

INTRODUCTION

Generics

Rule like statements that refer to categories rather than individuals
 Parents produce at low rates¹
 Have been found to facilitate category development and categorical induction^{2,3}

Research on Generics

Has focused on TD children
 Has used constrained experimental situations
 Parent/child interaction style during input rarely examined

Joint Attention



JA: a type of engagement in which the child and caregiver purposefully switch attention between each other and the same object of interest
 Reported to impact shape bias, other aspects of language development^{4,5}

Types of JA

IJA → child initiates, caregiver responds
 RJA → caregiver initiates, child responds
 passive attention (PA) → caregiver and child are focused on the same object, but the child does not look at or respond to the caregiver

Autism Spectrum Disorder and JA

JA is often restricted in ASD⁶
 By early school age category skills show differences^{7,8}
 Notable differences in categorical induction performance⁹

CURRENT PROJECT

Examine how frequently caregivers produce generics in naturalistic, at-home situations
 Capture how caregivers' generic production varies by JA type
 2 play sessions 4 months apart in-home, semi-structured, 30-minutes
 Sessions were recorded and transcribed then coded for JA types and parental production of generics:

Doggies like to play; Doggies say woof woof

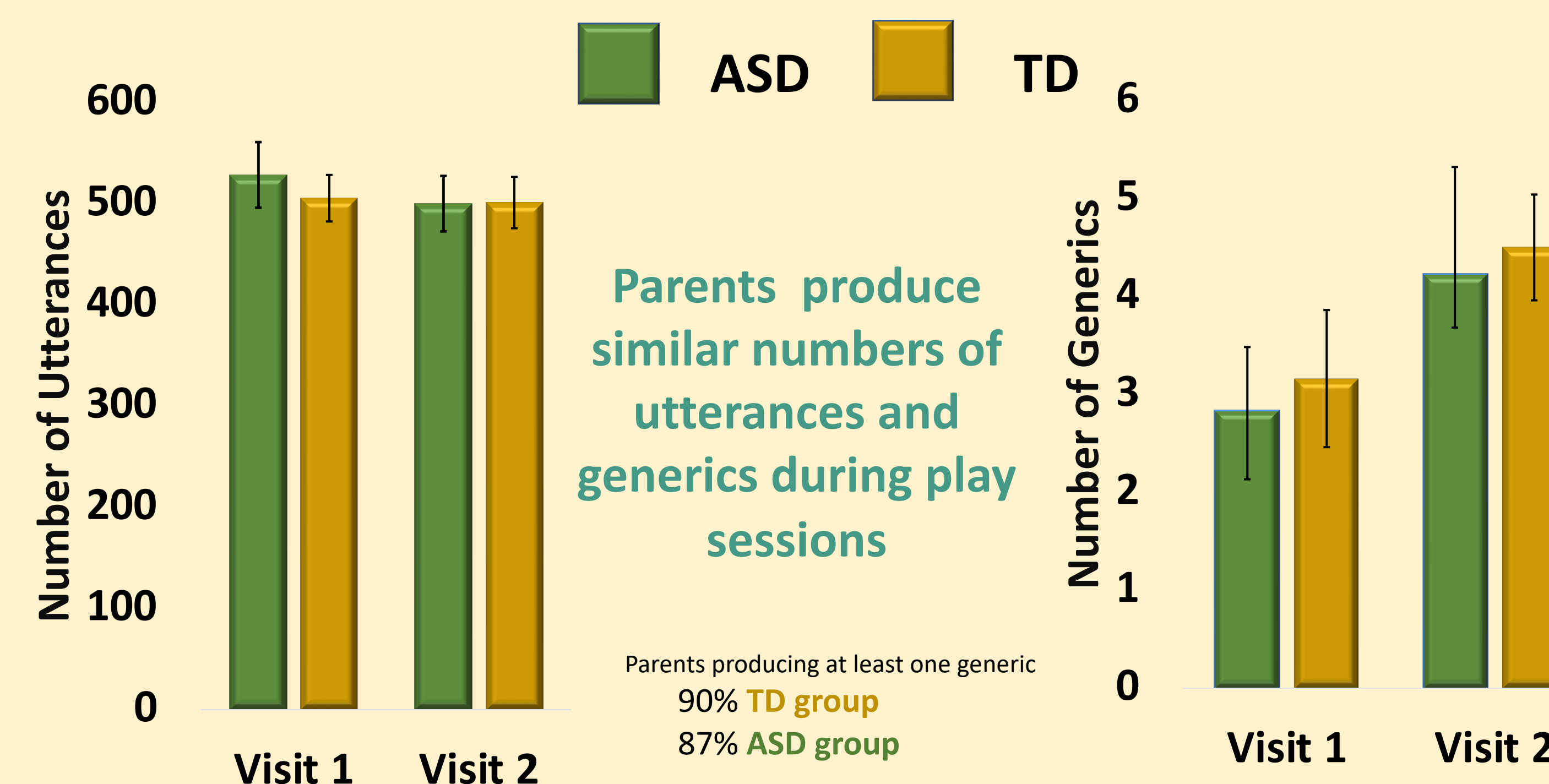
Participants

TD toddlers and toddlers with ASD matched on receptive language
 All toddlers were part of a longitudinal study of language in autism (LSEL)¹⁰

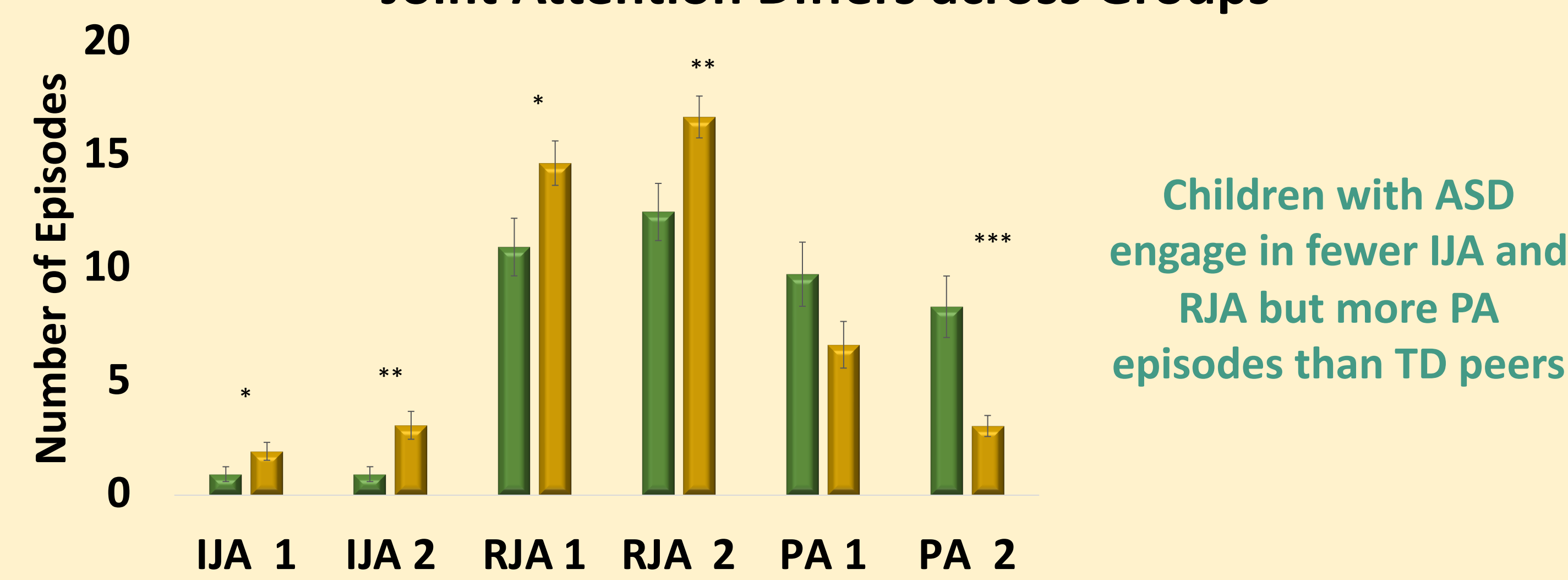
	n	Age months Visit 1 **	Receptive Language Mullen Scales of Early Learning Raw Scores
ASD	30	32.88 (5.5)	22.35 (8.3)
TD	32	20.29 (1.7)	24.39 (3.6)

RESULTS

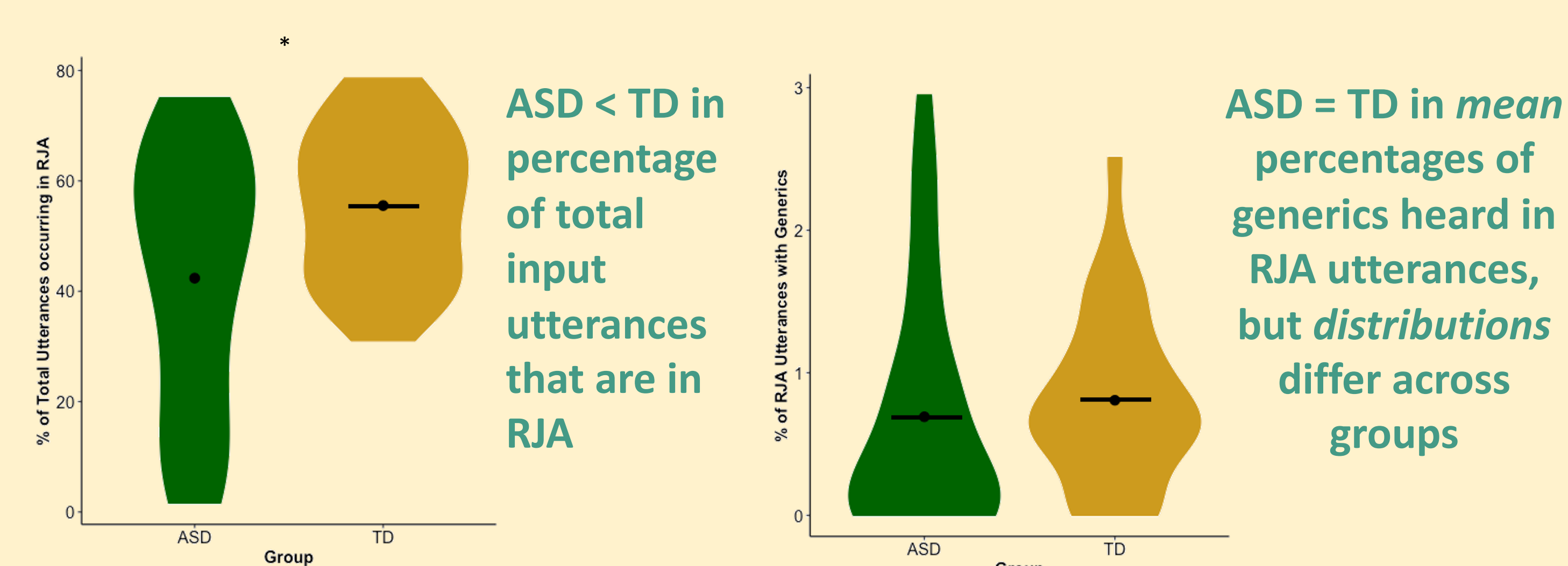
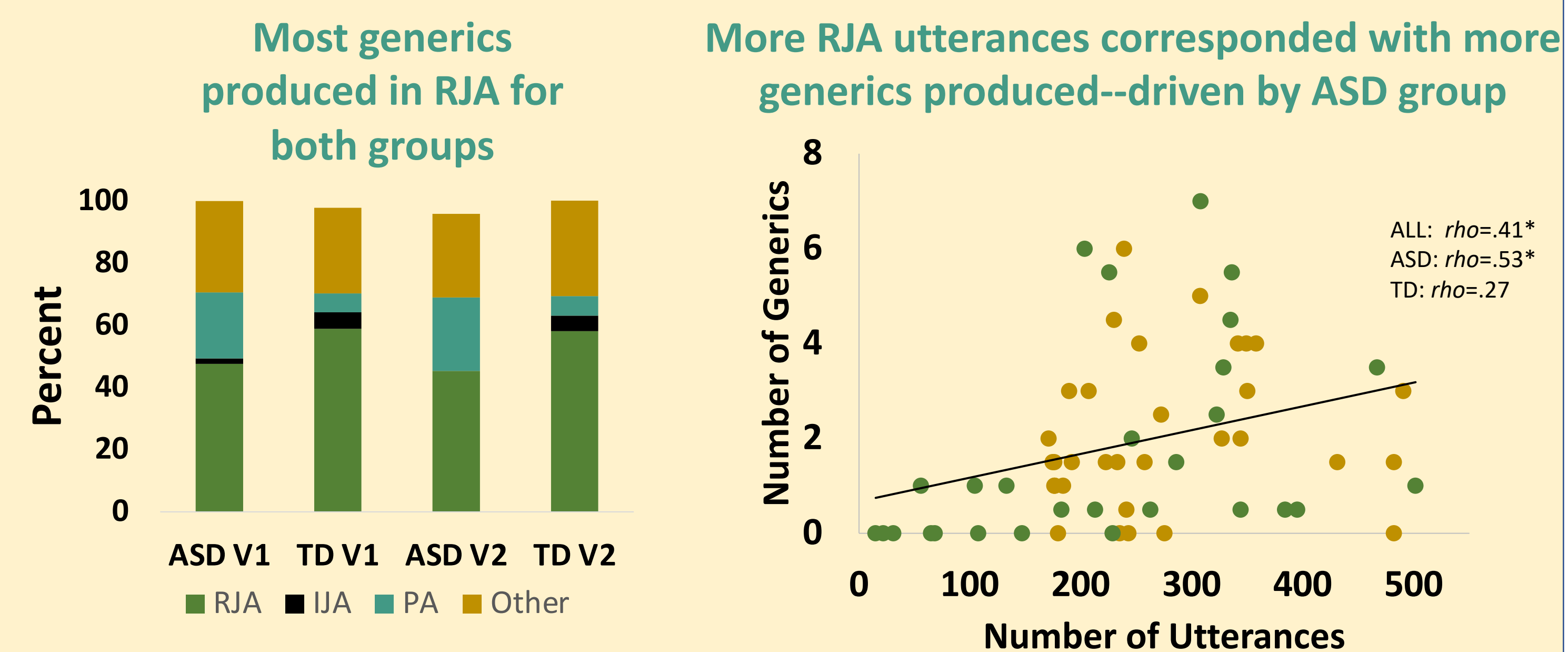
Parental Input Similar across Groups



Joint Attention Differs across Groups



RJA and Generics



Autistic toddlers are less responsive to caregiver joint attention bids than TD peers, potentially limiting exposure to generic statements that aid category learning



DISCUSSION

When toddlers are matched on receptive language ability parents of both TD and ASD groups produced similar numbers of generics and overall utterances

Parents produced more generics when their **child was responding** to their bid for joint attention



Toddlers in the TD group engaged in more RJA episodes than toddlers in the ASD group

Overtime this may lead to exposure to more generics in this optimal attentional state

Parents of the ASD group produced more generics during PA
 Parents are producing more generics when there is no clear sign their child is paying attention to them

Limited exposure to generics in RJA may impact how children come to understand and reason about categories

Future work

Examine impact of generics on categorical induction ability
 Examine difference of generics heard in PA vs RJA for ASD group

REFERENCES:

- Gelman, Ware, Kleinberg, Manczak, & Stilwell, (2014);
- Rhodes, Leslie, Bianchi, & Chalik, (2018);
- Wei, Kirby, Naigles & Rowe (2022);
- Abdelaziz, Kover, Wagner, & Naigles, (2019);
- Bottema-Beutel, (2016);
- Mundy, Sigman, Ungerer, & Sherman, (2013);
- Ellawadi, Fein, & Naigles, (2017);
- Gastgeb, Strauss, & Minshew, (2006)
- Naigles, Kelley, Troyb, & Fein, (2013);
- Naigles & Fein (2017)