Formulating Place, Common Ground, and a Moral Order in Lachixío Zapotec

DOI 10.1515/opli-2016-0009
Received June 11, 2015; accepted January 25, 2016

Abstract: People make reference to places in the variable formulations afforded by their languages and to multiple ends that in addition to picking out a referent, simultaneously build conceptual common ground about seen and unseen landscapes, including moral stances about the social geography. This paper examines the different ways that Lachixío Zapotec speakers of Oaxaca, Mexico, formulate and interpret place references in the dialogic narratives of their conversations. I examine sequences of interaction within stories that emerged in conversations as joint social actions. These sequences include both speakers’ place formulations and addressees’ responses that publically display their uptake and stances toward the references. I describe resources of the Lachixío Zapotec language for referencing place and show how place references are entangled with person references, references to historical events, and participants’ moral stances toward such references. Through examining references to locations within sequences of conversational story telling we gather some evidence for how conceptual common ground and moral value is developed through the step-wise progression of turn-taking and how stances about places come to be culturally shared or contested between interlocutors dialogically.

Keywords: place reference, landscape, conversation, narrative, morality, common ground, turn-taking, stance, Zapotec, Otomanguean

1 Introduction

This paper is about the varied ways Lachixío Zapotec speakers formulated place references in a video corpus of turn-by-turn conversations and the narratives that naturally emerged in those interactions. It questions how speakers and listeners oriented to places in their discourse and how the interactive process of formulating place contributes to building community values and a moral conception of the geography. Human knowledge about places has multiple sources. We can experience places through our perceptions of being at a place, experience that is itself a dynamic interrelation between the affordances of objects in the world for action (Gibson 1977). Such experience is also cognitively mediated through spatial frames of reference in which languages variably code spatial relations metaphorically grounded on our bodies (like relative relations of left and right), on the forms of objects (like the intrinsic part-whole relations of meronymy), and on the features of a landscape (like the use of absolute references of cardinal directions, land slope, river flows, shore lines, etc) (for reviews see Levinson 1996; 2004). We also come to experience place discursively through references in conversations and stories, and from the second hand reporting of others’ stories in a historical chain of references to others’ place references. These two types of knowledge...
are contrasted in the literature on epistemics and evidentiality as empirical and hearsay evidence and many languages show grammatical devices and interactional practices for maintaining as distinct these varied sources of knowledge in interaction (Nuckolls and Michael 2014). When we reflect on our knowledge of places it is apparent that we come to know more about places of our world through discourse than through our own travel. We learn about places from people who have traveled there, listening to and questioning the stories that circulate in a community, and in literate societies, also from the reading of histories, novels, and news reports. The epistemics of our knowledge is thus more hearsay than empirical evidence and this raises for analysts questions about the role of language structure and practice in producing shared knowledge of a cultural landscape, and even contestations of such knowledge as both sharing and contestation are grounded in the joint communicative actions of dialogic interaction where “cultures are continuously produced, reproduced, and revised in dialogues among their members.” (Mannheim and Tedlock 1995, 2).

While knowledge of distant places may come to be shared by many people of a society, not all people have travelled to those places. Societies generally have some individuals who specialize in travel, seeking interactions of trade, hunting resources like food or work, or undertaking the exploits of warfare. The anthropologist Eric Wolf (1956) pointed to the specialized role such multifaceted individuals play in building an interconnected world. While such diversity in division of labor may be minimized in relatively egalitarian societies, all communities have a distributed knowledge of their spatial environment such that all individuals could not share direct experience of all places but come to share knowledge dialogically through linguistic interaction. In this same way, the stories of elders are a source of knowledge of the past social geography. This is clearly illustrated in gardening societies where abandoned villages and gardens of the past become the places of narratives as reported from Fiji (Toren 1995), Amazonia (Javier Carrera Rubio, personal communication, 2015), and among the Western Apache (Basso 1996) where commemorative stories of places enforce moral conduct in the present.

In this essay I am interested in how conceptual common ground, including moral stances about places, is built up in turn-by-turn dialogue of joint narrative production as participants formulate place references, respond to such formulations, or respond to utterances about other things with interactional moves that formulate place. The narratives investigated are all formally dialogic in the sense developed by Mannheim and Van Vleet (1998) where stories emerge in conversations and proceed through a joint construction involving contributions from multiple present parties including signals of assent, affect, repetitions, questions, interruptions, and even substantive plot contributions (for additional approaches to the dialogic construction of narratives see also Basso 1985; Duranti 1986; Goodwin 1986; Johnstone 1990; Polanyi 1985; Urban 1985). One outcome of this analysis is a demonstration of how place reference sequences in local story telling exchanges are a mechanism for the reproduction of a Meso-American ideology of a morally ordered geography in which one’s indigenous village is the center of moral behavior and the space outside the village is characterized by amorality and danger. This stance was made explicit by a man from Lachixío who, in providing a coda stating the moral of another speaker’s travel narrative, said, Nelíí kà né wàxxhí sufrimiénto nò'o' desde nóo cho'o lò tòkkó eeyettxé, “It is certain that there is a lot of suffering when you leave a village.”

Such suffering from being out of place is a regular part of life for people of Lachixío and other rural villages of Mexico where some townsfolk are accustomed to spending part of their life working for wages outside of the village to supplement their families at home. The existential conflict of cultural values this presents is conveyed in a Lachixío myth about a man who leaves the village to hunt in the forest and comes across a man who offers him a day of work inside the mountain. Entering the mountain the man labors for what he thinks is a day and then returns to the village. When he arrives he finds a lifetime has gone by, the village has changed, he has become old, and members of his family have died.

The ideological contrast between the moral center of the village and the amoral and morally ambiguous world outside that is metaphorically present in many Lachixío narratives is strikingly parallel to that reported by scholars who have worked in distant regions of Meso-America. Jane Hill (1995) analyzes a Mexicano

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1 I use amorality in general opposition to the morality present in the concept of the village as moral center. The forest, for example is amoral, lacking something present in the socialized sphere of the village. I reserve immorality for specific cases where participants take negative evaluative stances on actions and behaviors in relation to the good, as we see in Section 6.
(Nahuat) narrative from central Mexico, where a man’s narrative of his son’s murder contrasts the peasant communitarian social order of his town with the disorder, danger, and amorality of business-for-profit outside the village. Similarly, Taggart (1983) illustrates a Nahua cosmology that metaphorically contrasts a center and periphery in which “[t]he center represents the moral order and stands for safety guaranteed by that order” “juxtaposed against the periphery...filled with creative and dangerous forces” (1983, 55). Against this backdrop the conversational narratives from the Zapotec community of Lachixío suggest that the socially ordered opposition of moral center with amoral periphery is more broadly a cultural feature of Meso-America rather than a feature of any particular ethno-linguistic group, and thus provides parallel support to arguments for a Meso-American discourse area, or *sprechbund*, (Sicoli 2010; Brown, Sicoli, LeGuen 2010).

In a discourse area, patterns that Dell Hymes (1974) called the “ways of speaking” of a “speech economy” are shared across the boundaries of linguistic families.

This essay then carries two inter-related aims that include the elucidation of the ideological content of a spatially delimited morality conveyed in linguistic formulations of place, and analysis of the dialogic, conversational process of its reproduction as formulations of place get deployed and taken up in the dynamics of interaction. Place reference formulations in conversational narratives illustrate dialogic processes through which knowledge of, and stances toward, places become intersubjective through the turn-taking structure of human conversation. Beyond factual knowledge, talk about landscapes displays speakers’ moral stances toward the human and non-human actors of the geography which can then be taken up in support or contestation by others in their response practice. Thus dynamic uses of the community’s conversational resources for place reference are shown to be crucial means for cultural reproduction which analysts can approach through a linguistic anthropology linking the conversational order of interaction with more durative scales of self formation and common ground about landscapes.

2 Background

2.1 Place as structure and place as practice

In their influential study of narrative description of places in New York, Linde and Labov (1975) link cognition, discourse, and sentence grammar together examining narrated responses to the question “Could you tell me the lay-out of your apartment?” In speaker responses narrative structure is seen to be important in conveying the experience of place to an unfamiliar listener. Telling the questioner about the apartment layout, subjects overwhelmingly took their listeners on a narrative “tour” of the kind “You walked in the front door. There was a narrow hallway. To the left the first door you came to was a tiny bedroom” (1975, 927). The other discourse pattern in the responses was that of the “map” of the kind “it’s laid out in a huge square pattern, broken down into four units” “on the ends you have the living room and a bedroom” (1975, 929). Interestingly only 3% of apartment descriptions were maps, the other 97% were narrative tours.

In discussing Linde and Labov’s project, Michel de Certeau (1984) elaborates on these two contrasting strategies for describing place: the map and the tour. Relating this insight to science studies, de Certeau contrasts practical actors who use the artful resources of narrative to bring an interlocutor along through a space with scientific practices since the enlightenment that have rather tended toward the production of static relational maps of spaces. Before the influence of the Cartesian geometry of Descartes, the earliest medieval maps were less often maps than they were travel directions communicating performatively prescribed actions of pilgrimages much like a tour. Meso-American maps produced by Aztecs, Mixtecs, and Zapotecs also illustrated such “spatializing practices” marking footfalls that “narrate” movement through space (de Certeau 1984, 120). Later cartographic representations of space came to erase the itineraries of a map’s production to privilege the geometry of objective space. Geographical knowledge became represented synchronically in a representation of structural relationships—as *product* rather than as *practice* (de Certeau 1984, 121). Such a contrast between *product* and *practice* underlies two approaches to studying and representing language and place in contemporary social science: one may be seen in inventories of
place names, the other grounded in spatial practices that are essentially ways to bring the listener along for an experience of place (though see Basso 1996 for a way to bridge these two approaches).

The study of place in linguistics has more commonly focused on lexical place names which map territories. Most of what we know about place reference in Mesoamerican languages is informed by such studies (see Guzmán 1989 and Guzmán, Muntzel & Villegas 2010 for overviews). Toponyms themselves tell us important things about language structure and potentially about history. The map of Mexico, for example, is heavily populated with place names derived from Náhuatl as a result of the Spanish conquistadors working with Aztec informants to learn the social geography of New Spain, often to the erasure of the local pre-Columbian ethnonyms and toponyms. Place names in Zapotec have received some attention from linguists and ethnohistorians. Bradomin (1992) works with mostly Náhuatl and some Zapotec place names to decipher their etymologies. De la Fuente (1947) focuses entirely on Zapotec place names, proposing that Zapotec place etymologies refer to physical dimensions of the landscape such as hills, often headed with some variant of kyéè ‘stone’ and valleys with a variant of lacchi ‘plain’, or what flora may be abundantly represented on or distinctive about a landscape. In this last way o-lá’a (place-guaje), the Lachixío Zapotec word for ‘Oaxaca City’ is derived from là’a ‘guaje’ a tree that produces an edible seed, the name Oaxaca itself being a Náhuatl translation (oax-aca ‘guaje-place’). Sicoli and Kaufman (2010) surveyed Zapotec and Chatino communities throughout Oaxaca and parts of Veracruz for general vocabulary and phrases including common place names important to preconquest Mesoamerica. Papers on Zapotec toponyms also include Smith-Stark (2004) on Chichicapan Zapotec, and Beam de Azcona (2012) on Zapotec of southern Oaxaca. The most extensive study of Zapotec place names is Zúñiga (1982), which surveyed 58 Zapotec municipalities throughout Oaxaca specifically for toponyms by sending a questionnaire to be filled out by municipal authorities and then enhancing the results through orthographic and morpho-phonological analysis. Such studies while focusing mainly on the products of place reference, have informed our understanding of places as reflected in morphology and provided for insights into colonial chronicles and the social history of the peoples of southern Mexico.

The current paper presents a different approach that studies place reference in Zapotec as practice and is informed by the discourse analysis of space and place, and grounded in the ethnography of conversational narratives that involve references to places. De Certeau (1984) draws a distinction between lieu ‘place’, as a stable position or configuration, which we could consider structural space, and espace as the effect produced by operations that orient, situate, and temporize to subjectivize space. Places for de Certeau are univocal and static but spaces are polyvocal and dynamic. In this view space is practiced place, a relation that he compares to one between a text and its performance, “situated as the action of a present...and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts” (1984, 117). “Stories,” de Certeau writes, “carry out a labor that constantly transforms places into spaces and spaces into places” (1984, 117).

Sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have also engaged with a distinction between space and place with recent reviews in Keating (2015) and Johnstone (2011). Readers are cautioned to note that while the contrast of space and place in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology is parallel to that of de Certeau, the labels themselves are reversed in part due to the translations of de Certeau’s lieu and espace. The practical and dynamic espace of de Certeau is parallel to place in this literature and this use of place is the one I adopt in the remainder of this paper. Discourse analysts like Lawrence and Low (1990) and Scollon and Scollon (2003) and others have demonstrated that human discourse practices transform objective spaces to subjective places of human activity. Cultural transformations of spaces into places through discourse may function to convey wisdom and imagined history as in Keith Basso’s 1996 ethnography Wisdom sits in places which shows how Western Apaches place import on individuals remembering the names of places as respectfully quoting the ancestors, and remembering the stories that the names evoke to remind people of proper, moral behavior, a practice he refers to as place-making. He writes that “if place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of doing human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities” (Basso 1996, 7). In studies that focus on the discourse of places, references to and stories of places are also seen to convey feelings and experience (Feld and Basso 1996), morality distributed across lived landscapes (Hoem, 1993), and how the “spatialization of knowledge goes hand in hand with knowledge of places” (Rumsey, 2001, 12). This area of work is itself
informed by phenomenological philosophy since Husserl (1958), particularly by Heidegger’s concept of “dwelling” (1977) as “forms of consciousness with which individuals perceive and apprehend geographical space” and by dwelling taken as “lived relationships’ that people maintain with places” (Basso 1996, 106).

My approach builds on and tries to go beyond this work to examine experience of place and morality not simply as a psychological relation between individual and environment, but as emergent in what Erving Goffman (1981) referred to as the “interaction order” and thus collaboratively created and circulated within the social dynamics of dialogic interactions. To do this I integrate methods of conversation analysis with an ethnography inspired in part by Geertz (1973) to produce a type of “thick description” of copresent encounters, interpreting spontaneous interactions where people referred to, and crucially, responded to each other’s references to places. The dialogic narratives emerged as part of spontaneous conversations rather than as responses to sociolinguistic interview questions (thus unlike Linde and Labov 1975) or experimental tasks that characterize the bulk of work concerning the language and cognition of space (Levinson 1996; 2004; Pederson, Danziger, Wilkins et al 1998).

2.2 Turn taking, place reference, and stance in conversation

Human conversation progresses through action chains in which participants generally take turns inhabiting reciprocal roles of speaker and listener (Levinson 2006; Schegloff 2006; Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). This is not to say that there aren't activities that privilege simultaneous speech (chanting, recitation, funerary mourning wails, singing in church, or even finishing another’s sentence along with them to show how much we are thinking alike) but conversation itself is defined by turn-taking, with consequences for human cognition, action structure, and experience. The alternating roles of turn-taking walk knowledge forward dialogically where at each offering in a conversation a test is made as to its understanding or uptake. As one person's move is formulated with a recipient design to affect an interpretation in another, the turn-taking format allows participants a next move for displaying the understanding of what one person made out of the other’s communicative action; not in an abstract sense, but by producing a move that is relevantly related (a relevance that itself displays a cultural logic and often a moral judgement).

This relationship between moves is a causal-temporal frame of interaction that Enfield (2013) has termed “enchrony” which “focuses on sequences of interlocking or interdependent communicative moves that are taken to be co-relevant, and causally conditionally related” (2013, 29). Two moves in an enchronic relation can be evaluated with both forward and backward pointing temporality. In an A then B interaction sequence, the formulation of move A is evaluated for its “effectiveness” to give rise to B; and the formulation of move B is evaluated for its “appropriateness” as a response to A (Enfield 2013, 32). In this way the question A: “When are you going?” may effectively give rise to answer B: “at four o’clock,” a temporal clause that is an appropriately fitting substitute for the content question word “when” in the question formulation of A, but it may also give rise to a following question B: “Where?”, which while not an answer to the question appropriately builds off the syntactic potential opened with “going.” The set of appropriate responses show that rather than strict rules on what can follow what in conversation, action sequences are guided by expectations and ranked preferences (Levinson 2006). Both of these responses appropriately fit the question but one is a preferred response given the formulation of the first move in the sequence and some responses would be inappropriate such as something like B: “No,” at least from an outsider’s perspective.

The enchronic relationship between the effectiveness and appropriateness of interlocking moves as evaluated by participants in interaction introduces an accountability to human interaction (Enfield 2013, 35; see also Goffman 1967). One way such accountability is made public is through the mechanism of conversational repair (Schegloff, Sacks, and Jefferson 1977) where forward progress of a conversation can be halted by a repair initiation following (or during) any move that is either seen to be ineffective (not effectively doing X) or inappropriate (No, not that, I meant X not Y). Together the causal-temporal frame of enchrony and the always possible action of repair provide important tools for analysts to understand how participants are interpreting each others’ actions and to learn what participants consider appropriate and
effective actions, thus linking language and culture through interaction. The use of enchrony and repair as analytical tools is exemplified in this paper, wherein the narratives examined are punctuated by turn exchanges that display for us not only place formulations and their effectiveness as references but also their uptake in responses that we can assess for their appropriateness. We can also assess where place references are themselves proffered as appropriate responses to other types of reference. In this way the turn sequences within dialogic narratives make visible a range of cultural associations speakers orient to as appropriate and effective in the subsequent enchronic frame that follows the current one. In the sections that follow we will see a question asking “who” responded to with an utterance specifying “where”, a question asking “where” responded to with an utterance specifying “who”, a question asking “how” responded to with an utterance formulating “where”, a reference to an illness responded to with a question about “where”, and one story responded to with the telling of another story that questions if the narrated events happened in the same place. In each case an interpersonal progression of knowledge and stances is displayed in an order of conversational interaction characterized by interlocking moves of turn taking building both common ground and a moral order through dialogic practice.

As conversation proceeds through turn-taking, where one action designed for a recipient prompts a public response of understanding, we benefit from considering Wallace Chafe’s characterization of the progressive sharing of knowledge that comes through conversation:

> It helps to think of casual conversation as a way separate minds are connected into networks with other minds. Individual experiences can be shared and passed on so that they become the second, third, or fourth-hand experience of others. Each experience may be trivial in itself, but the gradual accumulation of experiences within each individual and within a social network builds a fund of shared knowledge that far surpasses what any one person could have acquired if limited to what he or she experienced directly. (1998, 97)

Following Chafe’s lead pointing to a distributed and joint cognition developed through conversation, it follows that by examining references to locations in conversational sequences and the stories people exchange in dialogue we gather some evidence for how conceptual common ground is developed through the step-wise progression of turn-taking and how this process affords the collaborative building and sharing of moral stances toward a social geography. Following also the lead of de Certeau, the conversational dynamics of place must also address its polyvocality—there are both many ways that anyone can refer to a place, and a place will have at least as many meanings as those who cross it.

The study of place in conversation analysis has largely been informed by Schegloff’s paper “Notes on a Conversational Practice: Formulating Place” (1972) where he identified two problems in formulating place. The first problem is that for any place reference there is a set of terms in which each correctly refers to a place though on any occasion of use “not any member of the set is ‘right’” (1972, 81). The question is how is one term selected and the others rejected? For example, in response to a question like “Where are you?” it would be correct to say “In my office” or “Room 223”, but in a particular situation, only one would be appropriate. The former would be an appropriate answer to one’s boss on the phone and the latter to a new student looking to meet a professor in office hours. To answer one’s boss with the specificity of room number would be heard as doing things other than referring to place, like being arrogant or sarcastic (Schegloff 1972, 81; see also Grice 1975). Our understanding of what exactly a formulation of place does for a set of participants depends a great deal on how it is responded to, or what it is a response to. A second problem Schegloff notes is that place references can formulate things other than place, such as how “I work at a university” may formulate occupation, “When I was in elementary school,” formulates a stage of life, and “He’s at the racetrack,” formulates an activity (he’s gambling). Thus Schegloff questions “how a place term came to be used to do a non-place formulation” (1972, 81). A related issue is how a non-place formulation may formulate place, such as where “He’s running” is taken to mean ‘at the track’ for the people who know his movements. Such formulations of place by statements about other things are also common in the Lachixío video corpus. In considering these questions, I suggest that analysts may discover links between formulations of place, conceptual common ground, and moral stances toward sociocultural landscapes.

Turn-taking is also a process speakers utilize to take and display stances toward each other’s talk and the objects represented through talk. Du Bois (2007) describes stance as having the power to “assign value
to objects of interest, to position social actors with respect to those objects, to calibrate alignment between stancetakers, and to invoke presupposed systems of sociocultural value” (2007, 139). Stance involves a “complex web of interconnections” involving dialogicality, intersubjectivity, the participants who jointly enact stance, and the language structure and sociocultural value they invoke (Du Bois 2007, 140). Keane (2011, 169) notes that “to the extent that stance is a pervasive feature of verbal interaction, it also exemplifies the ubiquity of evaluation.” Kockelman (2004, 131) contrasts the “public, intersubjective, and embodied” character of stance with the “private, subjective, and psychological” character of attitudes. In considering moral evaluation as a social achievement it is semiotic action that makes stances visible, sharable, and contestable. Stances can be read from the public signs speakers deploy in response to another speaker’s utterance displaying the evaluation of a responding speaker to the utterance, meaning, and action of the previous speaker. In the chaining of actions in conversation one utterance may take a stance on a prior stance to affirm it, strengthen it, or contest it in some way.

The conversations analyzed in this paper all speak to the development of common ground and stances about places through place reference practice among Lachixío Zapotec speakers. In Section 3, I present the data and characterize the coding schema used to approach the multiple formulations of place in these data. Section 4 illustrates a cultural focus on places in which conversational references that are not ostensibly about place are responded to with questions and answers that explicitly refer to place. The first two segments (§4.1, §4.2) show talk focused on the topic of family genealogy and refer to places all within the village; the third (§4.3) opposes traumatic events outside the village with healing social life inside the village. Section 5 presents transcripts from a conversation about an illness caused at the border of the village and the forest by a malevolent forest spirit and in which the place of the enchantment became the explicit focus of talk. Section 6 turns to talk about places to which one participant has traveled and the other has not, examining how common ground and moral stances about different people of those places was built up dialogically. Section 7 moves to conclude discussing how a focus on the conversational practice of dialogic narrative provides insights on the collaborative formulation of place, common ground and morality in Lachixío Zapotec.

3 Data

Data in this paper come from a video corpus of over 40 hours of spontaneous conversational interactions recorded in the Zapotec speaking village of Santa Maria Lachixío in the summers of 2008 and 2009 (Sicoli 2012) transcribed, translated and coded for discourse features using ELAN multimedia annotation software (Wittenberg et al 2006). The participants were all local community members and in most of the videos there were no topics prompted, with the exception of three videos in which families discussed their genealogies. Although I set up the camera and audio recorder in about a third of the recordings, I was not present during the interactions to reduce observer-effects. The other two-thirds of the corpus was videotaped by a local Zapotec speaking man referred to as Pedro in the transcripts. He is also a conversational participant in several of the recordings.

In order to identify the range of place reference formulations within the data, the corpus was coded by the Multimodal Interaction in Meso-America (MMIMA) research group.2 Table 1 shows the coding for place reference type. It examines whether the formulation of place is a question about place, a deictic pronoun, a reference to a present object, a more oblique location description, a place name (toponym), or a functional description like what is done at a place, with a residual category for rarer place reference formulations that did not fit the others. These multiple categories show that beyond toponyms Zapotec speakers formulate place references in numerous interesting ways. This schema was developed as we discovered recurrent linguistic formulations in the conversational corpus where speakers referred to places in their physical or discursively imagined world. In some cases coding was not exclusive, as seen in example (3) which includes reference to a present object and a deictic pronoun. Other scholars have developed schemas based spe-
fically on structural relations of a language for coding spatial frames of reference and the reader here is pointed to the work of Levinson (2004); Levinson and Wilkins (2006); Levinson, Bohnemeyer, and Enfield (2008); Pederson, Danziger, Wilkins et al. (1998); and Majid, Bowerman, and Kita et al. (2004) for alternative and overlapping coding schemas.

Table 1: Place Reference Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Content Question</th>
<th>Where is your tortilla?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Deictic Pronoun</td>
<td>We put it in that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She came from over there.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reference to present object</td>
<td>Sit on the chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Location description</td>
<td>Sit in front of the stove.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I went down (to the lower elevation of town).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I went up (to the higher elevation of town)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Place name</td>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zimatlán</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>México</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Functional description</td>
<td>The place where the donkey is tied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with Francisco (for 'at Francisco's house')</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in the shade.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>in a place (abstract)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>these zones (abstract)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples 1-7 are Lachixío utterances illustrating each of these place reference types.³

(1) **¿Eerò ello nzokkó ni'i' Zxóà?**
    
    erò elo n-zokó ni'i-' Zxóà
    but where STA-sit house-POS John
    
    But where is John's house?

(2) **Oyaa beè ndxò enzo kwaa.**
    
    -|P gazing in direction of reference
    o-ya bè=ndxò enzo kwa
    CMP-carry PL=3F direction this
    
    They took her over there.

(3) **Ozokkó7 lò xhlétta kye'e nee bediccha' lò.**
    
    o-zokó=lò xhléta ke'e ne bedicha'=lò
    CMP-sit=2SG chair here in.order.to talk=2SG
    
    Sit (in this) chair here so we can talk.

(4) **Frente ro'o farmásya nzoo kwa' a rri'ccha á ndxò.**
    
    frente ro'o farmásya n-tzo kwa' a r-ri'cha=á=ndxò
    front mouth pharmacy HAB-put inhabit HAB-say=1SG=3F
    
    I told her I lived in front of the pharmacy.

(5) **Bii ngoyyà lá ro né.**
    
    bi ngo.ya=la=ro=né
    Zimatlán CMP-carry=already=1PLX=IND.S.O
    
    In Zimatlán we can get more.

³ Guide to orthography and abbreviations is appended to the end of the article.
(6) **ello rikki kwánna’ paara beè náññi**
elo riki kwána’ para bè náni
where sell medicine for PL animal
**where (they) sell medicine for animals ((veterinarian store))**

(7) **Tókko luwaare ozzella ro kulándro.**
tòko luware o-zxela=ro kulándro
one place CMP-find=1PLX cilantro
**One place we found cilantro.**

While examples (1-7) are all place references referring to geographical locations in space, place references can also refer to places on the body, to places in time, to parts of objects (meronyms), and to metaphorical places in discourse. Table 2 shows a secondary coding scheme that we applied to examine the place references for these domains of use.

**Table 2: Place Reference Metaphoric Domains**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Geographical</th>
<th>Anatomical</th>
<th>Temporal</th>
<th>Object part (meronymy)</th>
<th>Place in discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(all of the above)</td>
<td>Where I got bruised.</td>
<td>The hour there (that hour then).</td>
<td>You lifted the bike by the front? I lifted it by the headstock.</td>
<td>Where were we? Where are you going with this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Anatomical</td>
<td>Where I got bruised.</td>
<td>The hour there (that hour then).</td>
<td>You lifted the bike by the front? I lifted it by the headstock.</td>
<td>Where were we? Where are you going with this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>Where I got bruised.</td>
<td>The hour there (that hour then).</td>
<td>You lifted the bike by the front? I lifted it by the headstock.</td>
<td>Where were we? Where are you going with this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Object part (meronymy)</td>
<td>Where I got bruised.</td>
<td>The hour there (that hour then).</td>
<td>You lifted the bike by the front? I lifted it by the headstock.</td>
<td>Where were we? Where are you going with this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Place in discourse</td>
<td>Where I got bruised.</td>
<td>The hour there (that hour then).</td>
<td>You lifted the bike by the front? I lifted it by the headstock.</td>
<td>Where were we? Where are you going with this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples 8-11 are Zapotec utterances illustrating non-geographical/metaphorical place reference domains.

(8) **Rkoò méero ro'o báyyo á ello oya’lla.**
r-kò méro ro'o báyo=á elo o-ya’la
HAB-hurt very mouth waist=1SG where CMP-undone
**My waist hurt where it was sprained.**

(9) **Oòra ze’e enta látó yakkò’ é txe.**
òra ze’e enta=la=lò yakkò'=é txe
hour there come=already=2SG close=3O then
**You came that hour there to close it then.**

(10) **Oriñña á liññi pasajéero.**
o-rina=á lini pasajéro
CMP-arrive stomach bus
**I got inside the bus.**

(11) **Eenze’e kaà.**
e#n-ze’e kà
CLAS#SIM-there true
**There’s the truth. ((That’s the truth))**

Some of these examples illustrate the meronyms composed of body-part locative constructions that Zapotec is known for (MacLaury 1989; Pérez-Báez 2011) and Meso-American languages more generally (Bohmemeyer 2011; Campbell, Kaufman and Smith-Stark 1986; Freidrich 1969; Stross 1976). Meronymy can be seen in
example (4) ro'o farmásya ‘lit: mouth pharmacy’ picking out the side of the building with the door and example (10) liññi pasajéero ‘lit: stomach bus’ for ‘inside the bus’.

The coding schema facilitated building collections of types of place references and searching through the tagged corpus. We used the coding as a heuristic to qualitatively understand the range of place references within their sequences in the data and to build sets of place reference types to examine together. One of the things that became clear from examining place references in sequential environments was the multiple ways in which non-place references were used to formulate place and how place references were used to formulate other things.

Over subsequent field trips I recorded playback dialogues in which I video recorded community members watching video clips of these interactions and discussing them with each other producing metacommunications about the first order natural conversations we were viewing. I also conducted playback interviews in which I asked community members questions about the interactions. These additional ethnographic sources of data are also drawn on in the analysis of the following sections.

4 Ontological crossing of place reference with person and event

Place is a ubiquitous component of discourse which implicitly grounds all utterances and can be made explicit in dialogue. It is not uncommon to observe people in Lachixío getting involved in extended repair sequences working out the exact location of events before a conversation is allowed to go on. Through analysis of turn-by-turn talk we see that place is explicitly attended to by the participants in their responses to questions that were ostensibly about other things. I call such equivalencies speakers draw between places, persons, and events in their response practices ontological crossings and suggest here that they provide important insight for language as cultural practice. A cultural focus on place among Lachixío speakers is apparent in how questions about people are responded to with statements about place as in Section 4.1, how places are associated with particular people in Section 4.2, and with events in 4.3. Places, persons, and events are braided together in references to the landscape in historical narrations. Every place in the village is associated with people and with stories of their life events and social relations, many of which involve family and illustrate, as Hirsch (1995, 9) wrote, that “kinship and the land are mutually implicated.” Through ontological crossing and repairs that take place across turn transitions we will also begin to see a set of oppositions between the positive value of life and social relationships inside the village and the moral uncertainty conveyed in references to places outside the village.

4.1 Who is Where

The transcript in example (12) illustrates place references in the service of person references. In line 1 Endô’ asks his grandmother to talk about her genealogy using a ‘which’ content question “Which of your deceased beloved grandfathers (do you wish to talk about)?” In line 2 Nàolla ‘grandma’ responds with her choice of person followed immediately in line 3 with a specification emplacing that person through deictics in both speech and gesture (Haviland 1993). At the very start of line 3, she points up to her right and gazes up to her right, then returns her gaze to her left where the youth is seated next to her but continues to point to her right throughout her turn. It is important to note that the participants are seated inside a house with no line of sight to the parcel of land.

(12) LMSCVDP20Jul0901 (2:43 – 2:53)

1. Endô’: ¿Taà toò xée táolla lò?
   Tà tò xé tá#ola=lò
   which deceased uncle grandfather=2SG
   Which of your deceased beloved grandfathers?
2. Náolla:  Áâ toô xée táolla Bettoh txee  
áâ tô xé tá#ola Betoh txe  
oh deceased uncle grandfather Beto then 
Oh deceased beloved grandfather Pete then

3. Náolla:  Benné ze’e ozòkkó eenze’e eenze’e xhii yoò enza ékyè txoo nóo nzokkó. 
|N points right, moves hand up and holds through turn 
------------------------|N gaze to E through end of turn  
bené ze’e o-zòkó e#n-ze’e e#n-ze’e xhi  
person there CMP-live CLAS#SIM-there CLAS#SIM-there how  
yò enza ékè txo nó n-zokó  
land direction head then that STA-live  
That person there lived there there (where we’re talking about) toward the top of that parcel then (he) lived.

4. Endô’:  Xoo Serefínno  
------------|E small nods  
xo Serefino  
uncle Serefino  
Uncle Serefino

5. Náolla:  Áwwà  
-|N nods  
Yes.

6. Náolla:  Benné ze’e nzòkkó eenze’e ékyè kwâ’  
------------------------|N points across body  
bené ze’e n-zòkó e#n-ze’e ékè kwâ’  
person there STA-live CLAS#SIM-there head that  
That person there lived there at that knoll.

In addition to the pointing gesture, line 3 illustrates several place constructions used for space, time and narrative topic. The term ze’e is a pronoun used for non-visible referents, which can be distal in space or time. Benné ze’e (lit: person there) can refer to a person of a distal place but here refers to the person
of a distal time. Derived from this is the lexical item eenze’e, which metaphorically marks the topic as a place that is being tracked in a discourse. The exact place in the village is specified in the turn through a meronym using the body-part locative construction headed by ékkyè ‘head’ indicating the knoll of land in the direction she indicated by her pointing gesture. What I want to draw attention to is how a precise specification of place is recruited in the service of a person reference. This is an example of Schegloff’s second problem in formulating place where a place reference is formulating something other than place.

Following Náolla’s specification of place by verbal and gestural deixis, the boy responds with a person reference. His great-great-grandfather is not personally known to him but he is able to achieve enough cognizance through the place reference to posit an understanding check if the place she is indicating is “Uncle Serefino,” a known relation to him who lives there now. The space becomes a place through its association with human social relations. Enchronically his subsequent move brings person and place into an equivalency (an ontological crossing we will see again in §4.2). Showing that his subsequent move is an appropriate one, the grandmother verifies the understanding check in line 5 saying Áwwà ‘yes’ while nodding, and declares that Uncle Pete lived at the knoll there, pointing again to her right in line 6, though this time with her left hand as illustrated.

4.2 Where is Who

The next example is of a place reference associated with a person. Náolla says that the place she used to live as a child and where she still has a plot of land that she farms, is now called Jose Luís for the person who now lives there. Endò’s next move is an understanding check where he asks if the land she refers to is at the top of (or above) the oven (a makeshift earth furnace carved in a concave landscape feature of a hillside and used in processing of lime from limestone). She corrects him, specifying that the place to which she refers is actually inside the concave area (at the side that it is open to).

(13) LMSCVDP20Jul0901 (7:03 – 7:11)

1. Náolla: Jose Luís lèé ello noxxo ti kwárto yoò nóo do'o á nì.
   Jose Luís lèé elo noxo ti-kwárto yò nó do'o=á nì
   Jose Luís name where lies a-quarter land that put=1SG plant
   It’s called Jose Luís where there’s a quarter of land that I plant.

2. Endò’: Asta ékkyè órno
   |E Points up-left
   asta ékkyè órno
   to head oven
   At the top of the oven? ((lime-making oven dug into a concave hillside))

3. Náolla: [liññi órno rkyè
   --------|N open hand hand up-left
   ---------------|N open hand point up-left
   lini órno rkè
   stomach oven that.there
   Inside the oven ((in/below the hillside feature))

In this example and the previous one we see the close relationship between place references and person references in the village. All land in Lachixío is associated with people, both living and dead, and with the agricultural practices that define the fields, homesteads, and kin relations of the village. Knowledge of places is bound up with knowledge of social relations and social history. When participants spoke about people they almost always vocally and gesturally indicated the part of the village where they reside or
resided when living. And as we see here and will see in the next section, places in the village are often named and referred to by people’s names.

4.3 How is Where

In examples (12) and (13) the ontological categories of “where” and “who” were tied to each other across turns of talk. In this way formulations of place were entangled with references to persons. In example (14) we see a How-question responded to with a Where-response. In this example Pedro (the camera operator) is visiting his neighbor Flavio’s family. Flavio is talking about his twisted back, a chronic problem of back pain in his life at the time of the recording. Pedro asks the question “How did you do it that it got twisted?” Flavio repeats the how-question but does not answer it by reference to an activity that a how question makes relevant. Rather, he responds with a reference to place produced through both uttering a generic place name (daññi ‘forest’) and a chin point toward the specific direction where he is saying the injury occurred. Pedro shows a news uptake in next position, but Kacha (Flavio’s wife) interjects with a conversational repair initiation formulated as negation a’a and proffers a contradictory place reference: Olá’a ‘Oaxaca’ (the capital city a few hours away from the town) illustrating my earlier point about how repair sequences are launched to work out the details of places of events.

(14) LMSMVPDP20Jul0904 (3:42-4:02)

1 Pedro:  Xaa kye’ ori’i lò nóo oyo’lla é re’

How did you do it that it got twisted?

2  (1.1)

3 Flavio:  Xaa kye’ nóo níi á daññi oyo’lla é nyá’a.

How it was is that I say in the forest it got twisted I do say.

4 Pedro:  Áà daññi oyo’lla é.

Oh in the forest it got twisted.

5 Kacha:  A’a [enza Olá’a.

No it was in Oaxaca.
In overlap with Kacha, Flavio’s mother (Náolla ‘grandma’ in the transcript) makes a parallel assertion that his injury occurred in the city and provides a response that could be considered an answer to the how-question: “When a city-woman was sweeping and you lifted a heavy bundle.” Flavio agrees with this assessment in lines 7, “Oh I got hurt then” and 8 “I think it was when um in Oaxaca truly that it got twisted the first time,” followed immediately in line 9 with a return to the forest location, “and the second time it’s clear it got twisted in the forest.” What is notable is how through the turn taking of repair and contributions from all four participants, the places of Flavio’s injuries were negotiated through contestations and affirmations that resulted in a collaborative construction of the narrative.

Flavio’s story goes on from here to state that each time he injured his back he made great effort to return to the village where he could see a masseur to work on his back. In both cases the injuries occurred outside of the village, places one goes out of necessity. Townsfolk travel to Oaxaca City for wage labor, to buy supplies, or to sell agricultural products, and Flavio works in the forest as a lumberjack. In this dialogic narrative we begin to see a moral axis represented where from the point of view of the storytellers located in the village the distal is dangerous and the proximal safe. The home village is the place in the story to return to for healing. In contrast to the village (dèttxe), the forest (dáññi) is full of risk. Farther still is Oaxaca City, with which village folk have a necessary relationship for supply and trade, but which is filled with hazards (thefts and swindlers are common). Flavio’s injuries both occurred outside of the village in economically

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4 The lexical item ná’ttze ‘city woman’ indexes person and place together.
necessary but not preferred activities. References to place in the next section again show cultural attention to places where amoral dangers lurk at the edge of and outside the village.

5 Reference to forest spirit sickness entails reference to place

In Section 4.3 we saw through examination of variable responses across turn transitions that an event relating how something happened was remembered and developed in close association with place references. Before that we also saw that place references could appropriately affect person reference (§4.2), and that reference to living or deceased persons could be relevantly followed by a participant’s response invoking place reference (§4.1). In this section the ‘person’ referred to is not a living or deceased villager but rather a supernatural entity called Wàcchi in Lachixío and Chaneque in Spanish (the word Chaneque is itself borrowed into Spanish from Náhuatl). I will use the Lachixío word Wàcchi in my prose. The sequences in this transcript have Pedro visiting the same neighbor’s house as in §4.3 the next morning. Flavio’s mother made a comment about Pedro’s three-year-old daughter who was with him that day. The elderly woman labeled as grandmother (Náolla) in the transcripts commented that the girl looked to be growing well and asked if she was ever sick. This question was responded to with a dialogic narrative that involved responses from Náolla and other participants on the patio.

Pedro said she hasn’t been sick but that one time she got hurt: she suddenly became ‘chilled.’ What follows is a narrative about her diagnosis and cure. In this first sequence there are a number of place references as Pedro explains how they took the child to see different practitioners (line 55). Several place references show ontological crossings as we saw in Section 4. The formulations of place in the first transcript segment of example (15) are both done with person references. Rather than naming the pharmacy where they go first, Pedro formulates the place using the name of Amanda, who runs a pharmacy out of her house, gives injections, and is also referred to as the doctora, a title for a woman doctor. These person references must also be interpreted as place references given the shared information the participants have in their cultural common ground. This interpretation is made visible in how person references are responded to with pronouns of place such as ze’e ‘there’, and was reinforced in playback dialogues and interviews where speakers talked about and translated this person reference as a place reference: ‘the pharmacy’. The people of Lachixío share in their common ground that Amanda, the doctora, runs a pharmacy out of her house, the place to go for antibiotic injections. This knowledge is made explicit in the grandmother’s explicit stance-taking assessment of line 60 accompanied by her head turn to gaze toward the pharmacy (about 200 meters away across corn fields).

(15) LMSMVDP21Jul0901 (14:30 – 15:15)

55 Pedro:  

Nzaa nóo làá ro ndxò nzaa nóo làá ro ndxò loobe’ Mándà ori’i loobe’ doctóora.

I went and we took her/ I went and we took her to show Amanda, to show the doctor.

56 Pedro:  

ze’e ryekkà’ ndxò tsee.

There she gets cured then.

In Mesoamerica health conditions as well as remedies, foods, beverages, plants, and animals are considered hot or cold. See for example the work of Foster (1994).
There she gets cured then.

There she gets cured then.

It's truly good that Amanda’s family sells medicines there.

We carried her with (us) to see Amanda (and) to see the doctor here to see the doctor in the town and she wasn’t cured.
62 Náolla: ^^Nya’ay:...............^^
--------------------------|P gaze front
--------------------------|N gaze front
‘.ni=á=é
ACT.say=1SG=3O
^^I do say!^^

63 Pedro: Peero xhip kyènne txe ni=ro nóo eskye’ oyaa noo a’la làá ro ndxò loo Chinnà.
pèro xhi kyène txe ni=ro nó eske’ o-yaa=no=a’la
but now hurried then say=1PLX that like.this CMP-go=with=again
làá=ro=ndxò lo Chinà
take=1PLX=3F face nick.name
But quickly we said that we’re just carrying her to see Curly.

64 (0.8)

65 Pedro: Iccha wàcci txe ni Chína.
icha wàchi txe ni Chína
sickness Chaneque then say nick.name
It’s the sickness of Wàcchi then Curly said.

66 Náolla: %A’a’ nii á:::::%
-------------|N head up
a’a ni=á
no say=1SG
%no I say%

67 Pedro: Eskyè’ de.nò,
eskyè’ de.nò
like.this then
Like this then

68 Pedro: nóo nekka né eenze’e txe
nó ne-aka=né e#n-ze txe
that STA-become=IND.S.O CLAS#SIM-there then
that it happened like this then

69 Pedro: ori’i Chínnà remédyo ndxò txe.
o-ri’i Chínnà remedyo=ndxò txe
CMP-make nick.name cure=3F then
Curly made her cure then.

Next Pedro moves the story forward saying, “I saw then she was truly cured,” and turns his gaze to his daughter. What happens now reveals for us that the participants are orienting to the Wàcchi sickness as an issue of place. Reference to Wàcchi activates a common ground of their cultural landscape that has not previously been explicit in the talk exchanged. Náolla asks Pedro a where-question: “Where was she blown on then?”
70 Pedro: *Oyekka kaà ndxò txe rì’yya á nóo rekka asta onga ndxò eskye’ oyekka ndxò.*

I saw then that she was truly cured that she could get well.

71 Náolla: → *Nya’ay ¿Kaa olaññi txe?*

I do say. Where was she blown on then?

In playback interviews, people of Lachixío gave two reasons why Náolla asks about the place where she got sick. First, any sickness attributed to Wàcchi is attributed to the geographical location where one was touched or blown on by the cold spirit. People want to know where someone became ill because they will be wary of that place as one watched by Wàcchi. Often these places are physically marked by something like a rock outcrop and are at the forest edge or inside the forest. To pass there, loiter, or, in the worst case, sleep in such a place will put one at risk. Additionally, knowing the exact place where Wàcchi has taken one’s soul is of the utmost importance for the shamanic cure. The family must make offerings to appease Wàcchi and get him to return the soul of the afflicted. In the words of one villager, “One can make a thousand offerings but if they are made in the wrong place there will be no cure.”

Pedro’s response to Náolla’s question clearly shows that successful reference in conversation is a joint activity requiring both the referential act and its uptake. It is only with uptake that some public sign of taking a reference into common ground is signified and shows an orientation that triangulates on an object. In line 72 Pedro indicates where Wàcchi blew on his daughter through formulations of place that use the verbal deictic *rkyè* ‘over there’ combined with embodied deictics of hand points and head points. These gestures both depend on a shared indexical ground of deictic reference (Hanks 1992) supported by shared visual perception. While he also mentions ‘planting’ in this turn (the activity his family was engaged in when the child became ill), it is not specific as most land surrounding their location is planted with corn. Pedro’s place formulation gets no response in line 73 as the elder woman misses his point while looking down to find a place to sit (illustrated in line 72). Pedro then pursues his reference, developing it with an incrementally more specific reference by saying ‘over there where the eleuteria is planted’ and continuing to point (line 74). His place references pick out a location at the edge of the forest about 75 meters away from the patio where they are seated.

72 Pedro: *Enza choo rkyèè nóo oyaay beè ndxò (. ) onïi enza.*

That way then over there that they carried her (when) planting there.
73 (0.8)

74 Pedro: *Nokkwe choo rkyè ello jdoobè' lotéerya níngye' ello jdoobè' lotéerya níngye'*.

*---------------|P point and drops point |P gaze to N-------------------------------------*

*nokwe choo rkyè elo r-dobè' lotéerya níngye'*

*um then over.there where HAB-plant eleuteria DIST.O*

*elo r-dobè' lotéerya níngye'*

*where HAB-plant eleuteria DIST.O*

*Um then over there where that eleuteria is planted where that eleuteria is planted.*

75 Náolla: ^^Áâ^^

^\^Oh^^

76 Pedro: *Oyaa beè ndxò enza kwà' noo rekka odattze ndxò eenze'e nii Máari*

-|P gazing toward eleuteria

*o-yaa bè=ndxò enza kwà’ no re-aka o-datze=ndxò CMP-carry PL=3F direction that and HAB-can CMP-sleep=3F eenze’e ni Máari CLAS#SIM-there say NAME*

*They took her over there and she could sleep in that place, Mary said.*

77 (0.8)

78 Náolla: ^^Ady:;;;;:^^

^\^Oh:;;;;:^^

Pedro’s points and verbal deixis, followed by an incremental expansion of his reference, is his attempt to secure recognition of his place reference indicated through what Sacks in his class lectures (1972 unpublished) referred to as a ‘recognition-type description’ for places in story telling (Stivers, Enfield, and Levinson 2007 , 10). Unlike we’ve seen with other locations in the village, a person reference is not used, and the reference itself is somewhat disfluent and in need of repair. The repair itself is patterned in the same way as well-known repairs in person reference (Sacks and Schegloff 2007), showing a preference for minimization in the reference of the trouble source with a single deictic rkyè ‘over there’ (line 72). In line 74 he repeats rkyè and adds one more piece of information: “ello jdoobè‘ lotérya níngye” ‘where the eleuteria is planted’. This incremental increase made by adding a relative clause to his previous turn is sufficient for recognition. His new place formulation shifts his semiotic modality from a gestural index to symbolic reference which does not require Náolla to be in a visually co-present participation frame but rather relies on the symbol’s affordance for displaced, arbitrary reference, and her prior knowledge of the eleuteria (*Croton eleuteria* is a medicinal herb). In line 75 then, Náolla issues a news uptake interjection Áâ in response marking the achievement of common ground in her uptake of the reference. Pedro then moves forward saying that when his wife was working in the field at the edge of the forest she let the child sleep in that place where she became ill. Náolla responds to this information with an extremely lengthened, falsetto voiced affective interjection, “^^Ady:;;;;:^^ “

A moral axis opposing the village interior (defined by its social relations) with spaces at the edge and contiguous with an amoral space outside the village underlies this story, revealing a parallel to the conversation about Flavio’s twisted back in which places outside the village were constructed as dangerous. A contrast we see is that places outside the village are named with toponyms (Oaxaca, forest) but places in the village are named for people. Pedro’s formulations of place were indicating the edge of the village and the beginning of the forest, which can be seen from the patio where they are seated. Here it is important to note that the reference goes beyond hearsay to integrate the story with personal knowledge. It is marked in line 76 as something Pedro’s wife said but in the current speech environment the reference finds its ground.
in the empirical world of Nàolla’s experience of a known location at the edge of the village where a useful, and thus known, medicinal plant grows.

The term Wàcchi is regularly translated to Spanish as dueño del cerro ‘owner of the mountain/forest’ and often takes the form of a man, as in the myth of the villager offered work in the mountain that I presented in the introduction. People are expected to make offerings of food, mezcal (a liquor made from an agave plant), or tobacco to Wàcchi when entering the forest, asking permission to use the forest for food and materials. One is generally safe from Wàcchi in the village, and particularly in the area of one’s house, with the interior of a house being safest. The edge of town is an ambivalent place as are roads which are contiguous between the inside of the village and the outside where they connect to other centers through the forest. Both roads and edges come into play as features referenced in the stories of the next section.

6 The dialogic emergence of stances on places

The last two sections examined conversations about sickness and curing for their formulations of place. Another common topic of conversation in Lachixío is talk about travels. As I mentioned in the introduction, for people of Oaxacan rural villages it is very common to make extended trips outside of the town to look for work. In my ethnographic interviews consultants have characterized this as something necessary but undesired. “The village is beautiful, but there is no work here to make money” I’ve been told, and “We can grow most of our own food but if you want to buy things or send your kids to school you need to go find work.” Trips outside of the village are topics people ask about and tell stories about. Narratives about these trips are often characterized by risk, danger, and suffering, and end with a return to the safety of the village. Stories of this form are common enough to constitute a genre and I analyzed one such story a father told of his son’s trip to and return from the United States in Sicoli (2007).

The transcripts in this section were produced from a conversation between two brothers. Pedro and his older brother Martin are seated on a porch at their father’s house. Martin has recently returned from travel with other young men from Lachixío picking up day labor at construction sites and seasonal work with cash crops like coffee. As this is a particularly long sequence I present the dialogue in English translation and then focus on shorter sequences in Zapotec with interlinear glossing.

(16) Martin’s trip to Lotuna6 LMSMVD09Aug0803 (36.41-38.21)

Martin: But from there, um after that we went to the coffee plantation. There we arrived at a town that’s called “Lotuna.” It was there that we suffered. It was there that we suffered because it was so, how’s it called, upon arriving there in the afternoon then there were no places to stay there like I said before and (.) There are towns where there are good people and towns where there are bad people. There was no place to stay in that town there. If you wanted to sleep, well you sleep on the street or there was no no, They don’t give a place for you to sleep in their house. They don’t give a place for you to sleep (in) their house. We asked for a place to stay but even then he denied a place to sleep. They only gave a porch entrance where you’re simply at the edge of the street and anything could happen in the night. Like this they go along the people who (.) a problem there also, a likely problem is that they have a border dispute (with a) border or territory we thought.

Pedro: Exactly

Martin: It’s likely for this they are like that there that each person there was going around most of the day men and women carrying their machete or knife that they could use to defend themselves. And when you ask for a place to stay or ask for a um some tortilla for you to eat, they don’t give it.

6 Lotuna is a pseudonym.  
Pedro: They don't give it.

Martin: They won't give it because they would be I think like that they live there, or it's

Pedro: %aha%

Martin: in this way it seems they live there

Pedro: Exactly

Martin: They don't give. But I know that in that town there we suffered because, how's it called, the people there are really nasty.

Pedro: The people there are nasty.

Martin: They don't give a place for you to sleep. The only thing that we could do. We slept at the edge of the street there and at the edge of the street there is where we went to sleep. How's it called, we passed the night there then but a person who was the owner of a house there said, “You could sleep here but we don't know if you'll truly go on living tomorrow or if you'll be dead but never the less I'm not giving you a place to stay” he said. There yes we suffered then. After some time then we left there to go toward, like we said, we went to Puerto Escondido.

There are many place references in the dialogue including toponyms (Lotuna), pronouns, descriptions, a porch, the road, the edge of the road, houses, and inter-village borders. The places are also morally charged for Martin who takes stances on them during the story. And they become so for Pedro as we see through his responses of agreement and his resonating repetitions that by their form and function mark both the development of common ground and sharing of a moral stance. One way in which Lotuna stands in contrast to Lachixío for the participants is because it has a cash crop economy rather than a subsistence economy. In an earlier segment Martin mentions that they do not grow corn in Lotuna since all the land there is dedicated to growing coffee. This economic difference between villages produces a misalignment of the moral geography. Where other villages should conceivably have a metaphoric parallel to the moral geography around Lachixío, where the world of profit and labor exploitation is ideally in the distal spaces, not the proximal, these other towns have brought the capitalist market within their borders.

Martin characterizes the people of Lotuna as bad people, an ethical appeal to their lacking virtues demonstrated in their violation of expectations of the moral system shared by Martin and Pedro (see Williams 1985 and Keane 2016 on boundaries, fuzzy as they may be, between ethics and morality). Martin tells Pedro that the people of Lotuna do not give visitors a place to sleep. This violation of a moral norm is something like the “moral breakdown” discussed in Zigon (2007) as a contrary to expectation turn of events that makes the unreflective state of being moral reflective. But rather than an individual’s self-reflection on their own moral behavior that is so often the subject of anthropology and philosophy of ethics and morality (Laidlaw 2014, Zigon 2008), the moral breakdown here is dialogic where a first-pair part like a request, with a moral preference for granting, is denied. It has become an object of reflection for Martin and made a stance-object in Martin and Pedro’s interaction. In line 20 Martin says they asked for posadada ‘accommodation’, a word borrowed from Spanish posada ‘inn’, but that they were denied a safe lawhaare para nóó a’tze lô, (lit: ‘place that you sleep’). Offering someone a safe place to sleep is important in Lachixio and a definition of good hospitality. In line 21 Martin formulates the place they were left to sleep as roô korredôr ‘porch entrance’ (lit: mouth porch), which he further specifies in line 21 where they were roô käyye, at the edge of the dangerous street.
20 Martin: Onakkò’ ro posáada pèero aun (ne) née likkì’ zxa lowáare para nóo a’tzte lò.
   o-nakò’=ro posáda pèro aun né likì’=zxa
   CMP-ask=1PLX accommodation but even.if deny give=3DIS
   lowáare para nó a’te=lò
   place for that sleep=2SG
   We asked for a place to stay but even then he denied a place to sleep.

21 Martin: Solaménte olikkì’ zxa tòkko ro’o korredór
   solaménte o-likì’=zxa tòko ro’o korredór
   only CMP-give=3DIS one mouth porch
   They only gave a porch entrance

22 Martin: ello simpleménte nekka
   ello simpleménte ne-aka=né ro’o káyye noo tonno xhii oxe’kka lò rólla’
   where simply STA-become=IND.S.O mouth street and
   tonno xhi o-zxe’ka=lò róla’
   if how CMP-happen=2SG night
   where you're simply at the edge of the street and anything could happen in the night.

The next sequence shows Martin’s attempt to fit this situation, and by extension the village of Lotuna, into
a common-ground understanding of the region. Border disputes are common in Oaxaca and are commonly
talked about.7 Based on the way that Martin saw residents of Lotuna acting, he speculates that the town may
have been involved in territorial problems in their region. Martin's supposition gets a response from Pedro
in line 26 ‘Exactly’, showing that his reference was indeed fitted to a common ground shared with Pedro,
and others in Lachixío, and the people of this whole region that suffer these ongoing disputes brought
about largely by corrupt state government officials and business representatives colluding to exploit village
resources in the 20th century. In lines 28-30 Martin creates an image of a place where men and women go
about armed with knives and machetes.

23 Martin: Kommo eeze’e nzée nzée benné enno
   komo e=n-ze’e n-tzé n-tzé bené eno
   how CLAS=SIM-there STA-go STA-go person who
   Like there they go the people who

24 Martin: Lè’kka problémma, alomejóor problémma (de(.)) jlo’kkó beè zxa de limmite
   lè’ka probléma alomejór probléma de r-lo’kó beè=zxa de limite
   also problem likely problem of HAB-have PL=3DIS of territorial.borders
   a problem there also, a likely problem is that they have a border dispute

25 Martin: beè bréccha o beè iliò nii a’wa
   bé brècha o bé ilió ni=a’wa
   PL breach or PL territory say=IPL
   border or territory like we said

26 Pedro: Esso
   eso
   this
   Exactly

7 At the time of this writing Lachixío and San Pedro el Alto had been in the news for a flare up about a contested border where
two judicial documents showed different title to the same land and which lead to gunshots and wounded.
After the potential justification of the people of Lotuna’s behavior, which itself recognizes that as a village Lotuna could be metaphorically characterized as a moral center, Martin abandons the trope and turns back to the fact that the people of Lotuna offered no places to stay or food to eat, the actions that would perform the moral behavior of hospitality that one could expect in Lachixío. Martin’s formulations of place negatively evaluate Lotuna, by reference to its people who won’t give (see also Sicoli 2015b). Martin then references that town as the place where his group suffered in line 40, framed by a verb of seeing ri’yya á ‘I see’ that in Lachixío functions like an empirical evidential. The use of a verb of seeing asserts his direct experience of the place. He assesses that the people there are really nasty and Pedro’s resonating repetition of this assessment in line 42 displays his uptake of Martin’s stance assuming for himself the same stance which has now become discursively shared. Note how the stance utterances of lines 41 and 42 joins place, character, and virtue. Martin follows this by reasserting that Lotuna residents do not offer a place to sleep, characterizing again a lack of moral behavior.

But I know that in that town we suffered because what’s it called
43 Martin: \[lå\text{à}a \text{likki’ } \text{zxà lowàare para nóo a’ttze lò}\]
\[là \text{ liki’}=\text{zxà lowàre para nóo a’}=\text{tze}=\text{lò}\]
no give=3DIS place for that sleep=2SG
They don’t give a place for you to sleep.

Martin expands on this sequence with reference to where they slept formulating the place as ro’o kàyye ze’e ‘at edge of the street there’ (lit: mouth street there (unseen)) a place formulation which he emphatically iterates twice in line 45. Martin then shifts to animate the words of the owner of the house in line 48 where he quotes the man. The deictics shift for direct discourse and what has been formulated with ze’e ‘there’ in Martin’s narrative voice is now formulated with ka’a ‘here’ in an ironic shift as the man says that he knows it is unsafe and life-threatening to sleep on the edge of the street but that he still will not offer a place to stay. Rather than simply amoral, as if the man did not know any better, this attribution of knowledge and agency characterizes his action as immoral, an attribution I have elsewhere argued is seen in the choice of the grammatical forms characterizing people of Lotuna as willfully not giving (Sicoli 2015b).

44 Martin: \[\text{Solaménte lokee nóo ori’i ro}\]
\[solaménte \text{ lo.qe nò o-ri’i}=\text{ro}\]
only obj.that that CMP-do=1PLX
The only thing that we could do

45 Martin: \[\text{Oda’ttze ro tòkkò ro’o kàyye ze’e noo ro’o kàyye ze’e oda’ttze ro.}\]
\[o-da’=tze=ro \text{ tòko ro’o kày ye ze’e no ro’o kày ye ze’e o-da’}=tze=\text{ro}\]
CMP-sleep=1PLX one mouth street there and mouth street there CMP-sleep=1PLX
We slept at the edge of the street there and at the edge of the street there is where we went to sleep.

46 Martin: \[\text{Xaa lèé odette rólla’ ro txee pèero}\]
\[xa \text{ lèé o-deté róla’}=\text{ro txe pèro}\]
how name CMP-pass night=1PLX then but
How’s it called, we passed the night there then but

47 Martin: \[\text{benné enno nekka dweñño tòkkò ni’i nzokkó ze’e ni’i xaa nóo}\]
\[bené eno ne-aka dweño tòko ni’i n-zokó ze’e ni=zxa nó\]
person who STA-be owner one house STA-sit there say=3DIS that a person who was the owner of a house there said,

48 Martin: \[“\text{Tonno a’ttze wa ka’a pèero}\]
\[tono a’=tze=\text{wa ka’}=\text{a pèro}\]
if sleep=2PL here but
“You could sleep here but

49 Martin: \[\text{låa ri’i ro béyya’ tono waññi nzée kaa wa ye’e tono’ ngòtti wa pèero detodomóodo låa likki’ à lowàare’ nìi zxa.}\]
\[làa \text{ ri’i}=\text{ro béyya’ tono waññi n-tzé kà}=\text{wa ye’e}\]
no make=1PLX sign if live STA-walk truly=2PL tomorrow
\[\text{tono ngo-átì=wa pèro detodomódo lá liki’=á lowàre’ } \text{ ni=zxa}\]
\[\text{if CMP-die=2PL but none.the.less no give=1SG place say=3DIS}\]
we don’t know if you’ll truly go on living tomorrow or if you’ll be dead but never the less I’m not giving you a place to stay” he said.


Martin then moves to close the sequence about Lotuna shifting back to the distal place reference ze’e and an assessment of how he and his companions suffered there. His travel narrative continues with the group going back to Puerto Escondido, a small city on the Pacific Coast to look for construction work.

50 Martin: *Ze’e sii ori’i ro xhufrír txe.*

ze’e sí o-ri’i=ro xhufrír txe
there yes CMP-make=1PLX suffer then
There yes we suffered then.

51 Martin: *Yaa de tyémpo: después de no ocho’o ro ze’e oyaa lá ro enza:*

yaa de tyémpo después de nó o-cho’o=ro
already of time after of that CMP-leave=1PLX
ze’e o-ya la=ro enza:
there CMP-go already=1PLX direction
After some time then we left there to go toward

52 Martin: *kommo nii awa de riñña’ txe*

kom o ni=awa de riña’ txe
like say=1PL of work then
like we said of the work then

53 Martin: *oyaa lá ro enza pwértu eskondiido.*

o-ya la=ro enza pwértu eskondiido
CMP-go already=1PLX direction Puerto Escondido
we went to Puerto Escondido.

Shortly after this in the same interaction, Martin tells Pedro about the different places around the area of Puerto Escondido that he and his companions went looking for work and the difficulty of finding work that wasn’t paying below standard rates. Pedro displays that he has made a realization by issuing an interjection áà which in Lachixío can function as a ‘change of state token’ as Heritage (1984) has shown for ‘oh’ in English. And then Pedro comes in with an extended telling of a story he heard, querying if this was a story about the same place that Martin was referencing in his account. Pedro tells the story while Martin listens carefully without interjecting. Pedro’s story itself is a formulation of place, but it is unlike any of the formulations of place we have seen so far or that were originally coded for. It formulates place through the recounting of an extended narrative that happened at the relevant place, relying on an inter-discursive link of the two stories to the same temporal-spatial location. I present the English translation with the exception of one line that illustrates the use of the distal place pronoun for space and then time in the same sentence.

(17) LMSMVD09Aug0803 (39:11-40:12)

Martin: We went at the time to look for work to look for work. But sometimes we’d arrive at a place where they’d say the workers were already complete. And sometimes we’d arrive where they’d say that there was work then but it was cheap what they were paying then

Pedro: áà

Martin: *ryaxxò ska’llá olá’a loqee laa ze’e tyembo’ ze’e*

ryaxxò ska’álá olá’a loqee laa ze’e tyembo’ ze’e
HAB.pay scale Oaxaca obj.that comparative there time there
compared to the pay scale in Oaxaca then
Pedro: uhu, I heard another time where this was. One of you was telling a story that when you were going in that direction or another who was telling a story, I don't really remember when someone saw the place where there were soldiers um there was a soldier who was preparing food and there were the others keeping watch. But (the one) who was preparing this food there, they had a dog.

Martin: Exactly exactly

Pedro: He took the spoon that he stirred the food with and put it in the dog's mouth.

Martin: That very one

Pedro: It's something that I heard you all say.

Martin: Exactly

This exchange shows an entire narrative illustrating immoral behavior as Pedro's response to a sequence in Martin's story and proffered as a query of whether this story refers to the same place Martin is talking about. Pedro and Martin also take parallel stances on the area. The story Martin told about his cohort's travels around the port city characterize it as a place with amoral characters and rife with immoral labor exploitation. Pedro's story is a retelling of a narrated event that Pedro once heard, which, like the story about the nasty people of Lotuna, characterized distant places as populated by morally deficient people. Such stories are ones that commonly circulate in Lachixío. Pedro's query about the narrated place and its link to another discourse reiterates for us the cultural importance of place in Lachixío and its entanglement with other referential domains: for example, the ontological crossings presented in Section 4, where we saw place references as responses to a who-question and a how-question, and where we also saw place references linked with references to persons who have histories in those locations. Pedro's query about place through the narrative account of the incident with the soldiers' dog is through an account of what happened there. This last narrative brings us full circle to the notion I introduced at the beginning of this paper: that much of our knowledge of place is discursive knowledge accumulated through conversations. The tour I have given of Lachixío dialogic narratives and the analysis it presents brings us some way to understanding how common ground and a moral geography are built up discursively through the dialogic practice of turn exchange in conversation.

7 Conclusion

The examples and discussion in this paper show place reference to be a domain of language use that is deeply implicated in cultural practice and the building of knowledge and moral stances dialogically. The scale of analysis which examined place reference formulations in sequences that include responses of other participants evaluated for their appropriateness and effectiveness (Enfield 2013) makes visible how participants themselves are orienting to these references. I have focused on this dynamic scale of language use to bring the reader on an interpretive tour of how Lachixío speakers formulate place in the joint practice of conversational narrative. Place references are shown to have many formulations involving other ontological domains, and can be responded to with references that cross over to other ontological domains. In illustrating this I particularly focused on person reference (who is or was at a place) and event reference (what happens or happened there). Place references are seen to be doing many things beyond picking out or naming locations of a topography. Cumulatively the examples show that one thing the particular formulations of place are doing is constructing (and reconstructing within dialogic narratives) a moral geography centered in the positive evaluation of one's own social group (represented in the village with its dense network of kin and other social relations) and negative evaluation of places outside the village (the forest and other population centers). Taken on its own terms we see that Lachixío conversational narratives
sketch through discourse practices a moral landscape with positive value centered on the sociality of the village. In broad comparison with a similar moral geography sketched by Náhuatl narratives presented by Hill (1995) and Taggart (1983) the parallels are suggestive of a relationship between place discourse and a moral geography that comprises a feature of the Meso-American culture area (Sicoli 2010). However, the ethnographic literature in cognitive anthropology also supports that such alignments of morality on the landscape are more widespread and points to some questions for further research. Hoem (1993), writing on space and morality in a Tokelau Pacific atoll society near American Samoa, characterizes a distinction made between the moral area of the village with its front toward the central lagoon and the bush to its back, where danger lurks and where one is vulnerable to attacks by spirits like in the dáññi ‘forest’ beyond the edge and surrounding the Lachixío village. Though parallel, and worthy of an exploration of a grounding of such moral landscapes in human cognition or social-psychological experience, each moral-spatial system is bound up with local systems of representation and (re)produced through discursive practices which require detailed analysis of conversational interaction within engaged ethnographic research.

This examination of place formulations in Zapotec dialogues shows place references to be pervasive features of discourse whose cultural values are approachable by attention to and close analysis of spontaneous turn-by-turn conversations and their emergent narratives contextualized within the work of linguistic ethnography that can make visible the “semiotic and interactional labor” that Lempert (2013, p. 372, 387) has characterized as making ethics matter in everyday discourse. The analysis of the Zapotec examples in this paper have gone some way toward answering our questions of what different formulations of place do for speakers in interaction and how we come to experience many of the places of our world through discourse. Where Basso’s notion of “place making” shows us how place names that are already morally loaded in their structural form are taken into personal experience, this essay has worked to show how places are continuously being evaluated dialogically in ways that reproduce and circulate moral value. Through the way places are formulated across the turns of multiple participants in dialogic practices, people come to share and contest common ground, moral stances, and community values about their landscape, processes in which space becomes a moral geography.

Acknowledgements: This paper was supported by a fellowship from the Documenting Endangered Languages Program of the National Science Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities (FN-50065-10) and the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. It has benefitted from the input of many individuals. I especially thank the participants in the videos and my consultants in Lachixío, particularly Daniel Hernández Morgan, Giovani Hernández Garcia, David Hernández Garcia, and Pedro Martínez García. Transcription and translation was greatly aided by María Morales Morales. I also thank the participants in the MMIMA (Multimodal Interaction in Mesoamerica) research group, the Georgetown Graduate School for funding graduate student research assistants Daniel Ginsberg and Amelia Tseng, and GUROP (Georgetown Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program) that helped facilitate participation in the research group by undergraduate students April-Michelle Thomas and Joslyn Burchett. Thanks also to participants in the Interaction Laboratory at Georgetown, particularly Fred Erickson, Deborah Tannen, Nazir Harb, and Jeremy Wegner. And to Matthew Wolfgram, Adrienne Isaac and Chip Zuckerman for helpful comments on a draft. I presented aspects of this paper in talks to the University of Virginia Anthropology Department, U.C. Berkeley Linguistic Anthropology program, and Gallaudet University with thanks for comments from Ira Bashkow, Ellen Contini-Morava, Fred Damon, Eve Danziger, Lise Dobrin, Terra Edwards, Bill Hanks, James Igoe, David Lefkowitz, Kamala Russell, China Scherz, John Shepherd, and Kath Weston. Thanks also for the editorial and reviewing work of Lila San Roque, Nick Enfield, and two anonymous reviewers for Open Linguistics.

Orthography and Abbreviations

The tones of Lachixío are written with acute accent above a vowel for high tone, grave accent above a vowel for low tone, or a sequence of the two for rising or falling tone across geminate vowels. Vowels that show
no tone marking are unspecified for tone, or underspecified receiving their tone from e.g., the spreading of high tone to the end of the stem. The orthography uses \( x \) and \( zx \) to indicate voiceless and voiced retroflex fricatives and \( tx \) for the retroflex affricate. The voiceless palatal fricative is written \( xh \), the voiced \( zh \), and the palatal affricate \( ch \). Voiceless sonorants are \( jl \), \( jr \), and \( jn \). Glottal stop is written with the raised apostrophe \( /'/ \). The consonant \( q/ \) is written in some Spanish loanwords for a velar that does not palatalize before front vowels and thus is unlike the native velar /k/ in its phonological properties. Long consonants and vowels (written as double in the first line of the transcription blocks) are predictable from the minimal word requiring two mora in monosyllables \([C]VV\) and a durational stress timing that builds heavy trochees in disyllables \([C]VXCV\), where \( X \) is filled from the specifications of the post-tonic \( C \) if that \( C \) is voiceless or sonorant, and with the tonic \( V \) if the post-tonic \( C \) is voiced (see Sicoli 2007 for a fuller description of Lachixio Zapotec stress, word, and syllable structure).

In the conversational transcripts, numbers in parentheses indicate pauses in speech, colons indicate non-phonemic or non-stress template based lengthening, square brackets co-occurring between lines indicate that speech is in overlap (where there are multiple overlaps in the same line, subscript co-indexing is used), angle brackets pointed outward (<…>) indicate slowed speech rate. Each line, or utterance, of the transcripts are represented in a block of four tiers: (1) phonetic with CA transcription, (2) morpho-phonemic (3) morpheme-by-morpheme gloss, (4) English free translation. In addition to the four lines of text each block may include action descriptions which when relevant are included beneath the phonetic line. The pipe symbol within a description ¦/ indexes the onset of the action aligned to the phonetic tier.

Grammatical abbreviations used in the glosses follow those suggested in the Leipzig Glossing Rules (http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php): 1SG = first person singular, 2SG = second person singular, 3ANIM = third person animal, 3DIS = third person distal (also used for respect), 3INAN = third person inanimate, 3M = third person masculine, IND.S.O = indefinite subject acting on object, ACT = active, CAUS = causative, COMP = completive, DEF = definite, DIM = diminutive, HAB = habitual, IMP = imperative, PL=plural, POS = possessive, POT = potential, PRO = pronoun root/base, RECP = reciprocal, SIM = simulative, STA = stative.

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