



Explaining Accusative Case Marking on Locative Arguments in South Bolivian Quechua

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Roadmap

- Bolivian Quechua
- The puzzle
- The solution
- Main takeaways



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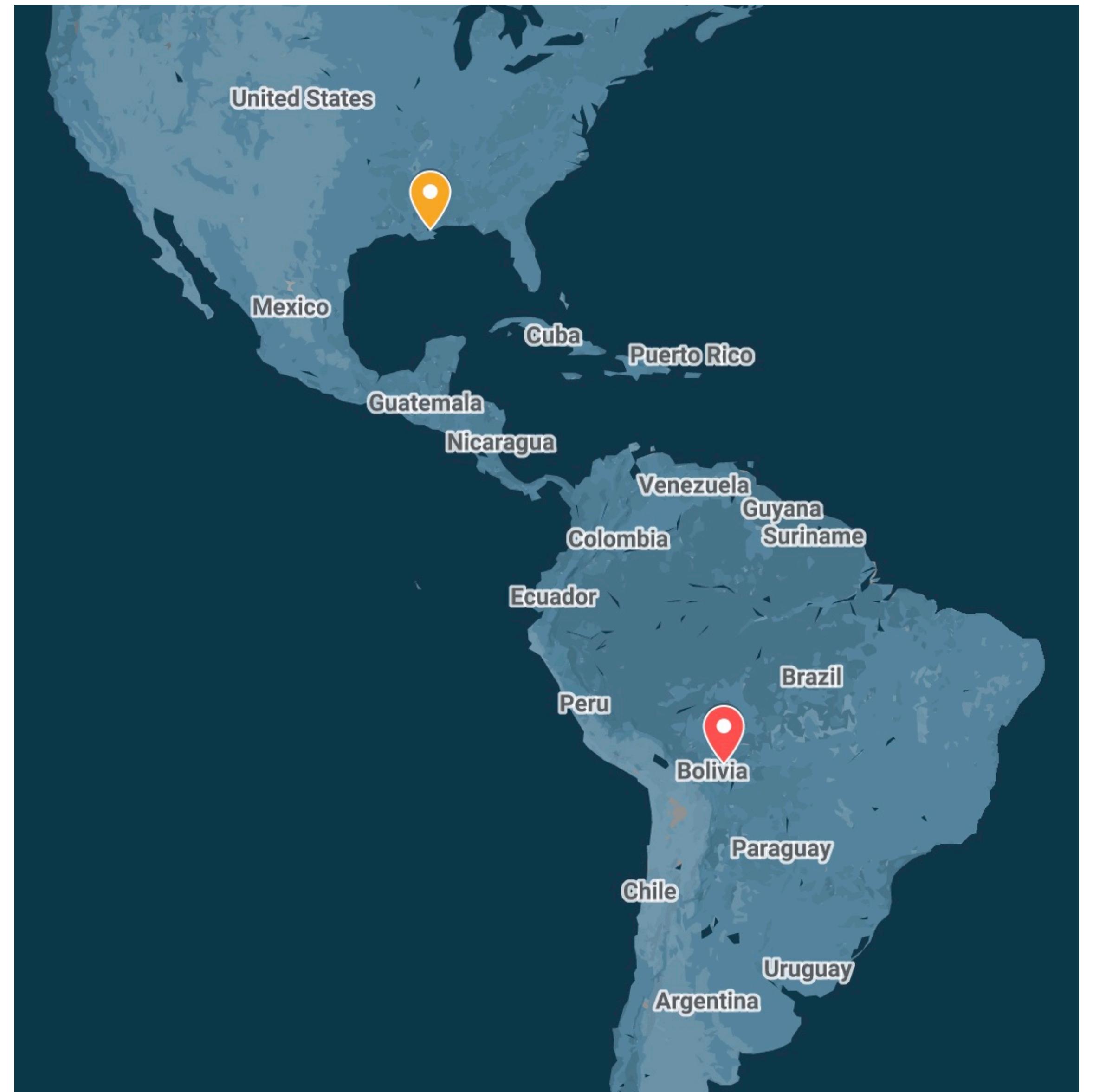
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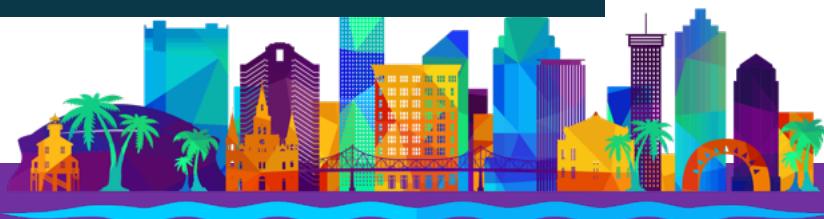
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Bolivia

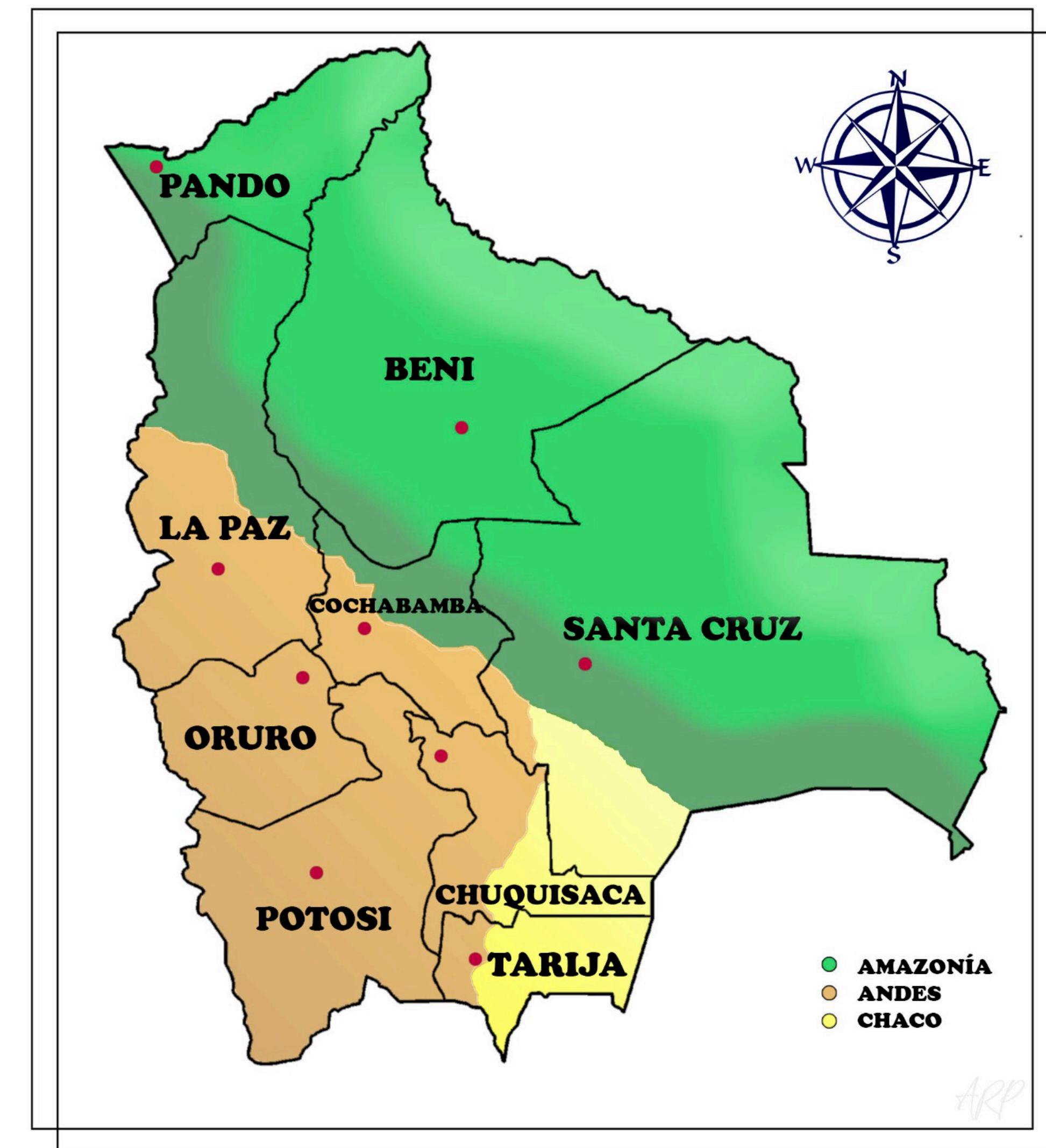


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Bolivia

Amazonia
Andes
Chaco



(Camacho Rios, Forthcoming)



Indigenous Languages in Bolivia

Quechua
Aymara
Uru

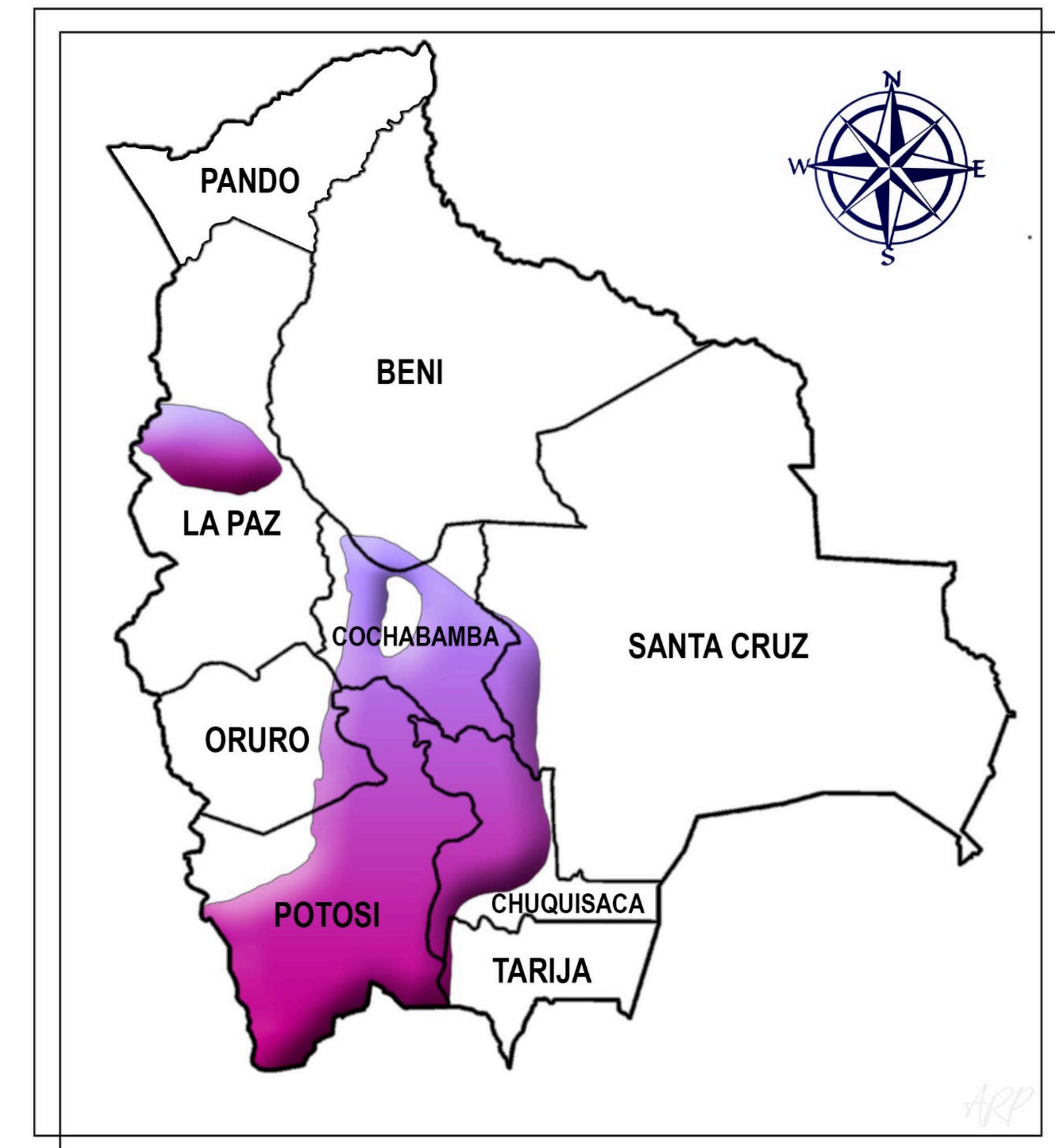


(Camacho Rios, Forthcoming)



Bolivian Quechua

- **South Bolivian Quechua (ISO 639-3: quh)**
 - Approximately 2 million speakers
 - Mainly spoken in 4 departments out of 9.
 - Cochabamba
 - Oruro
 - Potosí
 - Chuquisaca
- North Bolivian Quechua



(Camacho Rios, Forthcoming)



South Bolivian Quechua (SBQ)

- nominative–accusative language
 - *-ta* **ACCUSATIVE**
 - spatial case
 - *-pi* **LOCATIVE** ‘in’
 - *-man* **ALLATIVE** ‘to’
 - *-manta* **ABLATIVE** ‘from’

(Lastra, 1968)



Data collection

- Consultant: one SBQ native speaker (middle age, male, Spanish-Quechua bilingual, fluent in English).
- Session: Zoom meeting, November 8, 2024.
- Task: Sentence translation and Question-Answer matching task.



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Distributional variation

- only ACC is acceptable
- only LOC/ALL/ABL is acceptable
- both LOC/ALL/ABL and ACC are acceptable.



only ACC is acceptable

(1) intended: ‘Mister Isidru was crossing the street.’

- a. *Tata Isdru yan-pi pasa-sha-n
mister Isidro street-LOC cross-PROG-3SG.NF
- b. Tata Isdru yan-ta pasa-sha-n
mister Isidro street-ACC cross-PROG-3SG.NF



only LOC/ALL/ABL is acceptable

(2) intended: ‘Mister Isidru entered the house.’

- a. Tata Isidru wasi-man yayku-n
mister Isidru house-**ALL** enter-3SG.NF
- b. *Tata Isidru wasi-ta yayku-n
mister Isidru house-**ACC** enter-3SG.NF



both LOC/ALL/ABL and ACC are acceptable

- (3) a. Tata Isidru-q llajta-n-pi para-sha-n.
mister Isidru-GEN town-3SG.POSS-LOC rain-PROG-3SG.PRS
'It is raining in Mister Isidru's town.' 



both LOC/ALL/ABL and ACC are acceptable

- (3) a. Tata Isidru-q llajta-n-pi para-sha-n.
mister Isidru-GEN town-3SG.POSS-LOC rain-PROG-3SG.PRS
'It is raining **in** Mister Isidru's town.'
- b. Tata Isidru-q llajta-n-ta para-sha-n.
mister Isidru-GEN town-3SG.POSS-ACC rain-PROG-3SG.PRS
'It is raining **in** Mister Isidru's town.'



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Recap: Distributional variation

- only ACC is acceptable
- only LOC/ALL/ABL is acceptable
- both LOC/ALL/ABL and ACC are acceptable.



both LOC/ALL/ABL and Acc are acceptable

hypothesis: (3a) and (3b) are used in different contexts

- (3) a. Tata Isidru-q llajta-n-pi para-sha-n.
mister Isidru-GEN town-3SG.POSS-LOC rain-PROG-3SG.PRS
'It is raining **in** Mister Isidru's town.'
- b. Tata Isidru-q llajta-n-ta para-sha-n.
mister Isidru-GEN town-3SG.POSS-ACC rain-PROG-3SG.PRS
'It is raining **in** Mister Isidru's town.'



A discourse-pragmatic account

- Context A: The locative information is **newly introduced**.
Speaker 1: **Where** is the 2026 LSA annual meeting taking place?
Speaker 2: It is taking place **in New Orleans**.

(Malchukov & Spencer, 2012; Takahashi, 2011; Levin & Rappaport Hovav, 1994; (Hopper & Thompson, 1980).



A discourse-pragmatic account

- Context A: The locative information is **newly introduced**.
Speaker 1: **Where** is the 2026 LSA annual meeting taking place?
Speaker 2: It is taking place **in New Orleans**.
- Context B: The verbal event is **newly introduced**..
Speaker 1: **What is happening?**
Speaker 2: **The 2026 LSA annual meeting is taking place in New Orleans.**

(Malchukov & Spencer, 2012; Takahashi, 2011; Levin & Rappaport Hovav, 1994; (Hopper & Thompson, 1980).



When the locative information is newly introduced, use Loc/ALL/ABL

- (3) a. Context: **Where** it is raining?

Tata Isidru-q llajta-n-pi para-sha-n.
mister Isidru-GEN town-3SG.POSS-LOC rain-PROG-3SG.PRS

It is raining in **Mister Isidru's town.**



When the locative information is newly introduced, use **Loc/ALL/ABL**

(3) a. Context: **Where** it is raining?

Tata Isidru-q llajta-n-pi para-sha-n.
mister Isidru-GEN town-3SG.POSS-LOC rain-PROG-3SG.PRS

It is raining in **Mister Isidru's town.**

When the verbal event is **is** newly introduced, use **ACC**

b. Context: **What is happening?**

Tata Isidru-q llajta-n-ta para-sha-n.
mister Isidru-GEN town-3SG.POSS-ACC rain-PROG-3SG.PRS

It is **raining** in **Mister Isidru's town.**



When the locative information is newly introduced, use Loc/ALL/ABL

(4) a. Context: **Where** is Mister Isidro going?

‘Mister Isidro is going to **Buffalo**.’

Tata Isidru Buffalo-**MAN** ri-sha-n.

Mister Isidru Buffalo-**ALL** go-PROG-3SG.PRS



When the locative information is newly introduced, use **Loc/ALL/ABL**

(4) a. Context: **Where** is Mister Isidro going?

'Mister Isidro is going to **Buffalo**.'

Tata Isidru Buffalo-**MAN** ri-sha-n.

Mister Isidru Buffalo-**ALL** go-PROG-3SG.PRS



When the verbal event is **is** newly introduced, use **ACC**

b. Context: What is Mister Isidru **doing**?

'Mister Isidro is **going** to Buffalo.'

Tata Isidru Buffalo-**ta** ri-sha-n.

Mister Isidru Buffalo-**Acc** go-PROG-3SG.PRS



Solution

- ✓ • both LOC/ALL/ABL and ACC are acceptable
 - When the locative information is newly introduced, use LOC/ALL/ABL
 - When the verbal event is is newly introduced, use ACC
- only ACC is acceptable
- only LOC/ALL/ABL is acceptable



only ACC is acceptable

The Proto-Patient Constraint

When locative arguments instantiate one or more key proto-patient properties, use ACC

- a. change of state
- b. incremental theme
- c. causally affected by another participant
- d. stationary relative to another participant
- e. does not exist independently of the event or not at all

(Dowty 1991: 572-574)



only ACC is acceptable

The Proto-Patient Constraint

When locative arguments instantiate one or more key proto-patient properties, use ACC

- (1) intended: ‘Mister Isidru was crossing the street.’
- a. *Tata Isdru yan-pi pasa-sha-n
mister Isidro street-LOC cross-PROG-3SG.PST
- b. Tata Isdru yan-ta pasa-sha-n
mister Isidro street-ACC cross-PROG-3SG.PST



Solution

- ✓ • both LOC/ALL/ABL and ACC are acceptable,
 - When the locative information is newly introduced, use LOC/ALL/ABL
 - When the verbal event is is newly introduced, use ACC
- ✓ • only ACC is acceptable
 - The Proto-Patient Constraint: When locative arguments instantiate one or more key proto-patient properties, use ACC
- only LOC/ALL/ABL is acceptable
 -



only LOC/ALL/ABL is acceptable

The Agreement Constraint:

When verb root and/or verbal suffix encodes **directionality**, use LOC/
ALL/ABL

- (2) a. Tata Isidru wasi-man yayku-n
mister Isidru house-**ALL** ✓ enter-3SG.PST
- b. *Tata Isidru wasi-ta yayku-n
mister Isidru house-**ACC** ✗ enter-3SG.PST

‘Mister Isidru entered the house.’



only LOC/ALL/ABL is acceptable

The Agreement Constraint:

When verb root and/or verbal suffix encodes **directionality**, use LOC/
ALL/ABL

- (5) a. Tata Isidru Bolivia-man kuti-**pu**-sha-n
mister Isidru Bolivia-**ALL** return-**backward**-PROG-3SG.PST
- b. *Tata Isidru Bolivia-ta **✓** kuti-**pu**-sha-n
mister Isidru Bolivia-**ACC** return-**backward**-PROG-3SG.PST **✗**

‘Mister Isidru is returning to Bolivia.’



only LOC/ALL/ABL is acceptable

The Competition Constraint:

To avoid argument structure ambiguity when another noun is already marked with ACC, use LOC/ALL/ABL

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------|---------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| (6) | a. | Tata | Isisdru | ch'uñu- ta | yaku- pi | chullu-chi-n. |
| | | nister | Isidru | dried.potato-ACC | water-LOC | soak-CAUS-3SG.NF |
| | b. | *Tata | Isisdru | ch'uñu- ta | yaku- ta | chullu-chi-n. |
| | | mister | Isidru | dried.potato-ACC | water-ACC | soak-CAUS-3SG.NF |
- The word 'yaku' is highlighted in yellow. The word 'ta' is highlighted in green. The word 'ACC' is highlighted in green. The word 'LOC' is highlighted in yellow. A red checkmark is placed over the yellow-highlighted 'LOC' in the second row. A large red 'X' is placed over the green-highlighted 'ACC' in the fourth row.

‘Mister Isidru makes soak the dried potato in water.’ (Intended)



Solution

- ✓ • both LOC/ALL/ABL and ACC are acceptable,
 - When the locative information is newly introduced, use LOC/ALL/ABL
 - When the verbal event is is newly introduced, use ACC
- ✓ • only ACC is acceptable
 - The Proto-Patient Constraint: When locative arguments instantiate one or more key proto-patient properties, use ACC
- ✓ • only LOC/ALL/ABL is acceptable
 - The Agreement Constraint
 - The Competition Constraint



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Main takeaways

- In South Bolivian Quechua, case markings on spatial arguments vary.
- **An interacting view that Integrates pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic perspectives for explaining morphological phenomenon:**
 - both Loc/ALL/ABL and ACC are acceptable
 - Pragmatic: Information status
 - only ACC is acceptable
 - Semantic: The Proto-Patient Constraint
 - only Loc/ALL/ABL is acceptable
 - Syntactic: The Agreement Constraint & The Competition Constraint



Future directions

- Test the hypothesis with naturalistic conversational data and narrative storytelling data
- Language contact: Some Quechua-Spanish bilinguals prefer using accusative case marking over the locative case markers.



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Thank You

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