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On the quality of climate proxies derived from newspaper reports – a case study

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Abstract. One of the main problems in climate reconstruction from documentary sources is the evaluation of the quality of non instrumental meteorological records in absence of instrumental observations to perform a calibration. In these cases it is mandatory to envision different approaches to assess the climatic signal in a reconstruction. This work is aimed to test the consistency of a snow frequency reconstruction in the central Argentinean Andes by studying the synoptic patterns related to the occurrence of precipitation in this area. While the original reconstruction covers the period between 1885 and 1996, the insufficiency of overlapping instrumental data limited the calibration to a short 15-year interval. In this paper we evaluate the performance of the reconstructed series for the entire 45-year period between 1958 and 1996 by analyzing the displacement in the jet stream and the patterns of geopotential height related to anomalies in the reconstructed snow frequency series. Previous works have linked the precipitation in the central Andes to the ENSO through the Pacific South American mode. We also have found this connection between ENSO and the reconstructed precipitation. Finally, it is shown that the ENSO relationship is the cause of a significant link between the precipitation anomalies in the central Argentinean Andes and the ice extent around the Antarctic Peninsula.

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