



“The hummingbird is attached to the flower” Conceptualizations of Space in the Amazon

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26 • 12:00 PM • Register to attend at: <https://bit.ly/3abRhVz>

How we talk about the location of objects in space varies greatly across communities. This talk offers an overview of the expression of location in two languages: Kukama (Tupian) and Secoya (Tukanoan), both spoken in the Amazon of Peru. The data presented in this talk come from ongoing collaborative work with the Kukamas and Secoyas. This data is comprised of naturally occurring sentences from oral narratives and conversations, as well as elicited responses using photographs carefully chosen to depict culturally-appropriate locative scenes.

In Kukama, speakers specify different types of space by means of postpositions and adverbial elements. In contrast, Secoya has a set of verbs that pay attention to the deliberate position of the object being located, the type of space, and the relationship between the two. For example, a question such as *where is the stick?*, could be answered with any of the following sentences: *it is **lying** on the table, it is **standing** on the ground, it is **sitting** in the basket, or it is **leaning** on the rock*. The speakers of Kukama and Secoya demonstrate that there are multiple possibilities to conceptualize space, and some pay close attention to specific aspects of their surroundings.

Rosa Vallejos's research is centered in Amazonia. She pursues research in three areas of linguistics: morphosyntax, language contact, and documentary fieldwork. Since 1997, she has been involved in several community-oriented projects with indigenous groups. Her fieldwork has generated a rich stream of documentation on Kukama-Kukamiria (Tupian), Secoya (Tukanoan), and Amazonian Spanish. Her research informs current debates concerning the range of variation possible in languages, which ultimately allows the development of cross-linguistically valid theories of human language. At the same time, her work provides crucial language resources for the speech communities she works with.



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