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4-14-2023

Infants' Ability to Associate Objects and Their Names

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Repository citation: Kragt, Nycole and Swanson, Chloe, "Infants' Ability to Associate Objects and Their Names" (2023). *22nd Annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (2023)*. Paper 22.

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Infants' Ability to Associate Objects and their Names

Introduction

- Infants as young as 6 months can understand the meaning of common nouns ¹
- A process called cross-situational learning may be used by infants to learn words ²
 - Cross-situational word learning is when learning occurs as a result of many occurrences of a word paired with its referent
- **Research Question:** How do infants come to associate objects and their names over time?



Methods

- On a screen infants saw:
 - 12 novel objects, across 5 blocks
 - 4 targets (named), 8 distractors (not named)
 - Two conditions: naming or no-naming
- 2 sessions
- 17 infants
 - 10-29 mo., $M = 19.7$
- Eye-tracking

Results

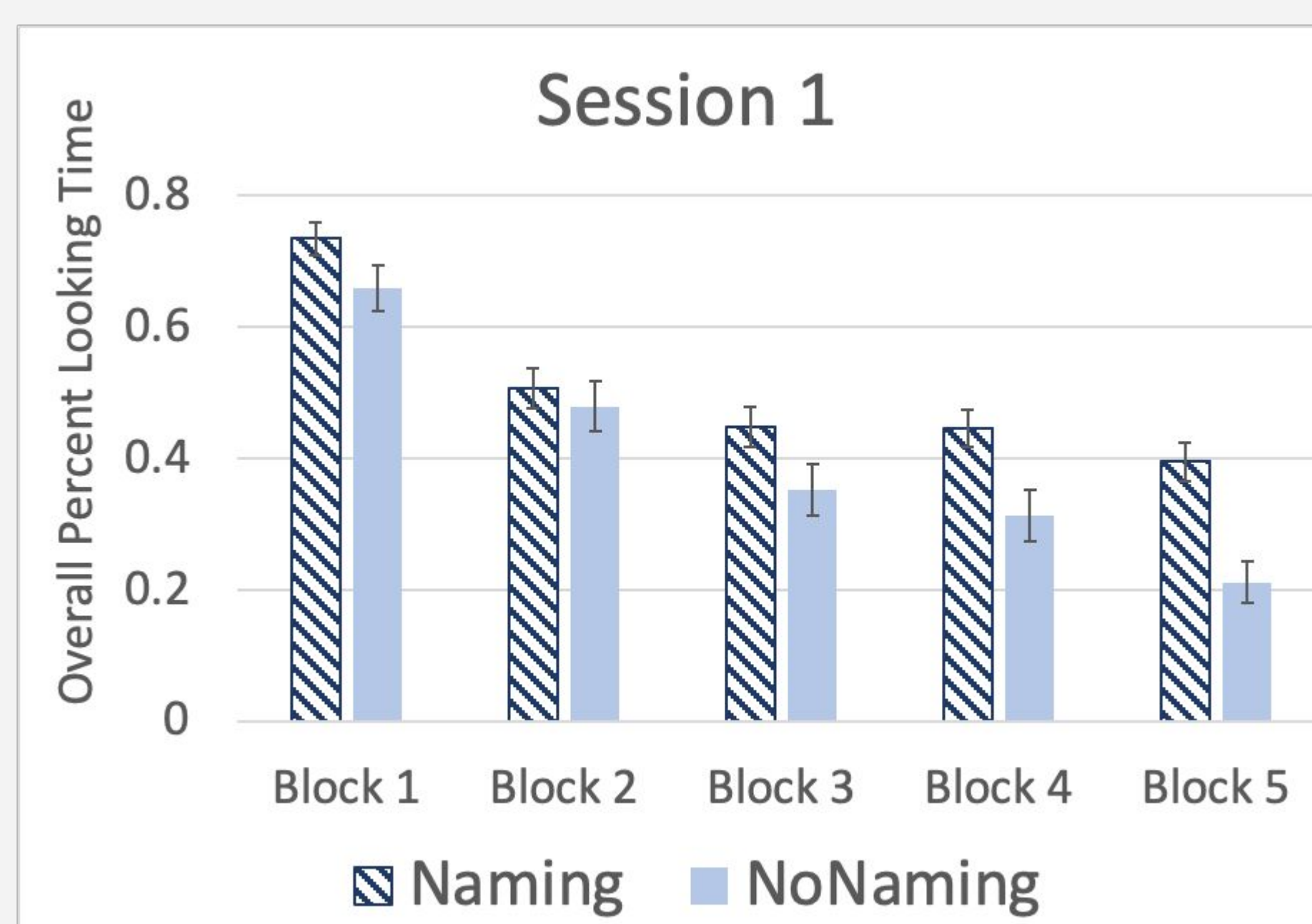


Figure 1. Percent looking time to the screen across blocks on day 1. Error bars represent the 95% CIs.

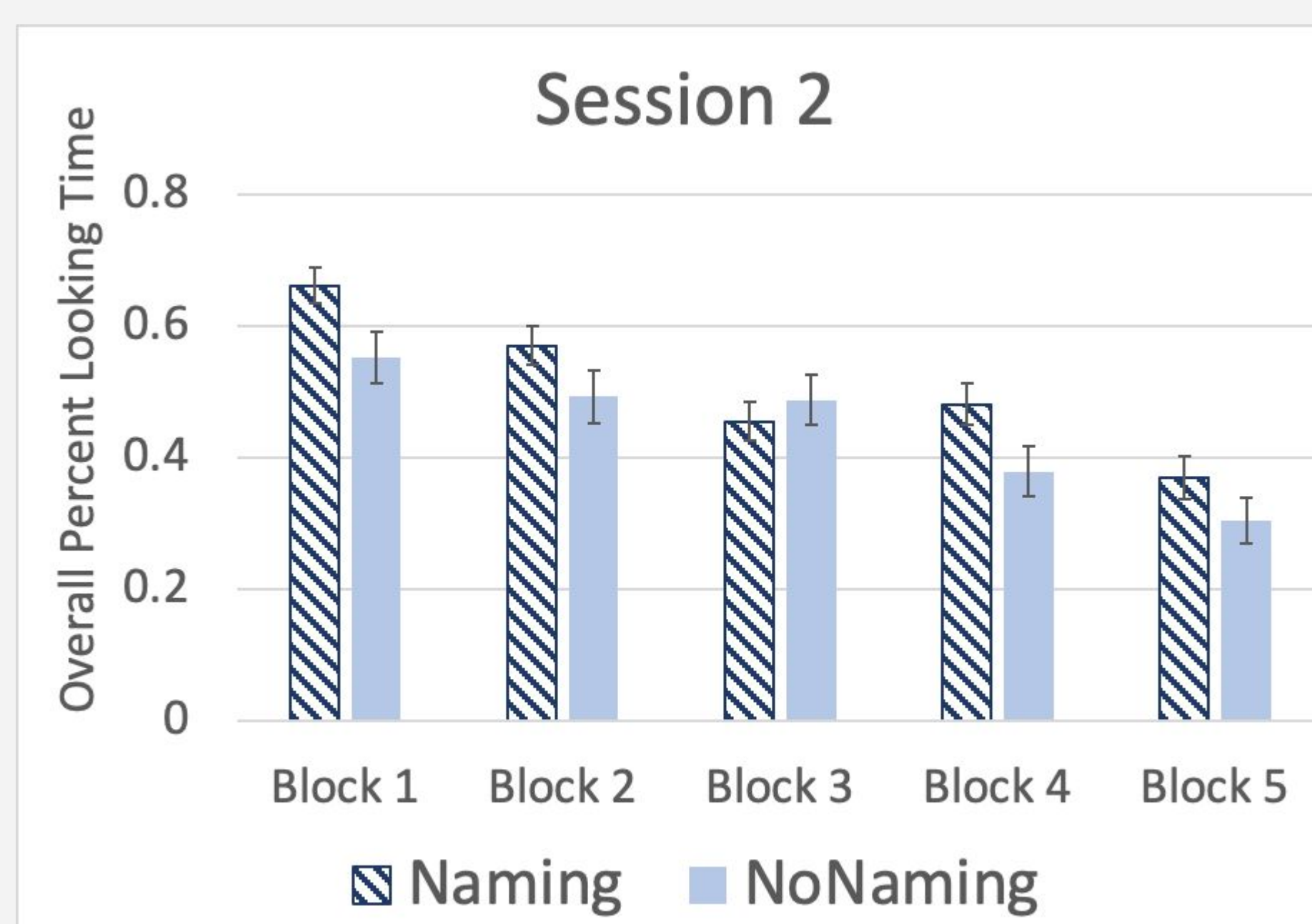


Figure 2. Percent looking time to the screen across blocks on day 2. Error bars represent the 95% CIs.

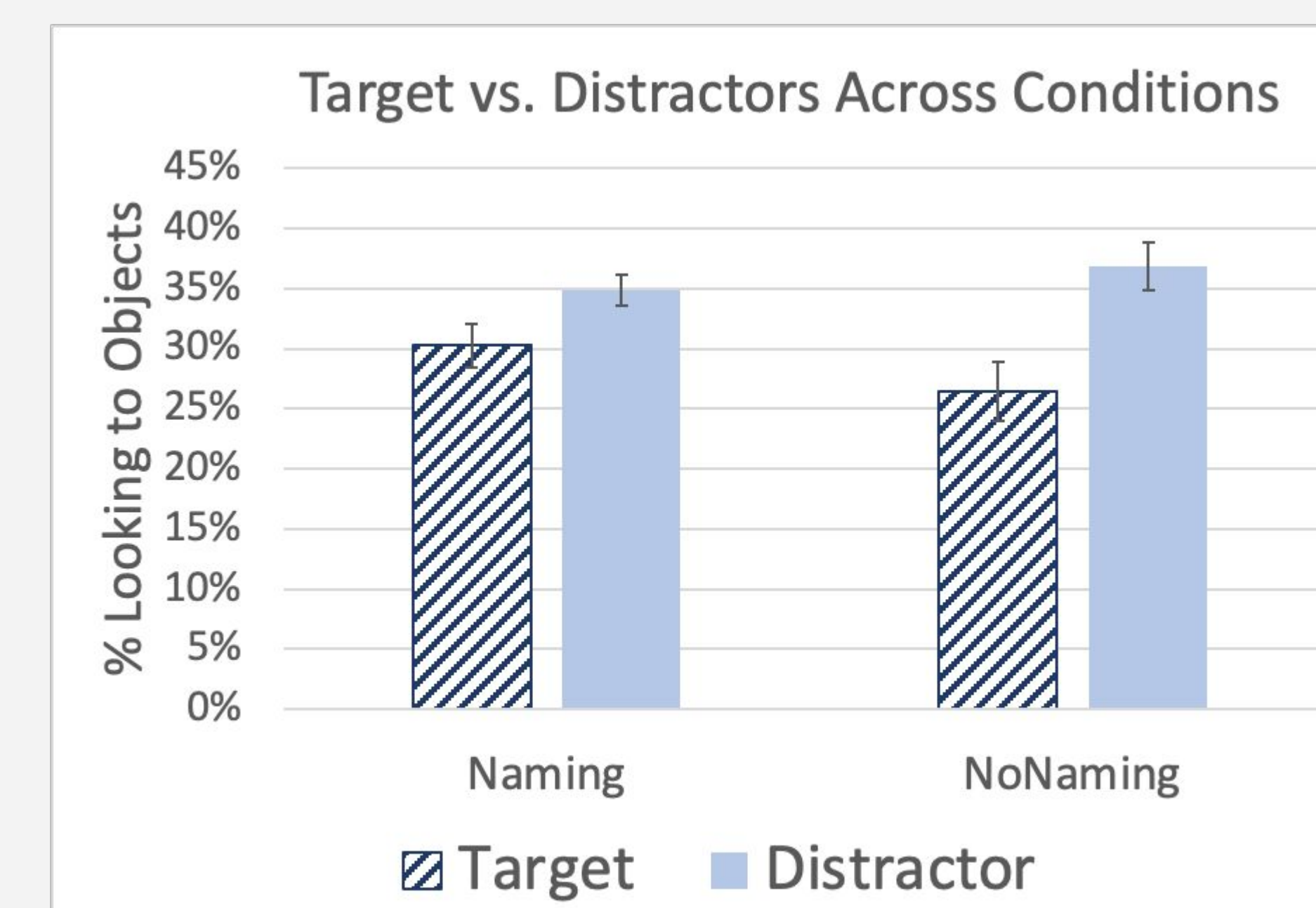


Figure 3. Percent looking time to targets vs. to distractors in both conditions. Error bars represent the 95% CIs.

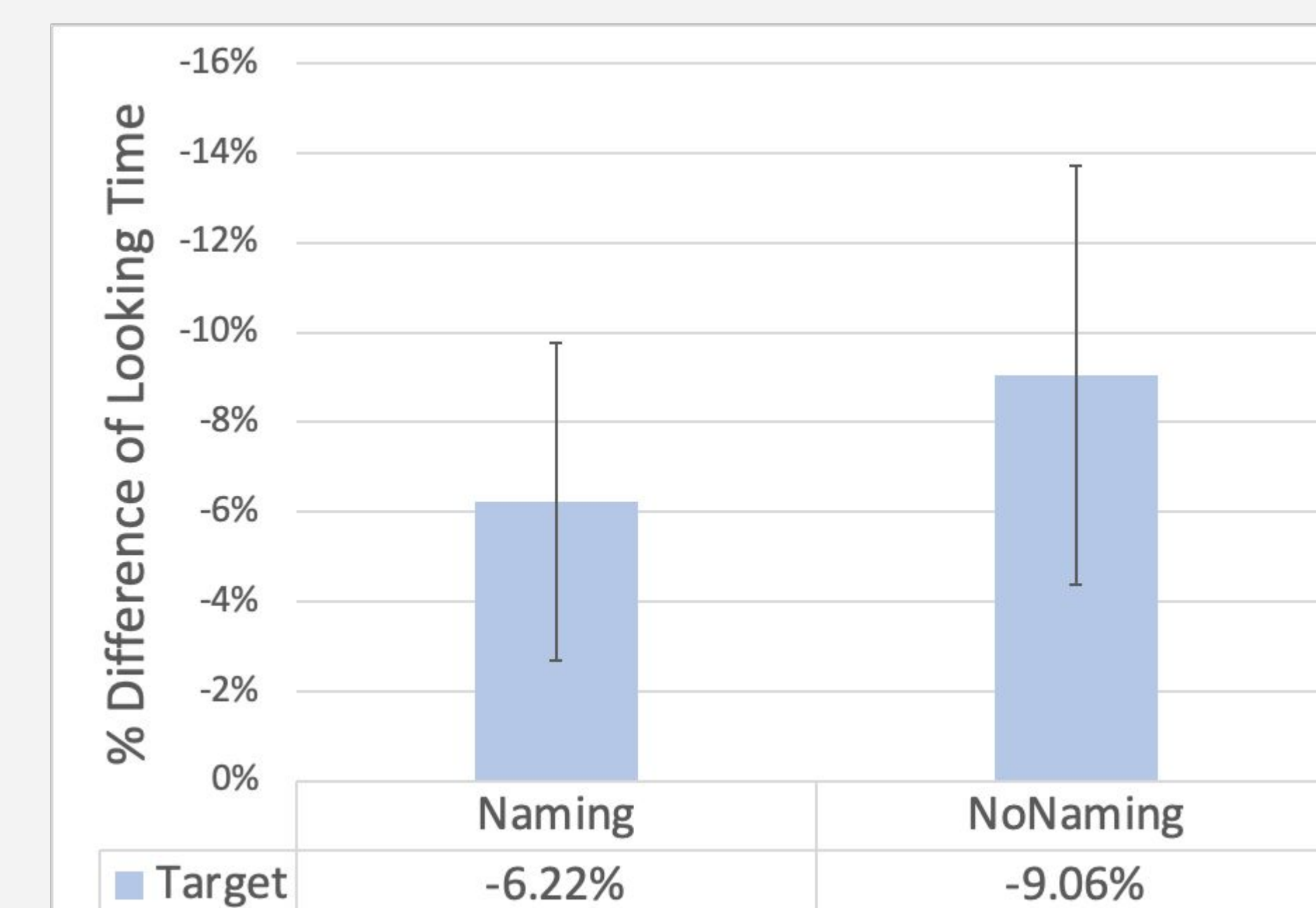


Figure 4. Percent difference of looking time between conditions. Error bars represent the 95% CIs.

Hypothesis #1:

Overall, participants in the naming condition will look more at the screen compared to participants in the no-naming condition

Hypothesis #2:

Infants in the naming condition will look more to the target objects compared to distractor objects

Discussion

- Learning is a complex concept to define.
- Since infants in the naming condition looked more to the targets compared to infants in the no-naming condition, this may indicate learning.
- These results support past research that even young infants are able to use cross-situational mechanisms to learn novel words.
- **Future research:** What role would the visual dominance of objects play in infant word learning?

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