

Unlocking evaluative verb morphology in a Central Andean Oral Story

Gladys Camacho-Rios

University at Buffalo, SUNY

gcamacho@buffalo.edu

Juan Zhong

University at Buffalo, SUNY

juanzhon@buffalo.edu

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The intersection of language and emotion is frequently studied through prosody and the lexicon, yet the grammaticalization of affect, especially in understudied, morphologically complex languages, remains comparatively underexplored (Besnier 1990; Wierzbicka 1999; Wilce 2009; Beatty 2010; van Berkum 2022). This paper shows that Central Bolivian Quechua has a dedicated affective verbal suffix *-ri* that adds an expressive layer of meaning (a joyful/pleased stance) without changing truth conditions i.e., (1).

(1) An added expressive meaning (Camacho-Rios 2022: 97)

sach'itá qhalla qallitalla t'ikaririn maravillata.

sach'-itá	qhalla	qall-ita-lla	t'ika-ri-ri-n	maravilla-ta
crop-DIM.ACC	bright	bright-DIM-DISTR	bloom-INCH-AFF-3SG	beautiful-ACC

Descriptive: 'Herbs that reach brightness start to bloom beautifully.'

Expressive: **The speaker is happy about** the herbs' blooming (around her town).

Quechua languages are spoken across the Andes of South America, and current work treats Quechua as a family comprising roughly a dozen distinct languages (Camacho-Rios et al. 2024). The analysis thus contributes an empirically grounded case study from a less-studied Quechuan variety, directly addressing how evaluative values are grammatically encoded and what motivates their use in discourse (Grandi & Körtvélyessy 2015; Merlini Barbaresi & Dressler 2020). Data comes from a traditional Central Andean oral story, *Atuqmantawan Imillasmantawan* "The Fox and the Girls", part of a collection of oral stories audio- and video-recorded from 2023 to 2024 in Bolivia. In this paper, we ask: (i) what expressive value *-ri* contributes in storytelling, and (ii) how the suffix's evaluative orientation is regulated by oral storytelling strategies.

Two findings support a morphopragmatic account. First, *-ri* does not modify the descriptive proposition; instead, it contributes an expressive dimension indexing storyteller's or character's emotions i.e., (2). This motivates a two-tier analysis separating descriptive and expressive meaning, extending multidimensional treatments of expressives from the lexicon or phrases to derivational morphology (Potts 2007). Second, the interpretation of *-ri* depends on how the storyteller structures participation and perspective using a variety of strategies. There are four recurring oral storytelling strategies conditioning whether the storyteller's and/or the character's affect is expressed: Quotation,

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