New case study — Ch 2

"What is the best way to teach the standard dialect..."

Background preparation:

• *Overview handout — <u>Case-study presentation</u>*

Setting the context

Goals for today's class

- I will give a **"demo" presentation**, *similar* to what you all will be doing in your groups

- We will also be trying out some methods for more **interactive participation** for in-class and livestream discussion

- Comments and information that are not part of the demo presentation (like this slide) will be **blue**

New case-study presentation

Kaplan (2016), ch 2

- **Myth**: "A dialect is just a collection of mistakes"

- **Case-study section research question**:

    What is the best way to teach the standard dialect to speakers of a non-standard dialect?

Class discussion

- Warm-up discussion: What case-studies were discussed in Kaplan (2016), Ch 2?

  - What language and speaker communities were studied?

  - What kinds of interventions (instructional techniques) were tested in each?

- The presentations will build in some time for class and group discussion along the way

  - Today: We're also pilot-testing some more "hybrid" discussion techniques

Research paper presented here

Montrul, Silvina, & Melissa Bowles. 2010. Is grammar instruction beneficial for heritage language learners? Dative case marking in Spanish. *Heritage Language Journal* 7(1): 47–73.

https://brill.com/view/journals/hlj/7/1/article-p47_3.xml

- Be careful with your citation format — use APA or similar; see link for linguistics format
- It's best to give the DOI link when possible, but the DOI link for this article is broken!

Research question

- Montrul & Bowles (2010: 53) [emphasis added]

    "...does **explicit instruction** [...], including **explicit feedback** and **negative evidence**, help instructed heritage language learners **distinguish** between [standard Spanish] **grammatical** and **ungrammatical** sentences with inherent dative case marking?"

    - It's good to state the RQ up front, even before providing all the background details, so the audience knows what's coming

Connection to Kaplan (2016), Ch 2

- How this research paper fits the Ch 2 theme
  - Examines the effect of **explicit grammar instruction**
  - on **standard-language achievement**
  - for students from a **non-standard language background**

- An important difference: The language system of a heritage speaker isn't necessarily the language system of a particular **speech community** that speaks a non-standard dialect

- **Heritage language speaker**
  - Kaplan (2016: 134):
    - L1 acquisition was interrupted, or
    - L1 is not the dominant language

  - Discussion? Other definitions?

Key background information

- **Dative case marking** in Spanish

  - Animate direct objects (DOM)

    Juan conoce **a** tu hermana
    Juan knows   ***A*** *your sister*
    'Juan knows your sister'

  - Experiencers of "psych verbs" like *gustar*
    A Juan **le**   gusta   el   rugby
    A *Juan* ***to.him*** *pleases the rugby*
    'Juan likes rugby'

Experiment design

- Participants

- Training

- Task

How can we pull this information out of a paper?

Results

- How can we interpret the results of the statistical analysis in a paper?

Results
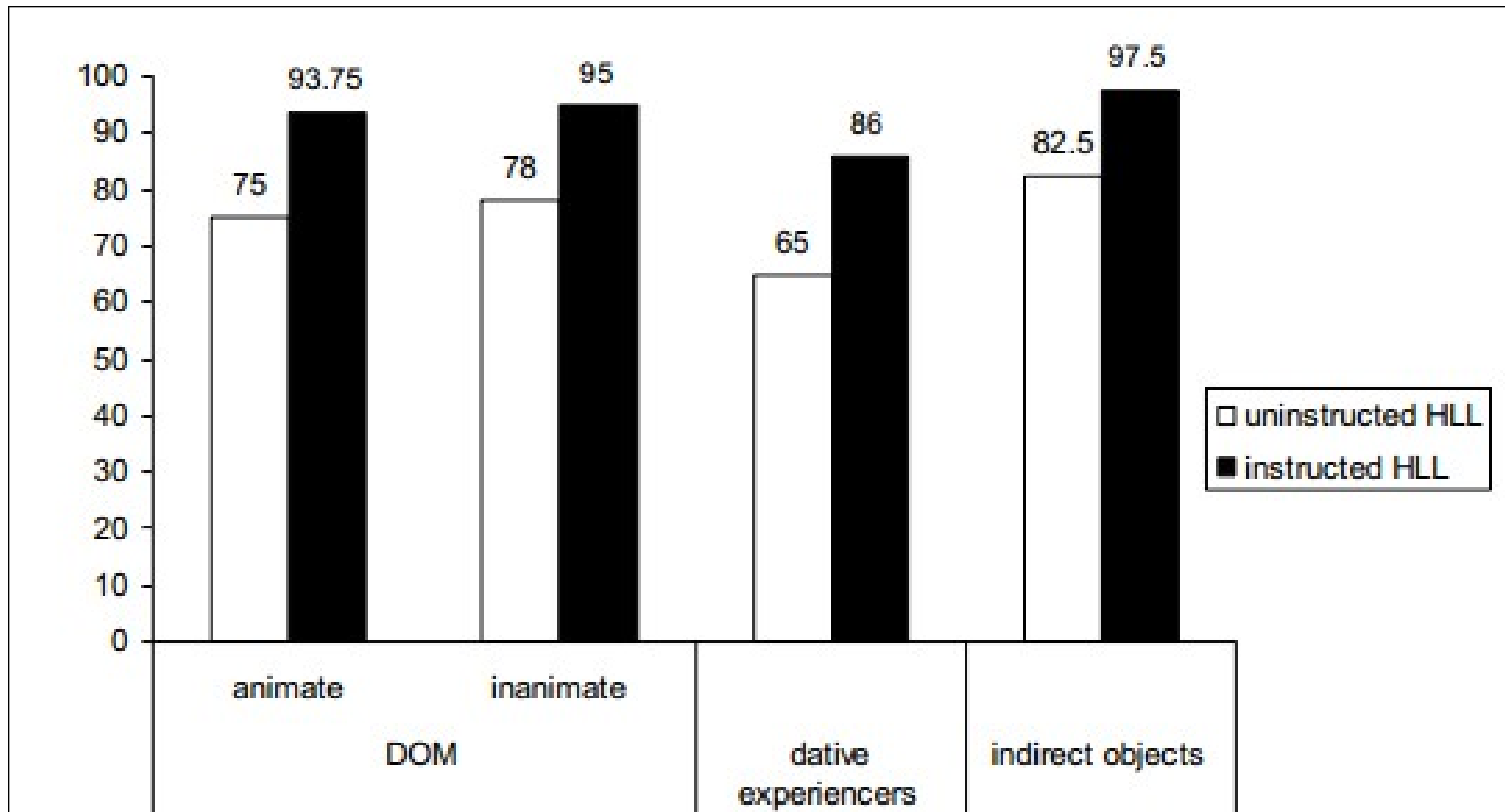
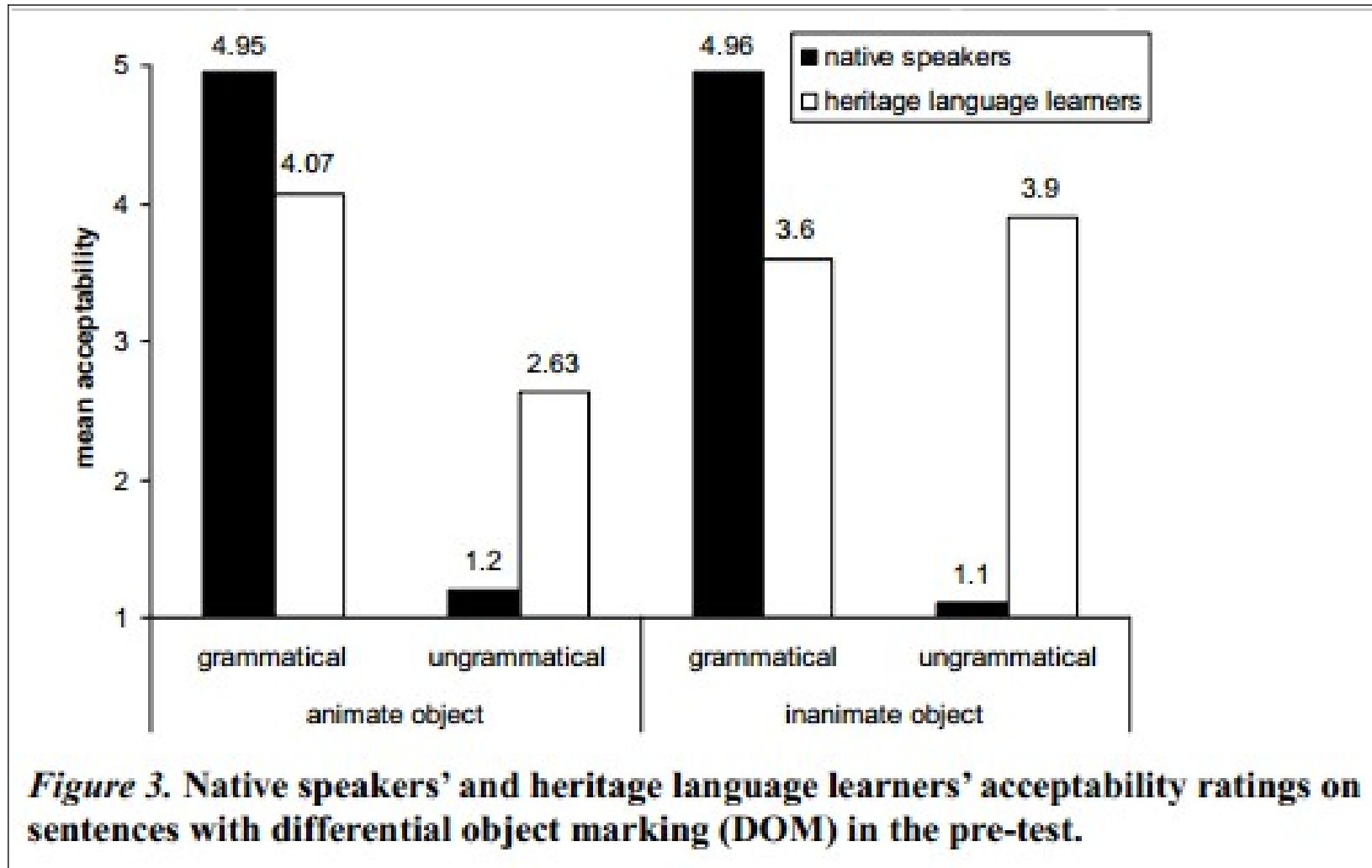- Production test: Effect of instruction

Figure 2. Percentage accuracy of dative case marking with the preposition a by group.

Results

- Grammaticality-judgment task (GJT)
  - 13 participants
    - took pre-test
    - 80% accuracy on the homework exercises
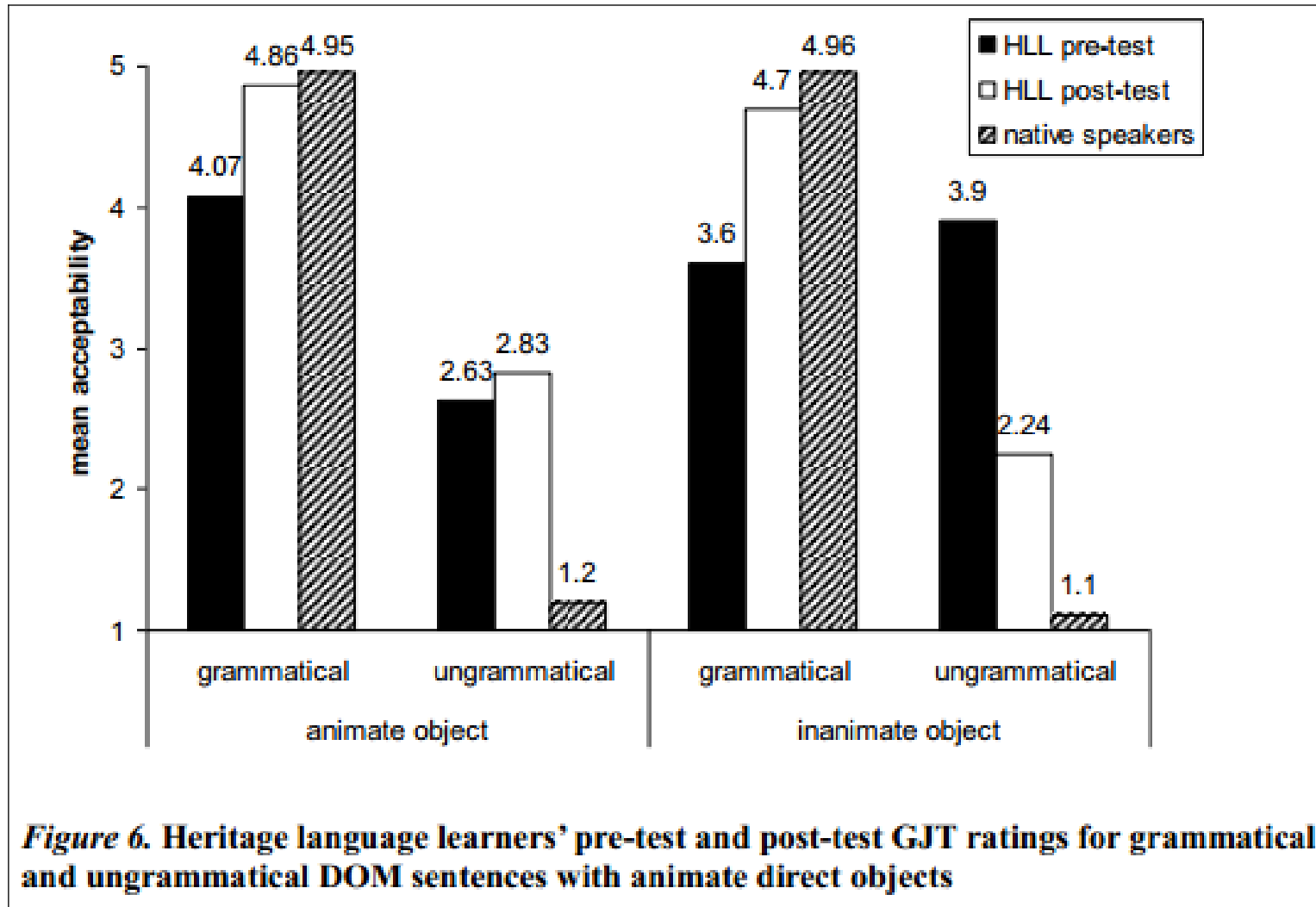   - took post-test

Results

- Grammaticality-judgment task (GJT), pre-test (DOM)

Figure 3. Native speakers' and heritage language learners' acceptability ratings on sentences with differential object marking (DOM) in the pre-test.

Results

- Grammaticality-judgment task (GJT), post-test (DOM)

Figure 6. Heritage language learners' pre-test and post-test GJT ratings for grammatical and ungrammatical DOM sentences with animate direct objects

Concerns with the study

Montrul & Bowles (2010: 64–65)

- Small number of subjects (problem with attrition)

- Couldn't compare the results of the two tasks on the same set of learners

- No longer-term follow-up — will the effects last?

- No "uninstructed" control group for comparison

Concerns with the study

Montrul & Bowles (2010: 66)

- Grammar instruction involved multiple sources of information; separate effects were not analyzed
    - Positive evidence
    - Negative evidence
    - Explicit feedback

Is the myth busted?

- Does explicit grammar instruction to speakers of a non-standard variety lead to more standard-language achievement?

- Does this study relate to the Ch 2 myth, "A dialect is just a collection of mistakes"?