



“there is no there there”: Space deictics, verb tense, and nostalgia at a family literacy class

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ABSTRACT

Drawing from a yearlong ethnographic study, this paper examines spatial deictics and verb tense use in conversation and instructional activities in a family literacy class at a Bay Area Public Library. More specifically, we employ discourse analytic tools to document how spatiotemporal coordinates are never solely product of cognitive calculation but always also entangled with emotions. In addition to enacting their referentiality with respect to places and moments in time, spatial and temporal indexical terms served to position participants within a discursive paradigm of migration, a chronotope imbued by nostalgia. We discuss how such discursive positioning constructs students' identities as diasporic, their being in the here-and-now predicated on their being from elsewhere, and their being here-and-there simultaneous and coextensive.

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1. Introduction

This paper examines the ways in which spatial and temporal deictics and verb tense are deployed in discourse to delineate traces of removed locations, while simultaneously anchoring speakers and hearers in the here-and-now. Drawing from a yearlong ethnographic study of a family literacy class at a Bay Area Public Library, we document in particular how *here* and *there* and the juxtaposition of present and past verb tenses are mobilized to position the learners within a discursive paradigm of migration, imbued by nostalgia. Against the backdrop of an increasingly anti-immigrant climate, our study contributes insights into processes of integration as well as exclusion within educational contexts. In addition to enacting their referentiality with respect to places and moments in time, we show how spatial and temporal indexical terms serve as resources for social positioning, calling into being certain subjectivities and delineating certain existential trajectories. We identify the liminal space between *here* and *there* as prominent locus within which family literacy class participants – the students as well as the instructor – situate themselves and are positioned by others. In doing so we show how, paradoxically, the urge to build commonality via a shared sense of nostalgia for places far away actually

obfuscates meaningful differences among the class participants, leading to missed opportunities for learning and connection predicated on diversity.

Our qualitative analysis of talk-in-interaction reveals that within the students' and the instructor's utterances, spatial and temporal deixis presents multiple levels of indexical order (Silverstein, 2003). Specifically, a spatial location or point in time is highly saturated with cultural features and psychoemotional connotations. The linguistic anthropological insight that “the context which provides for the understanding of a deictic is a socio-cultural one, not a purely natural one” (Hanks, 1996, p. 241), is further complicated by the dynamic delineation of the spatial and temporal reference, which emerges as at times vague and ephemeral, at times clearly demarcated. As such, space and time deixis constitutes a rich focus for shedding light on processes of place-making, belonging, estrangement, memory, identity and difference in the immigration experience and the diasporic condition.

Before providing illustrations from our study with our own data, we draw from Gertrude Stein's writing for a literary example. In her memoir *Everybody's Autobiography*, we find Stein's famous remark on Oakland, “there is no there there” (Stein, 1937/1993, p. 298). Relying on the polysemy and experiential saturation of the space deictic, the sentence refers to an experience of absence and nostalgia. The “no there there” eschews the paradox in that the referential content of the first and second space deictic is different: the first “there” is a personal place of childhood memories, while the second is a spatial location in the here-and-now. Stein has returned to Oakland on a lecture tour and could not find her childhood home,

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pastures, cows, or swimming holes amidst the rapid urban development. Thus, though (then) there was a *there* there, (now) there is no *there* there. As such, the phrase evokes imaginations of place, inextricably intertwined with the passing of time, loss, and wistfulness. We borrow this quote, with its nostalgic implications, to describe how places are lost not only because of the vicissitudes of time, but also because they are imagined in the first place.

2. Literature review

2.1. Spatial and temporal deixis

An overview of the notion of deixis provides grounding for our analysis of spatial and temporal deictics and their role in positioning family literacy students in liminal spaces and fostering a sense of nostalgia among them. The first comprehensive treatment of deixis traces back to psychologist and linguist Karl Bühler (1934/1990), whose linguistic theory distinguished two basic types of signs: deictics (or 'pointing words') and symbols (or 'naming words'). Deictic words and naming words are theorized as two distinct word classes connected to separate fields—the "deictic field" ("das Zeigfeld"), i.e. the physical or verbal context in which the speech is produced, and the "symbolic field" ("das Symbolfeld"), i.e. the syntactic and semantic environment of the linguistic expression. Thus, deixis "refers to a particular way in which the interpretation of certain linguistic expressions ('deictics' or 'indexicals') is dependent on the context in which they are produced or interpreted" (Levinson, 1994, p. 853). Different types of deixis are distinguished, notably (a) personal deixis, consisting of pronouns such as *I* and *you*, (b) space deixis, including adverbs such as *here* and *there*, and (c) time deixis, including adverbs, such as *now* and *then*, and verb tenses.

Theorization and empirical research in linguistic anthropology have shed light on the complexity of referential processes in deixis (e.g. Manning, 2001; Ochs, 1996; Silverstein, 1976, 2003). At the theoretical level, scholars such as Silverstein (1976), Silverstein (2003) and Ochs (1996) have posited the pervasiveness of contextual dependency in speech. More specifically, Silverstein has argued that linguistic expressions not only carry denotative meaning but also indexical meaning, which emerges from interactionally established associations between the expression and social roles, identities, relationships. Ochs has made the case that acquiring communicative competence means precisely attaining an understanding, in reception and production, of the indexical associations that link linguistic forms to features of the situation, including the nature of the ongoing activity, the identity of those involved, role-related expectations for stances, and behaviors (Ochs, 1996).

On the basis of empirical work on the Yucatec Maya deictic system, Hanks has further unearthed the complexity and ephemerality of the relationship between linguistic forms and context (Hanks, 1990). Hanks has shown that deixis exceeds the demarcation of a specific temporal or spatial reference, and in fact it often produces denotation on the basis of cultural and social parameters. The deictic field is thus theorized as always *embedded* in a socio-cultural sphere (Hanks, 2005). In Hanks' own words:

Deixis as a general semiotic resource articulates with broader social fields through what I will call "embedding." Embedding converts abstract positions like Spr [Speaker], Adr [Addressee], Object, and the lived space of utterances into sites to which power, conflict, controlled access, and the other features of the social fields attach. The distinctions between "here" and "there" or "I" and "you" may be part of a general deictic field, but when the "here" is a courtroom, the Spr a judge, the Adr a jury, and the Object a defendant, then the judicial field brings its full weight to bear on the deictic field. (Hanks, 2005, p. 194).

There is no simple algorithm that obtains the delineation of circumscribed deictic fields and their embedding. As such, deictic terms reveal a relationship of mutual definition with context that emerges contingently in talk-in-interaction. Context is both an independent and dependent variable in relation to talk, bringing about the use of certain indexical forms while also being shaped creatively by those forms.

The pervasiveness of contextual dependency in speech is all the more evident in relation to time. Most utterances in English include verbs with tense while other languages, e.g. Chinese or Malay, have no tense marking in the verb (Bybee, Perkins, & Pagliuca, 1994). The temporal reference, however, just like the spatial context, is not a one-to-one stable formal correspondence (Schiffrin, 1981). For instance, the English present tense specifies that the statement applies to the temporal span of the utterance-time (such as in utterances like "I am tired"), but such specification fails to capture a wide range of other usages of the present tense, such as "The class is tomorrow", or reference to present time via other tenses, such as "She will be sleeping now." In theorizing narrative in everyday discourse, Ochs has also highlighted the juxtaposition and conflation of times in conversational storytelling (Ochs, 1994; Ochs & Capp, 2001). In Ochs' own words, "present and future time are also part of the past time narrative in that one's sensation of the present and anticipation of the future organize one's sense of the story's past. Existentially (i.e., experientially) a story is past, present, and future at once" (Ochs, 1994, p. 109).

2.2. Deictics and spatiotemporal positioning

The referential fluidity and indeterminacy of spatial and temporal deixis allows for multiple possibilities not only in delineating landscapes and temporalities but also in constructing subject positions in everyday speech exchanges (Wortham, 1996). Indeed, attention to deictic terms in discourse analytic work on immigrant and transnational children and adults has generated insights on experiences of alienation, interpersonal relatedness and multifaceted positionality.

In an ethnographic and discourse analytic study of children from mixed-status Mexican-American families in Pennsylvania, Gallo and Dabkowski (2018) observed their participants deploying *there* (*allá*) to refer to Mexico in general at times, or to specific places in Mexico at other times, but always implicating a personal relationship with the *there*. More specifically, signaling awareness of their positions in the here-and-now as vulnerable and unsettled (even if not factually true) the children in the study attempted to construct a "familiar and inhabitable" (Gallo & Dabkowski, 2018, p. 98) *there* in Mexico, as a way to cope with the possibility of return migration looming over their precarious status in the US.

In a narrative case study of Marla, a 25-year old bilingual and biliterate transnational Latina mother, Bacon and Kaya (2018) also mapped spatiotemporal markers used by the subject in her stories, showing how she positioned herself in "the neither/nor" (Bacon & Kaya, 2018, p. 88), highlighting the mobility across borders, as well as the fluidity in identities that she experienced over time. The authors argued that "Marla's use of deictics provided an organizing framework for narrating her lived experience. [...] While Marla's comings and goings could traditionally be viewed as disruptions, her locations and relocations fostered a sense of becoming that complexified and expanded her linguistic, social, and academic repertoires" (Bacon & Kaya, 2018, p. 88).

2.3. Nostalgia and spatiotemporal positioning

Scholars investigating migration discourse have often drawn upon the Bakhtinian notion of the chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981). Originally developed within literary criticism to describe a

constitutive attribute of novelistic discourse, the chronotope is a representational configuration of time, space, and subjectivity that is enacted in discourse. It lends analytic purchase to any investigation of spatiotemporal formations, including those encoded and produced in talk-in-interaction (e.g. Agha, 2007; Lempert & Perrino, 2007).

Ethnographic studies of diaspora and migration conditions have identified the modernist chronotope, predicated on the juxtaposition of progress and tradition, as particularly salient in the narratives and sense-making of people in motion across national and cultural borders (e.g. Dick, 2010; Divita, 2014). Centering her ethnographic fieldwork in an industrial city in Mexico with several migrant pathways to the US, Dick (2010) examined how the use of *aquí* (here) and *allá* (there) contributed to discursive constructions of life “beyond here” as articulated by nonmigrant urban residents. In Dick’s analysis, the modernist chronotope shaped the imagination and ability of the study participants “not only to interpret and anticipate the possibility of migration but also to negotiate their immediate contexts” (Dick, 2010, p. 286).

Rather than juxtaposing progress and tradition, the conversations on migration and the diasporic condition in our study were characterized primarily by a chronotope of nostalgia. Generally understood as sentimental longing for a past or a place no longer at reach, nostalgia, as a mode of engagement with time and space, is predicated on a specific existential condition *in the present*. In a sense, nostalgia is a mode of relatedness not only with the past, but also the present and future (Boym, 2001). In urban architecture, for instance, memorial monuments serve as reminders of history while sustaining identity projects for the present and the future (Todorov, 2001). The “porosity of the transitory present” (Boym, 2001, p. 197), in which past, present, and future temporalities are entangled, is constantly on display in conversations about migration. An examination of the pragmatic conditions and effects of nostalgia can thus offer insights on the participants’ sense of being in space and time.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study setting and participants

The adult literacy program at the Bay Area Public Library (hereafter “Library”) encompasses several activities, including one-on-one tutoring, a cultural arts literacy program, General Educational Development (GED) classes, and our study focus, i.e. the family literacy classes. The “family” in family literacy classes is defined institutionally by the Library, in accordance with state guidelines for early childhood education, as including a parent or caregiver of at least one child who is five years old or younger. A flier for the Family Literacy Class advertises “Learn English to help your child in school!” The flier also features a speech bubble, stemming from a photo of children playing on the ground with a library instructor, which says, “Bring your children with you for free educational activities (and healthy snacks).”

Held once a week for two hours, these classes thus fostered English language and literacy learning for both caregivers and their children. The adults and the children were organized in two separate groups, though gathered in the same library area. In this paper, we present analyses focused on the caregivers.

The group of predominantly female adult learners was diverse. The participants hailed from different countries, had different religious affiliations, mother tongues, and also varied in terms of life stages (some were young mothers, others were grandparents). The number of participants for any given class ranged between one and eight. This paper draws on examples featuring a core of five

students¹ who regularly attended the class during the time of our data collection (country of origin in parentheses): (1) Kaori (Japan), stay-at-home parent in her mid-thirties, who had lived in the Bay Area for several years with her husband (a professional) and two sons; (2) Dunia (Yemen), also in her mid-thirties, who had lived in the Bay Area for over a decade, had four children ranging in age from 2 to 16, and worked at her family-owned and operated convenience store; (3) Rahel (Yemen), in her forties and a stay-at-home parent of three children; and (4) Mariana (Mexico), in her fifties, had four teenaged children, lived with her husband, and worked as a house cleaner; (5) Nuriya (Morocco), in her fifties and a stay-at-home parent of two children.

The family literacy class instructor, Nancy, was in her early sixties at the time of data collection and had been working at the Library as an adult literacy teacher for approximately five years. She also had experience teaching English as a Second Language to adult learners at another public learning center in the same city. Teaching was a second career for Nancy. Though she grew up and eventually moved back to the Bay Area, she spent most of her working life as a marketing professional in the American Northeast, with a short period spent in Paris in the years just after graduating from high school.

The first author of this paper was a participant observer in the family literacy class for approximately 12 months in 2015–2016. She was often recruited by Nancy for help with a range of tasks, including making photocopies of worksheets, demonstrating dialogs with her and the students, and occasionally serving as Nancy’s substitute teacher. Author 1 (A1)’s own personal history of immigration was shared with the participants and deepened her connection with the students in the class. Several participants commented on how A1 was the same age when she moved to the United States as their children at the time of the class, linking together her past and their present experiences. Several students also spoke to her in their first language (Mandarin) and occasionally she assisted with the translation of words or idiomatic expressions. Even given these points of convergence with the students, A1 remained aware of how her experiences and lifeworld differed from the participants, including differences in immigration and socioeconomic status, race, and education. A1 was careful to not assume that the participants’ immigration stories had similar arcs, even if threads of similarity emerged from time to time. The second author of this paper supported the data collection with guidance on ethnographic methods but was not physically present at the field site. Data analysis and paper writing were collaboratively carried out by the authors.

3.2. Data corpus

The data corpus includes weekly field notes, audio-recorded instructional activities and dialogs, and audio-recorded interviews with Nancy, Kaori, and Leslie, the director of the Library literacy program. Photographs of textual artifacts, including worksheets used during the class and/or for homework, and fliers advertising the program, were collected. The weekly fieldnotes (a total of 41) document an array of classroom interaction, including how classes were structured, participation formats, snippets of dialog, and several informative exchanges between the first author, Nancy, and the other participants. The audio-recorded classes (a total of 12 recordings collected during the second semester of ethnographic fieldwork) were fully transcribed using discourse analytic transcription conventions (see Appendix). From the audio-recordings

¹ We use pseudonyms for all of the participants throughout the paper.

Table 1
Deixis referential matrix.

Deictic term	Denotational referent	Examples
"Here"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly left undefined • Invoked as non-there 	"Jo and Kaori have been here for" (written prompt). "here, it's never simple" (from an informal exchange between instructor and students).
"There"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country of origin • Urban or rural location of childhood memories • Cultural center (not necessarily geographically delineated) • Locus of traditional practices 	"things are so nice there" (description of memories of homeland, in an informal exchange between instructor and students) "we don't do that there" (referring to homeland cultural practices)
Present tense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambiguous denotational referent • Atemporal/transhistorical referent 	"Do you do this in Mexico?" "Do you do this in Japan?" (asked in reference to flipping a coin to determine who would take the first turn of a language learning game) "What do you do in China?" (asked in reference to food preparation around the holidays)
Past tense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to a calendar year (of turning point in personal history) • Diasporic temporal span 	"I left in 2003" "I've been gone for more than ten years"

and field notes, we constructed a comprehensive collection of interactional segments in which participants used deictic terms.

3.3. Analytic procedures

Our analyses, comprehensively, addressed the following questions: What is the spatiotemporal framework sustained by deictic usage at the family literacy classes? How are participants' subject positions discursively articulated within the said framework?

Data treatment followed discourse analytic procedures and examined both the composition and position of focal discourse elements (Atkinson, Okada, & Talmy, 2011; Wortham & Reyes, 2015). Composition in discourse analysis refers to the linguistic makeup of focal utterances. Accordingly, we identified the referent for each deictic token, thereby delineating a referential matrix that maps the connection between deictic form and spatial/temporal denotation (see Table 1). Subsequently, we attended to the position of focal discourse elements by identifying the instructional activities and interactional sequences in which temporal and social deixis occurred. Such examination of the sequential context—i.e. the position of focal utterances in discourse analytic terms—sheds light on the processes of negotiation and transformation that yield a complex and dynamic deictic referential landscape.

4. Findings

In what follows, we give illustrations of the main features of the spatiotemporal framework in the family literacy class as well as the key effects of the deployment of spatial and temporal deictic terms.

The data segments included for illustrative analyses are representative of the prevailing practices and chronotopic articulations and were selected as particularly clear exemplifications of the chief findings.

4.1. Moving "here": space deictics and spatial scale

The first instruction that participants in the family literacy class were given was to write their name and country of origin on a piece of paper, to be placed on the table like a tent where they were seated. Repeated at the beginning of every class session, this simple literacy act linked participants' identity to being from a country. In other words, the name-cum-country affirmed space referentiality as an attribute of identity. Participants' presence in the class was predicated on an experience of relocation, one that entailed crossing national borders. The name tent thus summoned and articulated a situated and conditional identity, so to speak, an "I am here in so far as I am from elsewhere." (Fig. 1).

As introductory activity and ever-present literacy artifact throughout classes, the name tent established a discursive frame that had space as a prominent definitional parameter. As soon as the

conversation and instructional activities unfolded, however, temporality was layered atop the spatial framework. The predominant chronotope enacted in the family literacy instructional activities is a representational configuration of distance, at times proximal but most often remote.

During an early fall session that included two first-time participants, Nancy wrote the following sentences on the board and asked students to fill in the blanks. By way of introducing each other while simultaneously gauging their English abilities, the sentences included the names of the students (Jo, Kaori, and Furiko):

1. Jo and Kaori have been here for
2. Furiko has been here for
3. Furiko July.

All three sentences, when completed, included both a temporal and a spatial reference. The space reference is of special interest insofar as it seems self-explanatory and transparent, while in fact remaining elusive and undefined. Where/what is the *here* in lines 1 and 2? Why is "has been here since" the correct answer for line 3? If *here* is conceived of as co-articulated with *there* (Hanks, 1992) – the *there* being the country of origin written on the name tents – the *here* invoked in the fill-in-the-blanks exercise would be the United States, or California, or possibly the Bay Area. However, the *here* remained consistently unspecified in our data corpus. Fieldnotes offer several descriptions of speech exchanges among participants within which a richly described *there* is juxtaposed to simple *here*, a location left unnamed and unarticulated.

Fieldnote #18, February 12, 2016

Today there was a spirited conversation about polygamy, which started when Mariana brought up the television show "Big Love" and its portrayals of polygamy in America. Dunia then told a long and winding story about an acquaintance who recently went on an extended visit to Yemen with her children to visit relatives in a rural village, and in the meantime, her husband secretly married another woman in the capital city. Dunia's story elicited strong reactions from the other students and from Nancy. Mariana expressed shock that the man would get married, rather than simply keep two families in two separate places. Nuriyah bemoaned the fact that men "now" feel like they can have everything, "too much" in her words. Nancy attempted to inject vocabulary lessons into the discussion but everyone was too carried away by the discussion to pay much attention. Joking, Mariana asked Dunia if her husband would ever do such a thing—get married to a second wife—and Dunia motioned with her hand across her neck while clucking and laughing, as if she would behead him if he did, and then said "my husband is not like that." Everyone laughed. Nancy then asked Dunia if her husband "grew up here" and then said "well, that probably helps."

In this discussion, the *there* of Yemen was richly textured and fully fleshed out, while the *here* was simply stated at the end, and

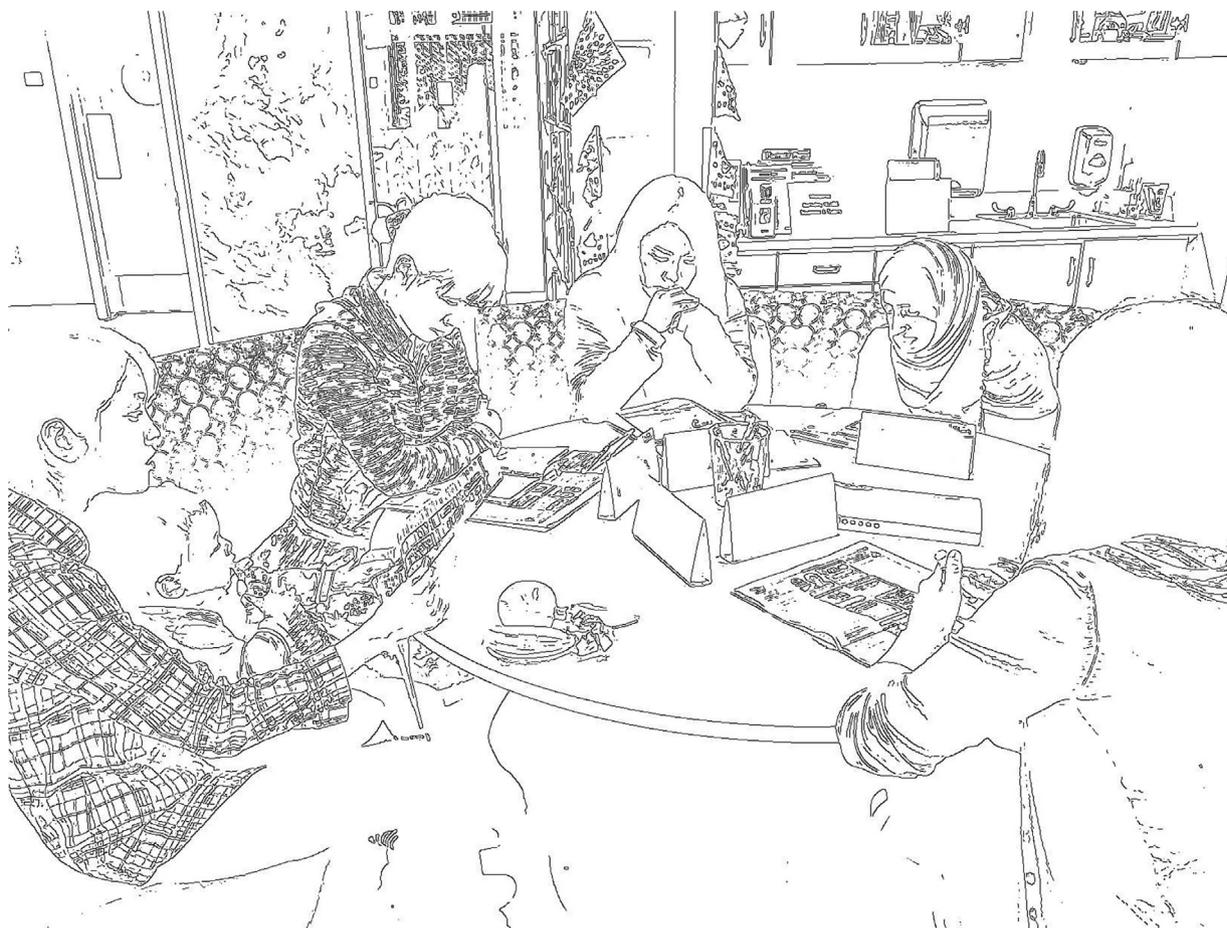


Fig. 1. Students and their name tents.

we assume it meant the United States rather than specifically the Bay Area. Leaving aside the fact that the discussion revolved around polygamy being a phenomenon in both the United States and in Yemen, Nancy's statement about Dunia's husband growing up *here* did two things: it created a division between *here* and *there*, and it also naturalized the *here* as someplace that did not need to be explained or questioned in further detail. Denaturalizing the *here* and exploring its various meanings and quotidian experiences for class participants, learners and teachers alike, is a recommendation we return to in this paper's conclusion. Here, we suggest that while these spatiotemporal references to the *here-and-now* marked a removal from the participants' context of origin, they did not create a definite and conspicuous anchoring into the local context, be it America, the Bay Area, or the neighborhood in which the Family Literacy class was held.

4.2. Present tense, but not "here": verb tense and place

Ambivalence with respect to where to position the class participants also emerged in instructional activities that invoked the country of origin and cultural background of the students. In word scrambles and informal Q&As on homeland and cultural affiliation, Nancy systematically opted for the simple present tense.

Fieldnote #9, November 12, 2015

After chit-chatting about the weekend, Nancy started the official portion of the lesson with a word scramble. She wrote the following on the board, in which the underlined word is the first word and the period comes after the last word of the sentence:

is city Japan. Tokyo the in biggest

After Kaori solved the word scramble correctly ("Tokyo is the biggest city in Japan."), Nancy asked a series of questions to prompt conversation. She began by asking, "Where do you live in Japan?" Her follow-up questions included "How far are you from Tokyo?" and "How long does it take to get to Tokyo?" She asked other students similar questions, like "Where do you live in China?" and notably does not use the past tense, such as "Where did you live in China?"

While the use of the present tense can be a deliberate pedagogical strategy in language instruction, an accommodation to the students' levels of English comprehension and production, our observations do not lend evidence to this interpretation. Nancy used more complex verb tenses with the same students, even within the same lesson. The pervasiveness of simple present tense when the students' country of origin was topicalized is thus all the more interesting. Queries such as "Do you do this in Mexico?" and "What do you do in China?" punctuated the field notes. The present tense is colloquially used to describe habitual occurrences, unchanging situations and general truths (Schiffrin, 1981). From this perspective, simple present tense is appropriate to describe habitual cultural practices such as coin flipping or holiday meals. At the same time, connecting these enduring practices to the participants in the class produced a sense of them still primarily situated in their homeland, fully embodying their cultural heritage. The following extract is also illustrative of this phenomenon. Taken from an audiorecorded class in early December, this extract shows participants talking about Thanksgiving, which had just passed.

Extract from audiorecorded class (December 3, 2015)

- 1 Dunia: the turkey is so delicious, and the stuffing=
 2 Nuriyah: =you know, muslims just celebrate two holidays. (.) eid-
 3 Nancy: oh are there two eids?
 4 Dunia: yes. eid and eid. (.) the other eid, eid al-adha.
 5 (1.0)
 6 Dunia and the birthday, I don't know how they call it in english,
 7 Nancy: so it's like christmas. celebrating jesus's birthday.
 8 Dunia: yes, like that.

In praising her Thanksgiving dinner, Dunia uses the simple present tense (line 1), blurring the specifics of her recent experience with the general cultural tradition. Nuriyah then invokes other holiday celebrations that are of primary religious and personal significance for her and Dunia. As a matter of fact, Dunia, in line 4, elaborates on Nuriyah's comment, in answering to Nancy's question (line 3). Nancy's utterances too are in the present tense. In line 7, Nancy does not actually respond to Dunia's indirect language query (i.e. how do they call Allah's birthday in English) but draws the students back to the local cultural and religious reference, by comparing the experience of celebrating the Prophet Muhammad's birthday with celebrating Jesus's birthday during Christmas. There is an unsaid "here" in Nancy's comparison, with the two Eid celebrations and Allah's birthday celebrations then located elsewhere. These comparative comments, both the students' and the instructor's, on the one hand draw similarity and commensurability between cultural, historical, and religious references. The present tense, we would argue, contributes to a sense of copresence. At the same time, it is worth noting that similarity is predicated on difference, which however remains undiscussed.² After Dunia's confirmation in line 8, Nancy's steers participants to a different instructional activity. In section 6 we offer some suggestions toward a pedagogy that centers difference to create bridges and connectedness. Here, we add that the proclivity to draw similarities, to connect with learners by building links between experiences *here* and *there*, in fact obscures important differences—notably those that are entangled with economic, sociological, and ethnic disparities—and potential moments for deeper learning from each other.

4.3. Chronotopic shifts

As seen in the previous extract, the dynamic functioning of deictic references was not only observed in instructional turns delivered by the instructor but also in the students' own positioning. The space-time configurations mobilized by the students appear however more fleeting and emotionally multifaceted. As such, they only partially aligned with the chronotope suggested by Nancy, which was more static and demarcated.

In an interview with Kaori, one of the most regular participants in the class, Author (A1) asked how she understood the different meanings attached to *here* and *there* in Family Literacy class activities and informal conversations.

Interview with Kaori (student) (Interviewer: A1)

- 1 A1: um (.) so sometimes the teacher: (.) um
 uses the word here?
 2 Kaori: mhmm
 3 A1: so for example she might say (.) um
 jane mo:ved here?
 4 Kaori: mhmm
 5 A1: in 2000,
 6 Kaori: mhmm.
 7 A1: >the year 2000.< for you? where does
here mean.
 8 Kaori: ooh: here means (.) now I think here is
 he-here (.) >is united states<

² Notably, a misunderstanding seems to arise in this exchange, wherein Eid al-Adha is assumed to be "like Jesus's birthday," whereas in fact Dunia, in lines 4 and 6, actually enumerates three holidays (Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and "the birthday").

- 9 A1: uh huh (.) uh
 10 Kaori: [huh?
 [and yes now (my)
 mind change.
 ((laughs))
 11 A1: your here used to be (h) (1.0) japan?
 12 Kaori: mmm.
 13 A1: or what do you mean. how- you said
 your here changed,
 14 Kaori: oh (1.5) I:: come to (.) two thousand
 thirteen,
 15 A1: uh huh
 16 Kaori: just maybe six months
 17 A1: [mhm
 18 Kaori: [(over) here my heart is a little bit
 >japan<
 19 A1: ooooh:
 20 Kaori: but that's changing. I'm living here: I
 am very comfortable in the bay area
 u:m ok so you told me that your here? [cha:nged?
 21 A1: [mhm mhm.
 22 Kaori: (hh.) what about the word there.
 23 A1: there is uh (.) japan?
 24 Kaori: it's japan for you?
 25 A1: yeah [yeah.
 26 Kaori: yeah [okay.
 27 A1: yes (1.0) japan. ((laughter))
 28 Kaori: your city? or the whole country?
 29 A1: oh:: whole country.
 30 Kaori: whole country.
 31 A1: yeah (.) mm:.

Kaori's responses reveal referential variability attached to the space deictics *here* and *there*, a variability that is tightly connected not only with temporal unfolding but also emotional experience. While in line 8 the "here" of "now" was identified as the broad geopolitical entity of the United States, for a few months after moving to the United States Kaori's "here" remained Japan (line 18), even though it was no longer the spatial "here" of where she was living. Thus, the affective saturation of the *here* and *there* makes the space deictics—which are always already denotatively shifting—all the more fluid. For a while in Kaori's life, the *here* was both the US and Japan, an experience that Kaori's tone of voice and facial expression conveyed as imbued with longing and nostalgia. As she expressed a sense of more groundedness and well-being in the present, in line 20, Kaori characterized the "here" as the Bay Area.

In this segment of the interview the spatial deictics serve to position the speaker in multiple contexts. There is no referential contradiction in the different denotations of *here*, since it is anchored to two distinct moments in time, the *now* and six months after the move. The *here of now* takes two referents, the United States and the Bay Area. As we shall illustrate also with other data extracts, we found that a more textured experience of place was associated with a narrower spatial reference. While in line 8 "here" is in subject position within the abstract "here is the US," in line 20 the speaker, Kaori, is in subject position, via the first-person pronoun, in subjective experience statements.

4.4. The chronotope of nostalgia

We have observed how several instructional activities were permeated with a chronotope of distance, saturating the here-and-now with a sense of removal and absence. At the same time the instructor nurtured interconnectedness and intimacy among participants, including herself. Such connectedness and affiliation were articulated through nostalgia.

One could expect that the students in the literacy class predicated their connectedness on being all in the same space in the present moment, a shared here-and-now. Regardless of their life trajectory and migration history, they had in common an experience of situated existence, one that was rooted in the present and arguably projected toward the future. (The participants' motivation

to take the class implies an orientation toward settling in). While in the same space in the present moment, however, the connection among participants was weaved through reference to their coming from elsewhere: it was their diasporic/immigrant condition, imbued with nostalgia, that mediated their connectedness.

The principal orchestrator of such sense of connectedness through nostalgia was Nancy, the instructor. Nancy's enactments of nostalgia were at the same time prototypically abstract and deeply sensuous. In discussing a class visit to the Asian Art Museum, Nancy expected and fostered connections for her Asian students to the cultural horizon represented in the museum. While the individual art pieces in the Museum were marked as belonging to a defined geographical area and historical epoch, in guiding her students through the exhibition rooms Nancy referred to them primarily as icons of a culture removed in space and time. The beauty of the museum artifacts made it easy to construct an idealized picture of the past and to prompt a sense of longing toward it. At the same time Nancy repeatedly lingered on the details of miniature pictures and objects, conveying her enjoyment of their sophistication and craftsmanship.

In what follows we consider two extracts from an interview with Nancy, in which she reflected on her own experiences as a young person who lived away from the *here* of the Bay area for two significant periods: for a year and a half in Paris following high school, and then for a decade in New York City as a young professional. The two segments offer additional insight on the instructor's constructions of the *here* and *there*, present and past. We shall see that Nancy explicitly invoked nostalgia as primary attribute of her relationship with space and time.

Interview with Nancy (instructor) (Interviewer: A1)

- 1 A1: so one of the big themes of this class seems to be about, like a sense of place
- 2 Nancy: mhm:?
- 3 A1: because as you know everyone's from different places and (.) >it's something that people talk about a lot and you ask about a lot<
- 4 Nancy: mhm:
- 5 A1: um (.) sort of like where are you from and (.) what do you think about
- 6 where you are now? ↑ can you talk a little bit about your sense of place?
- 7 Nancy: of this place?
- 8 A1: no. of place in general (.) like how do people um (.) like what does it mean
- 9 to be connected to a place or (.) I mean for you you're from here now but
- 10 when you were away what kind of connections did you feel to bay area: or,
- 11 Nancy: oh uh definitely uh (.) more of a nostalgia (.) not really realistic (.) um (.)
- 12 >you know< in new york I would kind of fantasize oh if I lived in california↑:
- 13 (.) things are so nice there (.) there's not ↑ cri:me >you know all this< (.5)
- 14 what was I thinking.
- 15 A1: ((laughs))
- 16 Nancy: but it's very easy↓ when you're away (.) to kind of romanticize some of the
- 17 things >about your home< and not - I know <a lot of students> uh:
- 18 (.) really miss their homeland (.) they really miss their homeland and some of
- 19 them (.) kind of know they're not gonna probably go back (.) uh but others
- 20 say you know oh you know I'm gonna um, go back to ↑mexico (.) and one of
- 21 them (said) I want to be a tour guide, one said I want to learn ↑english so I
- 22 can be a multilingual tour guide in - I can't remember where in mexico she
- 23 was from, but she had this goal, I - she may well achieve it - > I hope she

- 25 does< um (2.0) but a sense of place is (.) is so important (.) and how you feel
- 26 in whatever place, you are (.) and (.) I like to think when people are here they
- 27 feel (.) kind of at home (.) not stressed.

Nancy narrated her memory of living afar as an experience of nostalgia (line 13), a deep longing not devoid of romantic idealization as she acknowledged (lines 14 and 17). With no prompt from the interviewer she then made a connection to her students, who she claimed were experiencing nostalgia, a similar longing for their homeland. The seemingly-shared experience of nostalgia informed the class participants' connectedness in the present. Through invoking and enacting the chronotope of nostalgia, Nancy established an affinity, a sense of commonality among her students and with herself.

Many conversations during the literacy classes can be interpreted as practices of nostalgia, often invoking deeply sensuous experiences like cooking or dancing or singing. Nancy's own experience of nostalgia was presented as multisensory and embodied. Once again, in the following interview segment, she drew a connection between herself and the students via memorializing scents and smells:

Interview with Nancy (instructor) (Interviewer: A1)

- 1 Nancy: I- I think for them (.) you know cooking their their food is a real touchstone
- 2 to their (.) to their home. >probably the< (.) you know the ↑scent of (.)
- 3 A1: mhm:
- 4 Nancy: <cooking> you know it ((hand taps the table)) scent is very ((tap)) (.)
- 5 evocative ((tap)) (.5) um (2.0) >I mean I know there's a< certain (1.0)
- 6 mixture of smells in paris (.) it's=
- 7 A1: [uh huh.
- 8 Nancy: [diesel-
- 9 A1: ((hhh)) petrol.
- 10 Nancy: uh diesel buses and gauloises >cigarettes< you know the black tobacco
- 11 cigarettes.
- 12 A1: ((chuckles))
- 12 Nancy: and it whenever I (.5) rarely smell someone smoking (.) a black tobacco
- 13 cigarette I just ((tap)) (.hhh) ahh::.
- 14 A1: paris.
- 15 N: takes me back.

This segment is a testament to the visceral experience of nostalgia for Nancy. At the same time, she demonstrated reflectiveness on her own nostalgia, which she continued to experience even in the present, when she was back in her own homeland. We would suggest that this ever-present experience of nostalgia shaped the way Nancy related and nurtured relatedness with and among her students.

5. Discussion

In this paper we have examined how space deictics and verb tense in the instructional activities of a Family Literacy class provided a fluid spatiotemporal matrix within which participants were positioned. Such positioning, in turn, contributed to constructing students' identities as diasporic, their being in the here-and-now predicated on their being from elsewhere. In fact, their being in the present and local context was always marked as partial, in that a part of them was constructed as (still) situated in the remote milieu of the homeland.

Our analysis has shown that the spatiotemporal coordinates were never solely the products of cognitive calculation but always also entangled with emotions. In other words, space deictics and verb tense manifested and mediated emotional processing, exceeding strictly spatial and temporal denotations. As Hanks (1993)

noted, “interactants may share the same concrete context, but bear different social relations to it. These asymmetries should lead us to consider the spatial field of the deictic frame as something both variable and socially mediated” (p. 147). In our data, the reference of *here* was rarely made explicit and often seemed to shift in scale and meaning. Though the concrete context of *here* may have been shared by conversational participants, insofar as they were seated together around a table at a shared moment in time, the social relations to that *here* varied, depending on how long they had lived in that area (or the United States) and the intensity of their attachments to a *there*, among other factors.

Vivid imagery of places—the *there* no longer easily at reach—was saturated with personal, multisensory memories. Detailed descriptions of cultural practices were framed in the present tense, thereby conveying an enduring sense of belonging to the homeland. The class participants were discursively positioned in the liminal space, where the *here* and *there* are blurred and simultaneous (Turner, 1967). Rather than being a site of contradictions, however, the liminal condition housed the multifaceted, fluid, transitional identities of the participants. The liminal space of the family literacy class revealed itself as a capacious context wherein individuals with rather different cultural backgrounds and life trajectories found commonality.

Nostalgia, as an emotion at the juncture of the present and the absent, has emerged as salient attribute of the participants’ liminal condition. To be clear, we are not positing that nostalgia is an inherent characteristic of liminality. One might indeed argue that nostalgia entails liminality. Nevertheless, the “betwixt and between” the *here* and the *there* (Turner, 1967) is always created and recreated discursively at each and every instantiation of space and time deixis and so are the nostalgic reverberations. Nancy, the instructor, played a central role in constructing the chronotope of nostalgia as shared existential coordinates for all participants (learners and instructor alike) in the class. This is resonant with findings from Divita’s (2014) study, which documented the centrality of the modernist chronotope in the narratives of participants in a Spanish cultural center in Paris: “Whether or not individuals attempted to go back, they are all in Paris now; the narrative thus serves them collectively as an accessible point of reference—one that may be invoked as a means of constructing social meaning on a communal scale” (p. 15). In the Family Literacy class, the chronotope of nostalgia allowed students and instructor alike to find commonality with each other, despite the vast differences in both people’s *there* (“their homelands” to use Nancy’s words) and in their *here*. The commonality was located, then, in the seemingly shared experiences of migration and the attached emotional register of nostalgia.

Students mostly aligned themselves with the chronotope of nostalgia, though at times they resisted it. Indeed, Nancy’s assumption that students did not feel belonging *here* or that the students necessarily missed their country of origin is what undergirded a construction of the students as having never fully arrived to the *here*, in the present moment (the *now* of the class meeting). And for all its leverage in creating a sense of commonality, the chronotope of nostalgia also had the effect of flattening participants’ singular experiences and life trajectories. The discursive emphasis on shared experience of missing a homeland obscured multiple forms of difference, some of which point to histories of subordination and oppression (Abu-Lughod, 1991). Surely it is different to have migrated to the Bay Area because of a marriage to an American or to accompany a spouse studying for an advanced degree than to have done so to escape poverty or civil war. Surely it is different to be an immigrant from Mexico, from Japan, or a woman easily identified as Muslim by her headscarf. The multifarious dimensions of difference were rarely discussed in the Family Literacy class—a missed

opportunity in a setting that brings together people who may rarely meet otherwise.³

6. Conclusion

In concluding, we situate our study within work that has examined how immigrant participants in educational contexts respond to the rising of an anti-immigrant climate. Like Gallo and Dabkowski (2018) and Bacon and Kaya (2018), our study has evidenced immigrants’ resourcefulness and ingenuity in navigating the here-and-now circumstances, their capacity to inhabit multiple places at the same time and find expressive outlets in the liminal spaces (see also Clonan-Roy, Wortham, & Nichols, 2016; Wortham & Rhodes, 2013). At the same time, our study shows how benign hopes to create inclusive learning environments—in this case by fostering a sense of shared nostalgia—also renders immigrant learners as always-foreign, never quite settled into the present context.

Talk about countries and culture is widespread in second language and literacy classrooms, and teachers face a common paradox: how to acknowledge and celebrate students’ diverse cultural and linguistic identities, without constantly naming them as Other and not fully *here*? The paradox is to some extent inevitable but we suggest that teachers can expand dialogs beyond the vague, generalized *there* of a country of origin, toward narrower regional or metropolitan characterizations, or even idiosyncratic or familial differences. An even more fruitful avenue for discussion may be to use more specific references; students are not only representatives of a whole country, but are seen—and talked about and to—as individuals with distinct personal histories, singularities, and relationships to places. Similarly, the *here*—a location that may seem obvious and familiar and stable—may be understood in more specific terms, as conversational participants talk about their diverse experiences of heterogeneous landscapes, routes, and relations to the *here*. Broadening the conversation to allow and encourage articulation of the *particulars*—to borrow from cultural anthropologist, Abu-Lughod (1991), a term that invites going beyond ethnographic descriptions along the classic categorical differences of language, class, gender and culture—may yield a deeper recognition and a more textured experience of difference. Returning to Stein, to close, we petition for a pedagogical approach that fosters a *there* there and a *here* here.

Conflict of interest

None declared.

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Appendix: Transcription conventions

Notational conventions employed in the transcribed excerpts examined in the paper include the following:

³ We acknowledge the insights offered by one of the reviewers of this paper about the reductive effects of treating difference as uniquely cultural, glossing over contested historical, political and socioeconomic dynamics.

.	The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
?	The question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
,	The comma indicates "continuing" intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
:::	Colons indicate stretching of the preceding sound, proportional to the number of colons.
-	A hyphen after a word or a part of a word indicates a cut-off or self interruption.
<u>word</u>	Underlining indicates some form of stress or emphasis on the underlined item.
Word	Upper case indicates loudness.
> <	The combination of "more than" and "less than" symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed.
< >	In the reverse order, they indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slowed.
(())	Double parentheses enclose descriptions of conduct.
(word)	When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber's part.
()	Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing can be achieved.
(1.2)	Numbers in parentheses indicate silence in tenths of a second.
(.)	A dot in parentheses indicated a "micropause", hearable but not readily measurable; ordinarily less than 2/10 of a second.
[Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers indicates a point of overlap onset.
hhh	letter "h" indicates hearable aspiration.

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