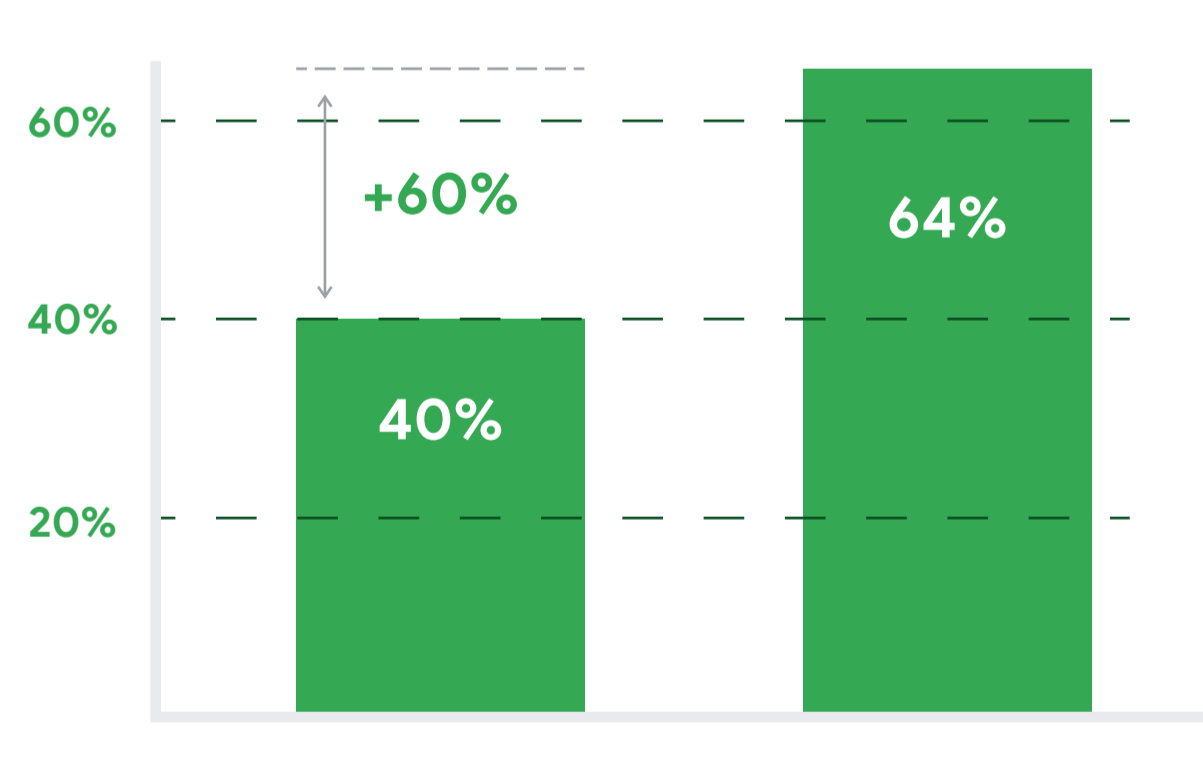
User Demographics



Key Findings

We analyzed the ASER assessment results provided to us and observed that

Over the pilot study period, more participants improved reading level in the Treatment group than in the Control group (figure 1)



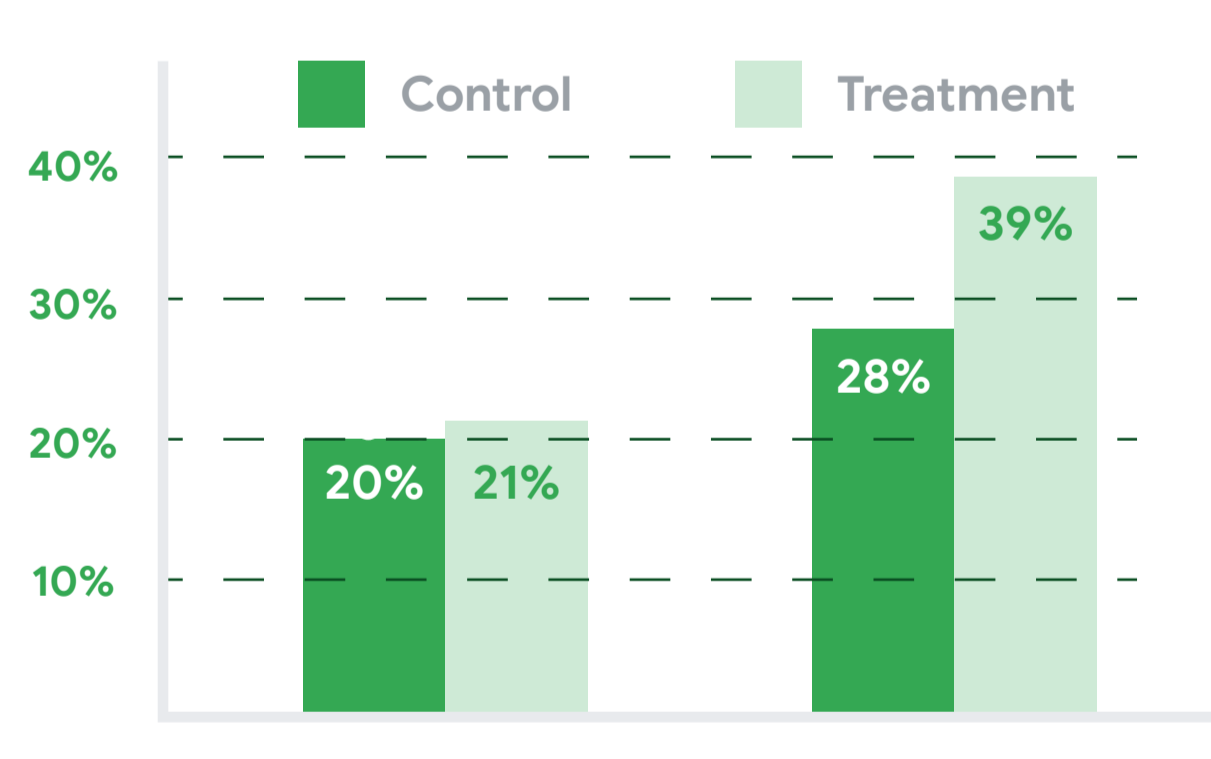
Growth in ASER reading level

%age of children whose reading level increased b/w Baseline and Endline

(Figure 1)

Among participants for whom we have measures at Baseline and Endline, and who were not already at ceiling (Std 2) at Baseline, 64% of those in the Treatment group saw an increase in scores (95% CI: 60%-68%), compared with 40% of those in the Control group, a statistically significant difference (P<0.0001)

At the endline, more students in the Treatment group reached the highest level (Std 2) than in the Control group (figure 2)



Reached highest level of ASER assessment

%age of children at Std 2 reading level

(Figure 2)

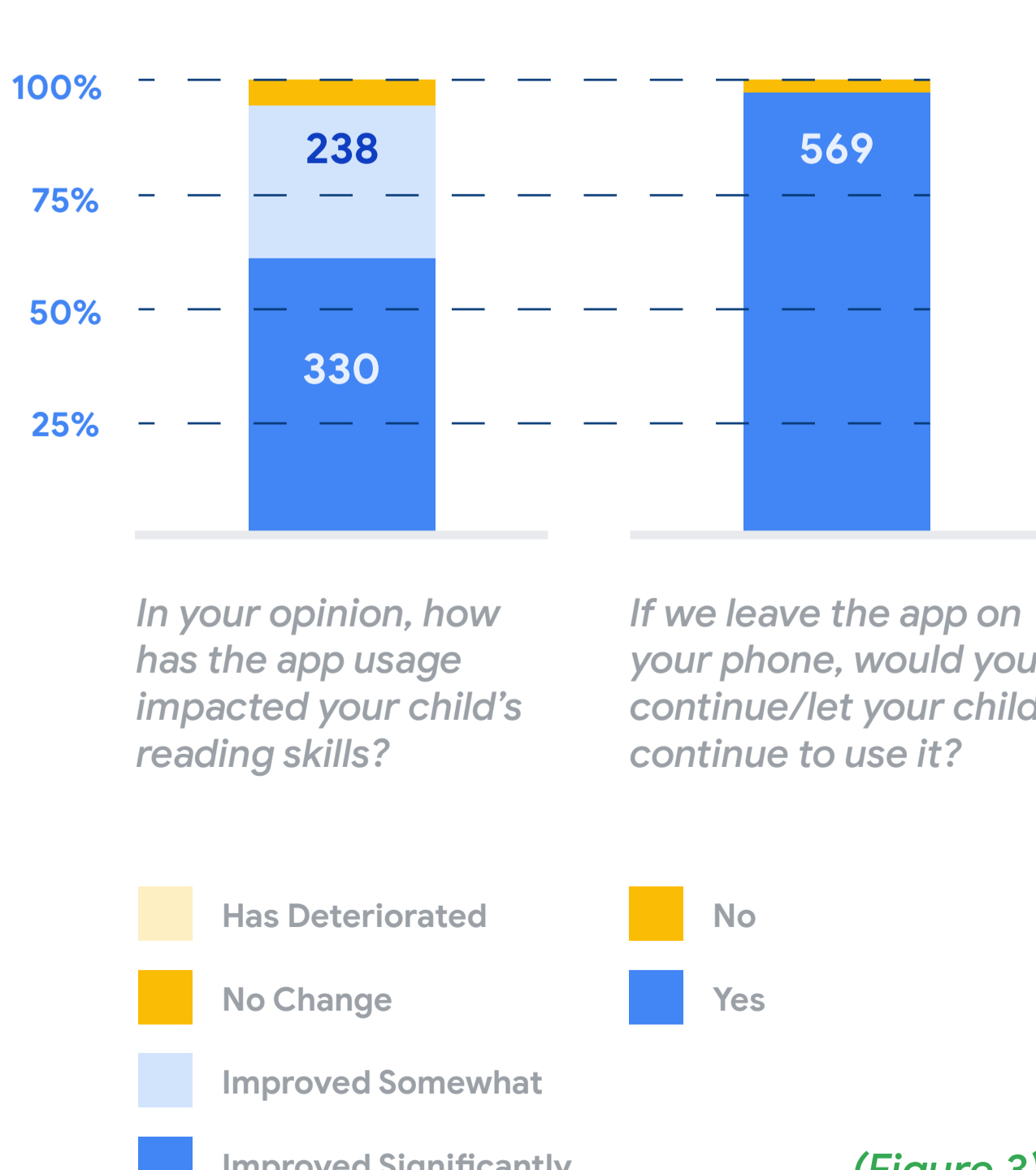
39% of the Treatment group reached the highest level: Std 2 (95% CI: 36%-42%) in the Endline, versus only 28% of Control (95% CI: 24%-32%). At Baseline, Control and Treatment are not statistically significantly different from each other (P = 0.7562), but at Endline they are (P < 0.0001).

Survey Findings

Additionally in a parents survey that was done at the end of the study we found that

~92% of them noticed some improvement in their child's reading skills

~95% would let their children continue to use the app if we left it on their phones



(Figure 3)

Next Steps

While these initial results are very encouraging, more research should be conducted to assess the broader applicability and impact of using Bolo as a supplementary reading intervention. We welcome other organisations to try Bolo in different settings and to study its impact.

*ASER assessment tool consists of 5 levels: beginner, letters, words, a short paragraph (Std 1 level), and a longer "story" (Std 2 level). The child is marked at the highest level which she can do comfortably. See more details on www.asercentre.org

For any queries write to us at bolo-feedback@google.com