

# Categorical Restrictions of Positional Verbs in Teotitlán del Valle Zapotec

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## 1 Introduction

This paper presents a preliminary descriptive analysis of Teotitlán del Valle Zapotec<sup>1</sup> (hereafter TdVZ) positional verbs and proposes that TdVZ positional verb restrictions can be typologically categorized into three groups. Previous studies of Zapotec positional verbs recognize two categories. The TdVZ verbs under discussion are: *zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b* (sit), *zu<sup>2</sup>u<sup>1</sup>* (stand), *zub* (be on, lie; literally, mount), *naga'a* (lie), *rii* (piled, crowded together), *nall* (hang), and *zèèbih* (float).

Zapotec is an Oto-manguean language and is spoken throughout the state of Oaxaca, México. Its basic word order is VSO. The TdVZ variant is spoken in Teotitlán del Valle, a village located approximately 15 miles (24 kilometers) east of Oaxaca City in the foothills of the Sierra Juárez Mountains.

According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía y Informática (INEGI) census report in 2005, Teotitlán del Valle has a population of approximately 5,600, about two-thirds of which speak “some indigenous language.” TdVZ is considered endangered. A majority of children no longer learn Zapotec as a first language and Spanish is generally enforced in the public school system. However, the community has demonstrated interest in language revitalization efforts and documentation of the language is in progress.<sup>2</sup>

Similar to other varieties of Zapotec, TdVZ requires a speaker to select one of several non-copular positional verbs when describing the location of an object. Verb selection is based on the postural orientation and sometimes the shape of an *object* and/or its relationship to a *surface*. Talmy (2000) defines these as Figure and Ground, respectively:

The Figure is a moving or conceptually movable entity whose path, site, orientation is conceived as a variable, the particular value of which is the relevant issue. The Ground is a reference entity, one that has a stationary setting relative to a reference frame, with respect to which the Figure's path, site, or orientation is characterized (p. 312).

In accordance with previous discussions on Zapotec positional verbs (Brugman and Macaulay 1986; Lillehaugen 2006a; Lillehaugen & Munro 2006; Galant 2006, forthcoming; Operstein 2002), the terms *Figure* and *Ground* will be employed throughout this paper, as well.

Animate Figures in TdVZ generally require positional verbs in line with the canonical concepts of “sitting,” “standing,” “lying,” etc. However, this is not always the case with inanimate Figures. For example, in TdVZ, a tall, vertically oriented object such as a tree is not necessarily always described as “standing” in TdVZ.

In San Juan Yaee Zapotec (SJYZ) and San Andrés Yaá Zapotec (SAYZ), Galant (forthcoming; 2006, respectively) notes that stative positional verbs can be typologically categorized into two groups: verbs “that are associated with a Figure’s posture” (2006: 3), for example, “lying,” “standing,” “sitting,” and “hanging” (p. 3), and those that are not (forthcoming: 22; 2006: 3). Similarly, Operstein (2002) distinguishes between two types of positional verbs in Zaniza Zapotec (ZZ), the first of which focuses on “the object whose location is being described (=figure),” (pp. 60-1, Operstein’s italics), specifically, “the position and, to some extent, the shape of the object” (p. 61), while the second category is primarily concerned with “the object in relation to which the location is being described (=ground)” (pp. 60-1, Operstein’s italics), or how the Figure “relates to the supporting surface” (p. 62). In TdVZ, the variables of these two categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.<sup>3</sup>

Several cases appear in TdVZ in which both the Figure’s posture and its relationship to the Ground account for why one particular positional verb is chosen over another. For example, the TdVZ verb *zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b* (sit) requires that if a particular inanimate Figure has a vertically oriented stature (focus on Figure’s posture), then the Figure’s base must be situated in a surface (focus on Ground).<sup>4</sup> If both of these conditions are not met, then a different positional verb must be used. In other cases, specific verbs appear to restrict *either* the Figure’s physical orientation/shape or form, *or* the Figure-Ground relationship.

The present analysis for TdVZ positional verbs recognizes three separate categorial restrictions as opposed to two. They are defined as follows:<sup>5</sup>

- 1) Positional verbs with restrictions on **the Figure’s posture/shape** and **Figure-Ground relationship**
- 2) Positional verbs with restrictions on **the Figure’s posture/shape**
- 3) Positional verbs with restrictions on **the Figure-Ground relationship**

This paper will present a comparative analysis of the TdVZ positional verbs included in Table 1 below. This is a partial list of TdVZ positional verbs. The data elucidate how each of these verbs meets the criteria of one of the three categories above.

**Table 1:** TdVZ positional verbs covered in this discussion<sup>6</sup>

<b>Positional verb categories</b>	<b>TdVZ positional verb</b>	<b>Basic meaning</b>
Restrictions on Figure’s posture/shape <i>and</i> Figure-Ground relationship (§3.1)	<i>zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b</i>	sit
	<i>zu<sup>2</sup>u<sup>1</sup></i>	stand
	<i>zub</i>	be on, lie (lit. mount)
Restrictions on Figure’s posture/shape (§3.2)	<i>naga’a</i>	lie
	<i>rii</i>	piled; crowded together
Restrictions on Figure-Ground relationship (§3.3)	<i>nall</i>	hang
	<i>zèèbih</i>	float

## 2 Methodology

The data were elicited over the course of three weeks in Teotitlán del Valle from one consultant, Serafin Matias Gutierrez, a native speaker of TdVZ. A majority of the constructions were collected by means of Bowerman and Pederson's (1993) *Topological Relations Pictures* (indicated by "BP" in the data set). The series consists of approximately sixty scenarios depicting objects in varying relational positions (e.g., a cat sitting under a table, a boat floating on water, etc.). In other cases, the consultant described tangible items in prearranged locations or positions—for example, a water bottle lying on the ground—or he described the location of objects in our immediate surroundings. In a majority of cases, upon presentation of a locative scenario, I asked Mr. Gutierrez, "Where is the...?" usually utilizing the simple interrogative Zapotec question format "Kon..." followed by either the Spanish or English word for the Figure (e.g., *Kon arbol*, "Where is the tree?"), for which Mr. Gutierrez would then provide the Zapotec equivalent (*Kon yaj*). He would then supply an answer (*Yax zu'u<sup>2</sup>b kie daing*, "The tree is (sits) on top of the mountain."). Finally, other constructions arose spontaneously (i.e., without question prompts or without staged locative scenarios).

### 3 The Data: TdVZ positional verbs

In this section, the series of examples first demonstrate how one verb is lexically defined and, secondly, how it semantically differs from other positional verbs. These semantic distinctions are based on animacy/inanimacy, posture, shape/form, and/or a Figure's relationship to its surroundings. Finally, the data exemplify how a given positional verb adheres to the conditions stated in one of three categories; positional verbs with restrictions on 1) *the Figure's posture/shape and the Figure-Ground relationship*, 2) *the Figure's posture/shape*, or 3) *the Figure-Ground relationship*.

#### 3.1 Restrictions on the Figure's posture/shape and Figure-Ground relationship

The verbs discussed in this section restrict the Figure's physical orientation, shape or form in certain cases, as well as its relationship to the Ground. The group consists of *zu'u<sup>2</sup>b* (sit), *zu'u<sup>2</sup>l* (stand), and *zub* (be on, lie; literally, mount).

##### 3.1.1 Zu'u<sup>2</sup>b sit

*Zu'u<sup>2</sup>b* occurs with both inanimate and animate Figures. When used with animate Figures, it adheres to the canonical notions of sitting.

- (1) Nguuxe'eng=ree    **zu'u<sup>2</sup>b**-ang    loo    zhi-axzhili-ang.<sup>7</sup>  
girl=PROX<sup>8</sup>    NEUT.sit-3SG    face/on<sup>9</sup>    POSS-chair-3SG  
The girl is sitting in her chair.

- (2) Zhi'i<sup>2</sup>t    **zu'u<sup>2</sup>b**    loo    la'adid. (BP)<sup>10</sup>  
cat    NEUT.sit    face/on    rug  
The cat is sitting on the rug.

In terms of inanimate objects, *zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b* appeared with Figures which have considerable height or are longer than they are wide and must be vertically oriented relative to the Ground.<sup>11</sup> Examples (3)-(5) below are cases in which the Figures are vertically oriented in their natural states. If the Figures in (3)-(5) are not in their natural vertical postures, then a different positional verb is required (cf. §3.1.3 and §3.2.1). The data sample also strongly suggests that an inanimate Figure's roots or base must be located in the earth or another surface in order for it to occur with *zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b*, indicating a further restriction on the Figure-Ground relationship, as exemplified in the examples below:

- (3) Yu'u    **zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b**    loo    liu. (BP)  
house NEUT.sit face/on ground  
The house is sitting on the ground (with its foundation in the earth).
- (4) Yaj    **zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b**    kue'e    yu'u-dau. (BP)  
tree NEUT.sit side/beside house-holy  
The tree is sitting beside the church (with its roots in the earth).
- (5) Daing    **zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b**    rè'è    kud    zèèbih    zaa. (BP)  
mountain NEUT.sit over.there where NEUT.float cloud  
The mountain sits under the cloud.

In (3)-(5) above, the house, tree and mountain are Figures which, in their natural states, have a clear vertical orientation (i.e., all objects have an obvious right-side-up) and bases which are located in the Ground; houses stand erect with their roofs on top and typically with their foundations in the soil, trees generally grow vertically with their roots in the earth, and mountains, similarly, project upward from the terrestrial ground in which their bases are established. In all cases, the Figures must be described as "sitting." If either their posture or location in the Ground is altered, then a different verb must be used. (cf. §3.1.2 and §3.1.3).

The Figures in (6) and (7) below exhibit a direct relational configuration between the Figures' postures and their Grounds. *Relative to their respective Ground surfaces*, the Figures are in vertical positions, while their bases are located in Ground.

- (6) X-keh'ehz-ang    **zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b**    ru'u-ang. (BP)  
POSS-cigarette-3SG NEUT.sit mouth-3SG  
The cigarette is in his mouth.
- (7) **Zu<sup>1</sup>u<sup>2</sup>b**    getxih    loo    nia.<sup>12</sup>  
NEUT.sit thorn face/on hand  
I have a thorn in (the palm) of my hand.<sup>13</sup>

In (6), the surface of the man's face plays the role of Ground, *not* the surface of the earth as in (3)-(5). In relation to the man's face, the cigarette stands vertically (i.e., the cigarette's posture in relation to the earth's surface is irrelevant). Regardless of which

direction the man is facing—whether he is looking upwards towards the sky, down towards the earth, sideways or straight ahead—the cigarette would maintain a vertical (i.e., perpendicular) orientation relative to the surface of the man’s face. This meets the restriction that the Figure (the cigarette) stands in a vertical orientation in relation to its Ground (the man’s face). This example also meets the second restriction for this verb—that the Figure’s base is located in the Ground. In this case, the man’s lips envelope the end of the cigarette. Similarly, the thorn in (7) holds a vertical posture in relation to its Ground—the surface of the palm of a hand—regardless of the hand’s directionality, while the thorn’s tip is pierced into the hand’s surface.

### 3.1.2 $Zu^2u^1$ stand

In cases where  $zu^2u^1$  occurs with pedate animates, the Figures assume the canonical “standing” posture as in (8) and (9) below.

- (8) Nguuxe’eng=ree  $zu^2u^1$  kue’e yaj-zhi<sup>1</sup>i<sup>2</sup>lih. (BP)  
 girl=PROX NEUT.stand side/beside chair  
 The girl is standing beside the chair.

- (9)  $Zu^2u^1$  bekuh loo mezh.  
 NEUT.stand dog face/on table  
 The dog is standing on the table.

$Zu^2u^1$  also occurs with inanimate Figures which have metaphorical legs/feet as with the table in (10), shown standing on its four legs.

- (10) La’a mezh  $zu^2u^1$  kut zèèbih xitxa’a. (BP)  
 (?)<sup>14</sup> table NEUT.stand where NEUT.float light  
 The table is (standing) where the light is.

$Zu^2u^1$  places a further restriction on inanimate Figures like those in (11) and (12) below in that they must be vertically oriented, as with  $zu^1u^2b$  (sit) in (3) and (4) (§3.1.1). If the Figure is not vertical, then a different verb must be used (cf. (25) and (26), §3.2.1). In direct contrast to  $zu^1u^2b$ , however, the inanimate Figure’s base or metaphorical foot *cannot* be located in the Ground (i.e., the Figure and Ground must be distinctly separate from one another). If this condition is not met, then  $zu^2u^1$  is judged infelicitous.

- (11) Yu’u de huget  $zu^2u^1$  loo liu.  
 house of play NEUT.stand face/on ground  
 The toy-house is (standing) on the ground.

- (12) Yaj  $zu^2u^1$  kue’e yuu-dau.  
 arbol NEUT.stand side/beside house-holy  
 The tree is (standing) beside the church (in a pot).<sup>15</sup>





- (21) La bixtilih **zub** loo nis.  
 (?)<sup>19</sup> soap NEUT.is.on.(lit. mounts) face/on water  
 The soap is on the (surface of the) water.

Examples (17)-(21) above demonstrate that the Figures can be tall, long, short, wide, or flat, where form and shape do not appear to play a role in determining whether *zub* can or cannot be used. Furthermore, when the posture of the book, pencil and water bottle in (17)-(19) respectively were altered, this was judged irrelevant. *Zub* is considered appropriate whether these Figures are upright, horizontal, upside-down, etc. This suggests *zub* restricts only the Figure's relationship to the Ground in such circumstances.

### 3.2 Positional verbs with restrictions on the Figure's posture/shape

This collection of verbs restricts a Figure's orientation, and in some cases, its shape and form. The Figure-Ground relationship is irrelevant in determining verb choice within this category. This verb group is comprised of *naga'a* (lie), and *rii* (piled, crowded together).

#### 3.2.1 Naga'a (na-ga'a)<sup>20</sup> lie

*Naga'a* appeared with animate and inanimate Figures that are vertically oriented and generally taller than they are wide. These objects "lie" if they are in horizontal position. In some contexts, either *naga'a* or *zub* (be on, lie; lit. mount) can occur. *Naga'a* differs from *zub* (§3.1.3), however, in that it does not require the Figure to be elevated from the terrestrial ground, whereas *zub* (§3.1.3) does.

- (22) **Na-ga'a** zhana' loo lung.  
 NEUT-lie my.mother face/on bed  
 My mother is lying in bed.
- (23) Os-e'eng ni ri-gid-ang **na-ga'a** loo x-lu'un-om.  
 bear-DIM that HAB-play-3SG NEUT-lie face/on POSS-bed-3SG:ANIM  
 The little bear that you play with is lying down on his bed.

In example (22), animacy is not imperative. The Figure could be alive or deceased. Compare this with *zub* in (16) above. In the latter case, the person must be deceased, and therefore inanimate. In contrast, *naga'a* only requires that the person lie horizontally.

Examples (24)-(27) below demonstrate that *naga'a* does not restrict the Figure's relationship to the Ground. Note especially (24) and (25).

- (24) Yu'u **na-ga'a** kia yu'u.  
 house NEUT-lie head/on.top house  
 The house is lying on top of the house.<sup>21</sup>
- (25) **Na-ga'a** yu'u loo liu.  
 NEUT-lie house face/on ground  
 The house is lying on the ground.

(26) **Na-ga'a** yaj loo nèèz.  
 NEUT-lie tree face/on street  
 The tree is lying in the street.

(27) **Na-ga'a** nis loo nèèz.  
 NEUT-lie water face/on street  
 The bottle of water is lying in the street.

In (24) the house lies on its side, elevated on top of another house, whereas the house in (25) lies horizontally in direct contact with the earth. The Figures in (26) and (27) lie in contact with the terrestrial ground.<sup>22</sup> The only requirement is that the Figures are in a horizontal posture. Example (24) represents a scenario in which either *naga'a* or *zub* can be used. (cf. (14), §3.1.3.) If the speaker wanted to convey, specifically, that the house is elevated from the earth, then *zub* must be used as in (14) above.

### 3.2.2 **Rii**<sup>23</sup> *piled, crowded together*

The positional verb *rii* requires two or more Figures to be located in relative proximity to one another, spread out (touching or not touching), or in a heap, placing focus on the form of the collection of Figures. The verb primarily stipulates that the Figures are part of a collection or group of objects.<sup>24</sup> The items can be found on several different Ground surfaces (e.g., on an elevated surface, in contact with the earth, under water, etc.), suggesting that the Figure's relationship to the Ground is irrelevant.

(28) La mingit **rii** mantuing loo mezh.  
 (?)<sup>25</sup> seeds HAB.piled mound face/on table  
 The seeds are in a mound on the table.

(29) **Rii** gu'ung nie daing.  
 HAB.crowded.together bulls foot/below mountain  
 A bunch of bulls are at the foot of the mountain.

(30) **Rii** gie loo liu.  
 HAB.piled rocks face/on ground  
 There are rocks piled on the ground.

(31) **Rii** kamion ku'ee nezh.  
 HAB.crowded.together cars side/beside street  
 There are cars along the street.

(32) **Rii** medih zhaa nis.  
 HAB.piled money buttocks/under water  
 There is money in (lit. under) the (pool) of water.



(38) La'adix **nall** loo du. (BP)  
ropa NEUT.hang face/on clothesline  
The clothes are hanging on the clothesline.

(39) Xih-itxa-na **nall** loo xih-biga'-a. (BP)  
POSS-saint-1SG NEUT.hang face/on POSS-necklace.chain-1SG  
My saint pendant hangs from my necklace.

(40) Xih-le's-ang **nall** loo ganzhih. (BP)  
POSS-cobija-3SG NEUT.hang face/on hook.  
His *cobija*<sup>27</sup> is hanging on the hook (on the wall).

The toy-ship (36) and painting (37) both hang from visible strings. The clothes in (38) hang from a clothesline. The necklace pendant in (39) hangs from a chain, while the *cobija* in (40) hangs on the wall by means of a hook. All Figures have the potential to “swing” from the Grounds to which they are attached.

### 3.3.2 *Zèèbih* float

*Zèèbih* occurs with both floating and hanging Figures. In the latter case, *zèèbih* overlaps with scenarios in which one can also use *nall*. It differs from *nall* in that it does not require the Figures to “float” or “hang” by means of a hanging mechanism (i.e., hanging devices are optional). Similar to *nall*, however, all Figures have the potential for mobility. *Zèèbih* appeared only with inanimate Figures during elicitation.

(41) Zaa **zèèbih** zhaa giiba. (BP)  
cloud NEUT.float buttocks/under sky  
The cloud is floating in (lit. “under”) the sky.

(42) Barkoh **zèèbih** loo nis. (BP)  
ship NEUT.float face/on water  
The ship is on the water.

(43) La bixtilih **zèèbih** loo nis.  
(?)<sup>28</sup> soap NEUT.float face/on water  
The soap is floating on the water.

The cloud (41) floats freely in the air, and the ship (42) and bar of soap (43) float on top of the water's surface.<sup>29</sup> *Nall* (hang) (§3.3.1) could not transpire with these Figures since they are not suspended by a hanging mechanism.

In contrast, the Figures in (44)-(46) below can occur with either *zèèbih* or *nall*. Compare these with examples (36)-(38) above.

(44) Bot **zèèbih**.

boat NEUT.float.

The boat hangs (from the ceiling).

(45) Kuadr **zèèbih** tex pader. (BP)

painting NEUT.float chest/on.vertical.surface wall

The painting is hanging on the wall.

(46) La'adix **zèèbih** loo du. (BP)

clothes NEUT.float face/on clothesline

The clothes are hanging on the clothesline.

The data suggest that the only condition that TdVZ places on *zèèbih* is that the Figures have the potential for varying amounts of mobility, whereas *nall* requires both this characteristic as well as the attachment of the Figure to the Ground by means of a hanging mechanism. For example, the cloud in (41) could glide across the sky, while the ship and bar of soap in (42) and (43), respectively, could float across the water. The suspended toy-boat in (44) has the potential to swing from the ceiling. The painting in (45) hangs on the wall by a visible string. If one were to push the painting, it would swing back and forth along the wall. Finally, the clothes on the clothesline in (46) could “swing” if the wind were to blow.

## 6 Summary

This preliminary description provides evidence that, typologically, TdVZ positional verbs can be categorized in three manners: 1) positional verbs with restrictions on the posture/shape of the Figure as well as its configuration with the Ground, 2) verbs which restrict the Figure's posture/shape, and finally 3), those positional verbs that primarily focus on the Figure-Ground relationship. The main goal of this discussion has been to provide a foundation for further investigation of TdVZ positional verbs which had not yet been described or documented and to contribute to the ongoing typological explorations and characterizations of Zapotec.

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## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> Several community members and San Francisco State University are currently collaborating on the Teotitlán del Valle Community Language Archive Project, a documentation effort headed by Dr. Troi Carleton.

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<sup>3</sup> Lillehaugen (2006a) alludes to a third category of positional verbs in Tlacolula Valley Zapotec. She notes that positional verbs place “restrictions...on the Figure *and/or* the locative relationship between the Figure and Ground” (p. 280, my italics). Her study does not aim to present the data in terms of distinct categories (i.e., the study is not proposing a typology), but her statement notes that an overlapping juncture exists among the restrictions of *Focus on the Figure* and *Focus on the Figure-Ground relationship*.

<sup>4</sup> See discussion in §3.1.1 on the positional verb  $zu^1u^2b$  for examples.

<sup>5</sup> These categories are comprised of generalizations that appear most salient in the data sample. Exceptions to these rules do occur and will be addressed.

<sup>6</sup> This is a non-exhaustive list of TdVZ positional verbs.

<sup>7</sup> When an answer was provided in response to a locative question prompt (i.e., “Where is the...?”), word order always appeared as SVO.

<sup>8</sup> Abbreviations used in this paper: 1/2/3 SG/PL *first/second/third person singular/plural*, - *morpheme boundary*, = *clitic boundary*, ( ) *parenthetical information*, ? *undetermined status*, ANIM *animate*, INANIM *inanimate*, HAB *habitual*, NEUT *neutral*, INT *intensifier*, DIM *diminutive*, POSS *possessive*, PROX *proximate*, O *object*, S *subject*.

<sup>9</sup> There is a debate as to whether or not body-part words have fully grammaticized as prepositions or if they are nouns with extended metaphorical locative functions. (For an overview of the issues, see Lillehaugen 2006a, CH. 2. For further readings, see Lillehaugen 2003, 2004a, 2006b; Lillehaugen and Munro 2006; MacLaury 1989.) This paper will not commit to one view or another for the time being. All TdVZ body-part words are glossed with both the body-part term and its corresponding locative meaning.

<sup>10</sup> BP indicates constructions which were elicited by means of Bowerman and Pederson’s (1993) *Topological Relations Pictures*.

<sup>11</sup> No examples appeared in which postural orientation was ambiguous, for example, with regular, symmetrical Figures such as cubes, spheres, etc. Such Figures need to be considered in the future.

<sup>12</sup> In cases where the location of a Figure was described without a question prompt, word order appeared as VSO.

<sup>13</sup> Similarly,  $zu^1u^2b$  would occur if a nail, stick, or pencil were stabbed into the palm of a hand enough so that the Figure was standing upright, relative to the hand’s surface.

<sup>14</sup> *La’a* (sometimes *la*) only occurred in sentence-initial position. It was sometimes translated as the Spanish articles, *la* or *el*. However, at other times it was translated as an abbreviated version of the third-person inanimate TdVZ pronoun *laing*. Lillehaugen (2006a) cites Munro and Lopez as suggesting that *la’a* cognates express focus (pp. 42-43). However, Lillehaugen’s own findings regarding the SLQZ cognate, *làa’* were inconclusive (p. 44). Further investigation is needed to explain the function of TdVZ *la’a* in the context of locative constructions.

<sup>15</sup> A discussion with Mr. Gutierrez suggests that if the tree’s roots have been removed from their natural environment, the earth, then the tree is viewed as “standing” on top of the Ground (i.e., the pot is not viewed as an alternate Ground in which the tree’s roots exist, at least in this specific instance).

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<sup>16</sup> Operstein (2002) noted a similar distinction in ZZ (pp. 61-2) between Figures with and without visible basis with the ZZ verbs *zub* (sit) and *zu* (stand), respectively (pp. 61-2). Both positionals fall under the category, “Positional verbs focusing on the figure” (pp. 61-2) in her discussion.

<sup>17</sup> Galant (2006; forthcoming, respectively) noted a similar distinction with particular Zapotec positional verbs in both SAYZ (pp. 5, 11, 13) and SJYZ (pp. 10, 21), where Figures must be located in relatively elevated or non-elevated Ground surfaces.

<sup>18</sup> More data is needed to determine if this euphemistic usage would apply to all animates.

<sup>19</sup> See footnote 14.

<sup>20</sup> The form of this verb differs morphologically from those already discussed. During elicitation, Mr. Gutierrez translated *na-* as *estar* (to be), and *-ga’a* as *acostar* (to lie) in Spanish, indicating that *na-*, at least psychologically, is a prefix for Mr. Gutierrez. Lillehaugen (2006a) compared Tlacolula de Matamoros Zapotec (TMZ) *niga’ah* to its cognates in San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec (SLQZ), *nà’tga’ah* and *na’ga’ah*, “‘is lying down, is (located) in a lying position’ which are identified as neutral forms of *ràa’tga’ah* ‘lies down, gets into a lying position’” (Lillehaugen citing Munro and Lopez, 299). For the moment, this interpretation shall be applied to the TdVZ, *naga’a*, as well, where *naga’a* is the neutral form of the verb “lie,” with the prefix *na-* marking neutrality.

<sup>21</sup> See discussion of example (14) for a detailed description of the scenario.

<sup>22</sup> Most of the streets in Teotitlán are unpaved, so most likely the consultant was envisioning a dirt road in this scenario.

<sup>23</sup> Lillehaugen (2006a: 310) tentatively suggests that TMZ *rii* is in habitual aspect rather than in neutral form. This is based on a dictionary entry by Munro and Lopez, et al. wherein *mbih* is listed as the neutral form of this positional verb. For the time being, I will employ Lillehaugen’s tentative analysis of this verb.

<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Lillehaugen (2006a: 310) found that the TMZ *rii* cannot occur with a single countable Figure.

<sup>25</sup> See footnote 14.

<sup>26</sup> Galant (forthcoming) found the SJYZ cognate *naala* in conjunction with a person hanging upside down from a tree (p. 16).

<sup>27</sup> A thick piece of cloth worn over the body as a covering, such as a shawl or coat.

<sup>28</sup> See footnote 14.

<sup>29</sup> This scenario also occurs with *zub* (cf. example (21), §3.1.3). If the speaker wants to emphasize that the bar of soap is elevated from the earth, then the speaker will use *zub*. Alternately, the speaker can focus on the soap’s floating behavior on top the water’s surface by using *zèèbih* as in (43). The different descriptive foci are encoded in the verb the speaker chooses to use.

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