

PA9.1 – Experimental investigation of presupposition projection

Student: Maik Thalmann

Supervisors: Clemens Steiner-Mayr, Thomas Weskott

Ext./Th.Com.: Viola Schmitt (HU Berlin/MIT)

I. The form-meaning mismatch

- Presupposition triggers can be viewed as a 0:1 mapping, having both presuppositional and non-presuppositional meanings. Presuppositions are considered substantially independent from the rest of the utterance.
 - Yet in some contexts, independence appears violated: information structure/word order seems to affect truth-value intuitions in (1). In (2), the two kinds of quantifiers are said to cause different projection patterns.
- (1) a. **The** king of France visited the Exhibition.
b. The Exhibition was visited by **the** king of France.
- (2) a. Every woman **stopped** drinking beer.
b. John is certain that Mary **stopped** drinking beer.

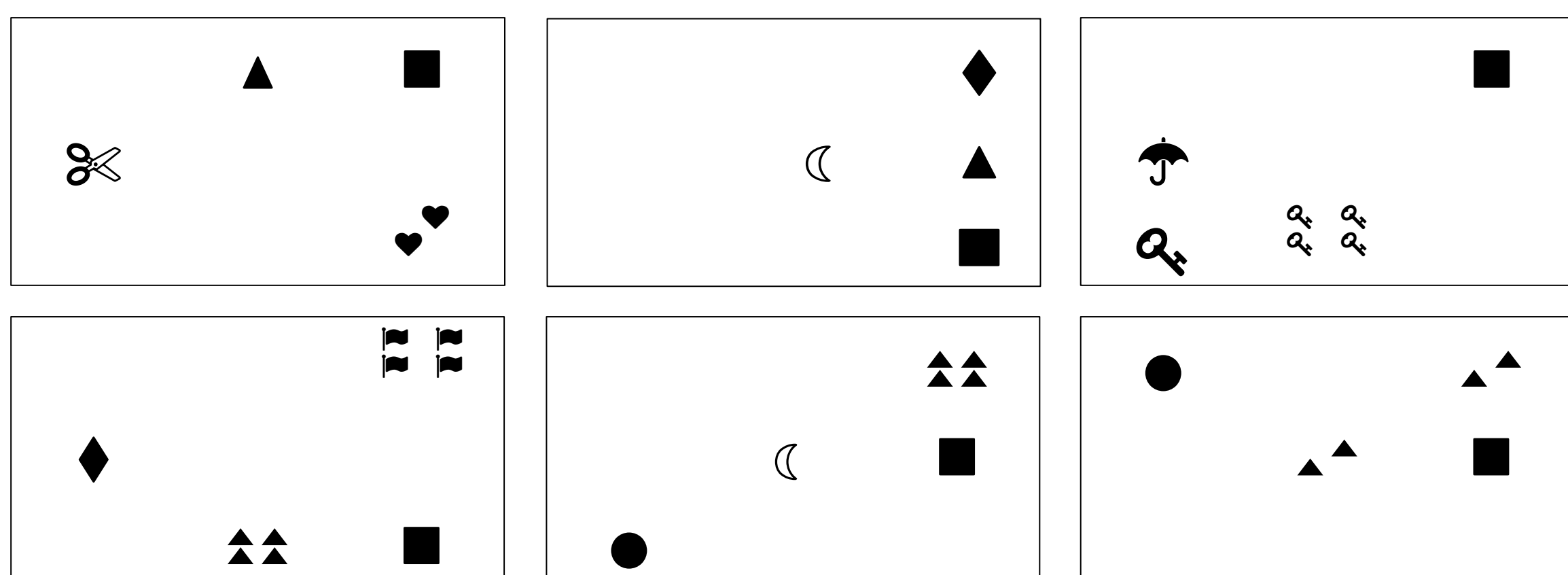
Research questions

- RQ1:** What are the presuppositions of singular *the*?
What is the role of syntax/information structure?
[1] [2]
- RQ2:** How do presuppositions project from quantified environments? [3] [4] Are there differences between quantifiers over worlds/individuals?
- (RQ3):** How do mistaken-beliefs affect factivity? [5] Is factivity weaker than originally thought?

II. Methodology and Hypotheses

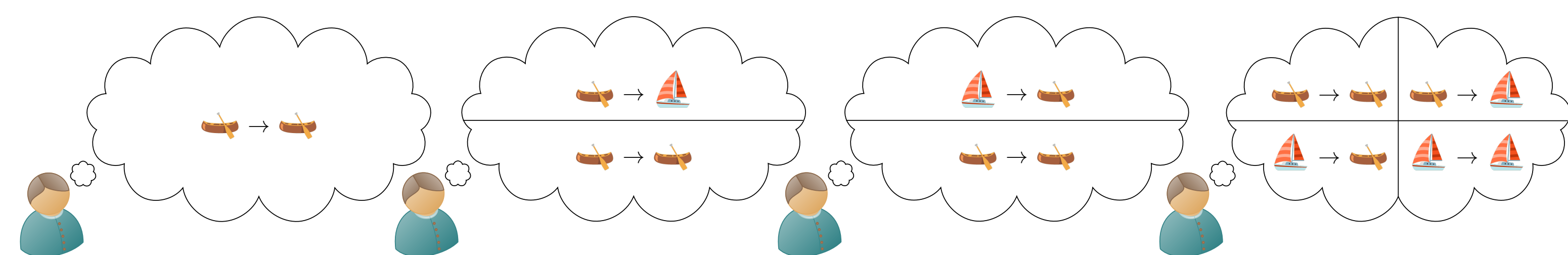
- We used the continuous truth-value judgment task (CT).
- RQ1:** two CTs w/ context images. [2] predicts that word order should affect judgments in the undefined scenario, [1] predicts medial judgments. Plurals served as controls.

(4) The triangle/s is/are to the left of the square.



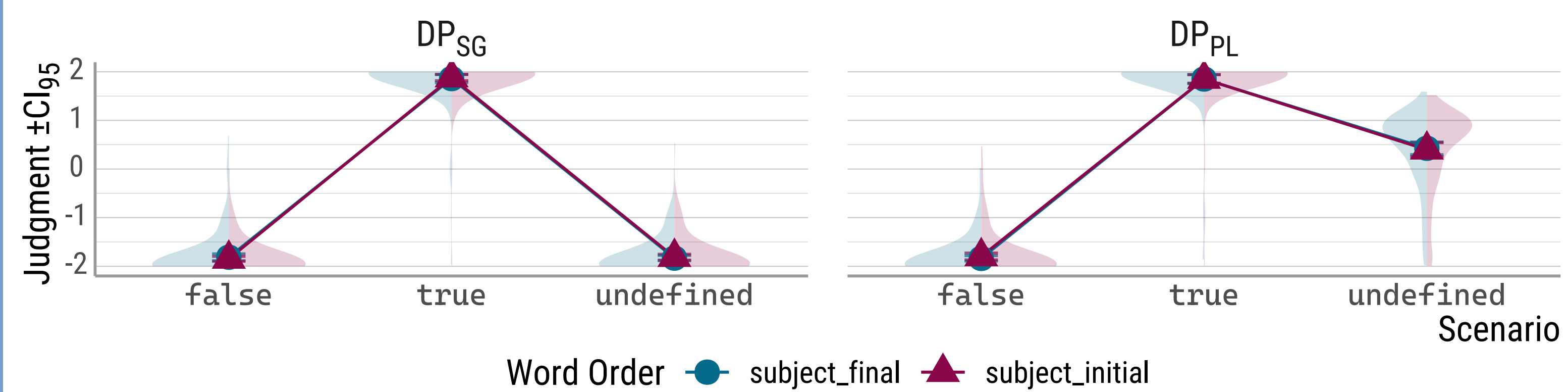
- RQ2:** two CTs w/ context images. [4] predicts that the critical scenario should pattern like undefined, contra [3].

(5) Peter is (not) certain that Jan canoed again.

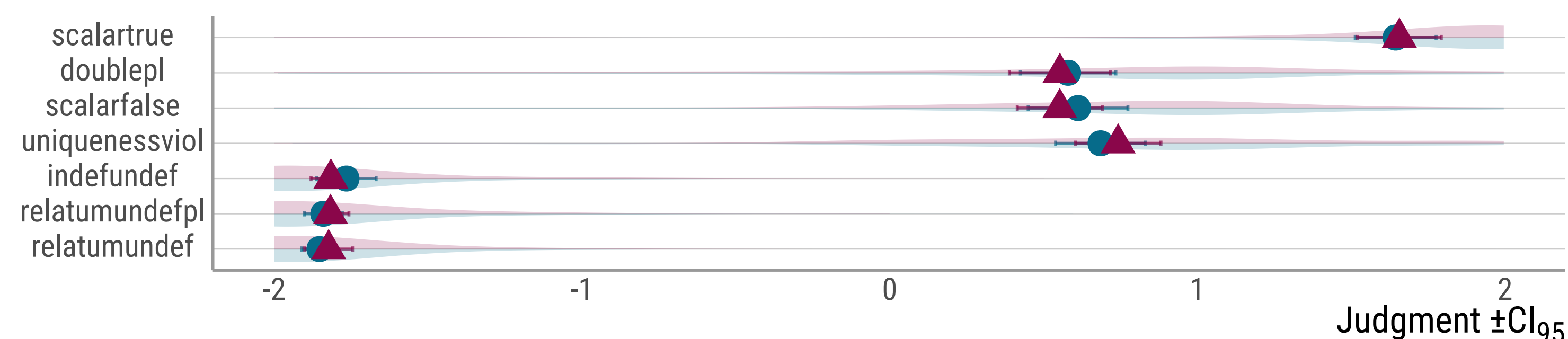


III. Results and discussion

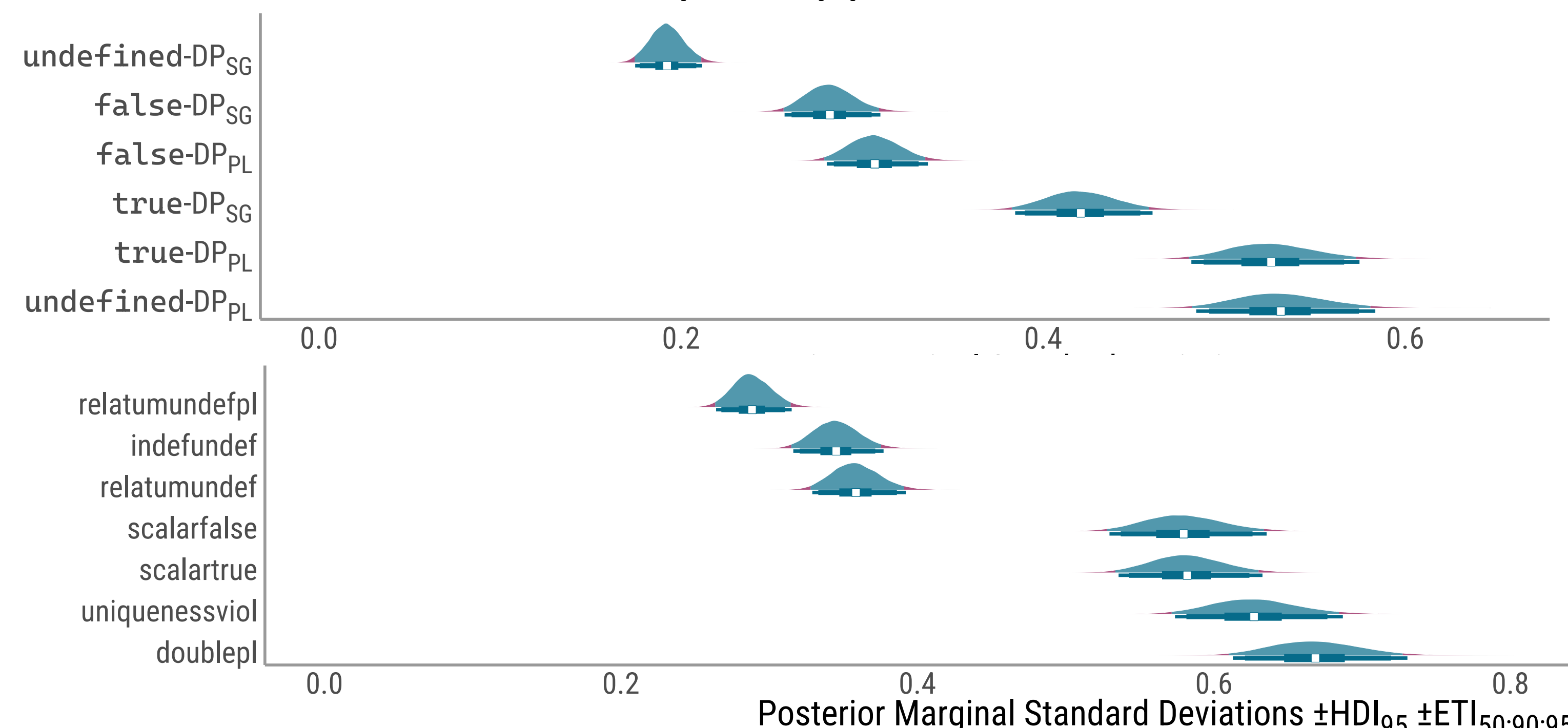
RQ1: There is no effect of word order in any of the conditions. The data also suggest that existence violations with definite singulars are not associated to a truth-value gap, contrary to violations of homogeneity with plurals.



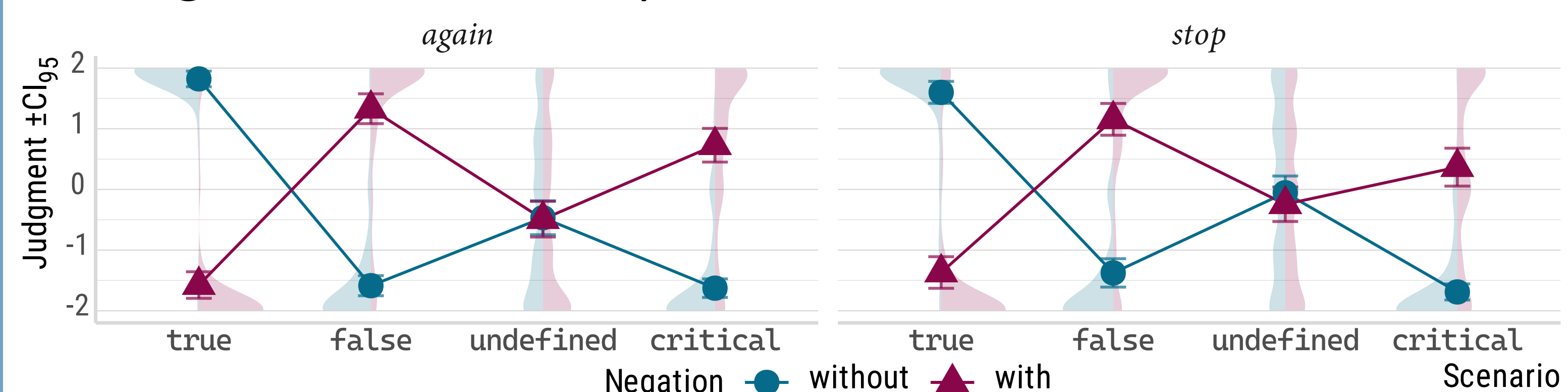
Uniqueness violations were treated as presupposition failure.



Variance contrasts enabled presupposition failure detection.



RQ2: Since *critical* behaves unlike *undefined*, the standard account makes wrong predictions, and a Strong Kleene logic from [3], which predicts our results, is to be favored.



IV. Consequences and follow-up questions

- We addressed the projection problem and the influence of pragmatics on truth-value intuitions. But:
 - While linear order did not affect participants' judgments here, what about domains where it does, like exceptives?
 - How do projection and pragmatics interact? That is, can pragmatic processes always affect projection, or can presuppositions be immunized, e.g., using embedding?