

Attachment Preferences in Code-Switched Sentences

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Introduction

- Syntactic ambiguity occurs when a sentence structure allows for multiple interpretations of its meaning.
- How do patterns of code-switching affect Spanish-English bilinguals' resolution of attachment ambiguities in bilingual speech?
- According to MacSwan (2000) and Lopez et al. (2017), code-switching is syntactically constrained, meaning patterns of switching are predicted to influence how bilinguals resolve potentially ambiguous input.
- We conducted two experiments focusing on ambiguity in quantifier float and adverb attachment.

Methods

- Participants:
 - 51 Spanish-English bilinguals.
 - Foreign-born or born in the U.S.
 - Between the ages of 20 and 64.
 - Formal education ranging from high school diplomas to doctorate degrees.
 - All could speak, understand, write, and read in both English and Spanish.
 - Assigned to one of two counterbalanced lists.
- Procedure:
 - Short linguistic profile questionnaire on Google Forms.
 - Participants given a two forced-choice task with an "other" option.
- Stimuli:
 - Adverb Attachment and Quantifier-Float Attachment sentences in English or Spanish.

Research Objectives and Significance

- How does code-switching affect the interpretation of a sentence?
- Is code-switching syntactically constrained?

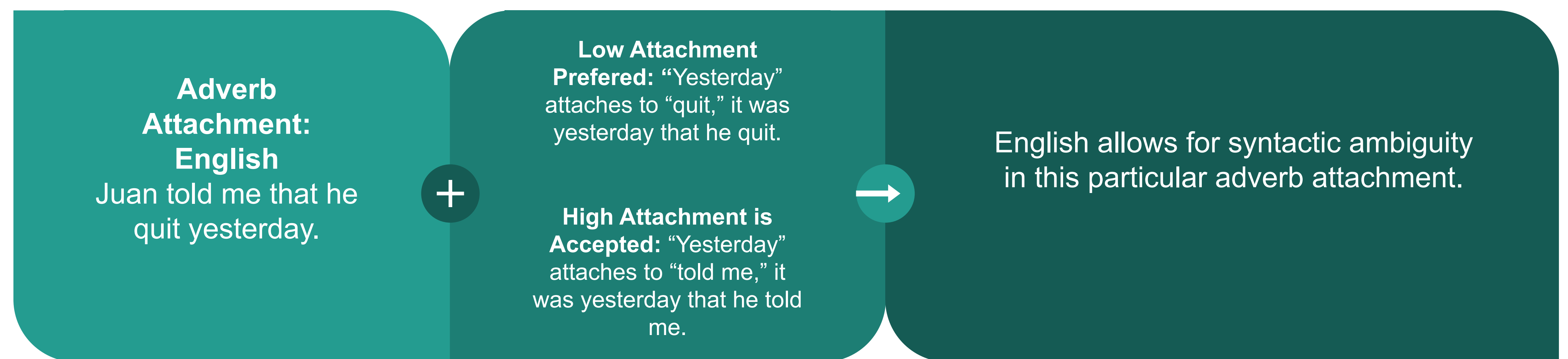
Conclusion

- Results indicate a tendency towards the hypothesized direction, though neither comparison reaches significance.
- Code-switching in both syntactic contexts shows a tendency for high attachment regardless of the language of the element they are attaching to.
- For Adverbials, participants preferred high attachment adverbs in Spanish as expected.
- For Quantifier-Float comparison, participants preferred high attachment more when the second object was code-switched in English.

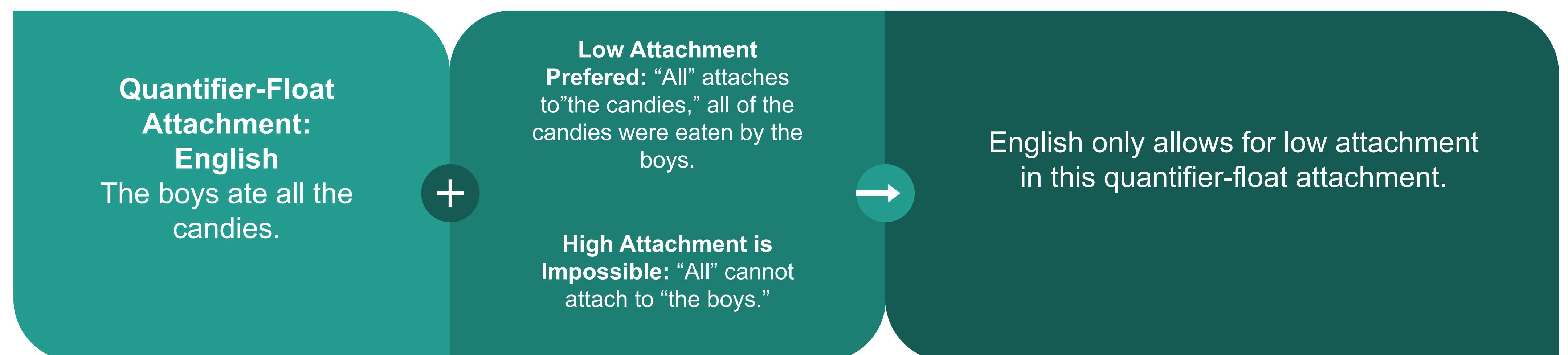
For future research: Increase the sample size to improve the statistical significance of the results.

References

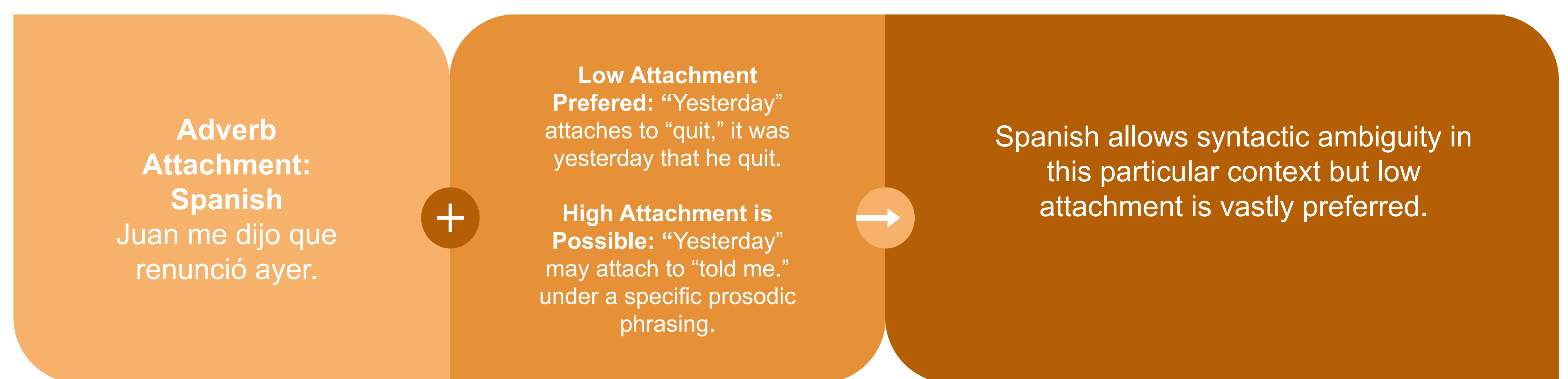
- López, L., Alexiadou, A., & Veenstra, T. (2017). Code-switching by phase. *Languages*, 2(3), 9.
- MacSwan, J. (2000). The architecture of the bilingual language faculty: Evidence from intrasentential codeswitching. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 3(1), 37–54.



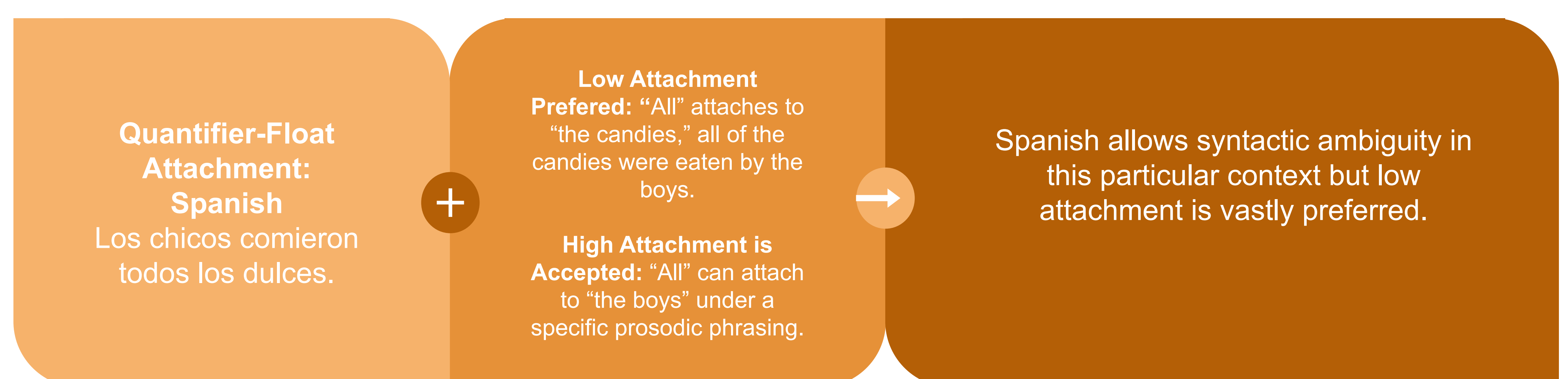
English allows for syntactic ambiguity in this particular adverb attachment.



English only allows for low attachment in this quantifier-float attachment.

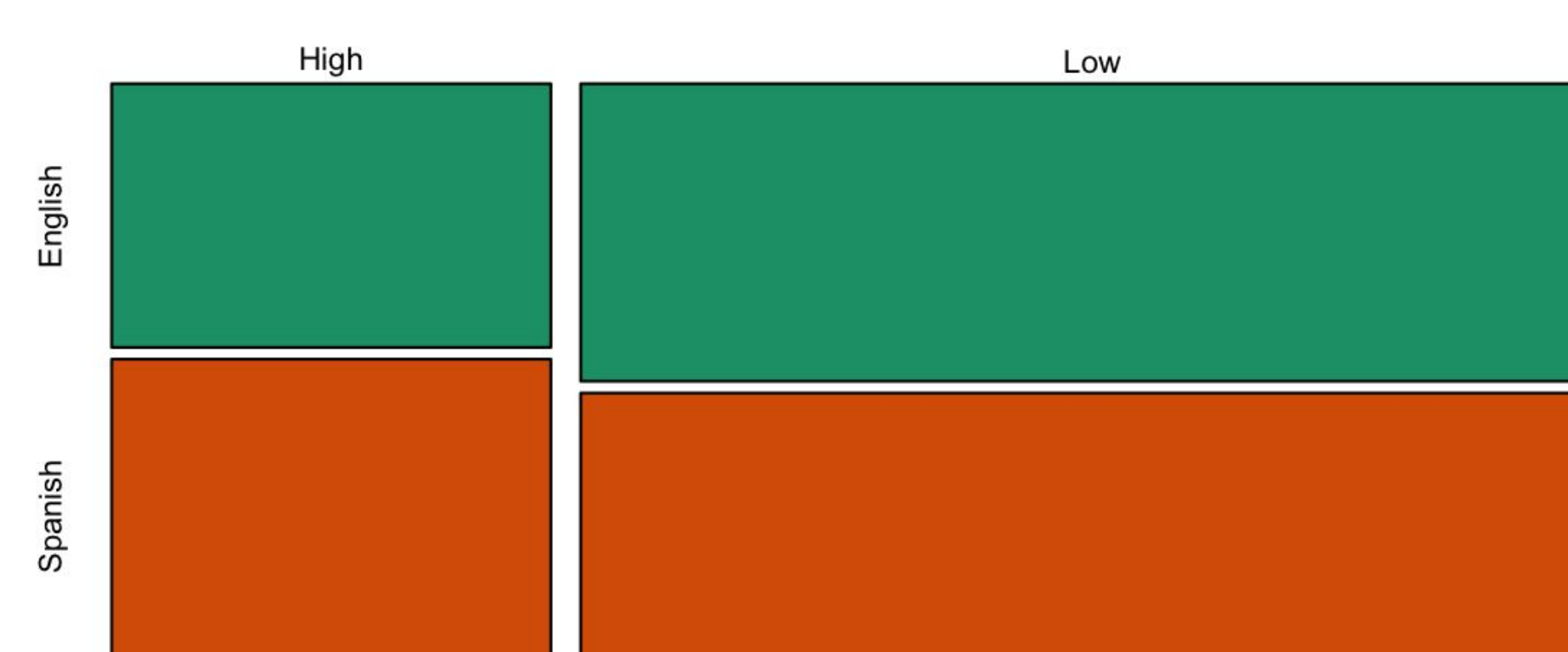


Spanish allows syntactic ambiguity in this particular context but low attachment is vastly preferred.

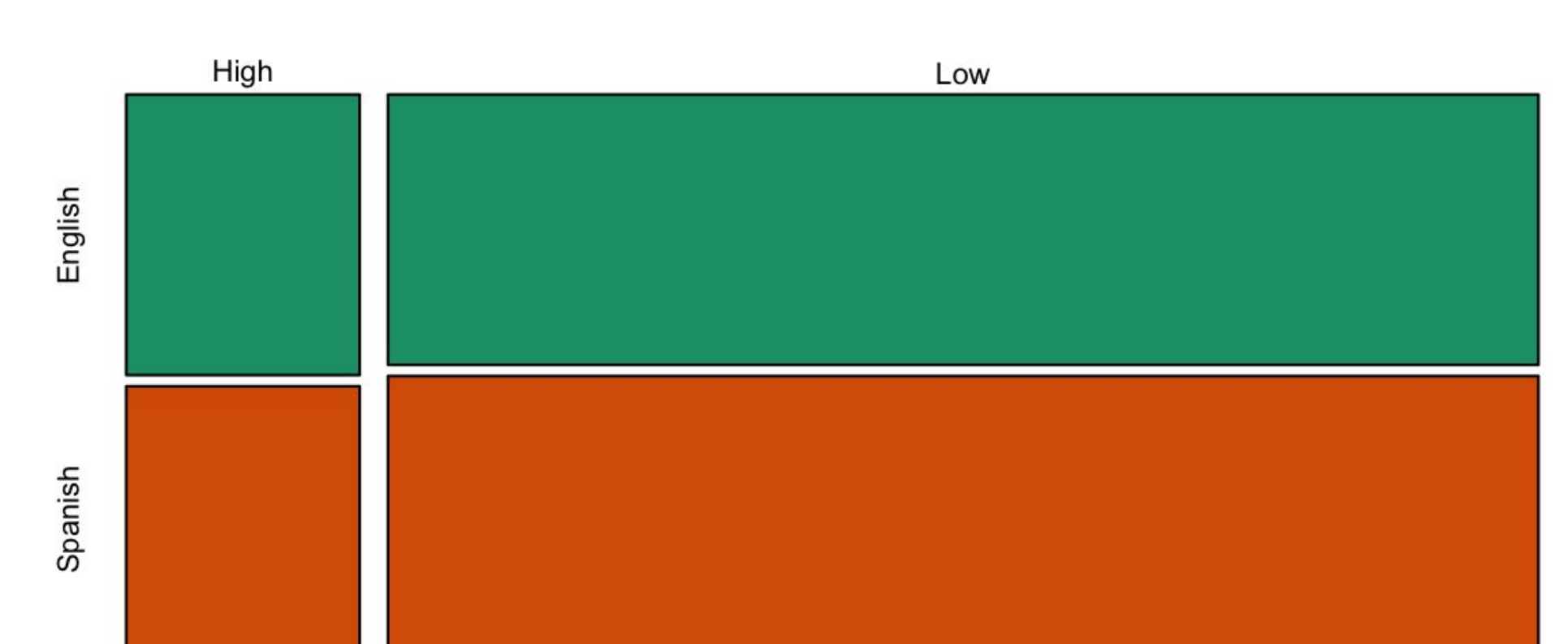


Spanish allows syntactic ambiguity in this particular context but low attachment is vastly preferred.

Adverbials subdesign, $p=.334$



Q-float subdesign, $p=.878$



(1) 'Juan told me that he quit yesterday.'

(2) 'The boys ate all the candies.'

- Juan me dijo that he quit **yesterday**.
- Juan me dijo that he quit **ayer**.

- Los chicos comieron todos **los dulces**.
- Los chicos comieron todos **the candies**.

Results

- General preference for low attachment regardless of language.

Adverbs

- Spanish High > English High.
- When the adverb is in Spanish there is a tendency to prefer high attachment compared to English.

Quantifier Float

- English High > Spanish High.
- When the noun phrase is in English there is a tendency for the quantifier to prefer high attachment compared to Spanish.