

Variation in spatial deictic words in varieties of Spanish*

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Abstract: This paper explores the regional variation in Spanish spatial deictics ending in *-í* and *-á*. While various attempts have been made to define the difference between the two classes of deictics, there has been no consensus on their meanings. This inconsistency in the literature may be due to the variation of deictics in both usage and meaning across varieties of Spanish. Written and oral data from corpora demonstrate that while *aquí* is used more frequently in all varieties, *acá* has higher representation in certain regions than others (particularly in the Cono Sur region of South America). Elicitation data and native speaker judgements from one Cono Sur variety, Chile, and one non-Cono Sur variety, Peru, reflect not only a difference in frequency, but a difference in deictic meaning. In Chilean Spanish, *-á* deictics have ego-centric deixis insensitive to specificity, while in Peruvian Spanish they have diffuse, non-specific deixis.

Keywords: spatial, deixis, Spanish, variation, corpus

1 Introduction

This paper investigates two deictic word pairs of note in Spanish — *aquí* and *acá* (meaning roughly ‘here’), as well as *allí* and *allá* (meaning roughly ‘there’). In traditional descriptions of these words, the *-í* forms are said to pair with verbs of rest, while the *-á* forms are said to pair with verbs of motion (Sacks 1954). Indeed, Spanish grammarians have long maintained this static-dynamic contrast in their formal definitions of the *-í* and *-á* variants, respectively (Salva 1859, as cited in Pablo 1990; Bello 1972, as cited in Sedano 2000). Sacks states that this contrast is maintained in part because “the dogmatic presentation of rules occasioned the need for conciseness in school grammars” (1954:265). The Real Academia Española, on the other hand, has labeled the variants as synonyms (RAE 1920). Lately however, a small body of literature has emerged which challenges the traditional, prescriptive definitions of these words, and points to a number of other pragmatic and semantic contrasts which may be observed in the actual usage of these deictic words. These include contrasts such as: whether a space is being described in relation to another (Pablo 1990), definiteness or specificity of the space (Sedano 2000), and the level of subjectivity and ego-centricity which the deictic word encodes (Maldonado 2013). These various descriptions are discussed further in Section 2.2.

Indeed, it is clear that more recent descriptions of these deictic variants challenge the traditional descriptions of how the *-í* and *-á* variants contrast. Our paper seeks to expand upon this recent literature by doing the following: investigating and summarizing the literature on these deictic words and the regional variation that is observed in their usage (Section 2); using corpora to investigate which variants are used more or less often in various regional dialects, and whether or not certain variants are used more frequently in spoken Spanish as opposed to written Spanish (Section 3); and conducting elicitation tasks and interviews with native Spanish speakers from different backgrounds in order to judge their everyday usage of these deictic variants (Section 4).

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Throughout the paper, we seek to substantiate the proposal that, while *-á* deictics are used much less frequently overall, certain dialects use them at higher rates than others, and that they are used disproportionately more often in spoken Spanish as opposed to written Spanish. This variation in usage rates correlates with variations in the meaning of *-á* deictics cross-regionally. Finally, we conclude with a discussion in Section 5, which seeks to consolidate the various proposals in the literature, as well as the findings of our preliminary research.

2 Background

2.1 Description of Spatial Deictic System

There are five different lexical items in Spanish for the words that distinguish ‘here’ and ‘there’ (organized them in Table 1). These five deictics can be broken down into at least three categories of spatial proximity. The words *aquí* and *acá* index an area in close proximity to the speaker, or “in this place” (RAE 2018), similar to the English *here*. *Ahí* indexes something which is farther away than the first two deictics, but which is within sight of the speaker and the addressee, or is subjectively not too far away, similar to ‘over there’ in English (Maldonado 2013). *Allá* and *allí* reference some area which is far away from the speaker, and which may or may not be close to the addressee, or is in “some other place” (RAE 2018), similar to ‘there’ in English.

Table 1: Spatial deictic words in Spanish and gloss

-V	here (close)	there (near)	there (far)
<i>-í</i>	<i>aquí</i>	<i>ahí</i>	<i>allí</i>
<i>-á</i>	<i>acá</i>		<i>allá</i>

The deictics meaning ‘here’ and ‘there’ can be further divided by whether they end in *-í* or *-á*, so that the difference between *aquí* and *acá* is often analysed to be the same as the difference between *allí* and *allá* (Pablo 1990; Stradioto & Maldonado 2018). As mentioned previously, there is disagreement in the classification of these deictic contrasts. The following section will explore these disagreements, focusing primarily on the words for ‘here’, and their use across different varieties of Spanish.

2.2 Literature Review: Descriptions of *aquí* and *acá*

Various approaches have been used in describing the difference between *aquí* and *acá*. The Real Academia Española (RAE) is the prescriptive norm-setter and settler of linguistic debates in the Spanish-speaking world (Paffey 2007). The RAE has maintained, until very recently, that *-í* and *-á* deictics are synonymous (RAE 1920). This has done little to clear the confusion around the patterning of these deictics. In absence of a better explanation from the RAE, grammarians have upheld the traditional explanation, passed down from Latin grammar (Maldonado 2013), that *-í* deictics are used with static verbs, and *-á* deictics are used with verbs of motion (Pablo 1990). This appears to reflect the use of these deictics in Spain until recently, though there is now evidence that *aquí* is winning out over *acá* even in the context of motion verbs (Maldonado 2013). Furthermore, it does not appear that this distinction adequately describes the Spanish of Latin America. Indeed, it has been noticed that there are many counter examples where *-á* deictics are used with static verbs and *-í* deictics used with verbs of motion (Sacks 1954; Pablo 1990). The static-dynamic distinction

appears to therefore not be adequate. There have been numerous attempts to define the division using different parameters, which are outlined below.

It has been argued separately that *-á* and *-í* deictics differ in terms of their relativity or their specificity. According to Pablo (1990), *acá* and *allá* reference some space as it exists in relation to somewhere else. In contrast, *aquí* and *allí* signal a space which is not viewed in comparison to another. Others argue that the division lies not in relativity but in the degree of specificity, with *acá* referring to a diffuse general area, while *aquí* references a specific, delimited area (Sedano 2000; Sacks 1954). This type of contrast is similar to the contrast between definiteness and indefiniteness. When the Real Academia Española updated its stance on the meaning of the Spanish deictics in 2001, this is the position they adopted (RAE 2001, as cited in Maldonado 2013).

In another interpretation, the difference between *-á* and *-í* deictics is their level of subjectivity. Maldonado (2013:290) argues that *acá* is “profoundly subjective” in that it references an area which is conceptualized as closer to the speaker than *aquí* and involves greater ego-centricity, foregrounding the speaker’s relation to the deictic space. On the other hand, *aquí* is labelled as “quasi-objective”, as it references a space close to the speaker, but slightly more distant, thus providing greater objectivity. The author argues that this difference in distance is what creates the subjectivity of *acá*. This is a notable difference in comparison to other theories, contradicting the analysis proposed by Sedano (2000). The two approaches are not necessarily incompatible, as, if the area of *acá* is diffuse and the area of *aquí* is specific, then it’s more likely that the speaker will be within the area dominated by *acá*, whereas the smaller defined area indexed by *aquí* may fall within or outside of that area associated with the self. Nonetheless, Maldonado (2013) rejects the diffuse-specific analysis. This is because the phrase *por aquí* (meaning ‘around here’) is attested, despite the fact that *por* is used to index a general or diffuse area. Thus, if the *-í* deictic were specific, Maldonado reasons that *por aquí* should not be a possible construction.

2.3 Regional Variation

In addition to the disagreement as to what type of deixis is indexed by *acá* and *aquí*, it appears that there is also regional variation in terms of how the deictic system is organized. Table 2 shows the deictic systems of three varieties of Spanish in the speech of upper-middle class individuals, based on research done by Sedano (1995 as cited in Sedano 2000). Deictic items used less than 10% of the time were excluded.

Table 2: Deictic variation by region

Madrid	Caracas	Buenos Aires
<i>aquí</i>	<i>aquí</i>	<i>acá</i>
<i>ahí</i>	<i>ahí</i>	<i>ahí</i>
<i>allí</i>	<i>allí/allá</i>	<i>allí/allá</i>

This data demonstrates regional differences in the use of deictics. Since the frequency of deictics differ across regions, this may indicate a difference in the indexicality of deictics cross-regionally. To explore this possibility, we looked at the *-í* and *-á* deictics across different varieties of Spanish, using corpora and elicitation data.

3 Corpus Data

3.1 The Corpus del Español: NOW

We have turned to The Corpus del Español in order to gauge with what frequency the *-á* forms are used compared to the *-í* forms. Table 3 looks at the NOW Corpus (News on the Web), a subset of The Corpus del Español, which contains, as of writing, over 6 billion words of text, sourced from various news publications (Davies 2018). Additionally, the NOW Corpus is the most recent addition to The Corpus del Español, having been established in August of 2018, and is updated monthly to add millions more words of data (Davies 2018). Because of its size and the frequency with which the corpus is updated, we believe NOW will supply us with a fairly accurate portrait of the distribution of the *-á* and *-í* forms. However, we must recognize that the words found in this corpus, and their distributions, most likely do not reflect their actual usage in colloquial speech. Because these words are sourced largely from news publications, the distributions of some of these words might favor those which are associated with more formal or educated speech. For instance, we know that in Spain, the *-í* forms of these deictic words are prescribed and favoured in academic settings, while the *-á* forms have been discouraged and considered incorrect when used with static verbs (Pablo 1990). And indeed, while the *-í* forms are heavily favoured in most cases (as tables 3 and 4 will show), it might also be the case that the *-á* forms are a fair bit more common in everyday speech. Thus, we may only take the data below as representing a rough estimate at the distributions of these forms.

3.2 NOW Corpus: *aquí* and *acá*

Table 3: Distribution of *aquí* and *acá* in the NOW Corpus, by country

Country	<i>acá</i> (opm ¹)	<i>aquí</i> (opm)	<i>acá</i> and <i>aquí</i> (opm)	Percentage (%) <i>acá</i>	Percentage (%) <i>aquí</i>
Mexico	19.36	328.19	347.55	5.57	94.43
Guatemala	70.69	910.49	981.18	7.20	92.80
Honduras	39.39	365.16	404.55	9.74	90.26
Nicaragua	43.45	361.16	404.61	10.74	89.26
El Salvador	73.62	254.17	327.79	22.46	77.54
Costa Rica	59.31	226.35	285.66	20.76	79.24
Panama	19.30	286.49	305.79	6.31	93.69
Cuba	36.27	503.34	539.61	6.72	93.28
Puerto Rico	31.27	439.89	471.16	6.64	93.36
Dominican Rep.	9.81	287.50	297.31	3.30	96.70
Venezuela	45.85	384.44	430.29	10.66	89.34
Colombia	71.84	807.76	879.6	8.17	91.83
Ecuador	38.35	292.05	330.40	11.61	88.39
Peru	60.32	261.12	321.44	18.77	81.23
Chile	143.96	251.31	395.27	36.42	63.58
Bolivia	38.94	162.61	201.55	19.32	80.68
Paraguay	124.15	129.33	253.48	48.98	51.02
Uruguay	157.03	234.26	391.29	40.13	59.87
Argentina	167.31	193.47	360.78	46.37	53.63
Spain	3.62	339.80	343.42	1.05	98.95

¹ opm = occurrences per million, i.e. number of instances of this word per million words in a country's dataset.

Table 3 presents us with some interesting findings. The most immediate of which is that *aquí* is found more frequently than *acá* in the datasets of all countries. However, the ratio with which *aquí* is used compared to *acá* is not even across all countries. For instance, the data sourced from Mexico presented us with only 19.36 instances of the word *acá* per million words in its dataset, and by comparison, the same data from Mexico presented us with 328.19 instances of *aquí*. Combined, there were a total of 347.55 instances of either *acá* or *aquí* per million words in the dataset, but of that amount, the instances of *acá* made up only 5.57%. Clearly, in terms of overall usage, *acá* is far behind, at least in the data sourced from Mexican publications. Many other countries show a similar pattern in terms of percentage use of *acá* to that of Mexico.

There do appear to be a number of countries that use *acá* slightly more frequently, however. El Salvador, Costa Rica, Peru, and Bolivia (which we label Group 1) all hover around 20% in their percentage use of *acá*. Additionally, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina (which we label Group 2) show an even greater jump in their percentage use of *acá*, with numbers ranging from 36.42% to 48.98%. All countries not featured in Groups 1 or 2 show a negligible number of instances of *acá* per million words in their datasets. That is, their usage of *acá* makes up roughly 10% or less of all instances of *acá* or *aquí* per million words in their respective datasets. The most extreme of these *aquí*-preferring countries is Spain, whose dataset shows a mere 3.62 instances of *acá* per million words. This takes up just 1.05% of the number of instances of either *acá* or *aquí* per million words in the dataset. We discussed in Section 3.1 the likely cause as to why *acá* is so underrepresented in Iberian Spanish, that is prescriptivism imposed by state-sponsored agencies (Pablo 1990), but these reasons may not necessarily apply to the similar patterning of other Spanish dialects in various Spanish-speaking nations.

As noted previously, Group 1 comprises the countries whose datasets show a marked increase in the representation of *acá* between these deictic lexemes. For instance, the Salvadoran dataset presents us with 73.62 instances of *acá* per million words, more than three times that of Mexico's dataset. Additionally, the Salvadoran dataset presented us with 254.17 instances of *aquí* per million words, more than 70 fewer instances per million words than that of México's dataset. Between the instances of both *acá* and *aquí* per million words in the Salvadoran dataset, *acá* takes up 22.46% of all instances. The representation of *acá* is far greater in the Salvadoran dataset than it is in the Mexican dataset. Thus, it appears that *acá* is used to different frequencies in Mexican Spanish and Salvadoran Spanish. In sum, the representation of *acá* in the combined instances of *acá* and *aquí* per million words hovered around 20% for the countries in Group 1.

Finally, we move onto the countries comprising Group 2. In the datasets of these countries, *acá* has even greater representation. For all of these countries, the representation of *acá* in the combined instances of *acá* and *aquí* per million words fell in the range of approximately 35%–50%. We considered this a marked increase from the usage and patterning of the datasets of countries in Group 1. Indeed, the countries in Group 2 used *acá* far more frequently than any other countries, although none used *acá* more than *aquí*. However, Paraguay and Argentina came very close to using *acá* equally as often as *aquí* in their datasets. Paraguay, for instance, had an almost even 124.15 instances of *acá* per million words, and 129.33 instances of *aquí* per million words in its dataset.

It is interesting to note how the patterning of these countries correlate geographically. All the countries in Group 2 (i.e. those where *acá* has the greatest amount of representation) — Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina — are situated in southern South America (i.e. Cono Sur, the Southern Cone). We can generalize these findings by making the following observation: that *acá*

has greater representation in dialects of Spanish spoken in southern South America. It might be the case that indeed these deictic words are lexicalized differently in these southern dialects, and that the pragmatic meanings of such words differ from those in more northern Spanish-speaking countries. However, this generalization ignores the datasets of El Salvador and Costa Rica, in which *acá* is also given a fair amount of representation. Further investigation of this issue is necessary in order to understand the variation in the patterning of these deictic words, as well as the potential dialectal differences in meaning. The following section will similarly investigate the representations of *allá* and *allí* in the data.

3.3 NOW Corpus: *allí* and *allá*

Table 4: Distribution of *allí* and *allá* in the NOW Corpus, by country

Country	<i>allá</i> (opm)	<i>allí</i> (opm)	<i>allá</i> and <i>allí</i> (opm)	Percent (%) <i>allá</i>	Percent (%) <i>allí</i>
Mexico	115.71	47.93	163.64	70.71	29.29
Guatemala	196.08	206.75	402.83	48.68	51.32
Honduras	123.86	168.39	292.25	42.38	57.62
Nicaragua	116.09	96.65	212.74	54.57	45.43
El Salvador	109.27	95.98	205.25	53.23	46.77
Costa Rica	125.88	93.33	219.21	57.42	42.58
Panama	106.61	139.66	246.27	43.29	56.71
Cuba	164.43	291.24	455.67	36.09	63.91
Puerto Rico	137.65	208.36	346.01	39.78	60.22
Dominican Rep.	97.22	137.12	234.34	41.49	58.51
Venezuela	160.43	278.81	439.24	36.52	63.48
Colombia	151.77	243.76	395.53	38.37	61.63
Ecuador	114.99	215.17	330.16	34.83	65.17
Peru	101.28	129.40	230.68	43.90	56.10
Chile	172.91	115.57	288.48	59.94	40.06
Bolivia	106.17	89.78	195.95	54.18	45.82
Paraguay	93.67	161.00	254.67	36.78	63.22
Uruguay	206.50	295.75	502.25	41.11	58.89
Argentina	204.58	314.02	518.60	39.45	60.55
Spain	129.04	182.13	311.17	41.47	58.53

Table 4 presents us with a very different picture than does Table 3. Unlike in Table 3, where countries clearly appeared to either use *acá* frequently (Group 2), somewhat (Group 1), or rarely (other countries), Table 4 does not present such a clear divide. Rather, almost all countries appear to use the *-á* variant of these deictic words, *allá*, roughly as often as *allí*. This is somewhat of a generalization however, as there does appear to be some small variation in these percentages. Here, we may introduce a new group of countries which pattern similarly, Group 3. This group includes the *allí*-preferring Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Paraguay. *Allá* makes up roughly 35% of the combined instances of *allá* and *allí* per million words in countries of Group 3, slightly less than most other countries. By contrast, the lexeme *allá* has the highest representation in the Mexican dataset. In all of the cases mentioned, the representation of *allá* deviates roughly 15%–20% from a baseline 50%.

Having said this though, we do not believe this variation to be significant evidence of some clear divide between countries and their dialectical representations of *allá*. Further, unlike in Table 3, there does not seem to be any indication that dialects are patterning in any clear way with respect to regional variation. Indeed, the countries of Group 3 seem to have a slightly lower representation of *allá* in their datasets, but none of these countries borders the other. In other words, they do not appear to pattern geographically. The *-á* variant in Table 4 is unlike the *-á* variant in Table 3, which was clearly more common in southern South American dialects. The differences in representation of *allá* may very well be insignificant across all dialects represented here. This, however, remains to be seen. Speakers may very well report regional or dialectal variation between the two. But currently, this is not represented in the NOW Corpus data, at least according to our interpretation of the findings.

To summarize: The NOW Corpus revealed some interesting findings about the variation in representation of these deictic words: (1) that *aquí*, as opposed to *acá*, has far more representation in the datasets of the countries represented here, but that (2) *acá* enjoys significantly more representation in the datasets of countries found in southern South America. This causes us to believe that *acá*, in particular, is lexicalized differently in different dialects. The NOW Corpus also revealed that *allá* and *allí* have roughly equal representation in all dialects, as represented by the corpus. Some variation in these percentages exists, but no clear divisions or patterns can be drawn between them. Unlike with *acá*, this does not cause us to believe that *allá* and *allí* are lexicalized differently in different dialects of Spanish. We turn now to the CREA corpus to investigate whether we observe similar findings in spoken Spanish.

3.4 The CREA Corpus

In order to gauge how the use of the deictic words in Spanish dialects differ between written and spoken usage, we turn now to the Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual (CREA). This corpus covers a variety of dialects and contains over 133 million words of written and spoken text (Xiao 2013). The oral Spanish data will be particularly useful to us, as it will allow us to contrast the usage of these deictic terms with their usage in written Spanish. Table 5 looks at the number of cases of the deictic words in question across all media (oral and written) and across all dialects in the corpus. It also notes how many documents the words are found in. What is immediately obvious is that the usage reflects, in general, the usage we find in the NOW corpus. That is to say, when all dialects are considered, *aquí* is far more common than *acá*, and additionally, *allí* is a fair bit more common than *allá*. We noted in Section 3.2 that *aquí* is more frequently used than *acá* across all dialects, and in Section 3.3, we noted that *allí* and *allá* were used almost as frequently as one another across all dialects, save for some potential minor variations. At a closer look however, the CREA corpus seems to suggest that *allí* is a fair bit more common than *allá*. This does not line up exactly with the data in Table 4. Indeed, there are over 15,000 more instance of the word *allí* across all media in the corpus, and additionally, *allí* is found in over 1700 more documents in total. This may follow from the discussion in Section 2.3, which notes that the deictic variant *allí* is found in all noted dialects, whereas *allá* is found in just two of the three dialects (Sedano 1995, as cited in Sedano 2000). One thing to note is that the data in the corpus is overly represented by Iberian Spanish. RAE (2015) state on the CREA website that 50% of the data comes from Spain, while the other 50% comes from Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas. Thus, the statistics we observe in both the written and oral data of the CREA corpus will be disproportionately skewed to reflect trends in Iberian Spanish.

Table 5: Statistics across all media (all dialects)

	<i>acá</i>	<i>aquí</i>	<i>allá</i>	<i>allí</i>
cases	5389	69143	25844	42192
documents	1941	14273	8391	10184

Table 6 is insightful and reveals some interesting trends in the usage of the deictic words that are unique to spoken Spanish. Immediately, we may note that there are approximately an equal number of instances of *allá* and *allí* in the oral media, across all dialects. Additionally, they are found in almost an equal number of documents. When comparing the usage of *allá* and *allí* in tables 5 and 6, we may note that the usage of the two is much more even in Table 6, suggesting that *allá* is about as common as *allí* in oral speech, but that *allí* is clearly preferred in written Spanish, again, across all dialects included in the CREA corpus. Table 6 would also seem to suggest that *aquí* is far more common in spoken Spanish than *acá*, across all dialects. However, we must remember that the data will be skewed to reflect habits of Iberian Spanish, which according to Pablo (1990), is discouraging of the deictic word *acá* in a number of ways.

Table 6: Statistics across oral media (all dialects)

	<i>acá</i>	<i>aquí</i>	<i>allá</i>	<i>allí</i>
cases	1753	14082	4124	4651
documents	538	1317	827	877

Table 7 looks at where exactly the deictic words *aquí* and *acá* are found in the CREA corpus data. As noted previously, the CREA corpus is comprised of both written Spanish text and oral Spanish data. However, the former makes up roughly 90% of the data, whereas the latter makes up only 10% of the data (Xiao 2013). Indeed, as this is the case, it is curious then that the instances of *acá* are found 33% of the time in oral data, whereas the instances of *aquí* are found just 20% of the time in oral data. Indeed, if *acá* is more commonly used in oral Spanish than in written Spanish, then these statistics are no coincidence.

Table 7: Representation of deictic terms in types of media

	<i>acá</i>	<i>aquí</i>	CREA Total
oral	33%	20%	10%
written	67%	80%	90%

In sum, the tables above provide us with some evidence that the *-á* variants experience an increased amount of use in spoken Spanish. It is hard to judge how speakers are using such words (i.e. in what contexts, and in conveying what pragmatic information) from corpus data alone, thus we turn now to elicitation data of these deictic words from native Spanish-speakers.

4 Elicitation

Complementary to our corpus data, we have consulted with two native Spanish speakers from different countries in order to explore the differences seen between regional varieties in the corpus data, focusing on the ‘here’ deictic variants. This is because we see greater range of variation in

'here' deictics than in 'there' deictics. Using elicitations, we aim to determine whether the use of *aquí* and *acá* differs not only in frequency, but also potentially in deictic and pragmatic meaning. Consultants were asked a series of questions, beginning with a section of six closed-response questions where the sentence structure of the response was controlled, and where the consultant filled in the blanks with the deictic or deictics they would use in that context. In the second section, they were given six questions which asked them to imagine some context, and then say 'it is here' in that context. The third and final section prompted the consultant to report personal and community usage of *acá*, and posed a perceptual dialectology-style question, which asked what they thought about how other countries use *acá*. The question-and-answer method was chosen over the method of presenting the consultant with pictures because Maldonado (2013) considers *acá* to have an ego-centric element, and so to test this meaning, it was necessary for the consultant to be able to imagine themselves in the same context as the items deictically indexed.

4.1 Consultation Response: Peru

Our first consultant is a 20-year-old male speaker from northern Peru who has not lived abroad. The consultation was conducted online. Here we present the data collected in the first section of the consultation.

(1) Closed response answers, Peru:

- a. No está allá en Brasil, está **aquí** en Perú.
NEG be.3SG there in Brasil be.3SG here in Peru
'It's not there in Brazil, it's here in Peru.'
- b. Ven para **acá**.
come.IMP toward here
'Come over here.'
- c. *Context: Getting a friend's attention.*
Oye! Ven y siéntate **aquí** a mi lado!
hey come.IMP and sit.2SG here at my side
'Hey! Come sit here next to me.'
- d. *Context: The speaker is a science teacher presenting to class.*
Tenemos **aquí** varios químicos que vamos a utilizar hoy.
have.1PL here various chemicals that go.1PL to use today
'We have here various chemicals that we will use today.'
- e. *Context: The speaker is looking for their keys.*
No sé donde están mis llaves. Sé que las he
NEG know.1SG where be.3PL my keys know.1SG that OBJ.PL have.1SG
dejado por **acá**.
left by here
'I don't know where my keys are. I know I left them around here.'

There are some generalizations to be drawn from the above closed-response answers. When specifying the location of something within a country, the variable *aquí* is selected (1a). When commanding someone to come or go to a general area — marked by *para* meaning literally *for*, but in this context meaning *over* (1b) — *acá* is used. Using *aquí* in this context was not deemed felicitous,² however if the word *para* is removed, then *aquí* is acceptable if the speaker has some location in mind. This is also reflected in the response to (1c) where *aquí* is chosen in the context of ‘come and sit here’. In (1d), when the speaker describes the location of some items that are placed in front of them, *aquí* is the selected variable. When indexing an item in an unknown nearby area (1e), the consultant used the word *acá*.

In the open response section, many of the responses reinforced or elaborated upon the patterns seen in the first section. The first three questions asked about the use of *here* in relation to a building, a city, and a country which the speaker is located inside. When inside a building, such as a local mall, and remarking on the fact that some store is located inside that same building, the speaker used the word *aquí*. In this case, when asked, the speaker deemed *acá* infelicitous. When using *here* to index a country or a city, a distinction was made between *-í* and *-á* variants. The consultant noted that when one is speaking about the location of something within the city or country, *aquí* is used. However, if one is discussing ‘how things are done’ or ‘what things are like’ in that city/country, then *acá* is the appropriate form. This pattern for *here* deictics does not change if the addressee is also in that same city/country as the speaker or not. As for the ‘there’ deictics, *allá* is the preferred variant for indexing any country other than the one in which the speaker is located. When talking about the location of an object on a table, the preferred deictic is *aquí*. This is also true if the item is being held by someone else nearby, or if the item is sitting next to someone else and not the speaker themselves. However, the consultant noted that if he was indexing an item on the table which was out of his reach, but he still wanted to express that it is ‘here’ then he would use *acá*. When the speaker has brought something for someone else, and they have it in their bag and are asked of the item’s location, *acá* is the chosen deictic. Also, when in a building and asked if another person is there, *acá* is used.

Our Peruvian consultant reports not using *acá* very often. At this point in the interview, the consultant was joined by a friend, a 20-year-old female, also from Peru, who shared that she does not think she uses *acá* much either. Both reported not thinking that the word was used very commonly in Peru. When asked to report on how they perceived other countries’ usage of the word, our consultant was uncertain, but their friend listed Colombia, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina as countries which they viewed as using ‘*acá*’ more than in Peru.

4.2 Consultation Response: Chile

Our consultant representing Chilean Spanish is a 22-year-old male speaker from Santiago, who has not lived outside Chile.

(2) Closed response answers, Chile:

- a. No está allá en Brasil, **está** aquí en Chile.
 NEG be.3SG there in Brasil be.3SG here in Chile
 ‘It’s not there in Brazil, it’s here in Chile.’

² The consultant said that to use the other variable was never ‘wrong’ or ungrammatical, but simply ‘not natural’, ‘not appropriate’, or ‘not what people would say’.

- b. Ven para **acá**.
 come.IMP toward here
 ‘Come over here.’
- c. *Context: Getting a friend’s attention.*
 Oye! Ven y siéntate **aquí** junto a mi lado!
 hey come.IMP and sit.2SG here next to my side
 ‘Hey! Come and sit here next to me.’
- d. *Context: The speaker is a science teacher presenting to class.*
 Tenemos **acá** varios químicos que vamos a utilizar hoy.
 have.1PL here various chemicals that go.1PL to use today
 ‘We have here various chemicals that we will use today.’
- e. *Context: The speaker is looking for their keys.*
 No sé donde están mis llaves. Sé que las he
 NEG know.1SG where be.3PL my keys know.1SG that OBJ.PL have.1SG
 dejado por **aquí**.
 left by here
 ‘I don’t know where my keys are. I know I left them around here.’

Most of the Chilean closed responses were the same as the responses we see from the Peruvian consultant. However, (2d) and (2e) are notable differences. For the Chilean consultant, *acá* is more suitable when discussing the location of items sitting in front of the speaker, within reach, and *aquí* is more suitable when indexing an unknown nearby location.

In open answer questions, the Chilean consultant reported flexible usage of the two variables. When referencing the location of another store within a larger building, the consultant’s first choice was *allá* or ‘there’, but when prompted to say ‘here’, chose *acá*. In this context, *aquí* was infelicitous, which is the opposite of what is seen in the Peruvian data. For the location of something within a city or country *aquí* was the preferred variable, but *acá* was also deemed acceptable. When asked, the respondent judged that there was no distinction between indexing location versus discussing ‘the way things are’ as there is in Peruvian Spanish. The deictic *allá* was also used to index other countries. When asked to index something on a table, *aquí* is chosen as in Peruvian Spanish. However, the Chilean speaker did not make the distinction based on distance that was made by the Peruvian speaker who used *acá* in the more distant case. Instead, the speaker uses *acá* to index an unseen nearby item. In one question the consultant was asked how they would respond if asked that a friend was somewhere in the same building as the speaker. The consultant’s response was *acá*, as in Peruvian Spanish. Notably, however, when answering that they have a book inside their backpack, the consultant said that it’s also possible to say they have the book ‘*acá mismo*’, meaning ‘right here’, a phrase deemed infelicitous by the Peruvian consultant.

In terms of self-reported use of *acá*, our Chilean consultant reports using the deictic frequently, and judges that the same is true of other Chileans. He also judges that *acá* is used more in other countries such as Argentina and Ecuador. In the following section, a summary of open-answer responses from both consultants is provided.

4.3 Summary of Open-Answer Responses

Table 8: Preferred deictics in Peruvian and Chilean Spanish (based on target indexed)

Target indexed	Secondary specification	Peru	Chile
Something else within the same building		<i>aquí</i>	<i>acá</i>
Something in the same city	location	<i>aquí</i>	<i>aquí, acá</i>
	description	<i>acá</i>	<i>aquí, acá</i>
Something in the same country	location	<i>aquí</i>	<i>aquí, acá</i>
	description	<i>acá</i>	<i>aquí, acá</i>
A different country		<i>allá</i>	<i>allá</i>
On the table	within reach	<i>aquí</i>	<i>acá</i>
	not within reach	<i>acá</i>	<i>ahí</i>
An item located nearby (not visible)		<i>acá</i>	<i>acá mismo</i>
Another person at the same event		<i>acá</i>	<i>acá</i>

Table 8, along with the responses in (1a–e) and (2a–e) demonstrate that there is variation in the deictic choices between our Chilean and Peruvian consultants. This variation will be analysed in relation to our corpus data in the following section.

5 Discussion

The use of *-í* and *-á* deictics differs across regions. Based on corpus data, it is apparent that all countries use the *-í* deictics more frequently. However, countries differ in the rates at which they use the *-á* deictics. We chose to focus particularly on *acá*, as it differed the most. Spain, for instance, almost never uses *acá* (with *acá* making up only 1% of all instances of ‘here’ in the dataset, compared to *aquí* at roughly 99%). This data, from the NOW corpus (Davies 2018), is based on written documents, and while it is up-to-date and representative of recent trends in written Spanish, oral data is not included, and therefore does not reflect actual usage in spoken Spanish. This may contribute to why *acá* is underrepresented in the data. As our findings from the CREA corpus indicate, *acá* is better represented in oral data (RAE 2015). In fact, this is also somewhat reflected in the NOW corpus data, as a closer look at the sources for *acá* in the data shows that many instances

of this deictic come from direct quotations of speech in news publications. This further supports the theory that *acá* is an oral variant.

There are potentially two ways in which the increased frequency of *acá* in oral speech may be interpreted. As mentioned previously, *acá* may be underrepresented in writing due to prescriptive influence, as many grammarians have claimed its use is restricted to verbs of motion (Pablo 1990). However, given that all Spanish-speaking countries look to the RAE as their primary authority on language (Paffey 2007), this would not explain why the rates of *acá* differ cross-regionally, as it seems unlikely that the RAE's prescriptive influence would affect each speech variety differently. Alternatively, if *acá* has an ego-centric deixis, then it may be more reasonable to expect that *acá* is more common in oral Spanish, given that writing (and especially formal writing) separates the speaker from the context, as well as the reader from the author. In this light, regional variation in the use of *acá* may indicate variation in the interpretation of deictic meaning.

Our findings from the NOW corpus (Davies 2018) indicate that *acá* is used at a higher rate in the 'Cono Sur' region of South America (which includes Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay). For our elicitations, we had one Spanish speaker from the Cono Sur region (the Chilean consultant) and one Spanish speaker not from the Cono Sur (the Peruvian consultant). The consultants' responses reflect the corpus data, as our Chilean consultant was, overall, more accepting of *acá* in a greater number of environments. While speakers' self-reported use of language is not always reliable and must be interpreted cautiously, the consultants' intuitions about their use of *acá* do reflect the patterns of use found in the corpus data for their respective countries. In sum, our Peruvian consultant reports he and the members of his community use *acá* infrequently, while our Chilean consultant reports he and his community use the variant frequently.

The Chilean elicitation data seems to reflect the ego-centric deixis of *-á* variants, proposed by Maldonado (2013). While Sedano (2000) claims that *acá* refers to a diffuse region, the Chilean data contradicts this generalization. Firstly, *por aquí* ('around here') is a case where *-í* is used to refer to a general area, but it is the preferred form for the Chilean consultant (see 2e). Secondly, the Chilean consultant volunteered the phrase *acá mismo* (Table 8, penultimate row), which translates to 'exactly here' or 'right here'. This means that the *-á* deictic may be used to refer to a precise location. Other examples show that in the Chilean data, *acá* is used to index a space in relation to the self. For example, in (2d), data was contextualized as 'being in front of' the speaker, and so *acá* is selected because the chemicals are positioned within the speaker's personal space, and in relation to themselves.

The Peruvian data, on the other hand, does seem to reflect the diffuse/specific distinction that Sedano (2000) proposes. In contrast to the Chilean data, *por acá* ('around here') is possible and uses the *-á* deictic to refer to a general area, and *acá mismo* is deemed infelicitous. This is compatible with the theory that *acá* is diffuse. The *aquí* variant is used for specific locations. When the location of some object is specific, its relation to the speaker or their ego does not affect the elicited form. For example, the location of chemicals on a table in front of a speaker (as in 1d) or a store within the same building as the speaker are precise, and in these cases *aquí* is selected, whereas in the Chilean data, *acá* is preferred in both contexts (see the comparisons in Table 8). The Peruvian data also makes a distinction between the two deictics which does not exist in Chilean Spanish: '*aquí en* [country, city]' refers to the (specific) location of something in that country or city, while '*acá en* [country, city]' is used to describe how things are generally done around there, which is, arguably, a more broad or diffuse use.

One explanation for the differing rates in the use of *-á* and *-í* deictics is that perhaps in Cono Sur varieties, the only requirement for using *-á* is egocentricity, while in varieties which behave

like Peruvian Spanish, *acá* must index something both ego-centric and diffuse, limiting its possible uses. However, since our elicitation data is limited to only one consultant from each variety, it may be possible that these differences are due not to regional variation, but simply differing individual intuitions. Furthermore, our elicitation data focused solely on the ‘here’ deictics. Future research may investigate the possible interregional variation in deixis of *-í* and *-á* spatial deictics by eliciting data from a larger number of speakers of Cono Sur and non-Cono Sur varieties of Spanish.

6 Conclusion

There has been much debate as to what the *-í* and *-á* spatial deictics in Spanish index. Different authorities have posited that the deictics are synonymous, or that they contrast in terms of directionality, relativity, specificity, or subjectivity (egocentricity). To better understand these deictics, we examined their interregional patterning across varieties of Spanish using corpus data, finding that *-á* deictics were used at differing rates and were comparatively common in Cono Sur varieties. We then elicited data on the *here* deictics from speakers of two varieties of Spanish which behave quite differently in their use of *-á* deictics. Our elicitation questions were designed to test for specificity of deixis and egocentricity, and found that the data is suggestive of interregional variation in not only rate of use, but interpretation of deixis. The Chilean use of *acá* reflects an egocentric use, insensitive to specificity, while the Peruvian data was sensitive to specificity. The extent to which the deixis of *acá* varies in different varieties of Spanish is not yet well understood and poses a question for future research.

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