Spatializing kinship

The grammar of belonging in Amdo, Tibet

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This paper explores children's language socialization into kin-based peer relationships in Amdo, Tibet. I examine spontaneous interactions in one extended family to show how children link place and kinship using spatial deixis, the grammatical system that encodes context-dependent reference to location, in Amdo Tibetan. I analyze uses of spatial deixis in two interactive routines: (1) peer-group play, and (2) children's scaffolding of infants' roles in multiparty participation frameworks. I argue that children use their emerging deictic repertoires to 'spatialize kinship,' mapping kinship relations onto the immediate spaces of co-present interactions as well as the enduring places of the village's geography. Previous studies have noted that culturally specific forms of relationality influence adults' uses of deixis by shaping the pragmatics of interactive settings. Building on these insights, the data from Amdo demonstrate the need to consider cultural associations between place and kinship when examining the acquisition of deixis in early childhood.

Keywords: language socialization, linguistic anthropology, language and culture, spatial deixis, Tibet, China

1. Introduction

This study advances our understanding of how children's language practices contribute to the ongoing (re)formulation of culturally significant relationships to persons and places. The assertion that social relationships, built through routinized cultural practices, influence children's acquisition of grammar has been well established in the anthropological paradigm of language socialization (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986, 2). By analyzing spontaneous interactions, language socialization has demonstrated that practices tied to language use endure or shift across generations along with the dynamic target of a community's mother tongue(s) and the social relationships built through everyday talk (Garrett and

Baquedano-López 2002). Children's own understandings of the links between specific language forms and social relationships play a key role in this reformulation, and can be examined through situated uses of linguistic features in activity contexts.

This article draws on theories and methods from language socialization to investigate how Amdo Tibetan children use the grammatical details of their mother tongue to formulate senses of belonging to their families and homeland. By examining peer-group interactions that unfold in the context of dense kinship ties, I analyze how children synchronize key grammatical features with multi-modal communicative resources. Amdo children use spatial deixis, a grammatical system that encodes context-dependent reference to location, to link the space of an interaction to the place of their village homeland. Children use spatial deixis to coordinate attention and movement in embodied interaction, which leads them to constitute attachments to their family members and homeland. I show that Amdo children's senses of belonging are simultaneously physically rooted in the landscape and indexed, through language and movement, to kin relationships. I therefore argue that young Amdo children use their emerging deictic repertoires to 'spatialize kinship,' or map kinship relations in the social spaces of co-present interactions, as well as the enduring places of the village's geography. This analysis advocates for the importance of examining cultural associations between place and kinship alongside the acquisition of spatial deixis in early childhood, and demonstrates how the details of children's language acquisition contribute to the "interpretive reproduction" (Corsaro 1992) of culture.

2.   Towards a language socialization perspective on spatial deixis

Language socialization provides a theoretical and methodological foundation to not only acknowledge cultural variation in the acquisition of grammatical systems, but also to attend to the co-constitution of language structures and cultural practices. Despite extensive psycholinguistic research on deixis in child development and a robust ethnographic literature on adults' uses of deixis, few anthropologists have examined spatial deixis in language socialization (cf. Platt 1986). I address this gap in existing research by analyzing new ethnographic material from Amdo, Tibet. I show that Amdo Tibetan spatial deixis influences children's senses of belonging because children use this grammatical system to establish their affective ties to persons and places.

Theorists of language have long recognized that deictic markers establish subjectivity and relationality through language (Benveniste 1971). Ethnographers have revealed how we create and transform our social worlds with deixis during

embodied interaction (Hanks 1996, 181–183). Because the referents of deictic markers index context, documenting how these grammatical forms are coordinated with social space and the material world provides crucial insight into their pragmatics. Therefore, examining the pragmatics of deixis is best accomplished with video-recording, or audio-recording accompanied by note-taking. Existing studies using these ethnographic methods with adults have demonstrated the central links among spatial deixis, person reference, and lived social relationships (Bickel 2000; Hanks 2009). Connecting insights from the ethnographic study of interaction to enduring cultural patterns, anthropologists have noted that deixis stands in dialectic relationship to broader social structures, such as a community's settlement pattern (Stasch 2013) or the sociohistorical embeddings of power relations in everyday life (Hanks 2005, 192). The literature on deixis thus suggests that relationality hinges on participants' perceptual access to shifting objects of joint attention (Hanks 1990, 139–140). I build on this literature to address how participants' coordinated attention and perception—the focal points of deictic usage—respond to the co-operative accumulation of sequenced actions (C. Goodwin 2018).

Taking the co-operative constitution of joint attention as an entry point into examining relationality is particularly relevant to research with infants and young children. While linguistic anthropologists have examined deixis in adults' cultural practices, scholars from the related discipline of psycholinguistics have contributed most significantly to our knowledge of the role of deixis in child development. Psycholinguistic research has shown that, in order to use and interpret deictic markers, an interactive participant must orient to others' perceptions. The skills of coordinating epistemic states and displaying intentionality are integrated with the acquisition of deixis, and become apparent at a developmental milestone between nine and twelve months of age. At this time, infants use gesture, gaze, and vocalization to direct goal-oriented activities. They begin to display recognition of multiple subjects and objects (Tomasello 2003, 302–304; Tomasello et al. 2005). In other words, infants *agentively* use a range of deictic forms to establish social relationships by managing joint attention (Bruner 1975, 25–17; Schieffelin 1983). As children age, they increasingly rely on grammatical deixis, in their mother tongues, to establish joint attention (Iverson and Goldin-Meadow 2005).

Culturally specific interactive routines influence pathways into the deictic coordination of joint attention. Salomo and Liszkowki (2013) conducted a comparative study of the frequency of joint action in multiparty conversations with infants aged 8–15 months in Yucatec Mayan, Dutch, and Chinese communities. They found that a greater amount of explicitly coordinated joint action was correlated with infants' earlier and more frequent uses of gestural deictics. How such measurable differences in deictic usage work to sequence the interactive routines

that build children's social relationships has been less thoroughly examined. In conversation with the psycholinguistic approach, language socialization's examination of embodied interaction can expand our understanding of the cultural basis of the forms of social understanding that infants develop alongside grammatical deixis.

In fact, caregiving routines define culturally specific expectations about how infants can and should co-operatively manage joint attention. For example, Takada (2014) found that San caregivers manipulate infants' bodies through a combination of song and gymnastic movement, and interpret infants' vocalizations as agentive responses, thus socializing them into contingent interactive sequences. While Takada's research demonstrates how infants agentively respond when they are positioned as objects of shared attention, infants also contribute to multiparty interaction when they are *not* focal addressees. De León (2014, 100–103) found that Zinacantec Mayan infants who are initially positioned as overhearers use gesture, body orientation, and vocalization to move themselves into the position of focal addressee. These ethnographic inquiries show that infants' and caregivers' uses of gaze, gesture, touch, and vocalization work together to achieve joint attention; the coordination of multi-modal resources sets cultural expectations for the kinds of actions that infants can and should perform.

As infants and young children become increasingly mobile, they actively shape these expectations through corporeal exchange in embodied interaction. Language socialization scholars have demonstrated that participants harness multiple dimensions of embodied interaction to manage unfolding activity sequences. Cekaite's (2016) study showed that Swedish teachers' and parents' uses of touch influence how children display joint attention. Cekaite (2015) also found that Swedish caregivers synchronize haptic resources with the grammatical structures of directives and imperatives, constraining children's future actions, in part, by constraining the social spaces in which they are embedded. In their analysis of the choreography of everyday family routines in the United States and Sweden, M. H. Goodwin and Cekaite (2018) assert that multi-modal resources establish "an interkinesthetic field of action," where communicative exchanges shape participants' somatic experiences (64). When young children participate in interkinesthetic fields of action by coordinating language, movement, and touch, they (re)produce a situated activity setting while forming enduring attachments to their social and spatial environments. As Goodwin and Cekaite therefore argue, "an analysis of mundane activities requires taking into account not only trajectories of action achieved through in situ organization of talk *and* the body but also the material environment that inhabitants frequently use as a constituent feature of their interaction—as well as dimensions of time" (ibid, 4).

This mode of analysis can shed light on young children's agency in shaping interactive contexts across developmental and sociohistorical time. The social space that participants inhabit in embodied interaction is never neutral. It is shaped through place-making practices, the human activities that endow space with social meaning (Casey 1996; Gieryn 2000; Low 2017). Language use builds affective connections to places, known in linguistic anthropological literature as 'senses of place' (Basso 1996; Feld and Basso 1996).[1] Senses of place are built dispositions that arise through the sedimentation of communicative routines in pre-existing material settings, and that can be learned across generations. Senses of place can therefore influence language structures, as well as the multi-modal resources with which grammatical forms are coordinated. Schieffelin (2018) emphasizes the pervasiveness of place in language socialization, noting that "Place is not context or setting; it is a critical force, both locational and conceptual, physical and psychical…as persons and activities are remembered and anchored across time" (34). From birth, local ecologies of social space embed infants in affective ties to persons and places. As children become mobile and influence activity trajectories in these social spaces, they construct and interpret relationships to persons and places with increasing agency.

Deixis is a potent interactive resource that forms children's attachments to persons and places—the very substance of belonging—through grammar. A language's unique grammatical features therefore contribute to social and place-based facets of belonging, even as they respond to the contingencies of social space in sequenced interaction. In a given language, some subsystems of deixis may be particularly elaborated and thus more salient. Amdo Tibetan features an elaborated repertoire of spatial deixis, which contributes to the prominence of Amdo Tibetans' place-based social attachments. In Amdo communities, a nexus of land, language, and kinship forms a central social orientation. In this ethnographic setting, children's routine uses of spatial deixis represent a locus of cultural practice that I call 'spatializing kinship.'

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1. Scholarship on 'visceral geographies' similarly joins inquiry into the embodied, affective, and material dimensions of relationality (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2010). This concept upends dichotomies between space/place to center sensorial experience when locating bodies in the material world (Longhurst et al. 2009, 334). This literature intersects with recent efforts of language socialization scholars to define how multi-modal communicative ecologies simultaneously shape persons and language structures.

3.   The setting

3.1   The ethnographic setting: Spatializing kinship in Amdo, Tibet

Amdo children use deixis to 'spatialize kinship,' or constitute senses of belonging within a system of place-based kinship relations. Amdo is a multilingual, multi-ethnic region of greater Tibet, today spread across the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, and Gansu. The Amdo Tibetan language is spoken by an estimated 1.8 million people (Ethnologue 2020), and includes two enregistered varieties that correspond to a salient occupational distinction: 'Nomad Talk' (Tib. *'brog skad*)[2] and 'Farmer Talk' (Tib. *rong skad*) (Don 'Grub Tshe Ring 2011). Farmer Talk, in particular, shows extensive place-based variation in its phonology and verb morphology (Tribur 2017). Existing language data suggest that the semantics of the spatial deictic particles examined here are shared across other documented varieties of Amdo Tibetan, and have equivalents in literary Tibetan (Ebihara 2011; Sung and Rgyal 2005). The presence of literary equivalents is relevant because standard language ideologies identify literary Tibetan as an historical source of ethnonational unity (Thurston 2018). Despite continuity in the semantic form of deictic particles, speakers of Amdo phonologically adapt them, and embed them within the verb configurations of their local spoken variety.

Despite an ideological emphasis on language standardization, Amdo social worlds rely on linguistic diversity. Amdo farming communities, in particular, organize sociality by linking place-based belonging and kinship relations to local language variation. I conducted fieldwork in a community that exemplifies this dynamic. My fieldwork took place amongst speakers of a local variety of Amdo Tibetan Farmer Talk in a village called Tsachen,[3] located in Tsholho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Tib. *mtsho lho bod rigs rang skyong khul*). Amdo farming communities differentiate the standard Tibetan language, *pha skad gtsang ma* or 'pure father tongue,' from place-based spoken language varieties, *yul skad* or 'mother tongues.'[4] While discourse and policy reveal an ideological emphasis on

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2. Tibetan terms and place-names with literary equivalents are transliterated with the Wylie (1959) system. Terms and excerpts from conversation are transcribed in the IPA.

3. Village and personal names are pseudonyms.

4. The Tibetan term *yul skad* literally translates to 'land speech.' I translate this term as 'mother tongue' to emphasize the local distinction between *yul skad* and *pha skad* ('father tongue'). The distinctions among Amdo's multiple *yul skad* intersect with but do not correspond to the enregistered distinction between 'Farmer Talk' and 'Nomad Talk' mentioned above. All *yul skad* refer to place-based language varieties. Some of these places are mainly inhabited by nomadic communities, and more or less correspond to 'Nomad Talk.' 'Farmer Talk' exhibits extensive internal variation, and is a local label encompassing multiple *yul skad*.

standardization (Ward and Roche 2020), ethnographic inquiries have consistently demonstrated the deep-rooted cultural significance of language variation in Tibet (Roche 2014). In Tsachen, adult participants discussed their *yul skad* by referencing an extended family history of migration and associated linguistic convergence with the Turkic language Salar (Ward 2019, 39–44). Roughly half of Tsachen's inhabitants are members of one extended family. They trace their *yul skad* to Hualong (Tib. *dpa' lung*), a region northeast of Tsachen. In the 1930s, Hualong's ruling warlord, Ma Bufang, enacted military conscriptions to aid in his struggle against encroaching communist forces. The ancestors of the extended family fled from Hualong and established their current settlement in Tsachen.

The family's settlement history links the *yul skad* to religious identity and spiritual practices. In Amdo, monastic allegiances overlap with kinship bonds (Nietupski 2010). Patrons of local monasteries tend to share a common *yul skad*, based on their place of habitation. In addition to these institutionalized religious allegiances, fluid spiritual practices strengthen associations between place and language. Everyday spiritual practices center on devotion to deities inhabiting the landscape. When Tsachen's current inhabitants settled, they emplaced their existing practices of monastic patronage and daily devotion in the new homeland. While adults in Tsachen actively remember their migration history and previous monastic allegiance in Hualong by discussing their *yul skad*, they also identify their *yul skad* with local land deities in Tsachen. The *yul skad* thus indexes membership to the extended family, and has continuously marked place-based belonging despite coerced migration.

In Tsachen, it is not only sociohistorical commentary on place and migration, but the grammatical particularities of the *yul skad* itself that shape how children form senses of themselves and others on multiple temporal and spatial scales: in the immediate space-time of face-to-face interaction, in the place of the village, and in the broader history of family settlement in Tsachen.[5] Due to the ways that land, language and kinship are linked in Amdo, the intersection of these three scales also facilitates young children's acquisition of their *yul skad*. Tsachen's *yul skad* is one of the Amdo varieties falling into disuse among children who live in cities or attend boarding schools, where Mandarin or standard varieties of Tibetan are favored. This reality of language shift calls on us to examine the co-occurrence of specific grammatical forms along with the communicative practices that lead children to identify as speakers of diverse *yul skad*. To this end, examining how children synchronize spatial deixis with multi-modal communicative resources is essential to a holistic understanding of the functions of deictic particles.

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5. This broader family history and its relationship to the political context of Amdo is beyond the scope of this paper, but young children's face-to-face interactions and mapping of kinship relations onto the village's geography are embedded in this sociohistory.

The everyday lives of young children in Tsachen unfold through engagement with peers and caregivers. In the course of a day, children move through the settings of their household, the outdoor space of the village, and their relatives' households. Because their activities rely on coordinated movement, children use spatial deixis to establish shared play trajectories. In peer group play, individual children offer competing directives to guide collective movement. In multi-generational interactions, children and adults take on caregiving roles for infants or toddlers, and use spatial deictics to constitute objects of joint attention. These routines help infants act as members of their peer groups even before they can independently coordinate joint attention. The coordination of attention through the *yul skad* also allows young children to link present interactive settings to enduring kinship relations. As children acquire the *yul skad*'s grammar through emplaced language experiences in early childhood, they also partially reproduce cultural associations between language and kinship in their everyday play.

3.2   The linguistic setting: Amdo Tibetan spatial deixis

Deixis is a grammatical system made up of particles called 'deictics' or 'deictic markers.' Deixis is unique among grammatical systems because of its connection to context—the social, spatial, and temporal settings in which it is used. Deictic markers refer to things in the world *only* in relation to their context. For example, English pronouns (such as 'I' and 'you') denote shifting individuals depending on who is speaking and who is being referenced. English demonstratives (such as 'this' and 'that') denote shifting places or things depending on the location and positioning of interactive participants. Participants interpret the referents of deictic markers by attending to an origin point ('origo') such as an individual speaker, as well as a framework of shared knowledge ('ground') such as the relative location of the speaker and addressee or the participants' collective knowledge of previous utterances (Hanks 1992; Sidnell and Enfield 2017). Because context shifts as talk unfolds in space and time, participants must continually reorient to the origo and ground to interpret deictic reference.

All languages have unique systems of deixis. All communities make use of deixis in embodied interaction. However, the Amdo deictic system is a particularly salient resource for constituting relationships to persons and places because it specifies topographical distance. Amdo spatial deictics refer to the relative altitude of a person, place, or thing, and therefore require participants to attend to changes of perspective resulting from vertical as well as horizontal movement. Amdo spatial deictics are well-attuned to two features of context—multiparty play, and expanded space at varying elevations—that characterize rural children's interactions.

The Amdo spatial deictic system includes two paradigms: locative adverbs and demonstratives. Both paradigms of spatial deixis mark a three-way distinction (Table 1). The locative adverbs indicate location within topographical planes relative to the origo. Because elevation varies quite drastically even within one village, speakers can use locative adverbs contrastively in the immediate space of face-to-face interactions.[6] The demonstratives denote distances away from the origo. The three demonstrative forms *^{n}di* ('here,' proximal to the speaker), *^{n}de* ('there,' distal from the speaker but proximal to the addressee), and *gen* ('over there,' distal from speaker and addressee) require interactants to interpret ongoing shifts in others' perceptual access to an object of attention. These details of Amdo spatial deixis allow children to coordinate movement in expanded spaces.

Table 1. Two paradigms of Amdo spatial deictics.

	Paradigm 1: Locative Adverbs		
Form:	*jar*	*mar*	*har*
Meaning:	Above	Below	Away (on the same plane as origo)
	Paradigm 2: Demonstratives		
Form:	*^{n}di*	*^{n}de*	*gen*
Meaning:	Proximal to Speaker	Distal to Speaker, proximal to Addressee	Distal from Speaker and Addressee

4.   Data and methodology

The data presented in this article draw from fifteen months of language socialization research (2016–2018) that compared the language use of children in one extended family, who were growing up in different households, both rural and urban, across Amdo (Qinghai, China). Using audio and selective video-recording, I documented over sixty hours of everyday talk (Ward 2019). The data examined in this article were collected in one household in Tsachen village. In Tsachen, I conducted participant observation by living in a household with three young girls, Dolma (age 5 years, 5 months at the beginning of research in August 2016), Lhamo (age 2 years, 9 months at the beginning of research), and Yangkyi (born in March 2018). I recorded the children's everyday verbal interactions at set intervals from

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6.   Brown and Levison (1993) describe a similar system of spatial deixis in Tzeltal.

2016–2017 and in the summer of 2018. Recordings captured play among these three girls and their related peers, as well as interactions with adult caregivers and relatives. While recording, I maintained a log of hand-written notes about the spatial setting and participants' gestures, body orientations, and movements. Due to the sensitive nature of fieldwork in this region, I did not use conspicuous recording equipment. I created all video recordings with an iPhone as I moved along with children. As a result, the videos showed close-up details of broader interactive settings, which were documented and diagrammed in my fieldnotes. In this article, I embed image stills from the videos into diagrams created from my fieldnotes, in order to fully depict body positioning, movement, and gaze.

I analyzed these interactions during transcription sessions with adult speakers from the family and community. Working with one adult at a time, I transcribed all talk morpheme-by-morpheme with the International Phonetic Alphabet in ELAN.[7] Family members' commentary about linguistic forms, social action, and child development emerged in the course of transcription and served as an important part of my ethnographic record (Ochs 1988; Schieffelin 1990). I worked with transcription assistants based on their availability, with a preference for those who had the closest relationships to the focal children. These adults tended to be the most familiar with each child's ways of speaking. While in Tsachen, I transcribed with Dolma, Lhamo, and Yangkyi's maternal uncle, Norbu. I also included Lhamo and Dolma in the transcription process.[8] The girls offered further explanations about their activities, which I included in the transcript annotations.

In this article, I employ a qualitative interpretation of interactive sequences that demonstrate patterns in Amdo children's uses of spatial deixis. I follow the norms of language socialization, noting the turn-by-turn unfolding of utterances to illustrate how participants coordinate grammar with other communicative resources. As C. Goodwin (2018) notes, sequential analysis allows us to examine social organization as extending from "the collaborative actions of speakers and hearers within utterances, through the co-operative construction of social action by those who are co-present to each other, to encompass social ties that extend beyond kin to link into courses of common action groups widely dispersed in both space and time" (1–2). This vision of social organization complements the anthropological perspective on language and context as co-constitutive (Duranti and Goodwin 1992), by affording greater analytic specificity about the multiple

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7. The Appendix shows transcription and glossing conventions.

8. Travel restrictions limited my time in Tsachen. Full transcription could not be completed on site. I conducted additional transcription with members of the extended family who were living in the provincial capital.

elements of the phenomenal world that interactive participants use to build meaning (C. Goodwin 2018, 13). It simultaneously contributes to language socialization's interest in dynamic forms of cultural reproduction.

Below, I analyze three interactive sequences that exemplify broader patterns in the complete corpus of Amdo children's language and the material specific to rural Amdo villages. My discussion of these sequences is informed by my interpretation of the corpus as a whole. In sampled interactions from all households, caregivers engaged children in activities that solidified peer relationships. Everyday interactions in rural settings including Tsachen, however, differed in important ways from those in urban settings. Rural children often structure their play away from adult supervision. Given the relative absence of free play in urban households, urban adults expressed considerable anxiety over their children's lack of attachment to related peers (Ward 2019, 155–157). The data analyzed below demonstrate the processes through which rural Amdo children build a central cultural orientation to the peer group and the village homeland. Although this orientation endures beyond the community of Tsachen, it is currently challenged by systemic economic constraints that encourage rural to urban migration.

5.   Analysis

Children in Tsachen reproduce social belonging through three interactive practices: (1) directing activity sequences, (2) building peer relationships, and (3) mapping associations between peer relationships and the landscape. These three interactive practices shape children's acquisition of the *yul skad* while simultaneously forming associations between spatial deixis and the embodied dimensions of rural communicative routines. The following analysis is informed by the corpus as a whole. It examines each interactive practice and their intersections, in three sequences from two different activity contexts.

5.1   Directing activity sequences

Tsachen's children build peer group activities by offering competing directives about where to go and what to do. When multiple children converge on an object of joint attention, a coordinated play sequence may unfold. Young children habitually direct activity sequences by using spatial deixis to encourage each other's movements. This communicative routine establishes associations between spatial deictic markers and the peer group's mutual orientation. In fact, the particular ways that Amdo children relate to one another by negotiating shared activities with spatial deixis produce the kin-based peer group as the center of childhood sociality.

Excerpt 1 demonstrates this communicative routine, showing how 4-year-old Lhamo and her 7-year-old sister Dolma use spatial deixis to focus joint attention. Dolma and Lhamo were playing with their toddler cousin Dorjee, infant cousin Tashi, and infant sister Yangkyi. Dolma and Lhamo used spatial deixis to manage unfolding participation roles, while also responding to the 'corporeal niches' of social space (de León 2014, 84). Yangkyi and Tashi were 3-months-old. They were nested in their mothers' laps (Dolma and Lhamo's mother and paternal aunt), oriented outwards. When the sequence began, Dolma approached the infants, and focused attention on their movements and vocalizations. Lhamo first stood next to Dolma, but then moved towards cousin Dorjee. Next, Lhamo and Dorjee moved further away from Dolma, creating a different activity center. Dolma and Lhamo's movements established two intersecting 'corporeal fields' (Goodwin and Cekaite 2018, 66), in which each child sought to shape the other participants' attention focus (Figure 1).
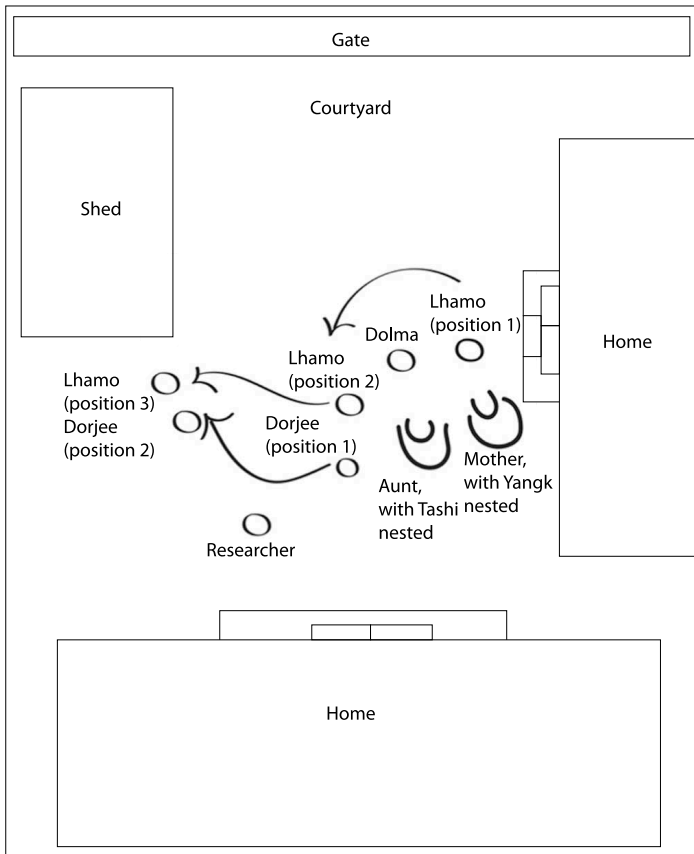
Figure 1. Embodied social space in Excerpt (1).

Excerpt 1.   *"Here, you look!"*

Participants: Lhamo (L, age 4;7), Dolma (D, age 7;3), Tashi (T), Aunt (A), Yangkyi (Y), Mother (M), and cousin Dorjee (DJ, age approximately 2;6)

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1    D    da   kʰə-ɲə kʰə-ɲə-a  ʰta-ki-joŋ ani
          then 3-DU   3-DU-DAT look-CVB-CAUS auntie
          Auntie, make them look at each other ((pointing and waving at T))
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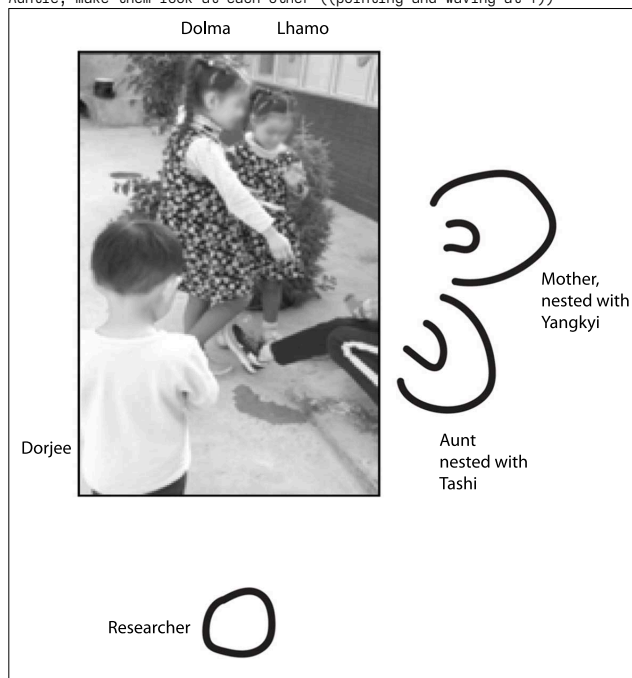

Figure 2. Dolma directs Aunt to orient infants towards one another (line 1).

```
2    A    ja ja
          ok ok
          Okay ((moving body orientation towards Y))
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3    D    wumo awu-a              ʰti
          girl older.brother-DAT look\IMP
          ((to Y)) Girl, look at older brother
((L moves towards DJ with arms outstretched and pinches her cheeks, 8 seconds elapse))
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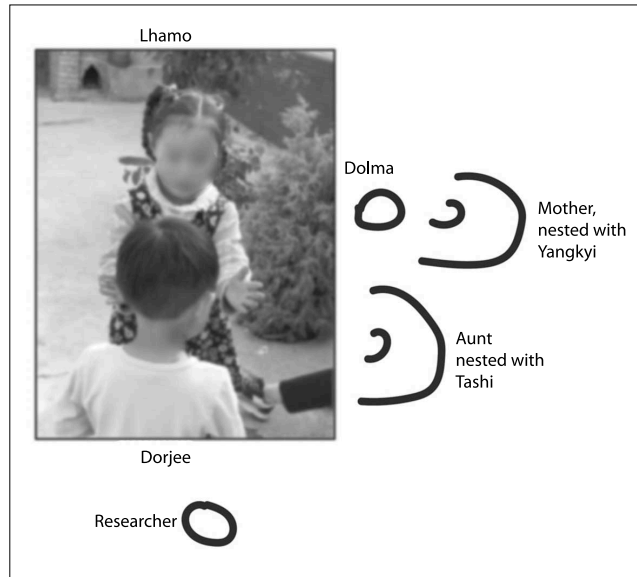
Figure 3. Lhamo moves into dyadic play with Dorjee (following line 3).

4   L   **ⁿdi** *tɕʰu* *ⁿti-a*
         here 2   look-EMP
         ((to D)) Hey, you look **here**! ((moving hands and looking towards D))
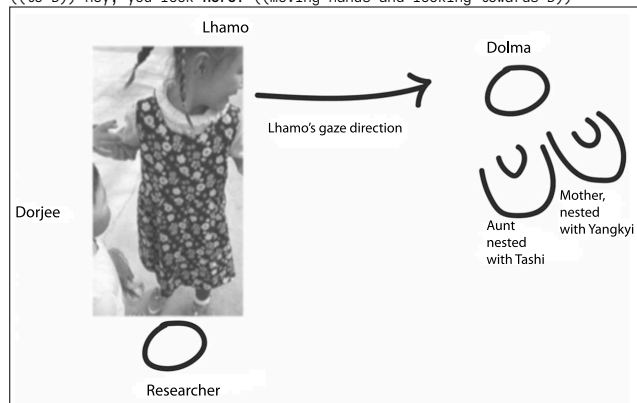

Figure 4. Lhamo attempts to draw Dolma's attention to her game (line 4).

5   L   *tɕʰu* *ⁿti-a*
         2   look\IMP-EMP
         You look! ((pinching DJ's cheeks))

6   D   **ⁿdi**-na   *ⁿti*
         here-LOC look\IMP
         ((to L)) Look **here**!

7   **ⁿdi**-na   *ⁿti*
         here-LOC look\IMP
         Look **here**!
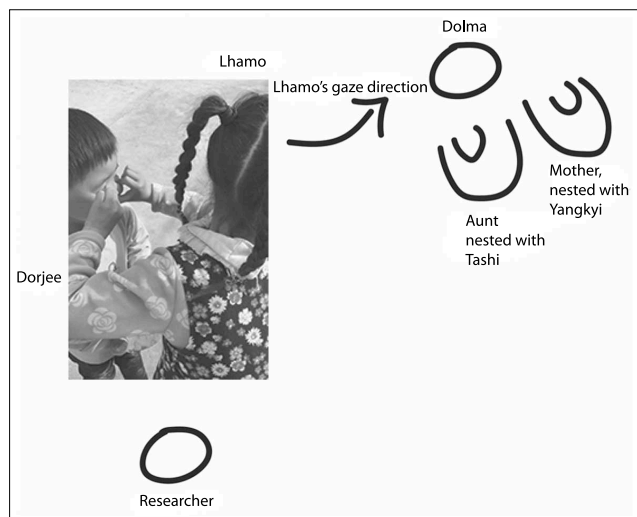
Figure 5. Dolma offers a competing directive (line 7).
((3 lines omitted))

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8    L    a:: atɛʰi      Dorjee tsa-a    ʱti     atɛʰi
          ah  older.sister Dorjee face-DAT look\IMP older.sister
          ((to D)) Ah! Older sister, look at Dorjee's face! Older sister!

9         atɛʰi       Dorjee tsa ʱti=
          older.sister Dorjee face look\IMP
          Older sister, look at Dorjee's face!

10   D    = ŋa ʱta-[mə-ʳgo]
            1 look-NEG-need
          =I don't [need to look!]

11   L             [atɛʰi       Dorjee tsa  ʱti-a]
                    older.sister Dorjee face look\IMP-EMP
                    [Older sister, look at Dorjee's face!]
          ((D laughs loudly. L and DJ smile. L and D share gaze while laughing))
```
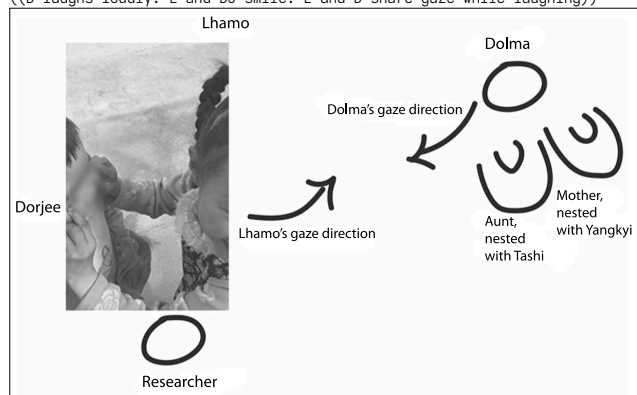

Figure 6. Lhamo and Dolma share gaze (line 11).

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12   A    a:: ⁿdə.gə    mə-ɲen-ki
          EXCL like.that NEG-good-EVID
          Hey, doing like that's not good!
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((L pulls her hands away from DJ's face. DJ flinches and moves back))
                    ((3 lines omitted))
```

13   DJ   *ŋa **gen**-na   ᴿ*ti-a*
           1 **over.there**-LOC look\IMP-EMP
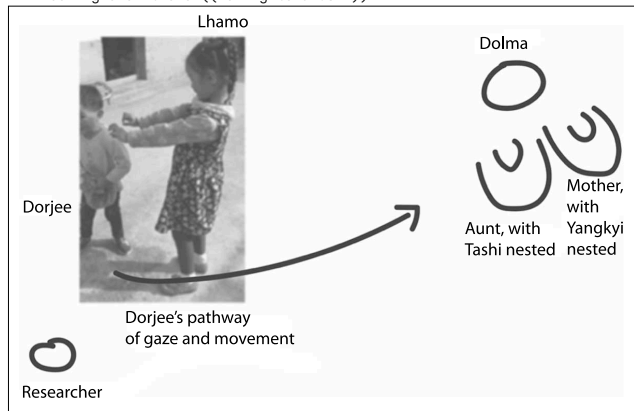   I'm looking over there ((moving towards D))

Figure 7. Dorjee moves towards Dolma (line 13).

Dolma and Lhamo established two competing activity sequences. First, Dolma directed her Aunt, "Auntie, make them look at each other," and gestured to guide Aunt and Tashi's body orientation (line 1, Figure 2). Aunt complied, shifting her body, along with Tashi, towards Yangkyi (line 2). Complying with Dolma's directive, Aunt controlled the infants' body positioning to scaffold their mutual orientation. Next, Dolma directed Yangkyi to look at Tashi. Dolma addressed Yangkyi with the gendered referent *wumo* ('girl'), and identified Tashi with the gendered kin term *awu* ('older brother'; line 3).

Dolma remained crouched by the infants. Lhamo moved away and established a game of distorting cousin Dorjee's face by pinching her cheeks (Figure 3). Lhamo attempted to draw Dolma's attention to her new game. She turned her gaze away from Dorjee and towards Dolma, directing Dolma with the proximal demonstrative (ⁿ*di*), "Hey, you look **here**! You look" (lines 4–5, Figure 4).

Dolma drew on Lhamo's statement, issuing a competing directive for Lhamo to look at *her*. With the proximal demonstrative (ⁿ*di*), Dolma emphasized her own position in the activity center near the infants (lines 6–7, Figure 5). With these paired directives, Lhamo and Dolma used spatial deictics to compete in establishing a shared 'line' (Goffman 1972, 6) of play. Each child sought to make their own action the basis of their peers' subsequent actions.

Lhamo briefly shifted her attention away from Dolma, into dyadic partnership with Dorjee. She then amplified her attempt to draw Dolma into the pinching game. Lhamo directed Dolma to look while specifying Dorjee's face as the intended object of attention (lines 8–9). Dolma retorted, "I don't need to look"

(line 10). Lhamo overlapped Dolma's response, insisting with another directive that Dolma look at Dorjee's face (line 11). Dolma finally looked towards Lhamo and Dorjee, giggling loudly. Lhamo and Dorjee smiled in response. Lhamo's gaze shifted from Dorjee to Dolma (Figure 6). At this moment, the three children focused on the pinching game, demonstrating affective alignment, as well as joint attention.

The activity sequence began to shift when Aunt also looked over, offering a negative assessment of the pinching game (line 12). Aunt's negative assessment disrupted the children's shared attention focus. Dolma returned her gaze to the infants. Lhamo attempted to re-establish the pinching game with Dorjee. However, Dorjee flinched and walked towards Dolma and the infants. Dorjee stated to Lhamo, "I'm looking **over there**," glossing her action of moving as looking (line 13, Figure 7).

In Excerpt 1, the children accomplished co-operative action by coordinating spatial deixis with gaze and movement. Dolma, Lhamo, and Dorjee used demonstratives with the verb 'to look' to direct each other's future actions. They used gaze to establish shared alignment, and interpreted others' gaze as an indication of mutual orientation. With embedded dyadic exchanges, children built individuated relationships within the peer group. They also influenced the collective unfolding of the peer group's social actions. In this way, verbal and embodied resources mutually elaborated one another. Previous language socialization research has emphasized how interactants coordinate haptic resources with directives to exert control over prospective social actions (Goodwin and Cekaite 2018, 39–63). In Excerpt 1, children directed each others' actions across spatially distant activity centers, and also shaped each other's fields of perception in shifting corporeal alignments. However, they did so primarily through gaze and movement, synchronized with spatial deixis, rather than touch. The corporeal and perceptual alignments that characterize Amdo children's peer group play therefore respond to communicative routines involving rapid movement in outdoor spaces. Interpersonal touch becomes relevant as an additional resource in directive sequences involving infants.

5.2   Building peer relationships

As the interaction continued, Lhamo followed Dorjee and approached Dolma. The activity sequence shifted towards the infants, clarifying how participants use spatial deixis to define kinship in embodied social space. Lhamo sat next to Dolma, forming a semi-circle in front of the infants, who were nested in their mothers' laps. Dorjee stood behind Aunt (Figure 8). Dolma managed the infants'

mutual engagement, using spatial deictics, the imperative verb 'look', and gentle movements of the infants' bodies.
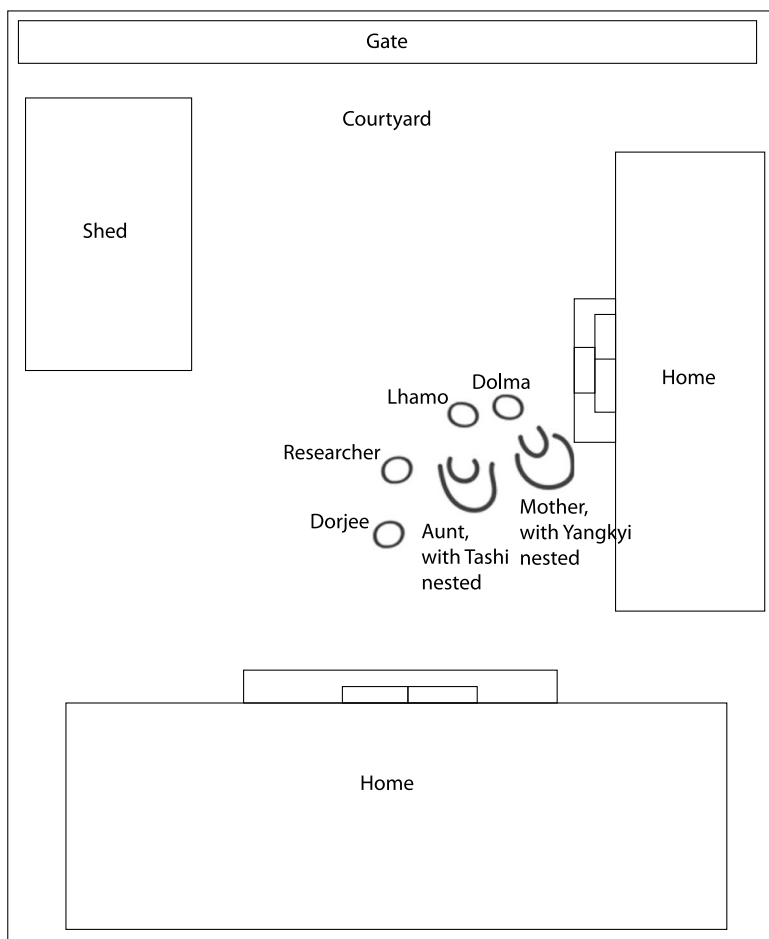

Figure 8. Embodied social space in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2. *Participants*

Lhamo (L, age 4;7), Dolma (D, age 7;3), Tashi (T), Aunt (A), Yangkyi (Y), Mother (M)

```
1    D    atɛʰi        gen
          older.sister over.there
          ((to T)) Older sister, over there!

2         tɕʰo-ɲə ⁿtsʰe-a-de-a
          2-DU    play-CVB-stay-EMP
          You two keep playing, then
```
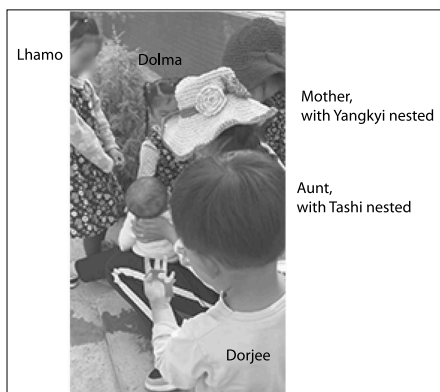
Figure 9. Dolma glosses infants' orientation as 'play' (line 2).

3   L   ***gen***   *ᴿti-da.kə*
              over.there look-PROG
              (T) is looking **over there**
                                          ((T facing towards Y))

4   *a::-ze   kʰər-ki kʰə-a kʰər-ki awu   ra ze*
              a::-QUOT 3-ERG   3-DAT 3-GEN older.brother COP QUOT
              Hey, she'll, say, he's her older brother

5   *ⁿdi-a   kʰər-ki atɛʰi   ⁿdi-a   kʰər-ki(.)*
              this-DAT 3-GEN older.sister this-DAT 3-ERG
              This one ((pointing to T)), his older sister, **this** one, he (.)

                        ((others laughing at infants))
6   *aləɪ ⁿdagə-ne*
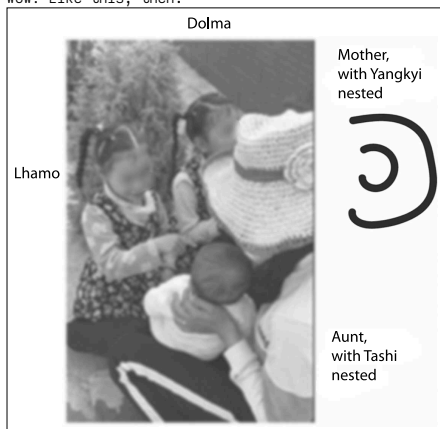   EXCL like.this-then
              Wow! Like this, then.

Figure 10. Lhamo defines infants' kin relationship (lines 6–7).

7   *kʰə-a lo   xtɛik̚ tʰon-na.ta atɛʰi   zer-nə.re*
              3-DAT year one arrive-CVB   older.sister say-FCT
              When she's ((pointing to Y)) a year old, she'll be called 'older sister.'

8   *ⁿdi-a   lo   xtɛik̚ tʰon-na awu   zer-nə.re=*
              this-DAT year one   arrive older.brother say-FCT
              When **this** one's ((pointing to T)) a year old, he'll be called 'older brother'=

9   A   =kʰə-a awu   ze-nə<ma>re
            3-DAT older.brother say-FCT< NEG >FCT
            =He won't be called 'older brother'

10   kʰə nuwo   re ɲima kʰaxi=
            3   younger COP days several
            He's younger by several days.

11   D   =a:: **gen**   ⁿti
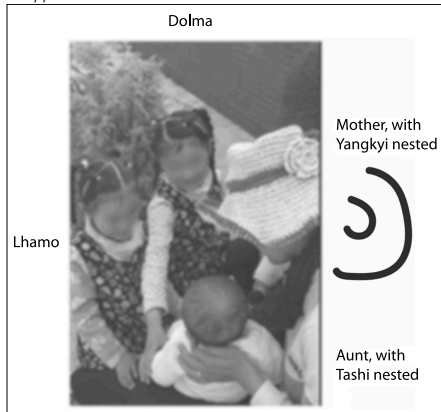   EXCL **over.there** look\IMP
            =Hey, look **over there**!

Figure 11. Dolma focuses on infant Tashi (line 11).

12   D   awu   atɛʰi-a   ⁿti-a-toŋ
            older.brother older.sister-DAT look-CVB-IMP
            Older brother, look at older sister! ((holding T's arm to reorient his body))
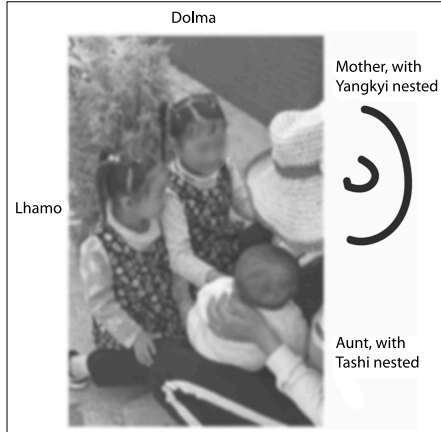
Figure 12. Dolma orients infants' bodies, while directing infant Tashi's gaze
             (line 12).

13   A   atɛʰi-a   ⁿti-a-toŋ-ja
            older.sister-DAT look-CVB-IMP-EMP
            Look at older sister!

```
14    D    atɛʰi       gen (.)    awu          Tashi hi:: ((giggles))
           older.sister over.there older.brother Tashi hi::
           Older sister, over there (.) Older brother, Tashi ((giggles))
```

```
15    T    hi::
           hi::
           ((T exhales audibly, other participants laugh))
```
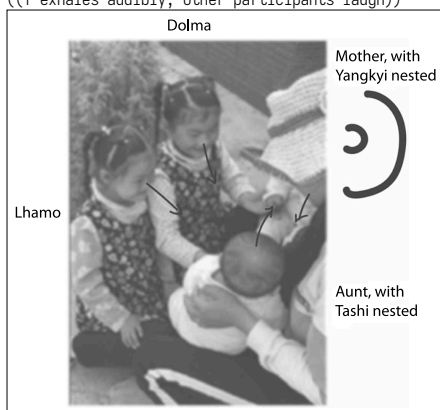

Figure 13. Participants gaze at infant Tashi, while infant Tashi gazes at infant Yangkyi (arrows show gaze directions; line 15).

```
16    A    hi:: gen
           hi:: over.there
           'hi::' over there
```
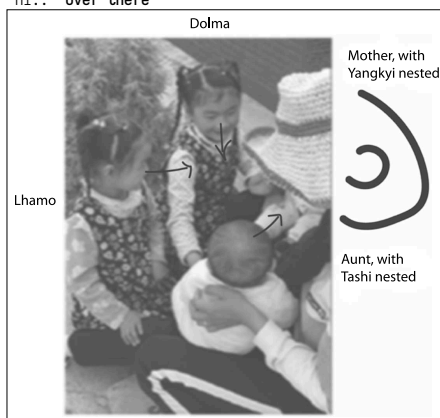

Figure 14. Participants follow infant Tashi's gaze towards infant Yangkyi (arrows show gaze directions; line 16).

First, Dolma oriented Tashi towards Yangkyi. She pointed out Yangkyi's relative location with the distal demonstrative (*gen*), and referred to her as *atɛʰi* ('older sister'), the kin term that Tashi will use for Yangkyi (line 1). Tashi turned his head toward Yangkyi. Dolma encouraged the infants to continue their joint engagement by defining Tashi's gaze as 'playing' (line 2, Figure 9). Lhamo elaborated on Dolma's description of the infants' co-engagement, noting with the distal demonstrative (*gen*) that Tashi was looking towards Yangkyi (line 3). Dolma and Lhamo

interpreted the infants' gaze as an intentional, shared activity, despite the infants' very young age and extensive scaffolding of their body orientations.

Next, Lhamo explained the kinship relation between the infants. Announcing her turn with an exclamation, Lhamo referred to Tashi and Yangkyi with third person pronouns, stating Tashi's kinship role (lines 4–5). When the other participants laughed at the infants and did not acknowledge Lhamo's statement, Lhamo reformulated it across three utterances, using more expansive gestures (lines 6–8, Figure 10). Lhamo pointed to each infant, and explained how they will name each other in Amdo kinship terminology. Lhamo referred to Tashi with the proximal demonstrative ($^n di$), locating him in spatial contiguity to herself. She referred to Yangkyi with the third person pronoun. Lhamo reported where the infants were located in the ongoing interaction, also projecting their current spatial proximity and kin relationship into the future.

Lhamo used the kin terms, *awu* ('older brother') and *atɕʰi* ('older sister') to define Tashi and Yangkyi's relationship. When peers refer to one another using these terms, they denote *relative* age. However, caregivers and older children use these terms as default referents for all much younger persons. Lhamo's formulation of the infants' kinship relation therefore demonstrated what an older child or caregiver would call the infants, and not the standard referent that each infant would use for the other. Aunt latched onto Lhamo's utterance, offering a correction: Tashi is younger than Yangkyi by several days, so Yangkyi will not call him *awu* ('older brother'; lines 9–10).

Yangkyi made a noise. This prompted Dolma to draw the participants' attention to Tashi and pull him into dyadic engagement with Yangkyi. She directed Tashi to look towards Yangkyi with the distal demonstrative (*gen*), and reached out to touch Tashi's arm (line 11, Figure 11). Dolma elaborated her directive, telling Tashi to look at his older sister. She gently held his arm and reoriented his body towards Yangkyi (line 12, Figure 12). Aunt collaborated with Dolma, repeating this directive to Tashi and shifting him to face Yangkyi (line 13). Dolma once again emphasized Yangkyi's location in relation to Tashi (line 14). Dolma held each baby's arms, urging them closer together. Tashi had shifted the position of his head, directing his gaze towards Yangkyi. Dolma giggled, and Tashi made a sound mirroring Dolma's giggle (line 15). The other participants burst out in laughter, their gaze converging on Tashi as he continued to look towards Yangkyi (Figure 13). Aunt quoted Tashi's vocalization, followed by the distal demonstrative (*gen*) (line 16). With this utterance, Aunt continued to orient Tashi towards Yangkyi. Simultaneously, Lhamo and Aunt moved their collective gaze from Tashi to Yangkyi, mirroring Tashi's shifting attention focus (Figure 14).

Excerpt 2 demonstrates how Amdo caregivers and older children socialize infants into the cultural expectations of peer group play. Caregivers socialize infants to display meticulous attention to peers' shifting movements. They consider gaze—modified by spatial deixis—to be synonymous with joint play. These communicative routines scaffold infants' participation in peer group play from birth. As caregivers encourage infants' mutual orientation to their peers, they also define infants as persons through their kinship relations; the expectation for peers to share attention is enacted through spatial deixis in embodied communicative practice. Caregivers locate infants in relation to one another in immediate interactions, and also project their enduring relationships into the imagined future.

5.3   Mapping associations between peer relationships and the landscape

As they become increasingly mobile and vocal, children enact their peer relationships by using spatial deixis on multiple scales. In addition to coordinating gaze and movement in the immediate social spaces of interaction, children map peer relationships onto the geographic space of the village, itself. To do so, children draw more explicitly on the paradigm of locative adverbs, in addition to demonstratives. This mapping of kinship relations through spatial deixis reproduces the nexus of land, language, and kinship that undergirds Amdo social worlds.

Children in Tsachen spend most of their days in free play amongst their related peers. In their everyday roamings, the peer group coordinates action through extensive discussion about the landscape, potential play activities, and prospective movements. Children point out significant features of the village landscape, including the location of flowers, animals, sand patches, hills and gutters. In developing emergent play trajectories, children therefore use both paradigms of spatial deixis to elaborate on features of the material environment.

These mundane forms of play use spatial deixis for the same interactive goals—mutual orientation and competing activity trajectories—that Dolma, Lhamo, and Dorjee enacted in Excerpts 1–2. Excerpt 3 clarifies how these interactive goals build associations between kinship relations and the landscape. Children draw on the landscape to direct movement and create narratives about past, shared activities, simultaneously defining their selves and kinship relations through 'place attachments' (Altman and Low 1992).

Before Excerpt 3 began, Dolma, Lhamo, and I had left the local temple compound. We exited the temple's gate, without an agreed-upon destination. Dolma initiated a new line of play, involving picking dandelions (*hor-ʳdzu*, or 'blowers') and blowing away their seeds. Dolma picked up a dandelion to blow. In the following turns, Lhamo, Dolma, and I discussed potential trajectories of movement.

Excerpt 3.   *Participants*
Lhamo (L, age 4;7), Dolma (D, age 7;3), Researcher (R)

1   L   *ani*   ***gen**-na*   *jo-pa*
        auntie **over.there**-LOC COP-EPIS
        ((to R)) There must be some **over there**, auntie ((pointing past bend in road))
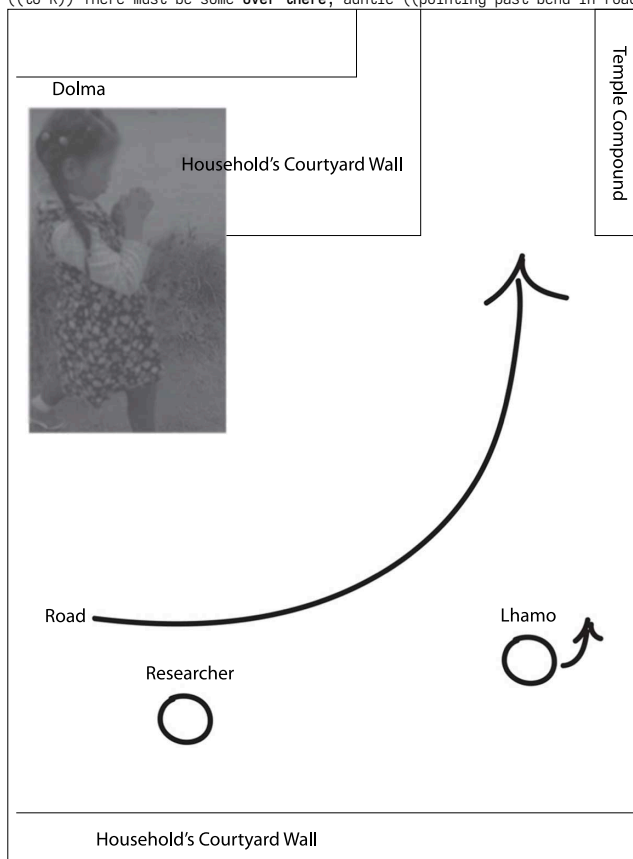

Figure 15. Lhamo suggests prospective movement (line 1).

2   ***gen**-ni*   ***jar** koŋwa* ***ⁿdʑo**-ra jo-pa*
        over.there-ABL **up** house   go-PRT COP-EPIS
        Let's go from **over there**, to the house **up there**. There must be (some).

3   ***ⁿdi**-ni*   ***jar** koŋ* ***gen**-na*   *jo-pa*
        here-ABL   **up** house **over.there**-LOC COP-EPIS
        From **here**, the house up **there, over there**, there must be (some).

4   D   ***gen**-na*   *jo.na<ma>re*
        over.there-LOC COP< NEG >FCT
        There aren't any **over there**.

5   L   *jo.ki-a (.)* ***gen***   *ker-ker-wo*   ***gen***   *mɪn-ne*
        COP\EVID-EMP **over.there** white-RED-NMZR **over.there** COP\NEG-Q
        There are (.) **Over there**, what about those white ones? Aren't those
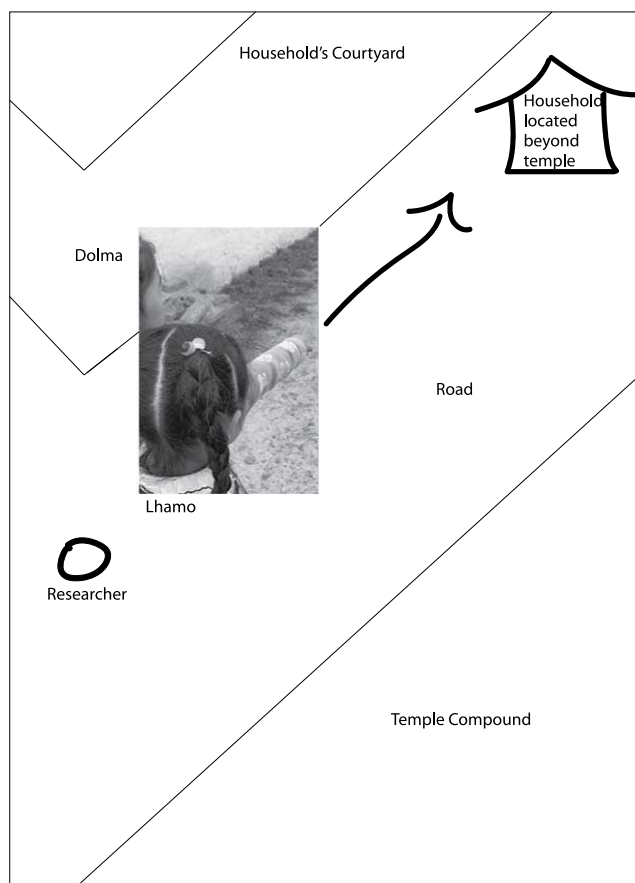   (dandelion seeds) **over there**?

Figure 16. Lhamo specifies destination of prospective movement (line 5).

```
6   D    kə   ma-re!
         that NEG-COP
         That's not (them).


7   L    ŋa  ⁿdzo ʱta
         1    go  look
         I'll go look.
```
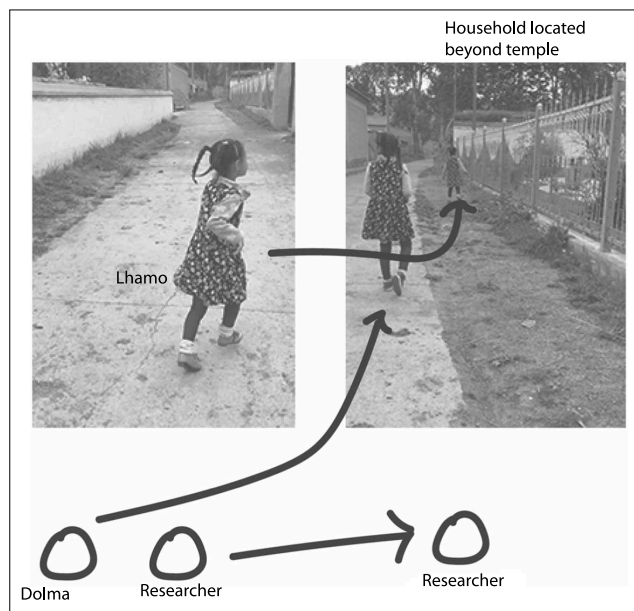
Figure 17. Lhamo moves towards intended destination, Dolma follows.

Rather than converging on a common trajectory of movement, Dolma and Lhamo asserted competing claims over the best location for picking dandelions. First, Lhamo addressed me with the kin term *ani* ('auntie') and used an elaborated deictic repertoire to suggest a potential activity trajectory. Simultaneously drawing on the demonstratives and locative adverbs, Lhamo noted the distal location of the potential destination (*gen*), the upward location of a landmark (a house; *jar*), and the more proximal location of our suggested pathway (ⁿ*di*; lines 1–3). Dolma contradicted Lhamo, asserting that there were no dandelion seeds in the distal location Lhamo had suggested (*gen*; line 4). Lhamo responded with additional evidence for her claim, locating white dandelion seeds with the distal demonstrative (*gen*) and pointing. Dolma moved alongside her (line 5, Figure 16). Dolma once again rejected Lhamo's suggestion, stating that Lhamo's referent was *not* a group of dandelions (line 6). Rather than ceding to Dolma, Lhamo announced that she would go to look by herself (line 7). Lhamo ran to look, and Dolma reluctantly followed as Lhamo neared her destination (Figure 17). Dolma and Lhamo navigated their peer relationship by focusing joint attention on features of the landscape, which required them to sequence both paradigms of spatial deictics in a single interactive setting.

Unable to decide on a shared activity trajectory at this point, Dolma and Lhamo wandered. Suddenly, Lhamo called out to confirm that she had found dandelion seeds. Twelve turns elapsed as Dolma, Lhamo, and I converged on the

new activity center. When we arrived, Dolma offered yet another potential destination.

Excerpt 3, continued.

8   D   *gen-ni   ta maŋ-nə.re-ja*
over.there-ABL EMP many-FCT-EMP
There's many from **over there**

9   *har-ra   akʰə-tɛʰo ⁿdʐo-sa jo-la*
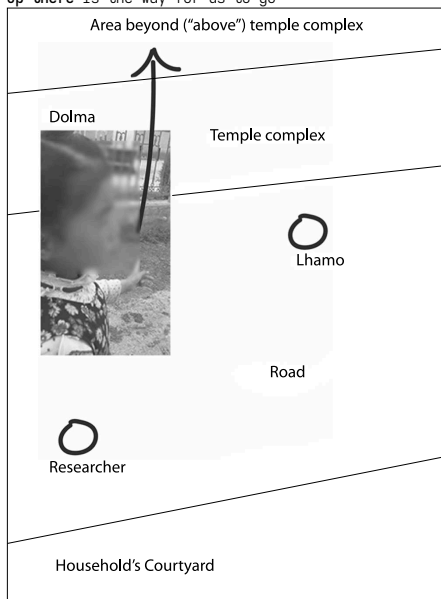**up.there**-LOC 1-PL   go-NMZR COP-EPIS
Up there is the way for us to go

Figure 18. Dolma specifies destination of prospective movement (line 9).

10   *lam zə̀k-ke tʂaŋmo   zək̀ ⁿdimo akʰətɛʰo milu da-ki-jo-no*
road IA   straight DA like.this 1\PL cat chase-CVB-COP-NMZR
There's a straight road, like this, the one where we had chased the cats

11   *ʱkor-ʱkor ⁿdi.ni.ta da maŋ.ŋa jo-no*
round-RED then   EMP many   COP-NMZR
Round and round, then there's one with many (blowers)

12   *ⁿdʐo   ta*
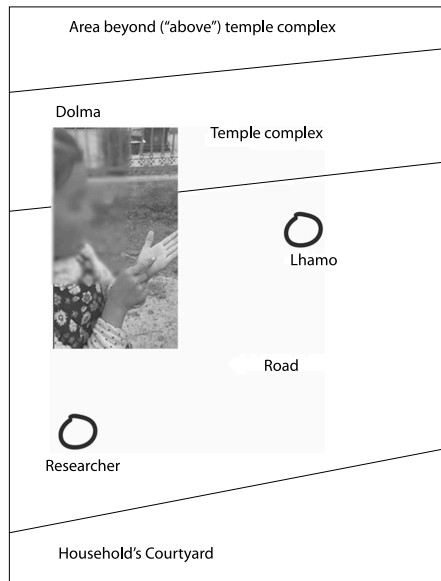go\IMP EMP
Let's go!

Figure 19. Dolma embodies destination of prospective movement (lines 10–11).

Dolma held my hand and turned, attempting to move us in the opposite direction. Using both demonstratives and locative adverbs, Dolma pointed out a distal location with many dandelions. She demonstrated the pathway to get there, pointing beyond the temple compound (lines 8–9, Figure 18). Dolma specified the location by mentioning features of the landscape as well as previous activities that had taken place there (lines 10–11). While verbally describing the potential pathway of movement, Dolma also mapped out the straight road and turn onto her hand (Figure 19). Dolma punctuated the activity sequence with the directive ^{n}*dʑo ta* ('let's go'; line 12). Lhamo, Dolma, and I moved along her suggested pathway.

Dolma and Lhamo's negotiation over the emerging activity sequence demonstrates how Amdo children's play routines create associations between the village geography and their peer relationships. Dolma and Lhamo used the full repertoire of spatial deixis to coordinate immediate objects of joint attention, and to establish their individual perceptions as potential loci for unfolding play sequences. These ongoing negotiations over movement build relationality in real-time, by elaborating on peers' previous talk to influence prospective shared actions.

Children also use spatial deixis and embodied gesture to create narratives that link past, present, and future activities. In Excerpt 3, Dolma used a past experience, of chasing cats with the co-present participants, to influence the group's shared destination. Dolma gestured to the prospective destination, and diagrammed features of the landscape on her hand. This coordination of auto-

biographical narrative with gestural and embodied references to the landscape demonstrates that children's place attachments are also relational. Dolma brought together the iconicity of embodied movement with the indexical reference of gesture and grammatical deixis to build continuity in the peer group's mutual engagement; the group's activity unfolded through associations between past activities, enduring features of the landscape, and their current attempts to coordinate a common pathway of movement.

Excerpt 3 exemplifies how children's associations between the village landscape and their kinship relations shifted during play. Children's play is intertwined with another key use of spatial deixis represented in the broader corpus of language data: spatial deictics can define stable features of the village landscape. Children in Tsachen name regions of their village with Amdo's locative adverbs, using the phrases *jarka*, or 'upper area,' and *marka*, or 'lower area.' Children locate their relatives' homes within these two regions, by taking their own households as the point of origin (Figure 20). In the broader corpus of data, when offering directives about where to go, Dolma and Lhamo frequently used the phrases *jarka* and *marka* to refer to relatives' households.
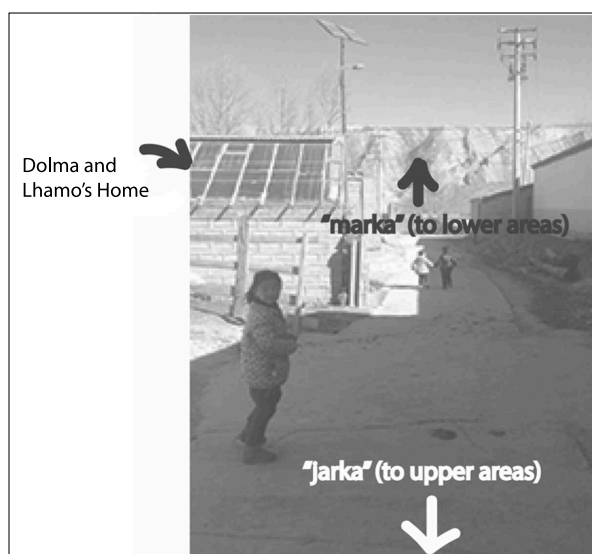

Figure 20. Children's deictic demarcation of the village geography.

Therefore, rural children use spatial deixis to establish relationality in face-to-face interaction, and to map out associations between social relationships and the village landscape. Children use their bodies, movements, and the landscape itself to define these social relationships through spatial deixis. As they grow, expanding

their movements outside of the home and into the village, children sequence their activities with more elaborate deictic repertoires, embedding locative adverbs and demonstratives. Amdo children's changing uses of grammar shape their pathways into social relationships and cultural worlds.

6.   Discussion and conclusion

As Ochs and Schieffelin (1995) explain, "children's use and understanding of grammatical forms is culturally reflexive—tied in manifold ways to local views of how to think, feel, know, (inter)act, or otherwise project a social persona or construct a relationship" (74). That is, a language's grammar helps to constitute the affective ties that anchor children's developing understandings of themselves as members of a community of speakers. These affective ties crucially rely on synchronizing grammar with multi-modal communicative resources and features of the environment. Communicative routines thus build enduring attachments to persons and places, as participants join sensory inputs to grammatical forms.

Beginning with Amdo Tibetan infants' earliest interactions, the grammatical particularities of their *yul skad* ('mother tongue') shape their senses of belonging. Because the *yul skad* offers an expanded repertoire of spatial deixis that marks topographical and relative distance, it makes salient the affective links of persons to places. Specifically, the *yul skad* provides grammatical resources for locating social relationships in the course of face-to-face interaction and emplacing these relationships in the village homeland. Caregivers and older children use Amdo's demonstrative spatial deictics to scaffold and direct infants' joint attention towards one another. In so doing, they socialize infants into cultural norms of play. They encourage infants to orient to related peers and coordinate activity sequences with a multi-modal repertoire of spatial deixis, gaze, and movement. As children age, they use spatial deixis to agentively build relationships in immediate, co-present interactions. Children use Amdo's demonstrative and locative spatial deictics to issue competing directives. With these directives, children shape each others' shared perceptions, coordinate attention, and achieve collaborative movement. Children link the immediate space-time of an interactive setting to enduring social and place-based relationships by using narratives of past experiences in specific places and sensory details of the landscape to influence prospective actions. Children also use Amdo's locative spatial deictics to demarcate village space, associating the village's geography with their peers. Children's expanding uses of locatives and demonstratives are tied to their movements throughout the village landscape.

These everyday activities take place in the medium of *yul skad*, which indexes kinship and place. Existing ethnographic literature has described the processes through which a language variety can come to serve as an emblem of belonging, especially to a kinship group (Jackson 1974; Sutton 1991; Vaughan 2018). Amdo adults explicitly articulate links between family relationships, migration histories and current places of habitation, and the *yul skad*, demonstrating an ideological facet to conceptions of linguistic diversity in Amdo. While explicit articulations of ideology are an important area of inquiry, a phenomenological approach to communicative practice provides insight into how young children come to partially reproduce this cultural association across generations. Despite a significant ideological emphasis on language standardization in contemporary Amdo, the *yul skad* persists in centering young children's lives in ways often overlooked by caregivers. It is the *yul skad* that serves as the key medium for establishing intersubjectivity, the very foundation for ontological understandings of the social world. Intersubjectivity is both the basis for and product of sociality. It is not merely a domain of cognition (cf. Tomasello 2003), but arises through cultural practices. Intersubjectivity reaches beyond the immediacy of embodied co-presence, defining experience through culturally shared perceptions of the world. As Duranti (2010) writes, one important facet of intersubjectivity for anthropology is "the being-with of specific encounters, interactions, joint activities, in the present as well as in the remembered past and in the anticipated future" (27). It is through the sedimentation of Amdo persons' language experiences over time, including interpretations of sociohistory and the anticipation of prospective actions, that communicative routines using the *yul skad* come to simultaneously reproduce and transform senses of belonging. What this understanding of intersubjectivity implies for Amdo social worlds is that cultural associations among place, language, and kinship are reproduced not only in ideological associations, but in the attachments that children build through emplaced language experiences.

At the time of writing, Amdo childhoods are facing radical change. Since the late 20th century, the rise of market labor and constraints on rural land use have pressured Amdo families to move to urban centres to ensure their socioeconomic stability (Yeh and Makley 2019). Even as the children from Tsachen age, they will enter boarding schools in towns and cities. Their language use, social relationships, and senses of place will shift. Future research is necessary to understand the consequences of these profound changes to children's social worlds. Because the *yul skad* anchors Amdo children's senses of belonging, the close analysis and documentation of children's changing grammatical repertoires in multi-modal communitive ecologies will be essential to this endeavor, as both lived environments and social relationships are transformed.

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Acknowledgements

Glossary

1:	first-person	EXCL:	exclamation
2:	second-person	FCT:	factive
3:	third-person	GEN:	genitive
ABL:	ablative	IA:	indirect article
CAUS:	causative	IMP:	imperative
COP:	copula	LOC:	bound locative particle
CVB:	converb	NEG:	negative
DA:	direct article	NMZR:	nominalizer
DAT:	dative	PROG:	progressive
DU:	dual	PRT:	particle
EMP:	emphatic	PL:	plural
EPIS:	epistemic	QUOT:	quotative
ERG:	ergative	Q:	question
EVID:	evidential	RED:	reduplication

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Appendix. Transcription and glossing key

Spatial deictics are presented with English glosses and bolded. Children's ages are provided as (years; months). Transcripts follow the Leipzig glossing rules, with morpheme glosses shown in the Glossary.

Conversation analytic transcription conventions are as follows:

= indicates latching

[ ] indicates overlap

( ) clarifies the intended referent

(( )) indicates gestural and paralinguistic descriptions

(.)   indicates brief pause
?   indicates rising tone
:   indicates affective vowel elongation

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