

Getting better over time: Syntactic satiation effects as a window into syntactic representations in a second language

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1. English vs Spanish

- English & Spanish questions appear to have superficially similar word orders (Wh – V – S)
 - English: What will John buy?
 - Spanish: Qué comprará Juan?
- But, not clear if structure of questions are truly the same¹

English	Spanish
☹ When <u>John will buy</u> this book?	☺ ¿Cuándo <u>Juan comprará</u> ese libro?
☹ I wonder what <u>will John buy</u> .	☺ Me pregunto qué <u>comprará Juan</u> .
☹ What newspapers <u>John never will read</u> ?	☺ ¿Qué diarios <u>Juan nunca leerá</u> ?

2. Research Questions

How do L1 Spanish speakers represent the structure of English wh-questions? Specifically, do surface word order similarities lead learners to assume the same syntactic structure for wh-questions in both languages?

3. Syntactic Satiation

- Defined:** Some sentences that initially sound ungrammatical sound “increasingly acceptable” after repeated exposures²
- Goodall (2011)³: Behavioral evidence for structural differences in English versus Spanish questions
 - Tested native English speakers in English, native Spanish speakers in Spanish

English: No Satiation	Spanish: Satiation
Ungrammatical sentences sound “equally bad” regardless of exposure	Ungrammatical sentences sound “better” with increased exposure

Trial #	Rating	Trial #	Rating
Exposure 1	☹	Exposure 1	☹
Exposure 3	☹	Exposure 3	☺
Exposure 5	☹	Exposure 5	☺

10. Conclusions

- Averaging across entire study, L2’ers judgments of English questions *appeared* native-like, but satiation patterns revealed that processing & representations were different from L1’ers.
- For L2’ers, Spanish question structure interfered with representations of English question structure
- Satiation can be a new indicator of “native-like” proficiency in L2 research

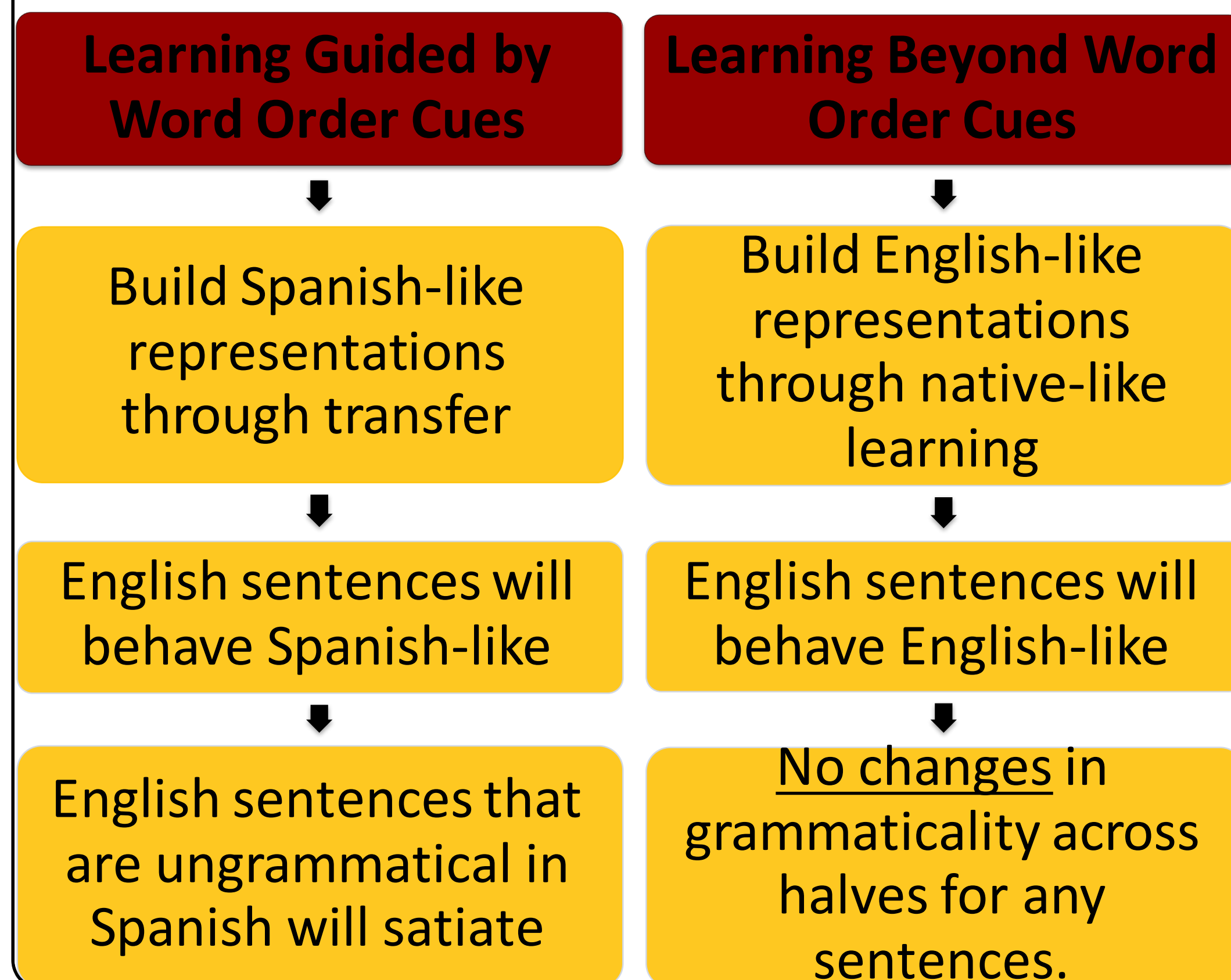
4. Current Study

- 32 Native English speakers; 23 L1 Iberian Spanish with mid-high English proficiency
- Web-based sentence rating task **in English**
 - 25 Targets over 5 blocks
 - 36 Fillers
- Compared average acceptability ratings (5-point scale) from first half against last half of study

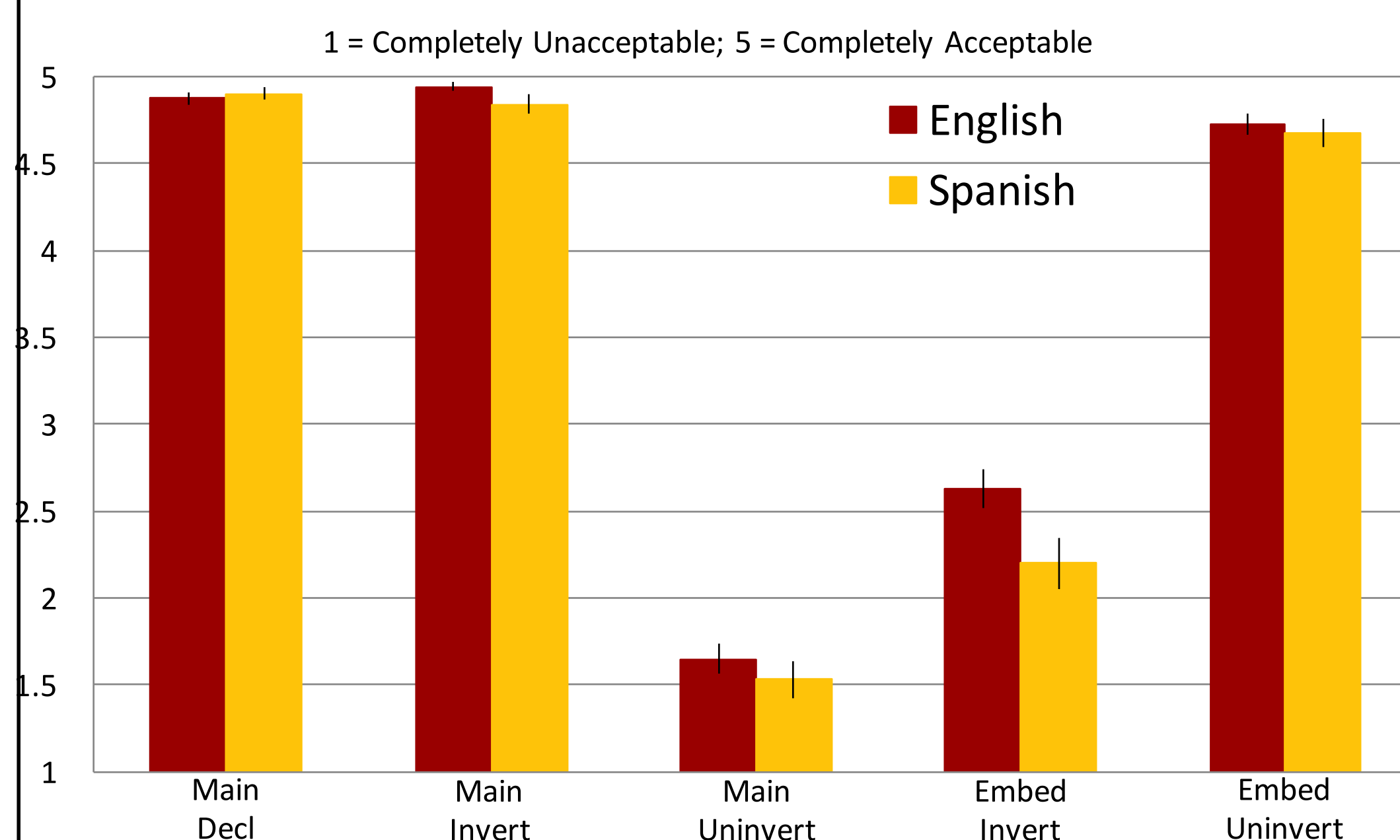
Sentence Types & English versus Spanish Grammaticality

English	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Sentence Type	Embed Invert	Embed Uninvert	Main Decl	Main Invert	Main Uninvert
Spanish	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

5. Hypothesis & Predictions

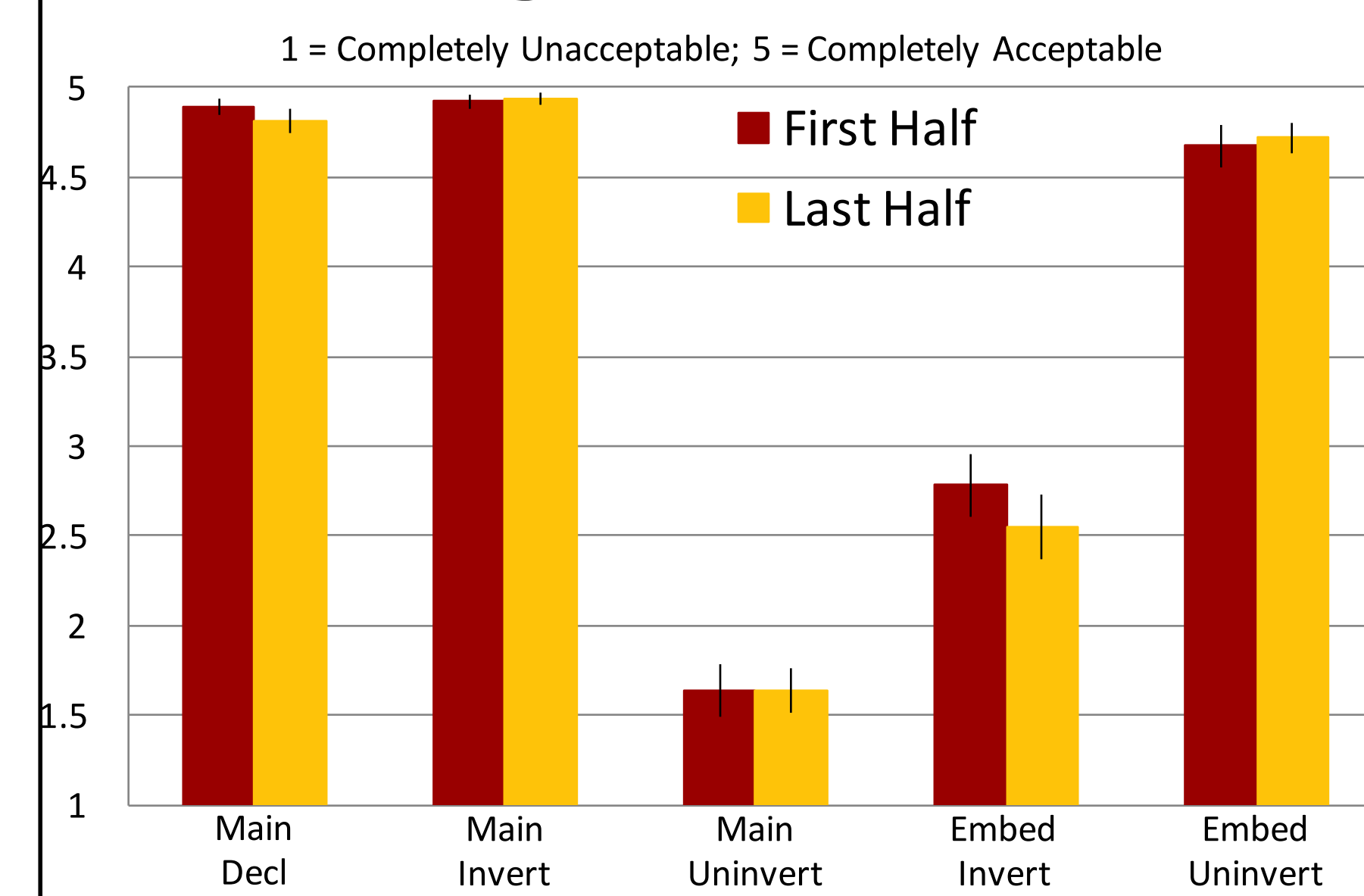


6. Entire Experiment: L1 Eng vs L1 Span



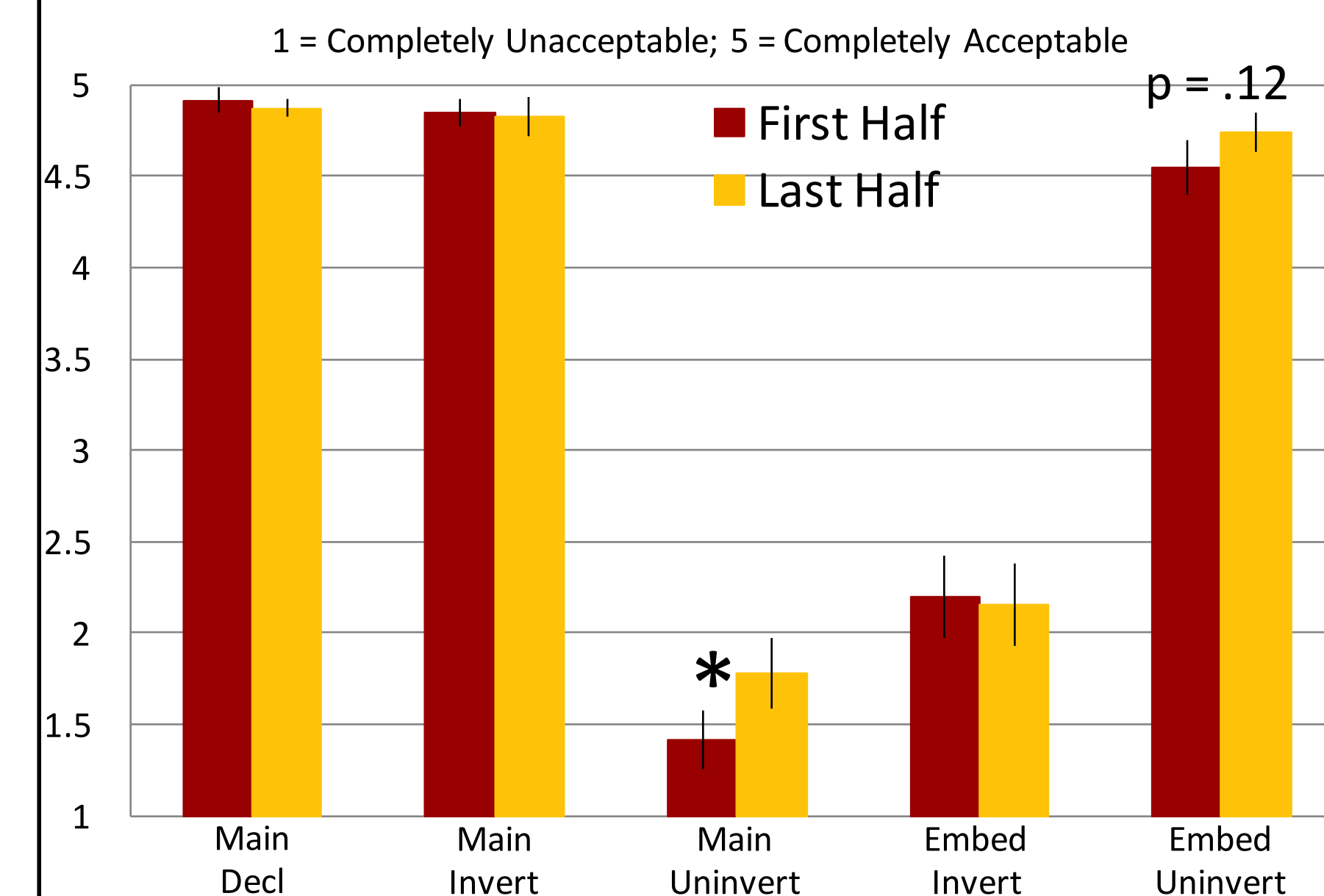
English & Spanish ratings did not differ in any conditions.

7. L1 Eng: 1st vs 2nd Half



Native English speakers' ratings did not satiate.

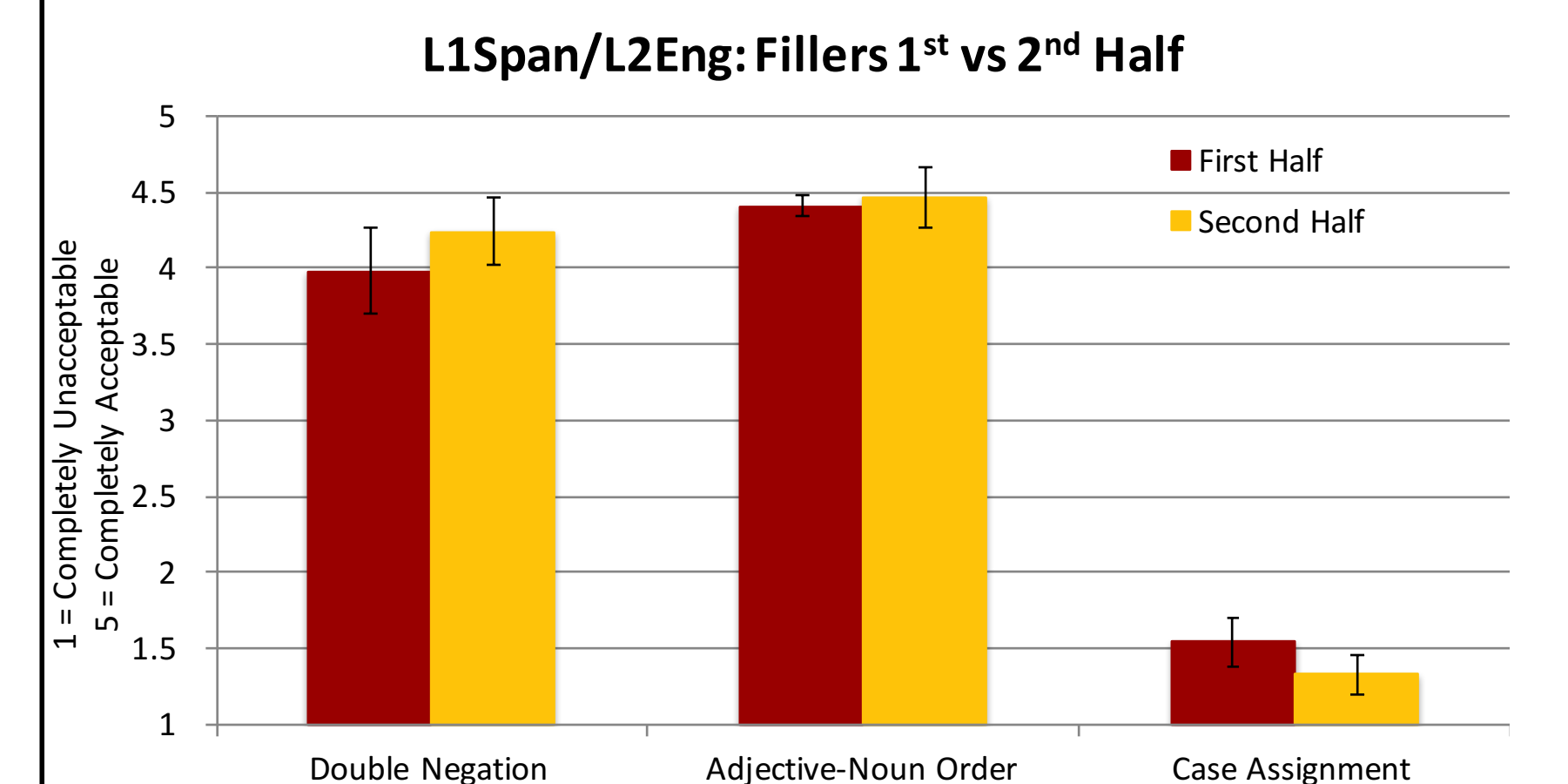
8. L1Span/L2Eng: 1st vs 2nd Half



L1Span/L2 English speakers' ratings satiated in Main Uninvert condition.

9. Satiation due to extra-linguistic factors? No.

- Satiation found only in predicted condition (i.e. Main Uninvert)
- No satiation in any ungrammatical *fillers*



L1Span/L2 Eng speakers' ratings did not satiate for any fillers.

11. Future Work

- Main vs Embedded questions: Native Spanish ratings for embedded clauses required for baseline.
- Relationship between L1 & L2 structures: Within speakers, extent of satiation in L1 should match extent of satiation in L2
- What drives satiation?