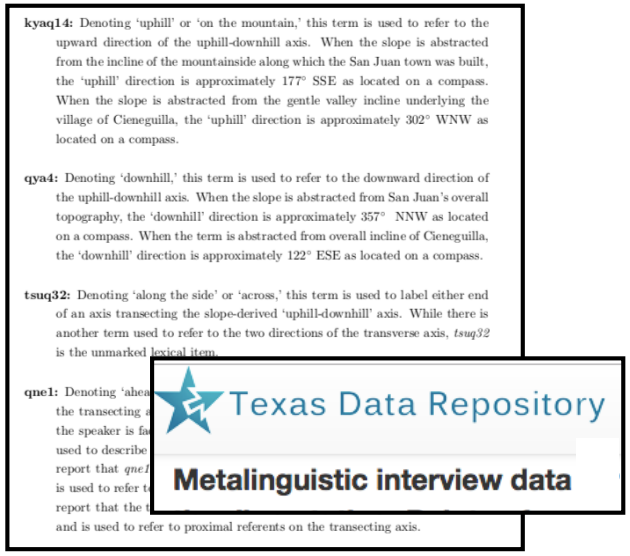
“Open Description” Impacts Documentation:

A Case Study featuring San Juan Quiahije Chatino



kyaq14: Denoting ‘uphill’ or ‘on the mountain,’ this term is used to refer to the upward direction of the uphill-downhill axis. When the slope is abstracted from the incline of the mountainside along which the San Juan town was built, the ‘uphill’ direction is approximately 177° SSE as located on a compass. When the slope is abstracted from the gentle valley incline underlying the village of Cieneguilla, the ‘uphill’ direction is approximately 302° WNW as located on a compass.

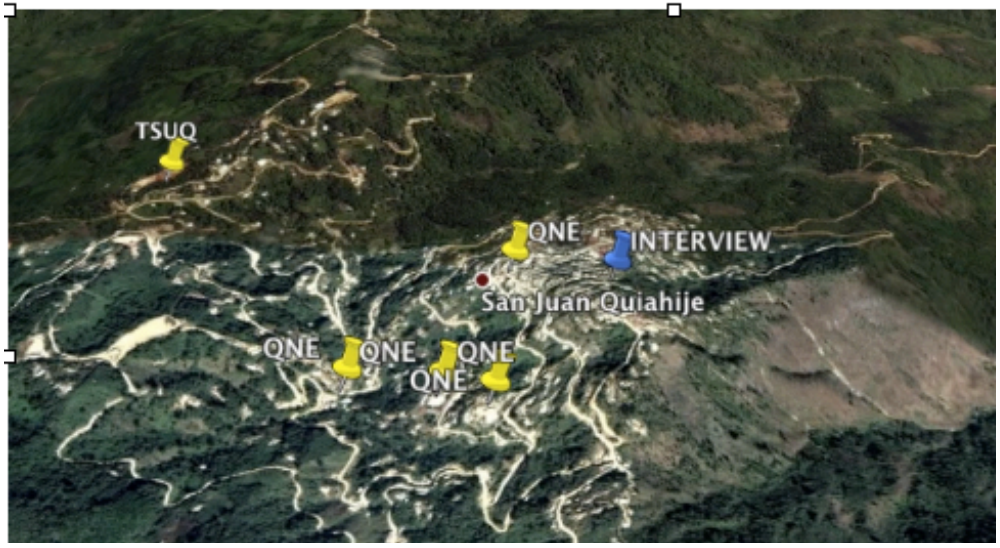
qya4: Denoting ‘downhill,’ this term is used to refer to the downward direction of the uphill-downhill axis. When the slope is abstracted from San Juan’s overall topography, the ‘downhill’ direction is approximately 357° NNW as located on a compass. When the term is abstracted from overall incline of Cieneguilla, the ‘downhill’ direction is approximately 122° ESE as located on a compass.

tsuq32: Denoting ‘along the side’ or ‘across,’ this term is used to label either end of an axis transecting the slope-derived ‘uphill-downhill’ axis. While there is another term used to refer to the two directions of the transverse axis, *tsuq32* is the unmarked lexical item.

qne1: Denoting ‘ahea
the transecting
the speaker is fa
used to describe
report that *qne1*
is used to refer t
report that the t
and is used to refer to proximal referents on the transecting axis.

Texas Data Repository

Metalinguistic interview data



Kate Mesh January 5, 2019 SSILA 2019

kwiq qa sa **qne** kwa

And it’s all-the-way **along-the-side**, there

Road Map

Background:

- Open Science
- Slope-based Quadrant Terms

Case Study Featuring San Juan Quiahije Chatino

- *"Open" Approach to Language Description*
- *Impact on Documentation*

Discussion/Conclusion

Background: Open Science

- Making full datasets available to the public
- Thoroughly describing the research method

Nosek et al. (2015). Promoting an open research Culture. *Science*, 348(6242), 1422-1425.

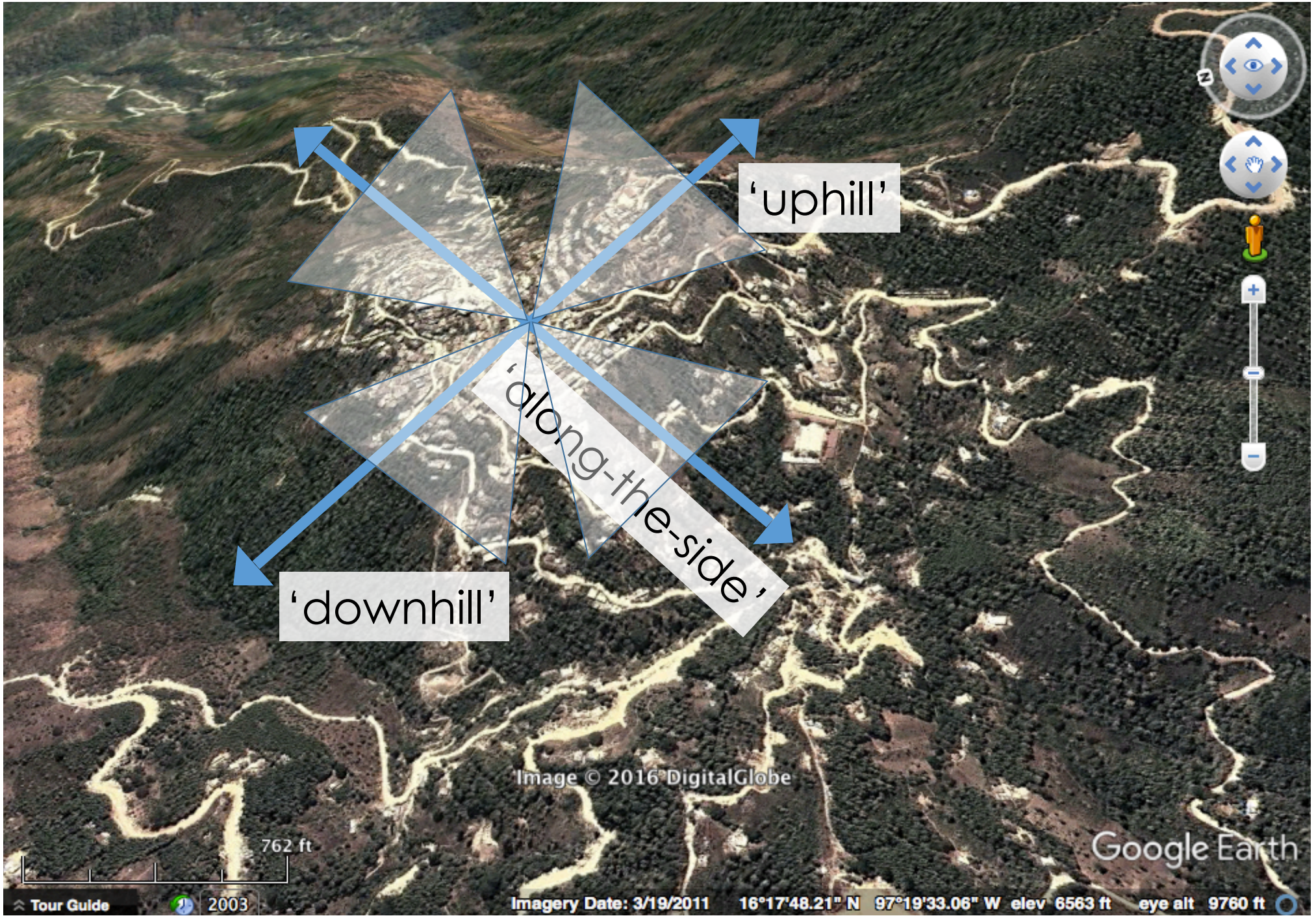
Berez-Kroeker et al (2018). Reproducible research in linguistics: A position statement on data citation and attribution in our field. Linguistics, 56(1), 1-18.

Background: Slope-Based Quadrant Terms

Slope-based quadrant terms are part of a **geomorphic** spatial reference system, in which the positions of entities are described relative to features of the local topography

(cf. Bohnemeyer & O'Meara 2012)

Image © 2016 DigitalGlobe
762 ft
Google Earth
Tour Guide
2003
Imagery Date: 3/19/2011 16°17'48.21" N 97°19'33.06" W elev 6563 ft eye alt 9760 ft


'uphill'
'along-the-side'
'downhill'
Image © 2016 DigitalGlobe
762 ft
Google Earth
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2003
Imagery Date: 3/19/2011 16°17'48.21" N 97°19'33.06" W elev 6563 ft eye alt 9760 ft

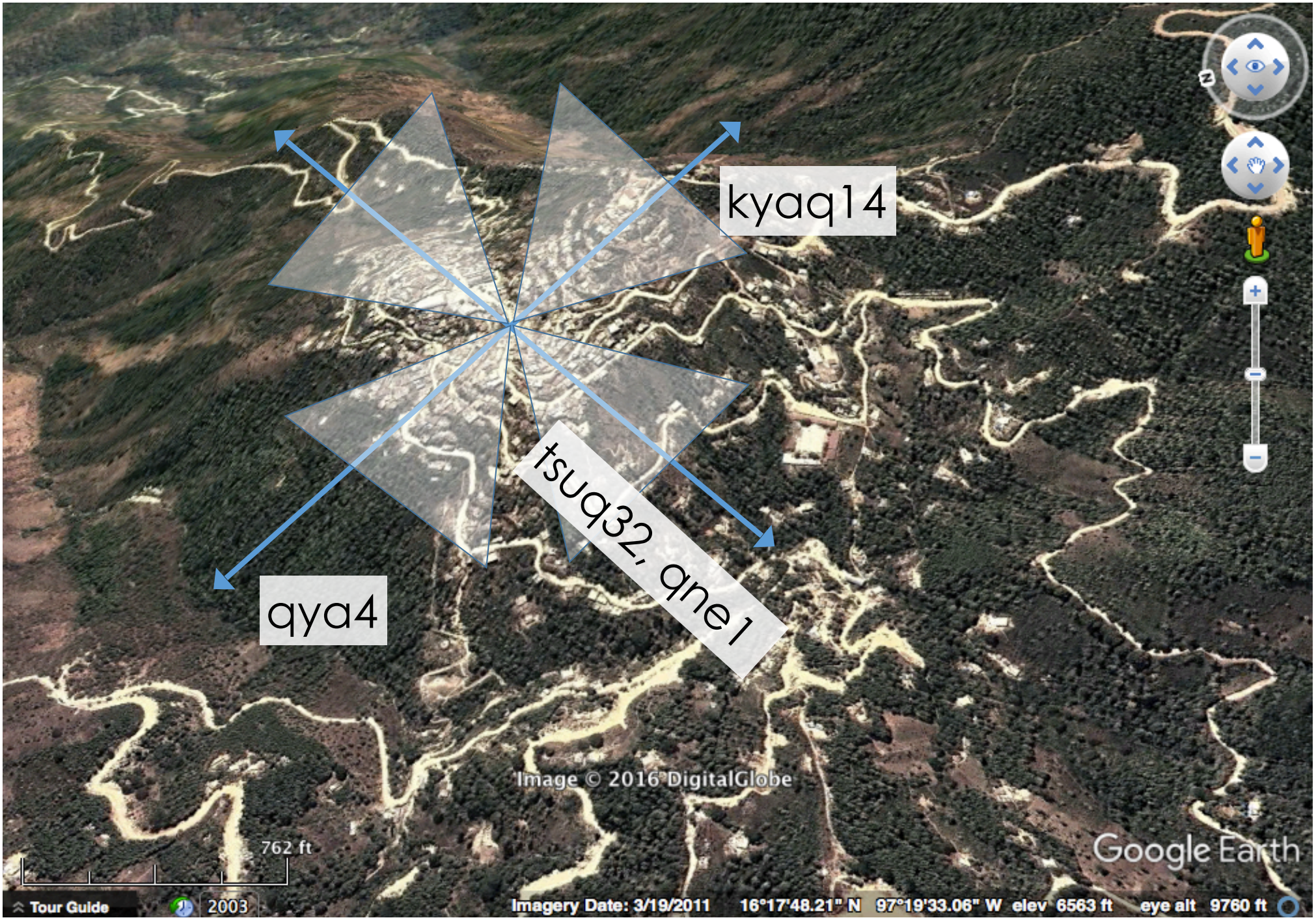
Slope-based quadrant terms in the Mesoamerican linguistic area and beyond

Tenejapan Tseltal (Mayan)	Brown & Levinson 1993; Levinson 2003; Polian & Bohneymyer 2011
Meseño Cora (Uto-Aztecan)	Vásquez Soto 2011
San Juan Quiahije Chatino (Otomanguean)	Mesh (2017)
Yupno (Papuan)	Cooperrider et al (2017)

Case Study Featuring San Juan Quiahije Chatino: "Open" Approach to Language Description

San Juan Quiahije Chatino

- Otomanguean, Zapotecan, Chatino
- Oaxaca, Mexico: San Juan Quiahije Municipality
- ~3700 speakers (INEGI 2014)


kyaq14
tsuq32, qne1
qya4
Image © 2016 DigitalGlobe
762 ft
Google Earth
Tour Guide
2003
Imagery Date: 3/19/2011 16°17'48.21" N 97°19'33.06" W elev 6563 ft eye alt 9760 ft

Method: Metalinguistic Interviews

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Interview Participants:

- C1: Female, ~45, homemaker
- C2: Male, ~40, farmer/rancher
- C3: Male, ~45, farmer/rancher
- C4: Female, ~55, teacher
- C5: Male, ~50, teacher

Interview Format

Participants were asked for:

- An **example** of how they might use each term
- Assessments of the acceptability of the term for **8 invented use contexts**

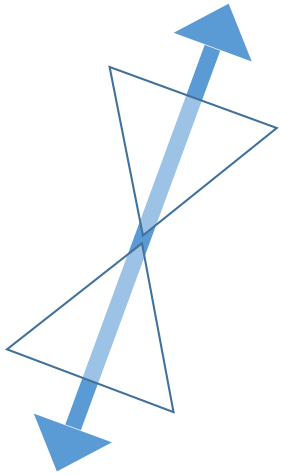
  e.g., you *are at the church; your friend is at school X. Can you say that they are in the [U/D/S] direction?*

Interview Format

Participants were asked for:

- An assessment of whether there is **disagreement** over the use of the term
- A **translation** of the term into Spanish, and/or an explanation of the difficulties of translation

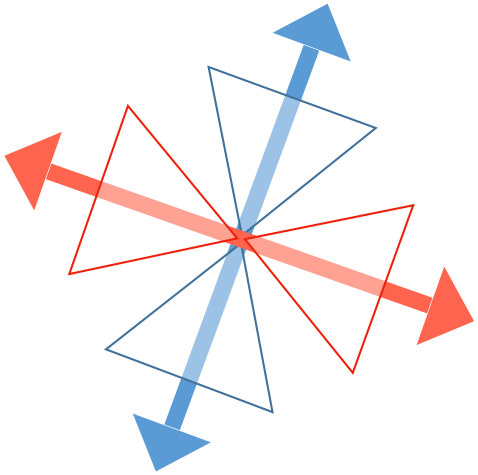
Results: agreement about terms for the **uphill and downhill quadrants**



kyaq14 The ‘uphill’ end of the up-down axis

qya4 The ‘downhill’ end of the up-down axis

Results: disagreement about terms for the **two transverse quadrants**



tsuq32 Lit. 'along-the-side.'
Refs on the trans. axis that are:

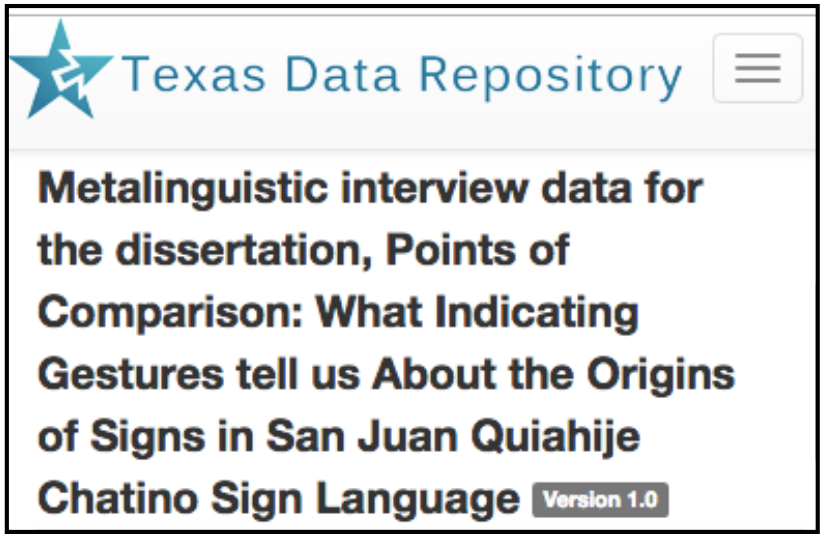
1. Not saliently positioned	*C1, C2, C3*
2. Behind the speaker	C4, C5

qne1 Lit. 'in front'
Refs on the trans. axis that are:

1. In front of the speaker	C2
2. distant from speech location	C1, C4
3. Proximal to speech location	C3

What to do with this set of responses?

Create a transparent or "open" description, w/ judgments attributed to specific consultants.



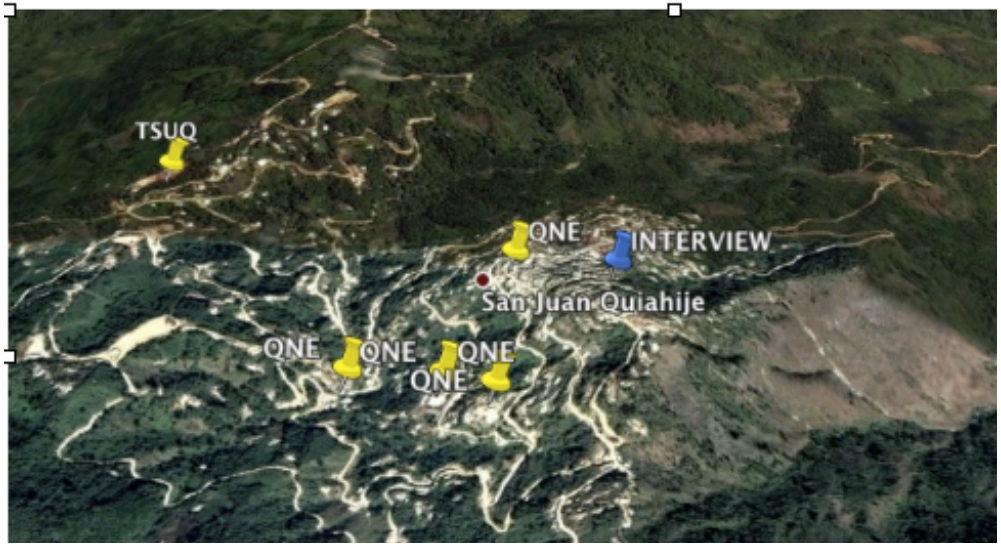
kyaq14: Denoting 'uphill' or 'on the mountain,' this term is used to refer to the upward direction of the uphill-downhill axis. When the slope is abstracted from the incline of the mountainside along which the San Juan town was built, the 'uphill' direction is approximately 177° SSE as located on a compass. When the slope is abstracted from the gentle valley incline underlying the village of Cieneguilla, the 'uphill' direction is approximately 302° WNW as located on a compass.

qya4: Denoting 'downhill,' this term is used to refer to the downward direction of the uphill-downhill axis. When the slope is abstracted from San Juan's overall topography, the 'downhill' direction is approximately 357° NNW as located on a compass. When the term is abstracted from overall incline of Cieneguilla, the 'downhill' direction is approximately 122° ESE as located on a compass.

tsuq32: Denoting 'along the side' or 'across,' this term is used to label either end of an axis transecting the slope-derived 'uphill-downhill' axis. While there is another term used to refer to the two directions of the transverse axis, *tsuq32* is the unmarked lexical item.

qne1: Denoting 'ahead,' *qne1* is an alternative term for identifying directions on the transecting axis. Some speakers report that *qne1* is available only when the speaker is facing in a direction on the transecting axis, and may only be used to describe the direction in which the speaker is facing. Other speakers report that *qne1* may be used independent of the speaker's orientation, and is used to refer to distal referents on the transecting axis. Still other speakers report that the term may be used independently of the speaker's orientation and is used to refer to proximal referents on the transecting axis.

Case Study Featuring San Juan Quiahije Chatino: Impact on Documentation



Documentary Project: Gesture, Speech & Sign in Chatino Communities

ELAR
SOAS
University of London

Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities

Deposit | Bundles and resources

Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities

Language:	Chatino Sign Language
Depositor:	Kate Mesh
Location:	Mexico
Deposit Id:	0459
Grant id:	SG0186
Funding body:	ELDP
Level:	Deposit

Summary of deposit

This deposit contains a record of communication in gestured, and signed communication in the San Juan Quiahije municipality of Oaxaca, Mexico. It focuses on communicative practices for wayfinding and direction-giving in the mountainous topography of the municipality, as well as practices for maintaining a household, including many cooking activities. Two languages are featured: San Juan Quiahije Chatino (Zapotecan, Otomanguean) and San Juan Quaihije Chatino Sign Language (a sign language isolate emerging in the municipality).

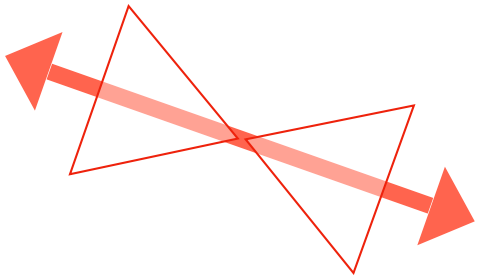
The data were collected by Kate Mesh and community members pseudonymized as CF32, CF23, CM13 and SF21. In a related project, Kate worked with Lynn Hou to document the structure of San Juan Quaihije Chatino Sign Language; their joint work is found in ELAR deposit 0355: Documenting Chatino Sign Language.

Local Environment Interviews

- Interview protocol following Kita (2011)
- 29 SJQ Chatino Speakers
- 6h 39m of footage
- For utterances *accompanied by a pointing gesture*,
  - Speech transcribed and translated
  - Referent locations mapped

Results Overview: 29 Interviewees

- 8 participants **did not use** *tsuq* or *qne*
- 8 Participants **used only 1 term**, *tsuq* or *qne*
- *12 participants used* ***both terms***
    - *9 with a clear usage pattern*
    - *3 with an ambiguous pattern*

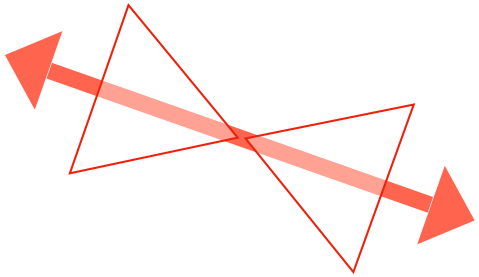


Results Overview: Clear Usage Patterns

Results Overview: Clear Usage Patterns

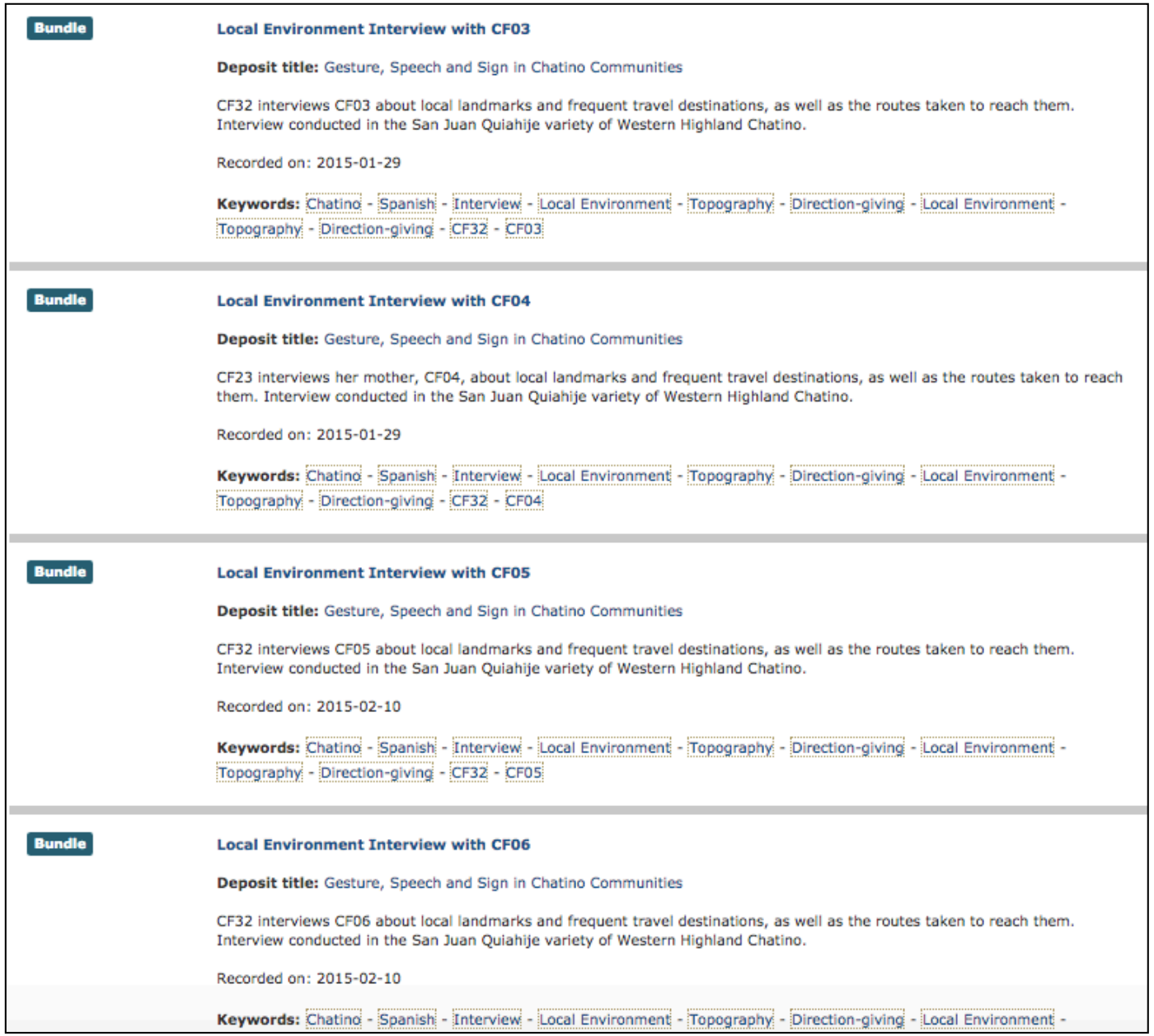
Results Overview: Clear Usage Patterns

- Qne for **near**: 4 participants (compatible w/ 2 more)
- Qne for **front**: 1 participant (compatible w/ 2 more)
- Qne for **far**: 3 participants
- **Tsuq** for **behind**: 1 participant



All interviews tagged in ELAR with:

Local Environment Interview



Bundle

Local Environment Interview with CF03

Deposit title: Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities

CF32 interviews CF03 about local landmarks and frequent travel destinations, as well as the routes taken to reach them. Interview conducted in the San Juan Quiahije variety of Western Highland Chatino.

Recorded on: 2015-01-29

Keywords: Chatino - Spanish - Interview - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - CF32 - CF03

Bundle

Local Environment Interview with CF04

Deposit title: Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities

CF23 interviews her mother, CF04, about local landmarks and frequent travel destinations, as well as the routes taken to reach them. Interview conducted in the San Juan Quiahije variety of Western Highland Chatino.

Recorded on: 2015-01-29

Keywords: Chatino - Spanish - Interview - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - CF32 - CF04

Bundle

Local Environment Interview with CF05

Deposit title: Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities

CF32 interviews CF05 about local landmarks and frequent travel destinations, as well as the routes taken to reach them. Interview conducted in the San Juan Quiahije variety of Western Highland Chatino.

Recorded on: 2015-02-10

Keywords: Chatino - Spanish - Interview - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - CF32 - CF05

Bundle

Local Environment Interview with CF06

Deposit title: Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities

CF32 interviews CF06 about local landmarks and frequent travel destinations, as well as the routes taken to reach them. Interview conducted in the San Juan Quiahije variety of Western Highland Chatino.

Recorded on: 2015-02-10

Keywords: Chatino - Spanish - Interview - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - Local Environment -

ELAR

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Where are we now?

kyaq14: Denoting 'uphill' or 'on the mountain,' this term is used to refer to the upward direction of the uphill-downhill axis. When the slope is abstracted from the incline of the mountainside along which the San Juan town was built, the 'uphill' direction is approximately 177° SSE as located on a compass. When the slope is abstracted from the gentle valley incline underlying the village of Cieneguilla, the 'uphill' direction is approximately 302° WNW as located on a compass.

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tsuq32: Denoting 'along the side' or 'across,' this term is used to label either end

Texas Data Repository

Metalinguistic interview data for the dissertation, Points of Comparison: What Indicating Gestures tell us About the Origins of Signs in San Juan Quiahije Chatino Sign Language Version 1.0

How did we get there?

SOAS University of London ELAR

Bundle **Local Environment Interview with CF03**

Deposit title: Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities

CF32 interviews CF03 about local landmarks and frequent travel destinations, as well as the routes taken to reach them. Interview conducted in the San Juan Quiahije variety of Western Highland Chatino.

Recorded on: 2015-01-29

Keywords: Chatino - Spanish - Interview - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - CF32 - CF03

Bundle **Local Environment Interview with CF04**

Deposit title: Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities

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Recorded on: 2015-01-29

Keywords: Chatino - Spanish - Interview - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - CF32 - CF04

Bundle **Local Environment Interview with CF05**

Deposit title: Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities

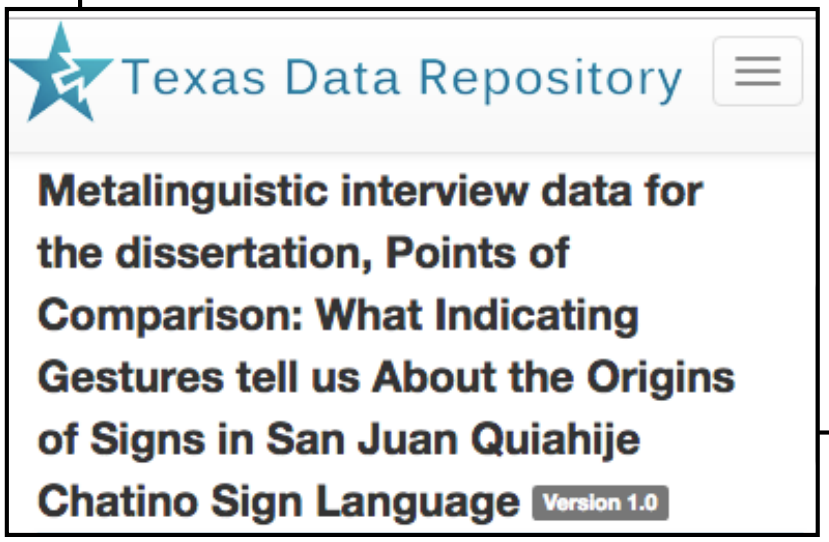
CF32 interviews CF05 about local landmarks and frequent travel destinations, as well as the routes taken to reach them. Interview conducted in the San Juan Quiahije variety of Western Highland Chatino.

Recorded on: 2015-02-10

Keywords: Chatino - Spanish - Interview - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - Local Environment - Topography - Direction-giving - CF32 - CF05

Two clear benefits of an ‘Open Description’ approach

A more representative record of a language’s structure(s)



An impact on how collected texts from documentary projects are annotated and understood

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Thank You

ELDP

Mesh, K. (2017). "Metalinguistic interview data for Points of Comparison: What Indicating Gestures Tell us About the Origins of Signs in San Juan Quiahije Chatino Sign Language," Texas Data Repository Dataverse.

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Mesh, K.(2018). "Gesture, Speech and Sign in Chatino Communities." The Endangered Languages Archive. Access: Public.

https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Collection/MPI1053087

Slides for this talk www.katemesh.com/talks

Questions or feedback?

Please contact me at: kate.a.mesh *at* gmail *dot* com