# Southern Zapotec Toponyms

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Southern Zapotec (SZ) toponyms are of interest both for their linguistic structure, and for what they reveal about the history of language contact, migration, and settlement within the Southern Sierra Madre region of Oaxaca, where SZ languages are spoken. More than 200 toponyms in 22 varieties of SZ are provided. These reveal the structural possibilities for SZ toponyms, which prototypically consist of a noun classifier followed by a noun. Individual toponyms of historical significance are discussed, especially with reference to colonial-era settlement patterns.

## 1.  Introduction

This paper was inspired by Smith Stark (2004), which examined toponyms (place names) in the Central Zapotec language of San Baltazar Chichicapan and developed a catalog of toponyms from all branches of Zapotec. For the present investigation I have collected toponyms from Southern Zapotec (SZ) languages, mostly from the Coatecan and Miahuatecan subgroups (see Smith Stark, 2003 and Beam de Azcona, in prep. [a], [c]). Simple toponyms consisting of only one morpheme are rare in Zapotec. Most toponyms in these languages consist of two or more words, the first of which is a generic noun which I analyze as a noun classifier. As also discussed by Smith Stark, some Zapotec and other Mesoamerican toponyms begin in relational nouns. The term *relational noun* is here used as a cover term for a class of words, mostly body part terms, with a nominal history but which are in the process of evolving towards prepositions, and which have already become prepositions in certain cases. In SZ languages, even outside of toponym formation, it is possible to analyze at least some instances of relational nouns as a subtype of classifier (see Beam de Azcona, in prep. [b]). An additional issue unique to SZ (as opposed to other Zapotec) toponyms relates to the existence of a classifier prefix *m-* found only in SZ languages and not in other branches of Zapotec. This prefix is commonly omitted in toponyms that include animal names.

There are two main types of information contained in this paper. §2 gives a synchronic linguistic analysis of SZ toponyms while §3 and §4 discuss the history of the SZ region, and particularly language contact, as preserved in SZ toponyms. The structural patterns described in §2 are further illustrated in Appendix A, which is a partial catalog of SZ toponyms. §3 looks at language contact specifically, with brief commentaries on contact between SZ and Nahuatl, and later SZ and Spanish. §4 examines how certain elements of SZ history have been preserved in individual toponyms.

The data used in this study come from personal fieldwork with 18 varieties of SZ, and published or archived data from other varieties. Names and abbreviations used for these varieties, along with information about their classification, can be found in Appendix A.

## 2.      Types of toponyms

In this section I describe the different compositional types of toponyms found in SZ languages. The majority of SZ toponyms are classified noun phrases (§2.1). These may be phrases that occur with a single independent classifier (§2.1.1), or with multiple classifiers (§2.1.3). SZ languages have noun classifiers, generic nouns that co-occur with specific nouns which they characterize (see also Aikhenvald, 2003: 81-97). When animal or other normally animate nouns are used with a classifier to form a toponym, the classificatory prefix *m-* is frequently omitted (§2.1.2). While bona fide classifiers are the most common initial member of compound toponyms, it is also possible to have fixed toponyms which include known relational nouns (typically body part nouns) as head. In such cases it is possible to analyze the word in question either as a relational noun or as a classifier. I discuss the issues surrounding such analyses in §2.2. Finally in §2.3 I describe types of toponyms, typically special and unusual ones, that exist without either a classifier or relational noun.

## 2.1.      Classified noun phrases

In (Southern) Zapotec many nouns with generic meanings may function as classifiers. In Coatec Zapotec (Beam de Azcona, in preparation [b]) I have found more than 50 such words which may function either as a common noun or as a noun classifier. Table 1 gives examples of the semantic types of noun phrases in which classifiers most frequently serve as head. In examples like these the occurrence of the classifier is, if not always obligatory, at least strongly preferred.

| Type of NP | Coatec example | Spanish gloss | English (or Latin) gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnobiological classes of animals | *má lwê* | 'animal de ala' | 'winged animal' |
| | *má yìch* | 'animal de pelo' | 'furry animal' |
| Plant species & genuses | *yà yèd* | '(palo de) ocote' | 'pine tree' |
| | *yà zôn* | '(palo de) guarumbo' | 'Cecropia obtusifolia' |
| Items made of particular elements | *nîtz ko'b* | 'atole' (lit. agua de masa) | 'atole' (lit. dough water) |
| | *nîtz yi'n* | 'salsa de chile' (lit. agua de chile) | 'salsa' (lit. chile water) |
| Place names | *Yêzh Sántlín* | 'Santa Catarina Loxicha (pueblo)' | '(the town of) Santa Catarina Loxicha' |
| | *Yêzh Xĭzh* | 'San Baltazar Loxicha (pueblo)' | '(the town of) San Baltazar Loxicha' |

**Table 1: Types of noun phrases which frequently occur with classifiers**
(examples from SBalL)

In this list of classified NPs each of the last three types of (semi-lexicalized) phrases refer to specific rather than generic concepts, while the first two examples with *má* refer to classes of animals rather than to individual species or even genuses. Historically *má* was used the same as plant classifiers like *yà* are used today, to form (semi-lexicalized) noun phrases referring to particular species, but these have now fully lexicalized with the reduction of *má* to a prefix *m-*.

The synchronic status of examples like those with *yà* is somewhere between a phrase, i.e. a syntactic unit, and a compound word, i.e. a lexical unit. These are (or almost are) lexical items because they indicate specific concepts which in many cases cannot be indicated by the

second form alone (without the classifier), but yet they have properties of noun phrases because in certain instances one element can be omitted. For example, the classifier can be used alone anaphorically to refer to the already mentioned or known fuller NP.

An even stronger indication of such strings maintaining phrasal status is the fact that the noun classifiers retain their lexical tone, whereas in compounds tonal contrasts are typically neutralized on the first element, i.e. tone is only contrastive on the final (stressed) syllable of a word. In Coatec unstressed syllables have a tone most similar to the lexical high tone. Note that a similar tonal reduction has taken place in the 'animal' but not the 'human' classifier in Coatec, as shown in (1). If strings such as those beginning in *yà* were fully lexicalized we might expect a tonal reduction to *yá*.

(1)  *mǎn*  'animal' (common noun)  >  *má*  'animal' (classifier, pronoun)
     *měn*  'person' (common noun)  >  *mě*  'person' (classifier, pronoun)

Besides the tone change and coda loss seen on *má*, an additional segmental reduction also affected this classifier and possibly also *mě* historically. Non-tonic vowels have been lost diachronically in SZ languages. Terms referring to animal species and genuses presumably began in *má* historically but today begin in a prefix *m-* (which assimilates to the place of a following voiced obstruent). This same marker is found on some words referring to humans and supernatural entities, suggesting that *mě* is another source for the *m-* prefix. This seems to indicate that animal (and higher animate) terms were further along the continuum towards compounds than were other types of terms which did not undergo this reduction, including terms referring to classes of animals rather than animal species. Many of the words marked with modern *m-* already bore a separate animacy prefix *b-* and today have a compound prefix *mb-*. In (2) I show Coatec examples with *mb-*, *m-*, and an assimilated homorganic nasal.

(2)  *mbyìn*    'pájaro; bird'
     *mbgùp*    'armadillo'
     *mxi'zh*   'tejón; coatimundi'
     *nděz*     'tlacuache; possum'
     *ngǔch*    'marrano; pig' (cf. Spanish *cuche*)
     *mběy*     'hongo; mushroom'
     *Ngwzi'*   'Rayo; Lightning'
     *Mbì*      'Aire; Wind'

### 2.1.1.  Toponyms with a single classifier

Many SZ toponyms consist of a single classifier followed by a single noun. This noun may be a unique morpheme, either a native or a borrowed proper noun, that is only used to refer to the place in question, or it may be a common noun that is here used to represent some feature of the place or its history.

Some semantic patterns can be found when looking at which common nouns occur in which type of toponym. Most common nouns in toponyms for plains and valleys refer to tree species, while more common nouns occurring in names of rocks refer to animals. Of course, trees can grow in valleys but not on rocks. Rocks can be places where animals congregate, but can also exist in formations resembling animals.

When considering toponyms which contain common nouns, we might regard the classifier-noun string as a compound. Each word has a particular meaning in isolation and by putting them together we get a specific meaning present in neither word alone. However, the question of whether these classifier-headed strings are lexicalized compounds or composition-

al phrases, is a complex one and there will surely be more to say on this subject in future work. Table 2 shows the most common of a larger group of classifiers found in SZ toponyms. Both Coatec (C) and Miahuatec (M) forms are given.

| Classifier/Example Toponym | | Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| Coatec | Miahuatec | |
| *yêzh* | *guéz* | 'pueblo; town' |
| *Yêzh Bzyá* | | 'Ejutla' |
| | *Guéz Xír* | 'Xitla' |
| *Yè* | *guíi* | 'cerro; hill' |
| *Yè Gô* | | 'Cerro Camote' |
| | *Guíi Lo* | 'Cerro Troja' |
| *yí* | *gué* | 'piedra; rock' |
| *Yí Ngwlàb* | | 'Piedra Olavo' |
| | *Gué Wla'b* | 'Piedra Golave' |
| *Làt* | *la'tz* | 'llano, valle; plain, valley'[1] |
| *Làt Yǒ* | *La'tz Naróo* | 'Llano Grande' |
| *na't* | *btée* | 'arroyo; creek' *(more common in Coatec)* |
| *Na't Ándábíst* | | 'Arroyo Andavista' |
| *yu'* | *yó'* | 'río; river' *(more common in Miahuatec)* |
| | *Yó' Bdo* | 'Río Platanar' |
| *Yèl* | *gueh'l* | 'hondura de agua; water hole' |
| *Yèl Kwǎ* | | 'Hondura Oscura' |
| | *Gueh'l Gueht* | 'Hondura de Olla' |

**Table 2: Common classifiers that occur in SZ toponyms**

### 2.1.2. Loss of non-toponymic classifiers in SZ place names

It is very common, although not obligatory, to omit the prefix *m-* (or homorganic allomorphs) when adding a classifier that indicates a type of place, as shown in (3).

(3)  *Yè Bèw*     'Cerro Javalín'    (cf. *mbèw* 'javalí')     Coatec: SBalL
      *Gué Béey*    'Cerro Gusano'    (cf. *mbéey* 'gusano')    Miahuatec: SBarL
      *Gué Góol*    'Piedra Zopilote'  (cf. *ngóol* 'zopilote')  Miahuatec: SBarL

Sometimes the more ancient prefix *b-* survives, or reappears, in this environment, as shown in (4). This shows that there is a difference between this older prefix *b-* 'animate' and the classificatory prefix *m-* which indicates animals and higher animates. This also indicates that *mb-* is not a single prefix but continues to behave as a series of two prefixes in synchronic derivational morphology.

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[1] When used as a noun in isolation and not as a classifier, in Miahuatec (at least in the variety of San Bartolomé Loxicha) this word also has the meaning 'city', due to the fact that the large cities, starting in Miahuatlán and extending north to Ejutla, Ocotlán, and finally Oaxaca itself, are located in the Valley of Oaxaca. (Miahuatlán is located at the end of the Valley where it borders with the Southern Sierra Madre).

(4)  *Yè Bdòn*   'Cerro Remolino'        (cf. *mbdòn* 'remolino')        Coatec: SBL
     *Yó' Blátz*  'Arroyo Sanguijuela'    (cf. *mblátz* 'sanguijuela')   Miahuatec: SBarL
     *Yó' Bkit*   'Arroyo Perro de Agua'  (cf. *mkit guehl* 'perro de agua',  Miahuatec: SBarL
                                          i.e. 'nutria')

Just as the prefix *m-* is lost in these instances, independent classifiers may also be lost. In Table 2 above, the Spanish toponym *Río Platanar* translates into English as 'Banana Tree River' and not just 'Banana River'. However, in Zapotec one would use the 'tree' classifier *yâ* if indicating a banana tree rather than the banana fruit, and this classifier is absent in the toponym. A similar example is given in (5).

(5)  Arroyo Guarumbo   *Yó' Dón*   (cf. 'guarumbo' *yáa dón*)   Miahuatec: SBarL

### 2.1.3.  Toponyms with more than one classifier
There are two types of toponyms which contain more than one classifier. First, an additional classifier may be used to provide more information about a place. In the second case, a classifier normally used with a common noun when not used in a place name, is retained in the toponym rather than dropped.

When more than one classifier is used in a toponym to indicate additional information about the type of place being named, the classifier closer to the end of the toponym is the (more) obligatory one while earlier occurring classifier(s) may be added by some speakers or in some varieties, as in (6).

(6)  'Miahuatlán'   *Yìs Dò'o*      [town holy(.thing)]        Miahuatec: SAM
                    *Yêzh Do'*      [town holy(.thing)]        Coatec: SBL, SMaC
                    *Làt Yêzh Do'*  [plain town holy(.thing)]  Coatec: CN

In the previous section I described how classificatory morphemes like *m-* and *ya* are typically omitted when the nouns they classify are used in toponyms. While typical, this generalization is not universal. Some toponyms retain classificatory morphemes which do not classify the place being named by the toponym but rather the common noun used in the toponym. Examples are given in (7).

(7)  'Cerro Venado'       *Yè Mbzhín*       [hill ACL-AN-deer]              Coatec: SBalL
     'Llano Xonene'       *Lá'tz Yáa Xé*    [plain tree xonene/cacahuanano]  Miahuatec: SBarL
     'Llano Cuache-       *Lá'tz Yáa Bít*   [plain tree (cua)chepil]        Miahuatec: SBarL
     pil'
     'Llano Palmiche'     *Lá'tz Yáa Guín*  [plain tree palm]               Miahuatec: SBarL

### 2.2.  Toponyms with relational nouns
Any toponym can be used with a relational noun to indicate, for instance, that one is going *to* or coming *from* a named place. However, some toponyms include a relational noun as a fixed part of the place name, as in the examples below from the Coatec variety of San Baltazar Loxicha. These may be added to a typical place classifier plus noun construction as in (8) and (9), or directly added to a noun (10) or lexicalized noun phrase (11).

(8)  *Xàn Yè Bla'zh*   'Chucupaxtle'       [underside hill chuchupaxtle (mbla'zh)]

(9)  *Tô Lát Bích*     'Llano Gordoniz'    [mouth plain quail (mbích)]

(10)  *Tzo' Yích*          'Agua Blanca'                    [back thorn/grindstone]

(11)  *Tô à Tìzh*          'La orilla del Arroyo Egarechal'    [mouth tree (reduced form) egareche]

Most but not all relational nouns are body part words. Names of body parts can specifically indicate a part, e.g. *tô* 'the mouth' or *yîd* 'the skin', but can also indicate the shape or composition of another body part, e.g. *yîd lèn* 'belly', *yîd nzhâ* 'outer ear', *yîd tô* 'lip', etc. Likewise these words can indicate the shape of a part of the land, where *tô* refers to an opening or entrance. Body part words which commonly function as relational nouns (or prepositions) might in such instances be analyzed as fulfilling a classifier function.

The relational noun *xàn* is clearly perceived as a noun by SZ speakers (for example, in translating its lexical semantics speakers of different SZ languages all use nouns or noun phrases like 'base' or 'bottom part' rather than prepositions like 'under') but its historical relationship to a body part word is synchronically opaque. According to Lillehaugen and Munro (2006) and Sonnenschein (2006) the cognates of this word in Tlacolula Valley Zapotec (*zh:ààa'n*) and Zoogocho Zapotec (*zxan*) are related to or homophonous with 'buttocks' (cf. Coatec *xi'n* 'buttocks' vs. *xàn* 'base, underpart'). In the examples in (8) and (9) we find *xàn* and *tô* added to a string that is the typical form of many SZ toponyms, i.e. a classifier indicating a type of place followed by a common noun which is lacking the classificatory prefix with which it normally occurs. Although the relational nouns in these relational noun-classifier-noun strings are fixed parts of the toponyms shown, it is easy to suppose that historically they may have been used only optionally with shorter versions of these toponyms, indicating a particular part of the land in relation to the larger named place. For example, Chuchupaxtle Hill may have been a larger named place and one may have used *xàn* with this toponym to indicate what in English we might call the foot of the hill (apparently English hills stand while Zapotec hills sit). The place being named by *Xàn Yè Bla'zh* is in fact at the foot of a hill. The important named place is the base and not the hill itself, but perhaps the hill was once (or is still to some) known by the name *Yè Bla'zh.* Likewise in (9), *tô* was perhaps once optional to indicate the entrance to this plain from some other typography (e.g. a mountain forest). The historical change here is that now these relational nouns are not optional but obligatory parts of the name. However, the semantics of relation do not necessarily fade just because a relational noun becomes an obligatory part of a compound.

The argument is harder (though not impossible) to make for *xàn* than *tô*, but it is possible that in at least some instances of toponyms beginning in relational nouns, these nouns are serving at once in both relational noun and classifier functions. While the semantics of relation are not completely lost, at the same time these nouns may also classify the places named, giving additional information about the *type* of place being named. Any valley or plain can have *làt* in its name, but the addition of *tô* indicates that this is not just a section of a larger wide open valley, nor a valley which emerges gradually from wide rolling hills, but rather a meadow that may be accessed from a more narrow entrance from the forest. In (11) above the shore is as much a type of place on its own that no other classifier, such as 'river' or 'creek', is used in the toponym.

While *xàn* seems at first to be less classificatory than *tô* because it seems so clearly to indicate a part of a larger whole, it is indeed possible to view such nouns as classifiers. Bases of hills and beginnings of larger mountain ranges are types of places. In English we have terms like *the Sierra Foothills.*

In the case of (10) we have a more completely lexicalized compound which includes a relational noun. In just the four examples seen above then we have three different types of toponyms headed by relational nouns. In (8) and (9) we have relational nouns which have fairly transparently been added to existing toponyms of a typical structure. In (11) we have a relational noun which also serves as the sole place classifier in the term, although the unusual form *à* is clearly derived from *yà* 'tree', which is a classifier but not a classifier of a topographic nature. Finally in (10) we have a relational noun which probably does indicate some geographic feature of the place in question, but which is not as straightforward and belongs to a group of toponyms which are named rather quirkily based on insiders' knowledge, like a toponymic nickname. Indeed (10) is also known by other names: *Na't Yî N-gǔd* [stream rock white] and *Nítz N-gǔd* [water white] which are more straightforward.

In the Southern Zapotec area there are many Spanish toponyms that come from Colonial (Valley?) Zapotec and contain the element *lo* 'face', e.g. *Lovene, Logueche, Loxicha*. However, the use of *lo* (or *ndô* in Coatec) as a fixed element of toponyms in modern SZ languages is not common, although toponyms are frequently used with this word in an utterance to indicate direction *toward* the named place. It is likely that the Spanish forms were borrowed not from the Zapotec names in isolation but from phrases in which the toponyms commonly occurred. Nevertheless there are a few instances of a reduced form of *lo* existing in SZ toponyms.

In Miahuatec the name of 'Quelové Loxicha' is *Guélbé*, where the *l* comes from 'face' in a name meaning 'rock where the sun hits', or more literally 'rock (in) the face of the sun'. This instance of *lo* is different than its occurrence in Spanish toponyms like Loxicha because of its position in the word. In 'Quelové' *lo* is not the initial element but heads a fossilized noun phrase that functions the same as common or proper nouns do in Zapotec toponyms already described, where they follow noun classifiers.

While the Spanish toponym *Loxicha* begins in *lo*, the Zapotec name of San Baltazar Loxicha lacks *lo*: Coatec *Xìzh,* Miahuatec *Xiz*. This name may be used in either language with or without the classifier 'town'. Although *lo* does not occur in the place name, the people of San Baltazar are known in Coatec as *mě lxǐzh.* This term is possibly borrowed from Spanish (or another Zapotec language) since 'face' in Coatec is actually *ndô* rather than the *l*-initial form.

## 2.3.    Toponyms without a relational noun or classifier

Toponyms which lack classifiers like 'town', 'plain', 'river', 'hill', etc. are few in number. Most single-root toponyms refer to important and oft-mentioned towns and cities, e.g. *Lǎ* 'Oaxaca'. Such places are also the most likely toponyms to have a synchronically opaque proper name. Most SZ toponyms with proper names are still used with classifiers, but the use of classifiers with these names is optional whereas a classifier is obligatory in toponyms with common nouns. This is easy to understand since if a common noun is used without a classifier, the toponymic reference is then not indicated and one is simply referring to the common noun. On the other hand, if a morpheme is only used to refer to a particular place then even if the classifier is lacking, its reference is still clear. This optionality of the classifier in toponyms with proper names was explained clearly to me by Emiliano Cruz Santiago, a Miahuatec speaker from San Bartolomé Loxicha and I suspect that this generalization also holds true in other varieties of SZ since I have collected variants with and without the classifier from different speakers of the same language, although one might wonder if these could also be dialect differences since these speakers were from different towns, as shown in (12) and (13).

(12)   Santa Cruz Xitla   *Xíd*          Coatec: SBL
                           *Yêzh Xít*     Coatec: CN
                           *Guéz Xír*     Miahuatec: SBarL


(13)   Ejutla de Crespo   *Wìzá*         Coatecas Altas
                           *Wzyá*         Coatec: SBalL, SMaC
                           *Yêzh Bzyá*    Coatec: CN


Some toponyms are very different from those shown so far in having other types of words as their initial member. A fixed toponym may even begin in a verb, as seen in (14) (from Coatec).

(14)   *Nzha'l  Nîtz   Yu'    Sántúrs*
       H-meet water  river    St.Ursula
       '(where) the waters of the Santa Úrsula river meet.'


As mentioned in the previous section, some toponyms are quirky and resemble human nicknames in their creativity, rather than following the fixed patterns of the other types of toponyms discussed in this paper (or the fixed patterns of official names for humans for that matter). In SZ languages there is a way of naming things perceived to be of little use by referring to them as the possessions of animals. For example, in Coatec a plant that gives very small tomatillo fruits the size of blueberries is known as *bíx tě mbzìn* or 'mouse's tomatillo'. Some toponyms are also possessed noun phrases, like the examples in (15) from the Miahuatec variety of San Bartolomé Loxicha. These both refer to natural springs with such a small trickle of water that they would not be of much use to humans.

(15)   *Xit Ngoóg*        Pozo de Tortola       [POS-water turtledove]
       *Xit Wiíz*         Agua de Chihuiro      [POS-water chihuiro (bird)]


## 3.     Toponyms and language contact

In this section I briefly discuss some toponymic evidence relating to the type of historical and modern contact between Zapotec and Nahuatl and Zapotec and Spanish. Borrowed Spanish toponyms are also discussed further below in §4.3.


### 3.1.     Zapotec and Nahuatl

The Aztecs had a military base in San Miguel Coatlán and were paid tribute by many other SZ towns (Espíndola, 1580). The *relaciones geográficas* (Gutiérrez, 1609) mention that a certain number of people in Miahuatlán knew how to write in Nahuatl, although Gutiérrez reports that they speak it "badly." There were Nahuatl toponyms for the regional locales and these were borrowed into Spanish with more frequency than the native Zapotec toponyms.

With the exception of Xitla, which is probably a borrowing from Nahuatl into Zapotec (Coatec *Xid* or *Xit*, Miahuatec *Xir*), most Nahuatl toponyms for this region are calques from Zapotec, including Ejutla 'beantown', Oaxaca 'among the huajes', Ozolotepec 'hill of the fierce feline', Colotepec 'scorpion (hill)', Cuixtla 'hawk hill', and Pochutla 'place of the cottonwood trees' which all have names with roughly the same meanings in both Nahuatl and SZ languages.

*Miahuatlán* at first appears to be one of the exceptional places, like Coatlán also, which has a unique Nahuatl name rather than a calque. Miahuatlán means 'among the corn spikes' in Nahuatl while the Zapotec toponym normally used means 'holy city'. However, I

propose that Miahuatlán is in fact not such an exceptional non-calque but instead a miscalque based on Nahuatl speakers' confusion over Zapotec tones. Miahuatlán is known in Coatec as *Yêzh Do'*. The form *do'* in Coatec can mean either 'holy' or 'rope', while the tonally different form *dô* means 'corn spike'. Likewise in Miahuatec these different concepts are segmentally identical but suprasegmentally different. For example, in the San Barltolomé Loxicha variety *dóo* is 'corn spike' while *do'* is 'sacred'. It is likely that some Nahuatl speaker(s) had developed enough familiarity with SZ to know that some *do* morpheme referred to corn spikes, but had not mastered the tones enough to recognize that this was not the same *do* that appears in the place name for Miahuatlán.

### 3.2.    Zapotec and Spanish

There are toponyms in Spanish for the SZ region that come from Zapotec, e.g. *Loxicha* and *Quelové*, but these were borrowed from colonial Zapotec and possibly even from a Valley Zapotec language rather than SZ. There are also toponyms that are borrowed from Spanish into SZ languages, mostly names of patron saints. However, perhaps more interesting is the coexistence of different toponyms in the two languages. Zapotec toponyms appear to be more conservative and resistant to change, while Spanish toponyms are newer, more fluid and subject to change.

Zapotec and Spanish toponyms may have different meanings and histories. The Zapotec toponym may reflect the type of ordinary, routine, or daily contact that people have with a place, whereas the Spanish name may reflect a special event or a recently coined name, the coining of which might be seen as a speech act, the deliberate attempt to bring about a change of some kind.

A notable case of Spanish and Zapotec toponyms with different etymologies revolves around a hill in San Bartolomé Loxicha. This hill is known in Zapotec as *Guíí Neéhd Thiíb* [hill road one/alone] "Lone Road Hill." It is called this because the hill has one road and this is the only road to Cozoaltepec, which historically has been the most important route to the outside world. However in Spanish this hill has a very different name, *Cerro Gachupín*. The latter word is a derogatory term usually applied to Spaniards but in this case extended to Europeans in general. According to oral history, a French couple fleeing from the Battle of Miahuatlán in the 19th century were killed one night by three drunk men who had followed them to this spot against the protests of their families and neighbors. Their bodies are said to be buried in this hill. In this case the Zapotec name reflects the traditional function of the hill, a place to pass through on the way out of town, while the Spanish name reflects a notable instance of contact with outsiders.

Sometimes people of influence or power (e.g. teachers, politicians) invent new names for already-named places. For example, in San Bartolomé Loxicha *Yó' Rétz* 'Empty River' has been renamed *Lá'tz Yúx* 'Sand Valley' and *Lá'tz Xeh'n* 'Toad Plain' has been renamed *Lée Na* 'Name of the Mother (the Virgin Mary)'. When new names are coined they are coined in both Spanish and Zapotec. While the new Zapotec names have not been adopted by most speakers, their Spanish versions have effectively replaced the old Spanish names, and the two aforementioned places are now called in Spanish *Llano Arena* 'Sand Plain' and *La Guadalupe* 'The Virgin of Guadalupe' respectively. Various sociolinguistic interpretations of these events are possible. First, it is notable that individuals wishing to change the name of a place, often to increase its status if the old name is deemed ugly, rename the places in both Spanish and Zapotec. Zapotec is healthy enough in this community that it still is most everyone's language, even if a large percentage of the population is bilingual. The adoption of new names in Spanish and the resistance to accept new Zapotec names may show that Spanish is the language of

new things, or a language which is less entrenched and more open to change for the town residents, while Zapotec is traditional, conservative, and fixed, or perceived as so with respect to toponyms. It also might be that the political players who attempt to change these names, for example school teachers, may be associated with Spanish. Indeed it is from schoolteachers that most people learn Spanish. Spanish may also be a language associated with upwardly mobile, politically-minded people, who are the same individuals who suggest name changes. One speaker reported that on a trip home he spoke Zapotec to everyone except the town authorities and his old schoolteachers. Both the authorities and the teachers are bilingual natives of the town, but "out of respect" Spanish was used.

## 4.        Etymologies of interest

I begin this section with an example of semantic opacity that is a common feature of toponyms, and proceed to discuss individual toponyms which reflect details of Southern Zapotec history.

### 4.1.        Modern reinterpretation of toponyms

Toponyms are susceptible to folk etymology as phonological changes and loss of vocabulary make the component morphemes opaque. With the passage of time the original meaning of a place name is forgotten, and changes take place to make the toponym and cognate morphemes in the language more distinct than they once were. An example of this is the Miahuatec name for the town of Cozoaltepec, *Gyé'tz*, which is similar to the Miahuatec word 'paper', *gué'tz*. Older residents of San Bartolomé Loxicha explain to the younger generation that Cozoaltepec is so named because in earlier times mail carriers used to stay overnight there. However, if we compare these similar Miahuatec words to their cognates in Coatec, *Yë'ch* 'Cozoaltepec' and *yìt* 'paper', we see that in fact the roots are quite different. A conditioned merger of Proto-Zapotec *\*tz* and *\*ty* in Miahuatec (but not in Coatec) has made these unrelated words phonologically similar.

### 4.2.        Toponymic evidence for SZ historiography

A colonial deer skin lienzo with glosses in Zapotec and Spanish was recently discovered in the Museum of Natural History at the University of Oregon. In one part of the lienzo which appears to represent Santa Catarina Cuixtla, there is a hill and a red-painted eagle on top of it. Below this there is a Spanish transcription. According to the paleography of Oudijk and Dumond (2005) this reads "Monte del Juego y del Aguila Cuixtla" ('Mount of the Game and of the Eagle Cuixtla'). In Miahuatec (here using the variety of San Bartolomé Loxicha) the name of Cuixtla is *Guí Tí. Mtí* means 'eagle'. 'Game' is *kith*. 'Mount' is *guíi* with falling tone. *Guí* with high tone means 'fire' (cf. Spanish 'fuego'). This would seem to indicate that the intended gloss is actually 'Monte del Fuego y del Aguila Cuixtla'. If this assertion is correct, while the mistake could be in the recent paleography, it is also possible that the mistake lay with the original scribe. Confusion between Spanish *j* [x] and *f* [f] among speakers of Oaxacan languages, especially earlier in the colonial period, is so common as to be a stereotypic feature of their speech.

### 4.3.        History of the Southern Zapotecs and of the *Sierra Sur*

Within the SZ region there are previously occupied sites which have since been abandoned. Toponyms may provide clues as to where archaeological exploration may be useful. Near Santa Lucía Miahuatlán there is an unoccupied hill named (in Coatec) *Yêzh Yè Mtzî* (town hill eagle). The use of *yêzh* in the toponym indicates that there was once a settlement here.

Some sites were abandoned in the forced congregations which the Spaniards orchestrated in the sixteenth century. In the Coatec region the people were concentrated in two places: San Baltazar Loxicha and San Pablo Coatlán. These two population centers have toponyms of entirely Zapotec origin, while surrounding towns, where people later went to live (sometimes returning to older sites, other times establishing new ones), have toponyms consisting entirely or partially of Spanish loans. Toponyms for the major towns of the Coatec region are given in Table 3.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| San Baltazar Loxicha | *(Yêzh) Xĭzh* | Coatec |
| San Pablo Coatlán | *Yêzh Yè Ke'* | Coatec: CN |
| | *Yíke'* | Coatec: SBalL |
| | *Yúke'* | Coatec: SMaC |
| San Vicente Coatlán | *Chĕnt* | Coatec: SBalL |
| San Francisco Coatlán | *Chi'kăn̑²* | Coatec: SBalL |
| San Miguel Coatlán | *Sámbyél* | Coatec: SBalL |
| | *Xumbyal xkò* | Miahuatec: Cuixtla |
| Santa Catarina Loxicha | *Sántlín* | Coatec: SBalL, CN |
| San Antonio Lalana | *Yêzh Láláná* | Coatec: CN |
| San Francisco Coatlán | *Yêzh Sábránsísk* | Coatec: CN |
| San Pedro Coatlán | *Yêzh Sán Pédr* | Coatec: CN |
| San Sebastián Coatlán | *Yêzh Sán Sébástyán* | Coatec: CN |
| Santa María Coatlán | *Yêzh Sántá Márí* | Coatec: CN |
| Santo Domingo Coatlán | *Yêzh Sántó Dómính* | Coatec: CN |

**Table 3: Toponyms for major Coatec towns**

The area that is today to the southeast of Coatec, and historically to the west of where Pochutec was spoken, is an area that was mostly depopulated in the sixteenth century due to smallpox and other diseases, and the Spanish congregations. It seems likely that the inhabitants of this region were speakers of Coatec, or Pochutec Nahua, and it wouldn't be surprising if this area had also included speakers of Chatino and Mixtec. An extensive and unexplored archaeological site exists in the current territory of San Bartolomé Loxicha, called *Guéguéeht* (rock-pot) in Miahuatec and Cerro de la Olla (Pot Hill) or Cerro Tepalcate (Potsherd Hill) in Spanish. Following this depopulation there was a large-scale migration of Miahuatec speakers into this zone. Today there are two quite different dialects of Miahuatec spoken here. The variety spoken in San Agustín Loxicha and in the majority of other Miahuatec-speaking towns here purportedly had an origin in San Agustín Mixtepec, in the eastern part of the Miahuatlán ex-district. Inhabitants of San Bartolomé Loxicha, who speak another variety of Miahuatec, have the tradition that theirs is a community of immigrants, and some say it was founded by people from a town, no longer in existence (at least with the same name), called Zimatlán Viralonga, and which was located closer to Miahuatlán itself, perhaps near Cuixtla, in the northwestern part of the Miahuatec area.

At least two toponyms for places in the area repopulated by Miahuatec speakers appear to be Coatec loans, an indication that Coatec was in (or nearest to) this southernmost part of the SZ region first. Santa Cruz Guajolote, a ranch near Quelové, is known as *Lá'tz Rabéed* in Miahuatec. *Guajolote* means 'turkey' and this animal is called *mber* in all varieties of Miahuatec, but *mbèt(')* in northern varieties of Coatec and *mbèd* in southern varieties. Thus it appears that this toponym was borrowed from Coatec, and from the nearest Coatec variety to the

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² Cf. *Chico*, a Spanich nickname for *Francisco.*

named place. This place is unlikely to have had fame in Miahuatec before the migration and only after arriving in the area did Miahuatec speakers borrow the place name from their new Coatec neighbors.

A larger and better known (it was even mentioned in the film *Y Tu Mamá También*) SZ polity is that of Santa María Colotepec. In Nahuatl *Colotepec* means 'scorpion hill'. Coatec and Miahuatec differ lexically by using different terms to refer to scorpions, but the toponym for Colotepec is cognate in both languages. This is shown in Table 4 for two varieties of each language.

| | Miahuatec | | Coatec | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **SBarL** | **SDM** | **CN (SMigC)** | **SBalL** |
| **'scorpion'** | *mxúb* | *bxub* | *mónè* | *mbéwnè* |
| **'Colotepec'** | *Bonè* | *Bonè* | *Yêzh Bónè* | *Béwnè* |

**Table 4: Words for 'scorpion' and 'Colotepec'**

The people of the Campo Nuevo Ranch (CN) speak a form of the same dialect spoken in San Miguel Coatlán. Santo Domingo de Morelos (SDM) speaks the same variety as San Agustín Loxicha. As mentioned above, the communities of San Bartolomé and San Agustín Loxicha purportedly have roots near Cuixtla and in San Agustín Mixtepec respectively. The location of these varieties relative to the location of Colotepec itself can be viewed in Map 1.

Because the Zapotec toponym for Colotepec is of Coatec origin, some Miahuatec speakers have folk etymologies for it, thinking that the *ne* morpheme refers to the red color of the earth in some locations around Colotepec. As can be seen in Table 4, the Miahuatec form of the toponym most closely resembles that found in the more northern SMigC variety of Coatec, even though the southern variety of Coatec is nearer to Colotepec itself as well as to some modern varieties of Miahuatec which have this borrowed toponym. The evidence suggests that the name of Colotepec, a polity important due to its size and strategic location (both in terms of trade and ancient military defense), was borrowed from Coatec prior to the Miahuatec southern migration. At that time Miahuatec had more contact with northern varieties of Coatec than with the southern variety which was spoken closer to Colotepec and most likely in Colotepec itself. Conversely, the relatively small community of Santa Cruz Guajolote would not have been worthy of mention in the distant pre-migration Miahuatec-speaking towns. Instead, this local toponym was borrowed from Coatec after the Miahuatecs arrived in the region. Accordingly, it was borrowed with the /ð/ phoneme of the southern variety of Coatec rather than the voiceless counterpart found in the northern varieties.
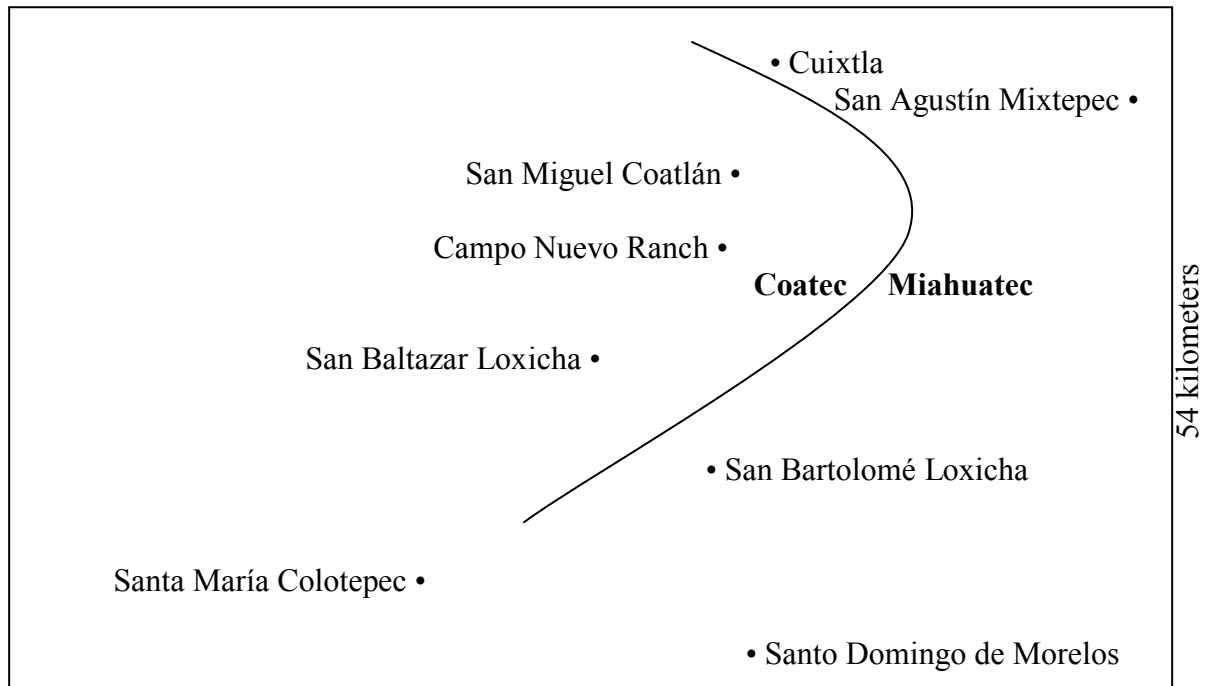
**Map 1: Relative location of Colotepec to those varieties with recorded toponyms for it**

## 5.     Summary

SZ toponyms typically consist of a classifier followed by a common or proper noun. This classifier may be optional when followed by a proper noun but is generally obligatory when followed by a common noun. The classifier used indicates the type of place being named. A relational noun, which in some instances may also have classificatory function, may be added in addition to a noun classifier, or used in its stead.

Of the common nouns used in SZ place names, most refer to animal and plant life. Any classifiers, whether prefixed or independent, normally used with the common noun when not referring to a place are generally omitted in the toponym.

SZ toponyms preserve in their forms a history of migration, and of contact between different varieties of SZ languages and between these and foreign languages like Nahuatl and Spanish. Evidence from individual toponyms points to the history of SZ migration, with the Coatecs eventually arriving all the way to the Pacific coast region at Colotepec, and later southward migrations including the sixteenth century migration of Miahuatec into the Loxichas.

Nahuatl calques of SZ toponyms reflect a familiarity with, but not complete dominance of SZ vocabulary on the part of Nahuatl speakers. The Spaniards who replaced the Nahuas as tribute collectors and administrators in this land, disrupted settlement patterns by rounding up Southern Zapotec people and concentrating them in a smaller number of locations, where they could be better controlled and proselytized to. While the Nahuas attempted to translate Zapotec toponyms into their own language, the Spaniards instead destroyed old settlements, established new ones, and put the names of their own saints on the map of the land. SZ languages borrowed the Spanish toponyms for newly established places, but retained older Zapotec place names for ancient sites. This pattern continues today to some extent,

where new names are sometimes composed in Spanish for older places, and proposed translations into Zapotec are not adopted.

This has been a study of the structure, meaning, and history of Southern Zapotec place names. Generalizations made are based on a compilation of toponyms for ca. 230 named places in several varieties of Southern Zapotec, but mostly from the Coatlán and Loxicha varieties of Coatec and the San Agustín Mixtepec, San Agustín Loxicha, and San Bartolomé Loxicha varieties of Miahuatec.

## Appendix. Catalog of Southern Zapotec Toponyms

The varieties cited are as follows:

- A. Coatecan subgroup
  - a. Amatec Zapotec
    - i. Logueche
    - ii. San Cristobal Amatlán (SCA)
  - b. Coatecas Altas Zapotec (CA)
  - c. San Vicente Coatlán Zapotec (SVC)
  - d. Coatec Zapotec
    - i. San Baltazar Loxicha (SBalL)
    - ii. Santa María Coatlán (SMaC)
    - iii. Campo Nuevo (CN)
    - iv. San Miguel Coatlán (SMigC)
- B. Miahuatecan subgroup
  - a. San Bartolo Yautepec Zapotec (SBY)
  - b. Miahuatec Zapotec
    - i. San Agustín Mixtepec (SAM)
    - ii. San Bartolomé Loxicha (SBarL)
    - iii. Santa Cruz Xitla (SCX)
    - iv. Santo Domingo de Morelos (SDM)
    - v. San Agustín Loxicha (SAL)
    - vi. Cozoaltepec
    - vii. Cuixtla
    - viii. Chilapa Loxicha (ChL)
    - ix. San Sebastián Río Hondo (SSRH)
    - x. San Marcial Ozolotepec (SMO)
- C. Cisyautepecan subgroup
  - a. San José Lachiguirrí (SJL)
  - b. Santa Catarina Quierí (SCQ)
  - c. Santa María Quiegolani (SMQ)

The Zapotec toponym is given either in practical orthography or in bracketed phonetic transcription, depending on the data source.

| Spanish toponym | Zapotec toponym | [Gloss]/Comments | Source variety |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cities and Towns** | | | |
| Oaxaca de Juárez | *Lă'* | | SAM, SBY |
| | *Lă* | (cf. *ndâ* 'guaje') | SBalL, SMaC, CN, SMigC, SJL |
| | *La* | (cf. *ndxa* 'guaje') | SBarL |
| | *Lolă, Lòlă* | | SCX, SSRH, SDM, SAL, SMO, Cozoal-tepec, Logueche, SCA |
| | *[lu la ↙]* | | SCQ |
| Ocotlán | *Làt Tzo'* | [plain (of) back] (meaning from sound change and/or folk etymology) | SMaC |
| | *[lɛȼ yoʔo]* | | SCQ |
| | *Lexso'o* | [plain (of) tomatoes] | SCA |
| Etla | *Lespeñ* | | SCA |
| Sola de Vega | *Sól* | | SAM |
| Ejutla de Crespo | *Lach* | [plain/valley] | SCA |
| | *Là'tz* | [plain/valley] | SAM |
| | *[lɛȼ]* | | SCQ |
| | *[tyàʔ] ~ [ptyáʔa]* | (cf. *tá'a* 'bean') | SAL |
| | *Wìzá* | | CA |
| | *Wzyá* | (cf. *nzâ* 'bean') | SBalL, SMaC |
| | *Yêzh Bzyá* | (cf. *nzâ* 'bean') | CN |
| Miahuatlán de Porfirio Díaz | *[yêz ðoʔ]* | [town sacred] | SDM, SAL |
| | *Yìs Dò'o* | (cf. *yès* 'town') | SAM |
| | *[stoʔo]* | | SCX |
| | *Làt yêzh do'* | [valley town sacred] | CN |
| | *Yêzh Do'* | [town sacred] | SBalL, SMaC |
| | *Yixto'o* | | SCA |
| | *Xbí* | | SMaC (according to SBalL speaker) |
| | *Guézdò'* | | SBarL |
| Pochutla | *Yaxe'n* | [tree-(of)toad] (tone change). Toads abounded in puddles under pochotle trees. | SAM, SBarL, SDM, SAL |
| San Juan Ozolotepec | *Sanjwán Ndárès* | | SAM |
| | *San Juan Yirezh* | | SCA |
| Roatina | *q-Rozin* | | SCA |
| San José del Pacífico | *San Jose Yezh Kub* | [San José pueblo nuevo] | SCA |
| San Juan Mixtepec | *San Juan Yibe'e* | (cf. *mbe'e* 'moon') | SCA |
| San Pedro Mixtepec | *San Per Yibe'e* | | SCA |
| San Pedro Guixe | *San Per Yix* | [San Pedro grass] | SCA |
| San Luis Amatlán | *Yidil* | [hill (of) fighting] | SCA |
| Monjas | *[mŏx]* | | SCX |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Santo Tomás Tamazulapan | *Yêzh Yè Do'ch* | [town hill (palo.de.) pipa] (cf. 'palo de pipa' *yà do'ch*) | CN |
| | *Tamasulaáp* | | SAM, SBarL |
| | *Xyè* | [market] | SBalL, CN, SMigC |
| Santa Cruz Xitla | *Xíd* | Xitla | SBalL |
| | *Yêzh Xít* | [town Xitla] | CN |
| | *Guéz Xír* | [town Xitla] | SBarL |
| Santa Catarina Cuixtla | *[tí]* | | SCX |
| | *Guítí* | [fire-(of)eagle] | SBarL |
| | *Yè Tzî* | [hill (of) hawk] | CN |
| | *Yítzî* | [X hawk] (X could be either 'rock' or 'fire', since lexical tone is lost in this position) | SMaC, SBalL |
| San Bernardo | *[ryɛʔ]* | (near Xitla) | SCX |
| San Miguel Yogovana | *Yêzh Ye' Bàn* | [town palo.de.santo] (cf. 'palo de santo' *yà ye' bàn*) | CN |
| Santa María Colotepec | *Béwnè* | cf. SBalL *mbéwnè* & Nahuatl *colotl* 'scorpion' | SBalL |
| | *Yêzh Bónè* | [town (of) scorpion] (cf. *mónè* 'scorpion') | CN |
| | *Bonée* | | SBarL |
| | *Bonè* | | SDM, SAL |
| | *Gone* | | Cuixtla |
| San Vicente Coatlán | *Chĕnt* | | SBalL |
| | *Làt Xezh* | [plain POS-town(?)] | SVC |
| San Francisco Coatlán | *Chi'kăn* | | SBalL |
| San Miguel Coatlán | *Sámbyél* | | SBalL |
| | *Xumbyal Xkò* | | Cuixtla |
| San Francisco Coatlán | *Yêzh Sábránsísk* | | CN |
| San Pedro Coatlán | *Yêzh Sán Pédr* | | CN |
| San Sebastián Coatlán | *Yêzh Sán Sébástyán* | | CN |
| Santa María Coatlán | *Yêzh Sántá Márí* | | CN |
| Santo Domingo Coatlán | *Yêzh Sántó Dómính* | | CN |
| San Pablo Coatlán | *Yêzh Yè Ke'* | [town hill Coatlán] (*ke'* is now opaque but comes from 'lord(s)', cf. colonial name *Quiegoqui*) | CN |
| | *Yíke'* | [rock Coatlán] | SBalL |
| | *Yúke'* | [land Coatlán] | SMaC |
| Cozoaltepec | *Yë'ch* | | SBalL |
| | *Gyé'tz* | | SBarL |
| | *[yɛʔɛs]* | | SDM, SAL |
| San Bartolo Yautepec | *[dǎn nzŏb yâʔas]* | [hill (of) corn black] | SBY |
| Quiegolani | *[yà lăn]* | | SBY |
| Asunción Tlacolulita | *[yùːč]* | | SBY |
| | *Yṣ̌ù'n* | | SMQ |
| Tehuantepec | *Yzè'ë* | | SMQ |
| Quioquitani | *Yrè'e* | | SMQ |
| Quiechapa | *Ktzyăp* | | SMQ |

# Southern Zapotec Toponyms

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tonameca | *Guézbéhn* | [town-X] (cf. guthbéhn 'murderer') | SBarL |
| Santa Catarina Loxicha | *Sántlín* | | SBalL, CN |
| | *Santlín* | | SBarL |
| San Antonio Lalana | *Yêzh Láláná* | | CN |
| San Baltazar Loxicha | *Yêzh Xǐzh* | (cf. *bxi'zh* 'pineapple' and *mxi'zh* 'coati') | SBalL |
| | *Lxǐzh* | | SMaC |
| | *Xiz* | (cf. *mpxi'z* 'coati' and *bxí'z* 'pineapple') | SBarL |
| San Francisco Loxicha | *[yû wa]* | | SDM |
| | *Yúgóol* | [land-X] (cf. *ngóol* 'buzzard' and *yáa góol* 'caoba') | SBarL |
| San Bartolomé Loxicha | *Guéz Xíil* | [town otate] | SBarL |
| | *[yí šil]* | | SDM |
| | *Yè Xìl* | [hill reed (otate?)] | SBalL |
| Santo Domingo de More-los | *Kañad* | | SBarL |
| | *[yɪs ⌄ kanyɛl ⌐] ~ [kanyǎt]* | | SDM |
| Chilapa Loxicha | *[yoʔ lazláʔ]* | | ChL |
| | *Yó' La'zlaá* | | SBarL |
| Buenavista Loxicha | *Ye Rò* | | SDM |
| Magdalena Loxicha | *[madalén]* | | SDM |
| | *Madalen* | | SBarL |
| Quelové Loxicha | *[keloβě']* | | ChL, SAL |
| | *Guelbé* | [rock-face-heat.of.sun] | SBarL |
| San Agustín Loxicha | *Xǐtz* | | SBalL, SDM |
| | *(xítz)* | (ethnonym, not toponym) | SBarL |
| | *Guézga'p* | [town-high] | SBarL |
| | *[yɪz ⌄ sap ⌐]* | | SDM |
| | *Yêzh Lósích* | | CN |
| ***Agencias* & Ranches** | | | |
| El Aguacate | *[lawakát]* | | SAL |
| | *[ɣʷuð yɪš]* | [round.object avocado] | ChL |
| San Vicente Yogondoy | *[yoʔ ndǒy]* | [river cocoa] | ChL |
| | *[yiβĭʔ]* | | SAL |
| | *Guíibi* | [rain/hill-resonance] | SBarL |
| Rancho Estinilla | *La'tzni'* | [valley-guineo.banana(?)] (tone change) Lots of guineo grows there. | SBarL |
| La Reforma | *Lá Be'* | | SBalL |
| Rancho Locote | *Lách Gô* | [X tuber] (X could be 'valley' loan from Miahua-tec) | SBalL |
| Rancho Campo Nuevo | *Làt Byôl* | [valley pitiona] | CN |
| Latixute | *Làt Chu't* | | SBalL |
| Rancho Arroyo Ciego | *Na't Wlè* | [creek blind] | CN |
| Rancho Arroyo Mangal | *Na't Yà Mánh* | [creek tree mango] | CN |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rancho Pobreza | *Ránch Póbrés* | | CN |
| Rancho el Macahuite | *Yêzh Bë' Yíl Yìt* | | SBalL |
| Rancho Tres Cruces | *Yo' Chŏn Krús* | | CN |
| Rancho San Juan | *Yo' Sánh Jwánh* | | CN |
| Latihueche | *Xwe'z* | | SBalL |
| La Sirena | *Yó' Lá'tz Laá* | [river-valley-X] | SBarL |
| Rancho Las Cuevas | *[la's kwép]* | [valley cave] | SDM |
| Rancho Piedra Negra | *[la's ke narat]* | [valley rock black] | SDM |
| Rancho La Sierra | *Yè Ndyǒ* | [hill X] | CN |
| El Zapote | *Yêzh Ndâw* | [town zapote] | CN |
| La Tehuache | *Yó'gueh'lzehn* | [river-water.hole-smooth.fish] (cf. "smooth fish" *mbéhl dzehn*) A water hole on this ranch is called *gueh'lzehn*. | SBarL |
| Rancho Altemira | *Yè Kwǎ* | [hill dark] | CN |
| **Cerros** | | | |
| Cerro Remolino | *Yè Bdòn* | [hill twister] (m > Ø) | SBalL |
| Cerro Rayo | *Yè tě Ngwzi'* | [hill POS Lightning] | CN |
| Cerro Javalín | *Yè Bèw* | [hill peccary] (m > Ø) | SBalL |
| Cerro Gusano | *Guébéey* | [rock-worm] (m > Ø) | SBarL |
| Cerro Iguana | *Guéwáach* | [rock-iguana] | SBarL |
| Cerro Tejón | *Yèlxi'zh* | [hill *lo- (cara) coatimundi] (cf. *mxi'zh* 'coatimundi') | SBalL |
| Cerro Leon | *Yè Nké Bi'zh* | [hill H-VERB puma] (cf. *mbi'zh* 'puma') | SBalL |
| | *Yè Nkè̀ Mbi'zh* | | CN |
| Cerro Gavilán | *Yêzh Yè Mtzî* | Near Sta. Lucía Miahuatlán. Could this be the original site of Cuixtla? | CN |
| Cerro Venado | *Yè Mbzhín* | [hill deer] | SBalL |
| Cerro Flores | *Do' Yè Yi'* | [top hill flower] | SBalL |
| | *Yè Ye'* | [hill flower] | SMigC |
| | *[yi ye^ʲe]* | | SCX |
| Cerro Cuapinole | *Làt Chi'l* | | CN |
| Cerro Pityona | *(Yè) Ndô Byôn* | | SBalL |
| Cerro Guayabal | *Guíiyáandzuúy* | [hill-tree-guava] | SBarL |
| Cerro Otate | *Yè Xìl* | [hill otate] | CN |
| Cerro Nopal | *Yè Yòj* | [hill cactus] | CN |
| Cerro Camote | *Yè Gô* | [hill tuber] | SBalL |
| Cerro Mazorca | *Guéníd* | [rock-corn.kernel? (tone change)] | SBarL |
| Cerro Coquito | *Guéndzál* | [rock-X] | SBarL |
| Cerro Pelado | *Guíxbdxuúb* | [grass-bare] | SBarL |
| Cerro Escalero | *Yè Bzóy* | | CN |
| Cerro Estribo | *Yè Dǔn* | | SBalL |
| | *Yèltyib́* | cf. *lityi'b* 'jail' | SBalL |
| | *Yè Stríb* | | SBalL |
| Cerro de Hamaca | *Guéxxnáax* | [net-POS?-prone] | SBarL |

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| Cerro Iglesia | *Guébdó'* | [rock-AN-sacred (church-shaped stone where pumas roared) | SBarL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cerro Tepalcate | *Guéguéeht* | [rock-pot? (tone & vowel change)] This hillside is littered with pottery shards and labored stones. | SBarL |
| Cerro Tizón | *Guíindobo* | [hill-H-COP burnt.wood] (cf. *yâ bò* 'burnt wood') | SBarL |
| Cerro Gachupín | *Guíi Neéhdthiíb* | [hill road-alone] | SBarL |
| Cerro Blanquillo | *Guéngó* | Note that here *ngo* has a tone more similar to 'egg' in SBalL than in SBarL. | SBarL |
| Cerro Troja, Piedra Troja | *Guíilo* | [hill-silo] | SBarL |
| | *Guélo* | [rock-silo] | SBarL |
| Cerro Peñasco | *Guéña'tz* | [rock-X] | SBarL |
| Cerro Tizne | *Yè Ndăn* | | SBalL |
| Cerro Mordoña | *Yè Ngùtz Kwi'* | | CN |
| Cerro Horcón | *Yè Ntzô* | | SBalL |
| Cerro Escopeta | *Yè Skópét* | | SBalL |
| Cerro Grito | *Yè Tĕzh* | | SBalL |
| Cerro de Huesos | *Yè Tìth* | (mentioned in colonial *Relaciones*) | CN |
| Cerro Sabroso | *Yè Wĭx* | (cf. *nwĭx* 'craving') Said to be enchanted on the nights of 24-25 December. | SBalL |
| Cerro Hacha | *Yè Yi'b Yà* | [hill cord tree] | SBalL |
| Cerro Grande | *yè zi'l* | | CN |
| Cerro Betecá | *Yèbétkâ* | *betecá* and *betecó* could easily be Zapotec words, but note also Spanish *bético* 'Andalusian' & *Bética* 'Andalusia' | SBalL |
| Cerro Betecó | *Yèbko'* | Not same as *Yèbétkâ* | SBalL |
| | *Yètko'* | | SBalL |
| Bocapiedra | *Yè Ndô Ngwzàn* | [hill face {1. in-law, 2. river spirit}] | SBalL |
| Cerro Horno | *Róòr* | [mouth-oven] | SBarL |
| Cerro Horcón | *Yèk Yèn Tzô* | [head neck forked.stick] (cf. *yà tzô* 'forked stick') | SBalL |
| **Rocks** | | | |
| Piedra de Juego | *Yî Bzhi'l* | There are three holes where people throw stones to divine life expectancy. | SBalL |
| Piedra Oaxaca | *Yî Lăg* | | SBalL |
| Que Cuanaje | *Xti' Guébzín* | [plateau-rock-deer] (cf. *mzín* 'deer') Old roasting pit for deer. | SBarL |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Piedra León | *Yî Lìd Mbi'zh* | [rock house puma] Near Cuixtla | SBalL |
| Casa de Piedra de Zopilote | *Yî Lìd Ngòl* | Cliffs with buzzards | SBalL |
| Piedra Rayo | *Yî Lìd Ngwzi'* | Near SMaC | SBalL |
| Piedras Finas | *Yî Ndíb Yêtz* | Near Sta. Marta Lox. | SBalL |
| Piedras Negras | *Yî N-gătz* | Near "el Ocote" | SBalL |
| Piedra Gallina | *Yî Ngízàn* | [rock chicken(*ngĭd*)-female.with.offspring] | SBalL |
| Piedra Olavo | *Yî Ngwlàb* | In the Paso Macahuite between SBarL and SBalL | SBalL |
| Piedra Golave | *Guéwla'b* | cf. *nglà'b* 'golave' (In SBalL they say "olavo" & in SBarL "golave" | SBarL |
| Piedra Caca de Lucero | *yí xkê mbêl* | [rock POS-shit AN-star] (this term also refers to a shiny type of rock) A ranch between SBalL and SBarL. | SBalL |
| Boquerón | *Guébxod* | [rock-b-branch (tone change) A large rock with extensions. | SBarL |
| Piedra de Muina | *Guéxán* | [rock-*muina*] Steep and difficult to pass (causing *muina*). | SBarL |
| Piedra (de la) Virgen | *Guéxnáx* | [rock-virgin] It is believed that the virgin turned to stone here at the end of the world. | SBarL |
| Piedra Eco | *Guétedx* | [rock-resonance] | SBarL |
| Piedra de Guajolote | *Guébéer* | [rock-turkey (m > Ø)] There used to be pheasants (mbêr wàb) | SBarL |
| Piedra Tlacuache | *Guénzed* | [rock-possum] Near Rancho Tepehuaje, where the possum stacked stones at the end of the world. | SBarL |
| Peña Colorada | *Guébneé* | [rock-X-red (tone change)] | SBarL |
| Piedra Cacalote | *Guébyáak* | [rock-raven (m>Ø] | SBarL |
| Piedra Gorgojo | *Guébéhd* | [rock-weevil (m>Ø)] | SBarL |
| Piedra Zopilote | *Guégóol* | [rock-buzzard (n>Ø)] | SBarL |
| Piedra Blanca | *Guégéht* | [rock-white.fragile.rock] | SBarL |
| Piedra Cantor | *Guékantor* | In a cave on Cerro Cantor. Said to be petrified musicians from the end of the world, still heard performing on Christmas. | SBarL |
| Piedra Cuache | *Guékwaách* | [rock-twin] (there are two) | SBarL |

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| Piedra Varaña | *Guélíizngíich* | [rock-house arthro-pod.species(looks like kin-dling)] | SBarL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Piedra Panal | *Guébkwé'tz* | [rock-hive (m > Ø)] | SBarL |
| Piedra Gallina | *Guélo'bngid* | [rock-sweep-chicken] There were many fowl and the elders said the smoothness of the rock was from them sweeping. | SBarL |
| Piedra de Tizne | *Guéndxan* | [rock-soot] | SBarL |
| Piedra Ventana | *kyè bentăn* | [rock window] Ruins near San Juan Mixtepec | SAM |
| **Plains and valleys** | | | |
| Llano Hombre | *Lá'tzbgui'* | [plain-male] | SBarL |
| Llano Viga | *Lá'tzbig* | [plain-beam] | SBarL |
| Llano Langosta | *Lá'tzdo* | (cf. 'locust' *mbe'zdo*) In a 19th century plague the people drove the locusts here with smoke and cov-ered them with dirt. | SBarL |
| Llano Maguey | *Lá'tzdób* | [plain-agave] | SBarL |
| Llano Oscuro | *Lá'tzgueh'l* | [plain-waterhole] | SBarL |
| Llano de Sal | *Lá'tz Gueh'ldéed* | [plain waterhole-salt] | SBarL |
| Llano Ocote | *Lá'tzgye'r* | [plain-pine] | SBarL |
| Llano Alegría | *Lá'tznabéz* | [plain-S-X] | SBarL |
| Llano Algodón | *Lá'tzxi'l* | [plain-cotton (tone change)] | SBarL |
| Llano Bailador | *Lá'tzwi'l* | [plain-PART-play.music] There were sounds of peo-ple playing and dancing. | SBarL |
| Llano Arena | *Lá'tzyúx* | [plain-sand] a new name given by a teacher who formed a school here, in the place also still called *Yó'rétz*. The new name is used more in Spanish than in Zapotec. | SBarL |
| Arroyo Seco | *Yó'rétz* | [river-empty] | SBarL |
| Llano Horcón | *Lá'tzyáató* | [plain-tree-forked] | SBarL |
| Llano Sapo | *Lá'tzxeh'n* | [plain-toad] Also known by a newer name: "La Guada-lupe" or in Zapotec *lê nà* [name mother] | SBarL |
| La Guadalupe (1. the place also known as Llano Sapo; 2. a pharmacy by the same name) | *Léena* | [name-mother] | SBarL |
| Llano Tlachicón | *Lá'tzyáaldxiídx* | [plain-tree-Curatella.americana] | SBarL |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Llano Xonene | *Lá'tzyáaxé* | [plain-tree-glericidia.sepium(?)] | SBarL |
| Llano Cuachepil | *Lá'tzyáabít* | [plain-tree-(cua)chepil] | SBarL |
| Llano Palmiche | *Lá'tzyáaguín* | [plain-tree-palm] | SBarL |
| Llano Malvarisco | *Lá'tzyáaláathnéhd* | [plain-tree-between-road] (cf. *wan yáaláathnéhd* 'malvarisco') | SBarL |
| Llano Maluque | *Là'tzyáambluk* | [plain-tree-maluque] | SBarL |
| Llano Galán | *Lá'tzyáaláan* | [plain-tree-smooth] Though "galán," appears of Spanish origin, it is actually derived from older Zapotec *yaga* 'tree' and *láan* 'smooth'. | SBarL |
| Llano Tololote | *Lá'tzyáagá'y* | [plain-tree-tololote] | SBarL |
| Llano Bigogue | *Lá'tzyáagoóg* | [plain-tree-bigogue] | SBarL |
| Llano de Cera | *Lá'tznguin* | [plain-black.wax] | SBarL |
| Llano Santa Ursula | *Làt Sántúrrs* | [plain St.Ursula] | SBalL |
| Llano Aguacate, Arroyo Aguacate, El Aguacate | *Làt Ta' Nîx* | [plain X avocado] | SBalL |
| Llano Grande | *Làt Yǒ* | | CN |
| Llano Grande | *Lá'tznaróo* | [plain-S-big] | SBarL |
| Llano Gordoníz | *Tô Lát Bích* | [mouth plain quail (m>Ø)] | SBalL |
| **Rivers and streams** | | | |
| Arroyo Anda Vista | *Na't Ándábíst* | | CN |
| Arroyo Podrido, Río Podrido | *Na't Nzhò Gu'd* | [creek H-exist rot] (on the edge of SBalL) | SBalL |
| Arroyo Mosquito | *Na't Yî Bî* | same as *ya't nzhò gu'd*, but the part at the foot of Cerro Mosquito | SBalL |
| Arroyo Yerba Santa | *Na'táwâ* | by Cerro Sabroso | SBalL |
| | *Btéeyáawá* | [creek-tree-piper] | SBarL |
| Arroyo Carrizo | *Na't Yà Lòd* | [creek tree reed] (on the SBalL border with S. Fco. Coatlán) | SBalL |
| Arroyo Mango | *Na't Yà Mǎnh* | [creek tree mango] (towards Sta. Marta on the highway) | SBalL |
| Arroyo Magueyito | *Na't Yà Wèd* | [creek tree yucca.elephantipes] | SBalL |
| Arroyo Jícara | *Na't Yà Xì* | [creek tree gourd] | SBalL |
| Arroyo Mamey | *Na't Yà Yěl* | [creek tree mamey] | SBalL |
| Arroyo Macahuite | *Na't Yà Yìt* | in SMaC | SMaC |
| Arroyo (Palo) Cinco | *Na't Yàga'y* | [creek tree-five] on the way to San Antonio Lalana | SBalL |
| Arroyo Mulato | *Na't Yèlbě* | [creek copal (mulato)] on edge of SBalL | SBalL |
| Arroyo Cacho | *Na't Yíbílwăz* | [creek rock?-X-horn] | SBalL |
| Arroyo Piedra | *Na't Yílìdíy* | [creek rock?-house rock] | SBalL |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Arroyo Flor del Niño | *Na't Yi' Mbĕz* | [creek flower child] on road to Sta. Marta | SBalL |
| Arroyo Agua Blanca | *Na't Yî N-gŭd* | [creek rock white] | SBalL |
| Arroyo Río Guacamaya | *Na't Yílbèw* | [creek-rock?-face?- guacamaya(m > Ø)] | SBalL |
| Arroyo Tecolute | *Na't Yu' Nzhò Mko'* | [creek river H-exist ANC-screech.owl] | SBalL |
| la juntura del río Sta. Ursula | *Nzha'l Nîtz Yu' Sántúrrs* | [H-join water river Sta.Ursula] | SBalL |
| Arroyo Cuapinol | *Btéeyáayóog* | [creek-tree-hymenaea.courbaril] | SBarL |
| la orilla del Arroyo Egarechal | *Tôàtìzh* | [mouth-tree(y > Ø)-oak?] | SBalL |
| Río Platanar | *Yó'bdo* | [river-banana] | SBarL |
| Río Grande | *Yó'be'y* | [river-NEG.know] The largest local river, which forms the border bet. SBarL & SCL | SBarL |
| Arroyo Perro de Agua | *Yó'bkit* | [river-river.otter] (cf. 'river otter' *mkit guehl*) | SBarL |
| Arroyo Sanguijuela | *Yó'blátz* | [river-leech(m > Ø)] | SBarL |
| Arroyo Guarumbo | *Yó'dón* | [river-cecropia]  (cf. 'cecropia' *yáa dón*) | SBarL |
| Arroyo Oscuro | *Yó'ków* | [river-dark] | SBarL |
| Arroyo Cruz | *Yó'krúuz* | Two rivers cross here | SBarL |
| Río Platanillo | *Yó'láa Béehz* | [river-leaf-platanillo] | SBarL |
| Arroyo Bendito | *Yó'léey* | [river-prayer] | SBarL |
| Arroyo Troja | *Yó'lo* | [river-silo] source is under Cerro Troja | SBarL |
| Manantial del Pueblo | *Yó' Loóbdzya'n* | [river face- water.being] | SBarL |
| Arroyo Comezón | *Yó'loóbxoól* | [river-face-itch] ('itch' nxol) | SBarL |
| Río que pasa sobre una piedra | *Yó'loógué* | [river-face-rock] Aka *Yó'xí'z* 'Río Piña' | SBarL |
| Río Piña | *Yó'xí'z* | [river-pineapple (b > Ø)] | SBarL |
| Río Tejón | *Yó'mxi'z* | [river-coati] When the name of *Yó'loógué* was changed to *Yó'xi'z*, this nickname began in jest, but it has gained favor. | SBarL |
| Arroyo Bejuco | *Yó'lúutz* | [river-vine (tone)] | SBarL |
| El Afilador | *Yó'ndyúubmdxehd* | [river-(where)H-sharpen-machete] | SBarL |
| Arroyo Huanacaxtle | *Yó'ngíd* | [river-río-huanacaxtle (cf. 'huanacaxtle' *yáa ngíd*) | SBarL |
| Yongina | *Yó'ngin* | [river-black.wax] | SBarL |
| Lachinilla | *Yúní* | [river-guineo?] | SBarL |
| Río Cozoaltepec | *Yó'nitgyeh'tz* | [river-water-Cozoaltepec] | SBarL |
| Arroyo Tigre | *Yó'nzómbe'z* | [river-H-exist-ACL-jaguar] | SBarL |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Arroyo de Piedra | *Yó'rógué* | [river-mouth-rock] There's a waterfall. | SBarL |
| Arroyo de Perro Macho | *Yó' Rólíizmbakwde* | [river mouth-house-dog-male] A well here is a water source for mating dogs. | SBarL |
| Arroyo Tejón | *Yó'xí'z* | [river-coati (m > Ø)] | SBarL |
| Arroyo Corozal | *Yó' Yáaga'* | [river tree-coquito] (cf. *yáa gáa gó*) | SBarL |
| Arroyo Mamey | *Yó'yáaguehl* | [river-tree-mamey] | SBarL |
| Arroyo de Tejuilote | *Yó'yáaneéhl* | | SBarL |
| Río Cuilapan | *Yó'yáabtyá* | [river-cuil] | SBarL |
| Río Yogondoy | *[yo' ndŏy]* | | SAL |
| Arroyo Ladrón | *Yó'lnxó'* | [river-face-H-bark] The Spanish name doesn't mean 'thief' but 'big barker' | SBarL |
| **Lakes, wells, and water holes** | | | |
| Pozo de Tortola | *Xitngoóg* | [POS-water-turtledove] Not much water (fit for a bird) | SBarL |
| Agua de Chihuiro | *Xitwiíz* | [POS-water-chihuiro] A small well (fit for a chihuiro bird) | SBarL |
| Laguna del Encanto | *lagŭn là'tz yéer dò'o* | [lake plain hole holy] | SAM |
| Hondura Oscura | *Yèl Kwă* | [water.hole dark] Once deep, this site of local legends has been mostly filled in by Hurricaine Paulina | SBalL |
| Hondura de Aire | *Gueh'lbíi* | [water.hole-wind (m > Ø)] Legend tells that a rich man threw all his money here in sewn-up calfskin. | SBarL |
| Hondura de Olla | *Gueh'lgueht* | [water.hole-pot(tone)] | SBarL |
| Hondura Reseco | *Gueh'lkwi'z* | [water.hole-dry] | SBarL |
| Hondura del Lagarto | *Gueh'lmbến* | [water.hole-cayman] | SBarL |
| Hondura del Guajolote | *Gueh'lmbéehr* | [water.hole-turkey] | SBarL |
| Hondura de Palo Floreado | *Gueh'l Nda'byáagye'* | [water.hole H-hang-tree-flower] | SBarL |
| Hondura de Cueva | *Gueh'l Róguélyo'* | [water.hole mouth-rock-cave] | SBarL |
| Hondura Cantador, El Cantador | *Gueh'lndxo'l* | [water.hole-H-sing] Before Hurricaine Paulina a stone made sound with the water. | SBarL |
| Hondura de la Union de Los Ríos | *Gueh'l Ndzeh'lníit* | [water.hole H-join-wet] | SBarL |
| Agua del Rayo | *Bít tĕ Yèl* | [pimple POS water.hole] A well in large rocks on the boundary between SMigC and SCL | SBalL |

# Southern Zapotec Toponyms

| **Roads** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *kámín sánh jwánh* | [road San Juan] | CN |
| La crucera, El manzanar | *làt tĕ zi'n* | [plain POS X] | CN |
| camino para el rancho "Confradía" | *nêz nzyá xàn yè* | [road H-go base hill] | SBalL |
| el camino que se va para Santa Marta | *nêz nzyèn nzyá pár santa mărt* | | SBalL |
| la entrada del camino que va para Cerro Sabroso | *nêz nzyèn nzyá pár yè wĭx* | | SBalL |
| (the same road as previous 2) | *nzô kè yí zo'* | | SBalL |
| **Regions** | | | |
| el Valle de Oaxaca | *nêz làt* | [road valley] | SBalL |
| la Sierra (Sur) | *yà do'* | [tree holy] | SBalL |
| la Costa (del Pacífico) | *pár lâ* | [towards down] | SBalL |
| **Other named places** | | | |
| el Paraiso | *nítz bêth* | [water epazote] a brick workshop | SBalL |
| Los Cuatro Cerros | *dâp yè* | [four hill] in SMigC | CN |
| Bix Wane | *Làbcho'n* | [plain C-three] | SBalL |
| La Ubicación San Juan | *gòx sánh jwánh* | | CN |
| Agua Blanca | *nítz n-gŭd* | [water white] | SBalL |
| | *tzo' yĭch* | [back thorn/grindstone] | SBalL |
| Paso Macahuite, Paso Ancho, Río Grande | *pás áyìt* | | SBalL |
| | *pás zi'l* | [pass big] | SBalL |
| Chucupaxtle | *xàn yè bla'zh* | [under hill chuchupaxtle (cf. *mbla'zh*] | SBalL |
| Tierra Blanca | *yìt yă* | [paper burnt.bone.color] | SBalL |
| Rio Grande | *yo' zi'l* | [river big] | CN |
| Pueblo Viejo | *Guéhzgox* | [town old] Near Cozoaltepec. | SBarL |
| Piedras Negras | *Lá'tzguénagát* | [plain-rock-S-black] | SBarL |
| Santa Cruz Guajolote | *Lá'tzrabéed* | [plain-X] 2 possible etymologies: (1) similar to *da béed* 'woven reed sack' (2) *béed* is a borrowing from Coatec 'turkey'. | SBarL |

| ? | *Xtí'guíbí* | [opening-fire-resonance] Around 3-4am there is a noise made here by *dzith ruúnh*, believed to be flying bones (*dzith*), which made a *ruúnh* sound. Touching them leads to paralysis. | SBarL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Iglesia Vieja | *Yódo'gox* | [house-holy-old] Founding site of SBarL (in ruins) 6km to the west. | SBarL |
| Piedra Ancha | *Yó'guétháa* | [river-rock-X] | SBarL |
| Tierra Colorada | *Yúbneé* | [earth-X-red(nanée)] | SBarL |

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