NAHUATL DISCOURSES AND POLITICAL SPEECHES AS WAYS TO NEGOTIATE THE RACIAL MONOLINGUAL IDEOLOGY OF THE MEXICAN STATE IN HIDALGO, MEXICO

Vanessa Miranda Juárez
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NAHUATL DISCOURSES AND POLITICAL SPEECHES AS WAYS TO NEGOTIATE THE RACIAL MONOLINGUAL IDEOLOGY OF THE MEXICAN STATE IN HIDALGO, MEXICO

A Dissertation Presented

by

VANESSA MIRANDA JUÁREZ

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2022

Anthropology Department
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DEDICATION

To my beloved father Francisco Miranda Salgado†
ABSTRACT

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MAY 2022
VANESSA MIRANDA JUAREZ
Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
Directed by: Professor Emiliana Cruz

This research focuses on language use as a means of linguistic, cultural, and communal negotiations with political economic forces of assimilation and systematic racial discrimination. I specifically analyze how the use of Nahuatl and Spanish within a Nahua community in Mexico, San Isidro Atlapexco Hidalgo, signifies ideological and power relationships. I pay particular attention to the dynamics of interaction and communicative practices within assemblies—a key form of local governance. Here, I show that the collective force displayed in such spaces might be the engine to transgress, oppose, and challenge the highly racialized language ideology of the state that advocates Spanish as the language of modernization. This research explores the linguistic strategies, semiotic resources, and discourse practices associated with specific roles in the communal government system and how these resources are distributed along the lines of gender, age, and class statuses as well as ethnic and racial identities. To do so, I identify different linguistic registers/styles, each of which is linked to social evaluations of individuals and their practices (i.e., linguistic ideologies). I explore how these actors’ linguistic ideologies and practices contribute to hindering the wider use of the Nahuatl language. I provide a detailed analysis of the linguistic dynamics through which raciolinguistic ideologies (Rosa & Flores 2017) are expressed and
negotiated in everyday practices of local life. In this way, this research uses the tool of linguistic ethnography to explore the intersections of race, indigeneity, class, gender, age, and linguistic phenomena. It is one of the goals to show that language ideologies and practices are key sites for the organization and reproduction of race and racism. As my approach is ethnographic and linguistic, through the ethnographic materials I obtained through participant observation, interviews and fieldnotes, I identify the historical and contemporary broader context of this Nahua society, highlighting the political organization and the structure of the local and communal government and the linguistic ideologies that permeate the use of language in political arenas. The collected data from texts-discourses of video recordings of assemblies gave me the possibility to analyze linguistic, pragmatic, and discursive elements in the Nahuatl language.

KAHKAMANALOLISTLI WAN TLANEHNEWILISTEKITL IKA NAWATLAHTOLI KEN MOCHIWA SE TLASENKAWALISTLI TLEN TLANEHNEWILISTLI TLEN IXNESTILISTLI SAN SE TLAHTOLI TLEN MEXKOTLALTEPAKTLI TLEN ALTEPETL TLEN HIDALGO, MEXICO.

Ni tlatehtemolistli monechikowa ika nawatlahtoli kenwak motlahkowia keman mochiwa tlasenkawalistli iahachitlahtol, masewallahlamihkayotl wan komontekitl ika chikawalistli tlen tlanehnewilistekitl tlen tomintekiwiah tlen kentsin kehka wan kikixtia axkayotl tlen kenmochiwas. Niktehtemoa ken motekiwia nawatlahtoli wan kaxtilahtlahtoli iihtiko tlen se nechikolistli pilaltepetsin nawa ipan Mexko, San Isidro Atlapexco Hidalgo, kixtlawa tlaxinepaloli tlen tlanehnewilistli wan tlawanatilistli. Tlen nikchiwa nikan, ya nikita kenihki kamanaloah wan tekitih ipan pilaltepetsitsin iihtik sentilistli, tlen kenihki tekitih tlawanatianih tlen san ne ehketl. Nikan, niknextia chikawalistli tlen
nechikistolli tlasemantli sekin kanahya welis eli tleadsintopehtli para kipostekiseng, axkimakaseh manoh wan moixpanketsaseh nopa tlanehnewilistli iahachitlahtol tlen ixtlamatinih kinehnewiltokeh tlen altepeltl kimanawia kaxtilahtlahtoli ken kahkamanololistli tlen naman. Ni tlatehtemolistli kitlahtlachilia kenihihi kichiwha iahachitlahtol, *semiotic resources* wan kenihihi kichiwha tlen axkinwetskiltia tlen wanya moxinepaltok tlamanextili tlen eltok ipan weyi tlanaawatili tlen comon wan ni tlapalewilistli moxehxeloa ipan nochi masewalmeh, tlen nochi xiwitinii wan nochi tlen kipiyah o axkipiyah tomin, kehni ken kinmanextia kanih walowih wan tlen axkayotl kipiyah. Para nikchiwas, nikixmati tlen axsena tlahkwilolistli/kenihihi iahachitlahtol, se wan se tlen wanya motskitok ipan tlataxchipalistli kampa itstokeh masewalmej wan tlen kichiwha, ken moixtos, tlanehnewilistli iahachitlahtol. Niktlahtlachilia kenihihi tlanehnewilistli wan tlachiwalistli iahachitlahtol tlen ni tlahkwilewanihi kichiwha para ma owih eli para ma moweyili nawatlahtoli. Nitemaktilia se tlatehtemolistli tlasenkixti li tlen kenihihi tekiti iahachitlahtol tlen ipan pano tlanehnewilistli axkayoaahachitlahtol (Rosa & Flores 2017) moihtoa wan mochiwa tlasenhatlalistli tlen kichiwha mohmostlih ipan ininnemilis tlen san nopaya. Kehni, ni tlatehtemolistli kitiwia sekin tlamantli tlen pialtepetsitsin iahachitlahtol wan kitehtemos kanih walajh masewalneskayotl, tlen kipiya o axkipiya tomin, tlen nochi xiwitinii wan sekinoi ahachitlahtolistli. Se tlaxitlahtlatehtemolistli ya monextis tlanehnewilistli wan tlachiwalistli iahachitlahtol ya kampa mosentlalis wan mosenkixitis kanih walah wan kampa axkinwelitah. Tlen ika nikchikilos ya pialtepetsitsin wan iahachitlahtol, ipan tlatekiwistli tlen pilaltepetsitsin kampa nikalahki wan nikinitak, tlatenkopinalistli wan tlahkwilolistli, nikixmati tlahkwilolistli tlen panotok wan
tlen pano mas wextik tlen masewalaltepetl nawa, kiyekantiyowih mosentlalis tlanehnewilistekitl wan ken kichiwah weyi tlanawatili tlen komon wan tlanehnewilistli iahachitlahtol tlen itechpowi ipan nawatlahtoli tlen motekiwia ipan tlanehnewilistekitl. Tlamantli tlen mosansehkotiltok ipan tlahkwilolistli-kahkamanalolistli tlen mokixtih pan tlatenkopinalistli wan tlamawisoli tlen tlasentilistli niwelki nikita iahachitlahtol, *pragmatics* wan axkinwetskiltia tlen nawatlahtoli.

Translated by Catalina Cruz de la Cruz, MA.
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation focuses on language use as a means of linguistic, cultural, and communal negotiations with political economic forces of assimilation and systematic racial discrimination. I specifically analyze how the use of Nahuatl and Spanish within a Nahua community in Mexico, San Isidro Atlapexco Hidalgo, signifies ideological and power relationships. I pay particular attention to the dynamics of interaction and communicative practices within assemblies—a key form of local governance. Here, I show that the collective force displayed in such spaces might be the engine to transgress, oppose, and challenge the highly racialized language ideology of the state that advocates Spanish as the language of modernization. This research explores the linguistic strategies, semiotic resources, and discourse practices associated with specific roles in the communal government system and how these resources are distributed along the lines of gender, age, and class statuses as well as ethnic and racial identities. To do so, I identify different linguistic registers/styles, each of which is linked to social evaluations of individuals and their practices (i.e., linguistic ideologies). I explore how these actors' linguistic ideologies and practices contribute to hindering the wider use of the Nahuatl language.

I provide a detailed analysis of the linguistic dynamics through which raciolinguistic ideologies (Rosa & Flores 2017) are expressed and negotiated in everyday practices of local life. In this way, this research uses the tool of linguistic ethnography to explore the intersections of race, indigeneity, class, gender, age, and linguistic phenomena. It is one of my goals to show that language ideologies
and practices are key sites for the organization and reproduction of race and racism.

As my approach is ethnographic and linguistic, through the ethnographic materials I obtained via participant observation, interviews and fieldnotes, I identify the historical and contemporary broader context of a Nahua society in the Huastec region of Hidalgo, Mexico highlighting the political organization and the structure of the local and communal government and the linguistic ideologies that permeate the use of language in political arenas. The collected data from texts-discourses of video recordings of assemblies gave me the possibility to analyze linguistic, pragmatic, and discursive elements in the Nahuatl language.

The assemblies consist of the gatherings of all citizens of the villages to collectively present, discuss, and make decisions in and for the community. This is the main mechanism to let everyone know about the political, civil, and religious aspects of the village as well as the way everyone exercises their right to expose their points of view or stances about community affairs. It is through the assembly that the representatives of the communal government, the ejido officials, and the other committees are elected. It is also in the assembly where people discuss the governmental programs, organize the komontekitl ‘communal work’, and make decisions regarding how to act in cases of emergencies. Importantly, all the discussions and decision making are mostly carried out in Nahuatl and a few times in Spanish.

Nahuatl is an Uto-Aztecan language, belonging to the Aztecan branch (Campbell 2000; Dakin 2007). Typologically, this language is characterized by its agglutinating character and its rich morphology of prefixes and suffixes; this
language is a head-marking language and has a predominantly syntactic order of VSO (Sullivan et al 1988; Launey 1992). Nahuatl has at least four dialectal areas: Huasteca, Central, Eastern and Western Periphery (Lastra, 1986; Canger, 1988). The Nahuatl language is currently used in dispersed communities throughout the national territory and diversified linguistically through time (Zimmermann, 2010). The large variations that Nahuatl has presented through time/space may indicate that it is no longer a single language but a group of closely related languages (Flores 2009; Peralta 2015; Pharao 2016b). Further, it is spoken in sixteen states in Mexico with a total of 1,651,958 people (INEGI 2020). The variety spoken in San Isidro is part of the Nahuatl, Eastern Huasteca grouping with approximately 410,000 speakers [ISO 693-3 NHE].

Nahuatl has been the subject of substantial research (León-Portilla 1988). From the time this assertion was made in 1988 by Miguel León-Portilla, more than 20 years has passed and the number of studies of Nahuatl has greatly increased. However, as Flores (2009) and Garcia (2014) note, most of them focus on the grammatical structure of the sixteenth-century variety known as Classical Nahuatl (Sahagún [2006] 1569; Olmos [1947] 1547; De Molina [2014] 1576; Carochi [1983] 1645; Garibay 1940; Andrews 1975; Sullivan et al, 1988; Karttunen 1983; Siméon 1984; Launey 1992; Lockard 2001), and contemporary varieties that belong to the central area (León-Portilla 1979, 2015; Dakin 1972; Wolgemuth 1981; Hasler 1995), to mention only a few. Pharao (2016b) points out that there are very few studies addressing the use of Nahuatl in its social context. One of the few sociolinguistic studies and one of the most important works of Mexicano (Nahuatl) is the work of Hill & Hill (1986) “Speaking Mexicano. The Dynamics of Syncretic
Language in Central Mexico”. In this book, the authors address linguistic contact in its linguistic, social, and cultural dimensions. They describe how Mexicano is borrowing plenty of linguistic material from Spanish, the dominant language in Mexico, resulting in a syncretic language. They analyze the syncretic language as a place where the speakers are negotiating the usage of Mexicano in creative ways. Through the application of a sociolinguistic survey in Mexicano, they identified syncretic forms of Mexicano in the lexical, phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels. They later encompass those levels to frame the syncretic project at the macro translinguistic level. The authors identify different codes in the Malinche ways of speaking: Spanish, Hispanicized Mexicano power code, and Mexicano purist code, which people use flexibly depending on social and cultural factors. Each code is related to different values such as power, prestige, solidarity, and reciprocity and to cultural practices such as rituals, kinship relationships, and compadrazgo. Thus, they consider the syncretic project as a set of attitudes, values, and symbolic resources “which are critical in the struggle of the people of The Malinche to construct a useful identity for themselves and to organize their world in order to survive and prosper in it” (Hill & Hill 1986:1).

With this research, I support some of the analysis on such notions of codes. In a similar way to Hill and Hill (1986), I use the notions of power code and solidarity code or communal code to explore how these two styles within assemblies are associated with the racial and national modern project of mestizaje and the local and historical Nahua communal project, respectively. The Hills’ (1986) work remains one of the few sociolinguistic analyses of Nahuatl language in
which linguistic practices and ideologies are studied. Informed by this and more recent studies on the social use of Nahuatl (Flores 1999, 2009; Messing 2002, 2007; Pharao 2016a/b;), this research focuses heavily on language use to negotiate linguistically, culturally, and collectively the survival of a contemporary Nahua society in the Huasteca region of Mexico. Unlike Hill & Hill (1986), this research concentrates on how the communal government system, the historical institution that regiments the political, civic, and religious life of the village, operates as a site of retention of Nahuatl vis a vis the imposition of the colonial language. Further, this research privileges the interactional dynamics of the assemblies, and the way people collectively make decisions using the Nahuatl language.

Many indigenous communities in Mexico have two political orders: 1) the official order administered by the rules of the nation-state which dominates individual political participation and 2) the historical, local, and collective order known in anthropological research as the cargo system, which is characterized by a constant search for consensus. The cargo system is a civil-religious and hierarchical institution found in rural and indigenous areas of southern Mexico and Central America well-known in the anthropological studies of Mesoamerica (Chance & Taylor 1985; Portal 1992; Korsbaek 2005, 2009). The cargo system maintains social order through self-government, encompassing all community concerns: political (elections), administrative (land plots), civic (town police and disagreements among community members), and social (festivals and religious celebrations) (Portal 1992; Korsbaek 2005, 2009).

The communal government systems have been a central object of study within Mesoamerican anthropology. These anthropological studies have focused
on 1) defining the importance of cargo systems and their particularities in every community; 2) the function of the cargo system in the redistribution of wealth inside the community; 3) the function of the cargo system in reinforcing poverty inside the community; and 4) its origins as being either pre-Hispanic, the product of colonialism, or an outcome of the late nineteenth century (Chance 1996, Medina 1995, 1996). More recently, postcolonial theorists have examined systems of indigenous governance, consensus-driven governments such as the one explored in this dissertation, as fields of conflict within states, and as sites of resistance to capitalist and neoliberal domination (Fenelon & Hall 2008: 1874), analyzing the role that indigenous forms of governance play in the resistance and revitalization of indigenous people’s identity (Bonfil 1996; Alfred & Cosntassel 2005, Rius 2011). This research draws from this recent postcolonial frame to analyze the role of the local and communal government system in the retention of the Nahuatl language.

The research investigates how and in what ways the language norms of communal assemblies sustain indigenous language through their function of local political decision-making. I hypothesize that the strong preference for the use of Nahuatl within communal government partly explains the continuity of their language and cultural identity. That is, the research understands three interconnected issues: (1) how the local and communal government system operates as a site where racial and national monolingual policies and ideologies are negotiated; (2) how the Nahuatl language represents a ‘vehicle’ (Pharao, 2016b) for communal projects; and (3) the role of different actors in the continuation or detriment of the use of the Nahuatl language through the political decision-making
processes of the local communal government. The two general research questions that guided this investigation are:

*What are the linguistic strategies, semiotic resources, and discursive practices associated with roles in the communal governance system that allow the inhabitants of San Isidro to maintain the use of their native language?*

*How do the specific linguistic forms of speech, styles, and genres used within assemblies shed light on the individual and collective preferences among linguistic and semiotic repertoires in this heteroglossic Nahua society?*

The communal governance system has been at the center of San Isidro’s social organization since the community’s founding around 1910. In San Isidro, the organization of the local and communal government requires one year of unpaid service from men and women over 18 years of age. Community assemblies elect municipal officials in the cargo system. The community assembly exercises the highest authority. Cargo positions are ranked, and individuals may ascend to more prestigious positions over the course of their life with positions requiring the investment of significant time and resources. Representatives of the communal government oversee negotiating with the federal and state governments to obtain funding to meet the needs of the community. They also lead decision-making in community assemblies. This negotiating character makes the communal government a bridge between the San Isidro people and the federal and regional governments. Therefore, it is more and more essential that community members possess communicative competence in both languages: Nahuatl as the language of the community, and Spanish as the language of the national government and the mestizo society.
Since the formation of the nation-state, many indigenous communities have resisted pressure to assimilate into the larger Mexican society (Warman 2003), including the use of Spanish. The prevalence of Spanish as the language of the nation and the government obeys the logic of imposition of only one language as part of the ideological representation of race which in Mexico and Latin-American is known as mestizaje. Mestizaje is a hegemonic race ideology where the mixture between Europeans and Indigenous peoples is the principal mechanism of forced acculturation and assimilation (Machuca 1998; Castellanos 2000, 2001, 2003; Alonso 2004; Speed 2008). In 2003, the Mexican state recognized the indigenous languages as national languages through the General Law of Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Haviland & Flores 2007). This law ideally seeks to place indigenous languages at the same level as Spanish. However, the national ideology of “one people, one fatherland, one language” (Bauman & Briggs 2003: 193) continues to sustain the mestizaje project. This state recognition of indigenous languages obeys an adoption of a more extensive neoliberal project including neoliberal multiculturalism as a new way to govern diversity (Speed 2008; Hankins 2016). Such recognition is not a solution of the language eraser as part of the colonial dispossession and domination of indigenous peoples (Alfred 2005).

The choice of language for making decisions is ‘a political decision’ (Hill 1998) in San Isidro. The San Isidro people may choose to treat community issues in the colonial and dominant language, Spanish. However, they prefer to use Nahuatl as the language of the political decision-making. San Isidro is an exceptional example of the argument made by Winant (1999): subordinates are not utterly powerless –they have modes of resistance. This project applies Winant’s
argument to the case of the San Isidro people, who are resisting colonial and national forces that push indigenous peoples and their languages towards disappearance. Nahuatl discourse is then a counter-discourse (Smith (2012 [1999]); Jefferess 2016) that configures and constantly reconfigures Nahuatl identity in the face of colonial authority.

San Isidro is an excellent example in which all the decision-making processes are conducted in Nahuatl, giving the community distance from the national agenda of monolingualism. In that sense, this research provides an understanding of the political economy of linguistic practices (Irvine 1989; Gal & Irvine 2000) within a Nahua community as well as the strategies that provide agency to the indigenous population, which makes resistance against Spanish monolingualism possible.

Decades of research by sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists on language shift argue that language processes are rooted in social, economic, and political dynamics (Gal 1972; Kulick 2004 [1992]; Fishman 2001; Meek 2010; Urla 2012). As Urla (2012:5) sustains, maintenance or revitalization of minoritized languages is part of broader social and political battles, which are embedded in a ‘struggle of recognition’. Through this perspective, the author postulates that the problem of minority languages is a problem of language ideologies always related antagonistically to the ideas of modernity, progress, and democracy. Following this line of thought, this research demonstrates that the local governmental structure in San Isidro plays a determining role in accounting for the maintenance of Nahuatl.
To explore how the structure of the local government favors the maintenance of Nahuatl, this research documents how the use of the indigenous language signifies ideological and power relationships within the members of this society. One specific way through which it is possible to grasp those complex relationships is to look closely at the linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic resources of Nahua discourses and speeches. Within political negotiations and decision-making processes, there exist different registers each of which is linked to social evaluations of individuals and their practices. One identified register among other Nahua societies is what linguists call a “purist code” (Hill & Hill 1986; Messing 2007; Pharao 2016b). This register represents an obstacle to the continuation of language because, as Hill & Hill (1986) among others have shown, purist language ideologies can often work against the use of a vernacular language when they stigmatize popular forms of code-switching and lexical borrowing as “polluted”. In other words, linguistic ideologies of different forms of speaking impact linguistic and discursive practices and election between a repertoire of codes and languages.

That is why this research also provides an account of how groups of power inside the community — mainly professionals and locally wealthy individuals who enjoy special status due to their education — equally play a role in the continuation or detriment of the Nahuatl language. The latter group which consists of the “socially and educationally privileged” (Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003: 458), impose their ideas on the rest of the population in terms of how Nahuatl should/must be spoken. These actors might carry linguistic ideologies which along with the racial monolingual state policies, hinder the development and wider use of the language.
This research identifies various grammatical, pragmatic, and discursive resources through which people discuss and make political decisions. The use of such strategies shows the importance of the consciousness of individuals in choosing certain rhetoric and linguistic resources among their repertoires which are associated with ideological systems (Hill & Hill 1989; Hill 1995, 1999). Similarly to what Hill (1995, 1996) investigated in terms of the relationship between ideology, voices and consciousness, this dissertation explores the responsibility of speakers regarding the use of rhetoric and linguistic resources in the decision-making process, shedding light on the role that ideologies have in the elections of codes and various linguistic resources in heteroglossic societies such as this Nahua society.

This analysis explores the possibility of understanding why people prefer to use their native language in public spheres as it gives a frame of the symbolic negotiations between the colonial language, Spanish and the native language, Nahuatl. Here it is especially necessary to interconnect ethnoracial identities and the use of language. In other words, this methodology not only allows me to identify linguistic styles but I could also explore the ways in which these linguistic styles are associated with other aspects of the Nahua society such as age, gender, class, and especially ethnoracial identities.

**Methods for Data Collection**

As a woman of color from Latin America and a grandchild of a Nahua speaker, the racial mestizaje project of the Mexican educational system along with the racial monolingual ideology negated me the possibility to acquire Nahuatl as
my heritage language. However, I always pursued academic goals involving the learning and investigation of indigenous languages and peoples. Along with such goals, my ethical concerns encouraged me to learn Nahuatl not only because it was the language of my grandfather, but also because I believe it is the best way to deeply understand linguistic and cultural differences. I initially learnt this language with a professor from San Isidro Atlapaxco when I was in my undergrad studies. Later when I conducted my master’s thesis, people of San Isidro kept teaching me their knowledge during several fieldwork periods and now I continue studying the language with Professor Catalina Cruz.

Speaking Nahuatl and being a trained researcher in linguistics and anthropology, I have been able to gain a level of access among the Nahua people that has permitted me to create a rich corpus of data and contextual understanding. As a master’s student in Mexico and a federal official of the National Agency of Indigenous Languages (INALI, for its acronym in Spanish), I acquired vast experience working with indigenous languages and carried out substantial research on linguistic policy, dialectology of contemporary Nahuatl, and worked on the development of a linguistic atlas of Mexican indigenous languages. I came to the Department of Anthropology at UMass, Amherst to expand my background, acquire expertise in the theory and methods of linguistic anthropology, and to apply these to my interest of indigenous language dynamics in Mexico. My research interests span language documentation and maintenance, community-based research, as well as ethnographic and linguistic fieldwork. I am particularly interested in the documentation of naturally occurring speech events.
and different genres as part of the analysis of the political dynamics of language-shift in heteroglossic societies.

My methodology comes from a community-based approach and includes critical and decolonial frameworks. For that reason, my long-term linguistic documentation project includes training native speakers in documentation methods, including training in recording natural speech events and the use of specialized software to systematize and analyze. In this sense, I worked closely with two young native speakers of the community and trained them in this type of documentation. The objective of this training is to empower indigenous youth to continue working in the future with the documentation of their language and ultimately help change negative attitudes towards Nahuatl, raising the local social status of the language. This would not be possible without speaking the language and having been involved with the community for a long time. My dissertation is the first stage of a long-term and ambitious research agenda that explores different Nahuatl genres to understand a varied range of ways of speaking and the linguistic structures that intersect with the domain of race and ethnicity.

Thus, my methodology includes what Duranti (1994) has called ethnographic linguistics: a methodology in which linguistic investigation along with participant observation and recording of spontaneous speech interactions are at the core of the analysis of language as a social activity. I initially visited San Isidro Atlapexco in 2005 when I began my master’s thesis. Since then, I have visited the village and the Huasteca region several times for academic and federal official purposes as well as personal interest to visit the people who have opened their homes for me these past 16 years. The strong connection I have built with
people of the community has allowed me to conduct this research applying the methods of ethnographic linguistics. As part of this methodological framework, I also applied the methodology of language documentation to collect several types of text-discourses in Nahuatl.

For this research, I worked with the members of the 2019-2020 local government (or cargo system) of San Isidro to participate within the governmental activities and understand the political dynamics and organization of the village. Three of the major activities in which I participated were assemblies, *komontekitl* ‘communal work’ as well as meetings carried out by members of the local government with different committees that oversee several needs of the community. The participation within these activities has allowed me to not only carry out participant observation within political activities and explore the decision-making process but also to video and audio record political speeches and negotiations on various topics such as the elections of the incoming members of the local government—both men and women—, the one-year changing cycle of the members of the local government, negotiations of the introduction of new services to the community, negotiations and attempts to solve agrarian issues with neighboring villages, internal trials for individuals who commit any crimes, and organizations of religious festivities and patron saints’ celebrations.

My methodology to analyze text/discourses includes the systematizing of audio and video recordings. This systematization consists of transcribing, translating, annotating, and glossing the collected materials. To analyze and systematize recordings, I use Audacity and ELAN software. To parse and annotate texts in ELAN, I utilize a six-line interlinear format consisting of: 1) utterance
transcription using a practical writing system, 2) morphologically segmented text, 3) morphological glosses, 4) paralinguistic annotations, 5) Spanish free-translation, 6) English free-translation, and 7) annotation of kinetic events, general comments, and observations. This is part of the methodological proposition of a thick translation (Woodbury 2007) from the language documentation perspective (Woodbury 2007; Epps, Webster & Woodbury, forthcoming) such as Nahuatl. I used this methodological tool because as Epps, Webster & Woodbury (2017: 60-61) note, the increasing interest in discourse from documentary linguistics comes along with the development of useful annotation methods for texts. Thick translation consists of several basic interlinear Boasian style transcription to assure transparency in terms of grammar and lexical levels (Woodbury 2007; Hoseman & Webster 2021). It also includes other creative forms to represent performance.

Figure 1. Example of thick translation
Combining thick description (Geertz 2017 [1973]) with thick translation, this research contributes not only to the discipline of Linguistic Anthropology but also to Language Documentation proving a mixed complementary methodology. In other words, thick description and thick translation altogether allow for a fine-grained analysis including not only meaning but also how contexts impact meaning. Importantly, through this combined methodology, we can access various levels of meaning and contexts. In terms of meaning, we can access linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic levels and in terms of contexts, we can similarly identify broader historical and national contexts or more regional and local contexts to finally access the context of enunciation.

Since the audio and video recordings are valuable material, part of my linguistic documentation project includes the archiving of recordings. To follow the best practices for archiving, every recording is bound to its metadata file created in the SayMore software. Metadata files include the date and place of the recordings, participants’ information, equipment used, length and quality of the recording, contributors to the recordings, and a brief ethnographic description of the contents and contexts of the recordings. Through this work, I examined the linguistic, pragmatic, and discursive strategies people utilize in political negotiations and the decision-making processes. Moreover, this work allowed me to explore the Nahua body of knowledge of civic and economic life, political participation, and notions of community, democracy, justice, cooperation, and solidarity.

I interviewed current and former members of the local government, young female and male citizens, adult citizens, and elders, both men and women.
Through this work, I included the broader context in which political speeches take place. I also collected samples of other speech genres including oral history, life histories, tales, and quotidian conversations. Additionally, I documented the grammatical and lexical questionnaires of the Archive of Indigenous Languages of Mexico (ALIM, for its acronym in Spanish) from El Colegio de México A.C. (Colmex, for its acronym in Spanish). The analysis and results will be published in the form of a book as part of the collection of the Centro de Estudios Lingüísticos y Literarios, Colmex.

Covid-19 severely impacted this research. February 2020 was the last month of fieldwork data collection. The beginning of the pandemic in Mexico forced me to interrupt my fieldwork and I went into lockdown. Thus, I could not conclude the second part of my methodology in situ which consists of consulting with participants of the assemblies by looking at video recordings while interviewing them. However, starting in March 2020, I carried out such interviews via Zoom meetings with several consultants. To obtain people’s interpretations of language use, these interviews were guided by the findings in the previous systematization stage to reduce bias in the interpretation. This allowed me to have local interpretations about the use of specific linguistic structures, linguistic styles registries, and different codes in the political speeches as well as social evaluations of individuals and their linguistic and discursive practices (e.g., language ideologies). Access to the Internet in the village is relatively new and often unstable; in spite of these circumstances, I instructed and taught consultants how to download Zoom and used it for our sessions. Older citizens do not have a device
that supports Zoom software so conducting the interviews was impossible. That is why I visited the village once again in the summer of 2020.

The collected data consists of: 1) 10.8 hours of video and audio recordings of assemblies and political speeches, 2) 18.5 hours of video and audio recordings of other speech genres including oral history, life histories, tales, and everyday conversations, 3) 45 interviews of individuals including the current and former members of the cargo system, young citizens, adults, and elders, both men and women, and 4) extensive fieldnotes from observations of several assemblies, komontekitl ‘communal work’ and other meetings, daily life events as well as civic and religious celebrations.

I transcribed 45 interviews, 10.8 hours of assemblies and 6 hours of other speech genres. The completely systematized data consists of 40 interviews, 5 hours of political speech including glosses and annotations, and 4 hours of other speech genres to store them in the Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America (AILLA) at the University of Texas, Austin.

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Department and the Pre-Dissertation Research Summer Award 2017 of the Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies (CLACLS) both at UMass, Amherst allowed me to conduct preliminary fieldwork in previous years. The Ph.D. Grant 2016-2020 of the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), Mexico contributed not only to the period of this research but also to the conclusion of the Ph.D. program in Anthropology at UMass, Amherst. Finally, with the Sylvia Forman Scholarship Fall 2021 of the Anthropology Department at UMass, Amherts I concluded the writing of the dissertation.
CHAPTER I. A NAHUA COMMUNAL PROJECT AND ITS LINK WITH THE NAHUATL LANGUAGE

1. Introduction

The present chapter places the San Isidro village within the regional, national, and global contexts by providing a general account of San Isidro as an indigenous community of the Huasteca Region. After a brief history of the region in which the communality project of the village is reflected, I utilize two narratives told by two elders to explore the origins of the town and the place of San Isidro in the regional history, highlighting the agrarian movement of the 1970s and 1980s as a political event that impacted indigenous identity as well as Nahuatl language use. It also identifies migration and the advance of capitalism through modernization\(^1\) as the two main processes that bring change to the village and explain how these processes have affected the dynamics of the political organization and the use of the vernacular language. The chapter begins by describing the spaces within the limits of the village and the use of the Nahuatl language in those spaces as the language of domestic and public life and as the language of the communal project of San Isidro people.

\(^1\) With this research, modernization is understood as one consequence of the modernity project of Western Europe which was brought to other continents as part of colonialism. For Escobar (2012 [1995]: 8) the order and truth implicated in the modernity project "has been deepened by economics and developments". Modernization is part of the discourses of development "within the overall space of modernity, particularly modern economic practices (Escobar 2012 [1995]: 11) of the so-called Third World. Marín & Morales (2010: 112) consider modernization as the operationalization of the project of modernity. Lencher (1990: 10) indicates that modernization is the development of instrumental rationality, contrasting it with modernity as normative rationality. Indeed, for Lencher, modernization has become an unavoidable criterion for economic development. Modernization then brings the idea of progress and development as part of the frame of modernity.
2. Nahuatl Language as Part of an Identity and the Political Project of Nahua People

As this dissertation analyzes the discursive strategies people use when making decisions in political arenas as a mechanism that might reveal some aspects of the continuation of the Nahuatl language, this chapter highlights that Nahua people and the Nahuatl language exist within a broader colonial and national society in which Spanish and mestizo people dominate in various aspects of the contemporary social life. In that sense, we will see that the history of Nahuas is one of endless racial and interethnic tension. Part of the history of this Nahua group, as in many other native groups in post-colonial Mexico, is a history of western colonialism characterized by a tense relationship between non-indigenous—with their racist colonial character,—and indigenous with a more local and communal project, a different historical project that in turn implies the existence of a language that is different from the colonial language of the majority.

Specifically, for the Nahuas of Huasteca, it is in this historical context of ethnoracial conflict on the one hand, and vindication—by way of land redistribution—on the other, and the resistance against the colonial, and State institutions first of the Spaniards haciendados, and later of mestizo ranchers and caciques, that Nahuas from Huasteca of Hidalgo still speak their native language. In this context, important questions for this research include: what is the relationship of the continuation of Nahuatl with historical and more recent events? What is the relationship between the historical communal and local model of political participation with the still vital use of Nahuatl languages in political arenas? Could we think there is a link between the mechanism of local political
representation and participation of this group with the maintenance of the native language even though Nahuas live in the middle of a racial monolingual State ideology as part of the colonial and national modernity project? In other words, what is the role of the political communal project in the continuation the Nahuatl language among this Nahua group in the Huasteca of Hidalgo?

All of these questions are important for this dissertation and function as guides 1) to explore how Nahuatl is an essential and constitutive element of the political communal project of San Isidro and 2) to find the connection of the communal project with the continuity of the native language.

2.1 Post-coloniality, racialization and resistance as ways to navigate power

This research is conceptualized through the literature on postcolonial contexts and studies of resistance to neocolonial presents. One of the main topics among postcolonial-decolonial studies is the racialization of indigenous peoples (Mignolo & Escobar 2010; Mora 2017) as the process by which those populations have historically been marginalized because their race status is lower in the racial hierarchy. Critical studies of linguistic anthropology have recently embraced the concept of linguistic racialization (Veronelli 2015) as the process by which race is brought to language (Omi & Winant 2015; Myers 2005; Urciuoli 2013 [1996]) as well as the production of racial distinctions through it (Bonfiglio 2007). Such investigations have explored how language not only turns into a channel through which race notions travel but also the object of racialization itself. That is, linguistic racialization is examined within the framework of coloniality, as a contemporary form of domination (Quijano 2000) to understand that racial hierarchy is a historical imposition from the colonizer to the colonized (Fanon, 2017 [1967];
Coronil 1996; Trouillot 2002; Hesse 2007; Mignolo & Escobar 2010). Indeed, in the racial hierarchy, the colonized is placed as non or less-human than the colonizer. Much of this work has focused on how indigenous peoples and their languages have been racialized subjects. In that sense, because non-European languages are spoken by the colonized, they are not conceived as full systems of communication with grammars (Veronelli 2015) (see Chapter 4, section 2.1).

In Mexico, as in other colonial contexts, indigenous languages are framed as dialects or non-standard languages. Following the raciolinguistic perspective put forth by Rosa & Flores (2017) race is not seen as a body-based diversity project but as a colonial enterprise. This research intends to frame linguistic discrimination as part of the racial project of modernity and a legacy of colonialism.

The idea of resistance has also been a theme among postcolonial research agendas. Resistance in this perspective is seen as a strategy that opposes domination (Go 2016). Here, resistance is defined as acts, behavior, values, and reactions that challenge, oppose, mitigate, and deny structures of power and oppressive conditions (Scott 1990; Weitz 2001). Scotts’ (1990) pioneering work on resistance uses language and discourse as the main element to negotiate domination. Aligning with Scotts’ (1990) notion of hidden transcript, this dissertation considers the use of Nahuatl as one of the main tactics to resist and negotiate power. We will describe later in this chapter some instances in which the Nahuatl language has served to navigate and make decisions for the well-being of the community, or more precisely with and for the communal project of the Nahua people of San Isidro.
In the 1990s, scholars criticized the anthropological trend to see resistance wherever there are forms of domination; thus, its indiscriminate use undermined its utility (Brown 1996; Creswell 2000). Brown (1996) suggested that this concept was informed by a moral sensibility, leading to simplified complex forms of social interaction as if they were just reactions against forms of domination. Because scholars morally romanticized subalterns, they gave them the privilege of resistance (Creswell 2000). Such a biased vision contributed to a superficial analysis of power. However, recently scholars have encouraged us to use the term as a diagnosis and to look at different forms of power and how individuals navigate them (Creswell 2000).

According to Briceño & Coronado (1999: 273) the use of Nahuatl in Huasteca of Hidalgo corresponds to the reproduction of a pre-Hispanic agricultural culture. Moreover, they sustain that is difficult to think of the disappearance of Nahuatl because it has served as one of the defense strategies permitting access to land and promoting local identity. The recent history of the Nahua has been strongly marked by the fights for their land and their identity. For these Nahua Spanish signifies the language of mestizo caciques or the ones who are constantly trying to dispossess the indigenous of their resources. Briceño & Coronado (1999: 269) specifically sustain that as long as the identity of the Nahua keeps being a tool and support for the protection of their land and the communal institutions, the Nahuatl language will continue being spoken. Further, the fact that Nahua people from the Huasteca maintain the use of their native language in both the private and public spheres reveals a certain type of collective resistance through strategic and creative forms to navigate the social structures,
power relations, and national-colonial institutions, including the monolingual ideology of Spanish as the language of modernization.

2.2. Identity and Language

The notion of identity this research draws on is one in which interaction is at the core and language is one of the mediums by which identity is constantly constructed and negotiated. Bucholtz & Hall (2004) suggest that the importance of that relationship lies in the fact that language is one of the most inescapable sources in the constitution of identity. This is an interactional perspective because identity is not an objective state but rather a process that emerges from social interaction. According to these authors, the concepts of sameness and difference are the starting points to analyze identity regarding contextual, social, and linguistic interactions. Sameness and difference as elements to determine identity are not pre-established conditions; they are dynamic elements in constant movement. These movements are determined by the power and agency among individuals. In other words, this indicates that social grouping does not obey preexisting conditions. Instead identity is a constant process “of inventing similarity by downplaying difference” (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 371) (see Conclusions).

When understanding the Nahua identity and its relation to the Nahuatl language what is needed is an interactional and dynamic model. Indeed, what we will see throughout this dissertation is how the Nahua identity emerges around a communal project which has the Nahuatl language at a central position. Nahuatl is the language through which identity is constantly configured and reconfigured.
2.3 The Nahua Communal Project of San Isidro

Much of this dissertation will describe the communal project of the Nahuas of San Isidro as understood by intellectuals and scholars who theorize about communality. Díaz et al. (2014) defines communality as a category that allows us to socially understand indigenous communities. "Communality is the immanence of community" (Díaz et al. 2014: 36). They define community as the set of relations given by people who share a territory, a common history, a language that is identified as the common language, an organization that defines the political, cultural, social, civil, economic, and religious aspects and a communitarian system that administers and procures justice (Díaz et al. 2014: 34-5).

This dissertation analyzes the cargo communitarian system as the system that administers and procures justice in San Isidro and describes how such a system regulates the social and linguistic norms that shed light on that communal project and the value of the Nahuatl language within it. Although this approach has been taken by Ayuujk (Díaz 2007) and Zapotec (Martínez 2015) scholars, it works for many other indigenous groups in Mesoamerica.

Communality is a project of many indigenous communities in Mexico which consist of an ethic, moral, and ideological code (Díaz et al. 2014) regarding the material and spiritual existence of native groups. Díaz et al. (2014:35) sustains that accessing the communitarian components of communality helps to go into "the brain-vertebral dimension of the community". For them, the elements of communality are 1) the land as mother and territory, 2) the consensus in assembly as the mechanism to make decisions, the unpaid service offered to the community as an exercise of authority, 3) the communal work, or komontekitl for Nahuas of
San Isidro, as an act of recreation, and 4) the rituals and ceremonies as expressions of the communal gift. Further, to understand these elements leads us to understand indigenous notions of the collective and the communal and some dynamics of indigenous nations (Aguilar 2020). Tzul also recognizes communal work and assembly as a political way to reproduce decisions (Tzul 2016a: 128) as two central political forms of communal indigenous governments. Indeed, she suggests thinking in the communal code (Ibid:128) when trying to understand communal indigenous government systems.

What follows in this chapter is an ethnographic description of the Nahua people from San Isidro focusing on different sociolinguistic situations, later on a really brief description of the history of the region to later localize the Nahua people of San Isidro in the frame of the communal and modernity project.

3. Use of Nahuatl within the Limits of the San Isidro Village

The sociolinguistic situation in San Isidro can be divided in two different spheres: the private and the public². The private sphere consists of households, solares ‘backyards’, and crop fields. According to the local authority records, there are 92 households in San Isidro. The community has a patrilocal pattern and there is marriage exchange with the surrounding communities, all of them Nahua villages as well. Within a household there are regularly three, and sometimes four

² This is an operative division of the space within the community for the purpose of ethnographically describing the sociolinguistic situation of the village. Scholars have problematized such classic divisions. For instance, Tzul (2016a:116) suggests that thinking from the importance of communal work both the domestic society, the one that organizes the world of reproduction- and the political society -the one that organizes the public life, are not categorically separated. This is because in the communal life one dimension supports the other and both dimensions feed mutually.
generations: the great grandparents, the grandparents, the parents, and the children. The three first generations use, most of the time, Nahuatl as the language of interaction in almost every communicative situation. This takes place especially if the great grandparents and the grandparents are monolingual or have a limited communicative competence in Spanish even though among the parent’s generation all are bilingual. However, in recent years, I have observed, that individuals belonging to the parents’ generation try to address children in Spanish. When I conducted my master’s research from 2005 to 2008 I did not notice such a tendency. At that time, the parent’s generation addressed their children in Nahuatl. It is still the parent’s generation who now address their grandsons in Spanish and some of the children at that time are now parents and they talk to their children in Spanish. This can happen even among adults who possess a relatively limited competence in Spanish. If the household has more than one child their interactions happen also in Spanish, especially if the children already attend elementary school.

The public sphere consists of public spaces such as the kindergarten, the elementary, and the middle schools, a shelter designated to provide housing to children who are from surrounding villages in which there are no schools and are there to attend San Isidro elementary school, the five small grocery stores, the tortillería, the river, the corn mill, the church, the local government office building, and the streets, including the paraderos ‘bus stops’ and a basketball court. In all those places, except for the schools, and sometimes in the church the language of use is Nahuatl. On the streets people greet each other in Nahuatl, the interactions in the stores and the tortillería are in Nahuatl, the river conversations
and gossips are in Nahuatl, and the women’s conversations in the corn miller are in this vernacular language as well. People shower in the river, and women wash clothes there. However, in the last five years, since they have had tap water, many have installed a space to wash at home and a few households have washing machines. The practice of showering in the river has been decreasing because of the recent introduction of the sewer system in communities which is contaminating the river and people have begun to shower at home also. Backyards are very important spaces as these are the spaces where people receive neighbors, relatives, and friends. Public spaces are fundamental for carrying out the communal project but so are backyards and kitchens.

![Figure 2. Public Spaces in the Village](adapted from www.inegi.org.mx)

Both the schools and the church are spaces of contact with foreigners. The schools are Spanish use spaces par excellence since the very goal of the schooling system in Mexico has been the castellanization and acculturation of indigenous peoples (Dietz 2015; Hamel 2008). Spanish is the language of instruction and often the only language of teachers who most of the time are outsiders. Upon starting
elementary school, students report mistreatment because they do not understand Spanish. Some young people specifically refer to their suffering when turning to middle school because there, they encounter more and more monolingual Spanish teachers.

The case of the church is special because most of the religious services are performed by catechists who are individuals from the village who receive a religious training to perform services at the local level. Priests may visit the village but only on special occasions such as marriages, 15th birthday celebrations, baptisms, and the other sacraments. On such occasions the masses are in Spanish. Several of the sacrament’s celebrations require a payment for the priest to give the mass, and it is on such occasions when the priests would go to the community. The rest of the celebrations are performed by the local catechists who use Nahuatl in giving their religious services, including the sacrament of the dead. Like teachers, priests are mestizos and the only language they use within the religious activities is Spanish.

A third public space which is of special interest in this research is the building of the local government, the delegación. This space is important not only in physical but also in symbolic terms. The delegación along with the church, which is physically located next to it, are the two most important public spaces in terms of the whole community. There, people spend large amounts of time reproducing much of the collective life. Specifically, people refer to the delegación as the center of the village and the space of reference of communal life. Moreover, people associate the delegación as the place of justice and the place where authority is exercised. In this space, the local authorities carry out most of their
political obligations including the daily afternoon meetings in which they plan and
organize the work as authorities of the village, the reconciliation of conflicts
between people, and the communal assemblies. These activities are carried out
exclusively in Nahuatl unless the delegación becomes a third space of contact with
outsiders. In this space, authorities receive outsiders who enter the community
because of any governmental affair. Outsiders could be teachers, doctors, or State
officials who must apply public national policies in native communities. Those
characters must first introduce themselves to the local authorities in turn and
address them regarding any actions they will implement in the village. On those
occasions the interactions are in Spanish. If the issue implies communal
assemblies in which the State officials need to give information to the entire
population, as in the case of health campaigns, there is sometimes a simultaneous
interpreter. This space is a male-oriented space because the local political main
offices are held by men.

A parallel public space but female-oriented is the corn mill. As we will see
in the following chapter, the governmental structure has a male side and a female
one. The corn mill is the female space. It is not only an important space in terms of
the reproduction of life because women grind their corn, the principal source of
Nahua diet, but also because it is one of the few places where women interchange
their opinions and gather to share their viewpoint. This is a place of exclusively
Nahua use. This space is almost prohibited for men. The presence of men in the
corn mill would cause mockery and jokes by the inhabitants as the gendered
associations to this place pertain exclusively to women. The same happens with
kitchens within households.
The communal assemblies where people discuss, negotiate, and make decisions concerning issues within the community are a space of Nahuatl use. However, people also use Spanish mainly through codeswitching and loanwords. Since communal assemblies are paramount spaces for the political and historical communal project of San Isidro people, this dissertation pays attention to the communicative interaction that takes place within it. A great part of this dissertation is devoted to describing and analyzing communal assemblies as discursive spaces of political decision-making.

4. Huasteca of Hidalgo as part of the Huasteca Region

Huasteca is a geographical region in east-central Mexico. The region is comprised of some parts of the states of Veracruz, San Luis Potosi, Hidalgo, and a small portion of Tamaulipas, Puebla, and Queretaro (Ruvalcaba et al. 2004). Geographically this region is known for its semitropical weather and for being part of the Atlantic Coast and the Sierra Madre Oriental. (Ruvalcaba et al. 2004).
The present research takes place specifically in the Huasteca of Hidalgo. This area is in the northeastern part of Hidalgo state. The municipalities that comprise this area are San Felipe Orizatlan, Jaltocan, Atlapexco, Huazalingo, Huejutla de Reyes, Tlanchinol, Xochiapitan, Huautla, and Yahualica (Navarrete & Dolores 2014). Such municipalities are judicially administered by Huejutla de Reyes.

The municipality of interest in this dissertation is Atlapexco which in turn is compounded by a political and administrative municipal head (cabecera) and 49 scattered villages. Indeed, the entire Huasteca of Hidalgo is characterized by a dispersed distribution of its villages, provoking noticeable issues of infrastructure,
services, and communication (Duquesnoy 2010:91). San Isidro is one of the 49 villages, and it is the place where this research took place.

Figure 5. Atlapexco Municipality
(adapted from www.wikimedia.org)

4.1. Hidalgo Huasteca Economy

The economy of Huasteca of Hidalgo is sustained by cattle raising, agriculture, and commerce. Some of the main crops are corn, sugar cane, chili, cotton, beans, tobacco, and tropical fruits such as bananas, oranges, and tangerines. Corn has a special symbolic meaning through which people create a strong tie with land (Baez & Moreno, 2012). San Isidro village, specifically, bases their economy on subsistence agriculture. The main crop is corn that is alternated with beans, chili, coffee beans, and sugar cane.

4.2 Linguistic and Cultural Diversity of Huasteca Region
The Huasteca region is a multicultural and multilingual region where not only Nawa (Nahuas), Ñähñu (Otomíes), and Limasihpihní (Tepehuas), but also Teenek (Huastecos), Xi’iuy (Pames), Tachaqawaxti (Totonacas) and mestizo Spanish speakers coexist (Camacho & Carrera 2012). According to the last official intercensal survey of 2015, Hidalgo state recorded a total of 2,858,359 people, 1,035,011 (36.21%) considered themselves indigenous whereas 385,836 (13.49%) speak an indigenous language, including Nahuatl, Ñähñu, Tachaqawaxti and Limasihpihní.

The area of study of this research is the municipality of Atlapexco. Ethnically and linguistically Atlapexco is mainly Nahua. With a total of 19,902 inhabitants, 14,999 (75.36%) speak Nahuatl, 12,830 (64.46%) are bilingual Nahuatl-Spanish, and 2,127 (10.68%) are monolingual Nahuatl. The monolingual population are 65 years old or over (INEGI 2015). As mentioned previously, the municipality has 49 villages. 28 villages have less than 249 inhabitants, 6 villages less than 499, 10 villages less than 999, and only 5 towns have more than 1,000 but less than 2,499 inhabitants (INEGI 2010).

Culturally, Nahua communities in the Huasteca of Hidalgo are characterized by using Nahuatl in both private settings and public meetings. The use of Nahuatl by adults and children gives a specific world view, including a notion of community “defined in terms of citizenship rights and loyalty” (Schryer 1990: 61). Schryer (1990) also mentions that Nahua communities have specific customs such as the patrilocal residence, dances, the giving of gifts to the potential father-in-law, the gerontocratic logic, and the existence of the council of elders, musical tradition, and clothes that are worn by women and elders (Schryer 1990: 62). I
have also observed the importance of the local political and religious system in Huasteca Nahua towns, the local communal government, that prevails in many Mexican indigenous villages.

What follows is a brief history of the region to better understand the history of the Nahuas of San Isidro. One objective is to show some of the consequences of Spanish colonialism as well as to track some aspects of communality of this group and highlight the role of the communal project in the history of the Nahuas of the Huasteca Region.

5. Brief history of the region

Before the European arrival in this area, the Aztec Empire already had control over Huasteca populations. The Nahuas of the Huasteca region were not the Nahuas of the Empire. Although the area was already inhabited at least 3,000 years ago (Ruvalcaba et al. 2004), Nahua people arrived to the Huasteca around 1220 and 1270 A.D when Chichimecas warriors settled the Valley of Mexico. These Nahuas came from Michoacán and founded the provinces of Yahualica, Huazalingo, Huautla, Molango, and Ixmiquilpan (Pérez 1983). As Camacho & Carrera (2002) indicate, before the imperial invasion, the Huasteca region managed to stay separate from the center of Mesoamerica, maintaining a certain degree of autonomy. However, with the advance of the empire towards the

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3 As Sandoval (2017) points out there is a misconception in thinking of the Nahua speakers as the same as the Aztecs. This misconception is related to the supposedly unique origin of the Mesoamerica populations, spread by the State in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the goal of creating unity within the nation. See Sandoval Arenas, Carlos O. 2017. “Displacement and Revitalization of the Nahuatl Language in the High Mountains of Veracruz, Mexico.” Arts and Humanities in Higher Education 16 (1): 66–81.
northeast, Huasteca communities were obligated to pay tribute to the Aztecs. The Nahuas were a warrior group who were forced to fight against the Aztecs of Tenochtitlan, making an alliance with the Señorío de Metztitlán and avoiding paying tribute to the former until 1487 when the mighty Aztec empire defeated them. The empire conquered the city of Huejutla in that same year, but its rebellion forced the Aztecs to reconquer the area again. Although the Nahuas resisted and fought against Ahuizotl—one of the Aztec leaders that governed the Empire—they later fell under the control of Moctezuma Xocoyotzin in 1501, becoming tributaries of the empire until the arrival of the Spaniards (De Alva, 1985).

When the Spaniards took over the territory, they established colonial provinces, delimiting a colonial jurisprudence or corregimientos through encomiendas and congregations. The Spanish imposed the structure of the altepetl which was similar to the Spanish structure of mayoral offices in which the mayor resided in office and collected the tribute now charged for the colony (Camacho & Carrera 2002; Carrera 2018). Yahualica and Huejutla somehow territorially corresponded to the autonomous pre-Hispanic administrative unities. These unities were probably assigned to the encomienda between 1531 and 1533. Indeed, Yahualica was given in encomienda to the conqueror Gómes Nieto in 1533 (Camacho & Carrera 2002). Later in 1547, it became a town directly dependent on

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4 The encomienda was the Catholic institution by which the Spaniards exploited labor and surplus from indigenous populations in colonial times (Mysyk, 2015).
5 Altepelt was the political, social, and administrative entity of Mesoamerica. See Federico Fernández-Christlieb (2015) Landschaft, pueblo, and altepetl: a consideration of landscape in sixteenth-century Central Mexico, Journal of Cultural Geography, 32:3, 331-361.
6 Yahualica refers to the territory where Atlapexco belonged during the colonial times (De Gortari 1987), so this part of the text uses Yahualica as the main reference to indicate the area in which San Isidro is historically framed.
the king. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Yahualica also became the cabecera of corregimiento, holding supreme authority and concentrating the tribute for the entire jurisdiction (De Gortari 1987). The whole area of what today is the Huasteca of Hidalgo comprised the corregimientos of Huejutla, Yahualica, and Metztitlán.

Due to the lack of minerals in the Huasteca, no mines were constructed, however in the seventeenth century the Spanish built haciendas and introduced cattle, forcing the indigenous people to work there as slaves. The introduction of cattle brought the capture and trade of indigenous people in exchange for livestock especially in the plains, leaving aside the more mountainous parts where indigenous people escaped from slavery for at least two centuries (Pérez 1983; Carrera 2018). 7 However, some haciendas were built on lands stolen from indigenous settlements in the plains, not only with the idea of better production of the land but also to use indigenous labor on their former and expropriated land (De Gortari 1987). Then not all could escape from exploitation. As haciendas stole significant expansions of land, owners offered indigenous people a piece of land as a condition to interchange their labor without receiving any payment for their work. Additionally, haciendas gave indigenous workers payments and clothes in advance, maintaining the indigenous people in a state of debt and obligated to continually work at the haciendas (Schryer 1990).

7 Carrera (2018) mentions that slave trade was alarming, especially with the government of Nuño de Guzman when the number reached the amount of about ten thousand extracted slaves. Indeed, unlike other areas, slavery was the factor that considerably affected the demography of the Huasteca.
5.1 Political Organization During the Colony

The political order imposed by the colony consisted mainly of the appropriation of land from Spaniards. *República de Indios* and *República de Españoles* were created as part of this new imposed structure (Lenkersdorf 2001). This was the first process of racial segregation between native people and Europeans during the colony. The Spanish then established a colonial regime through a territorial reorganization in which some pre-Hispanic settlements were respected but regulated under the Spanish legal system and there was also some re-setting of indigenous villages, creating the *fondo legal* (Maruri 2009). The Fundo legal was mainly in the hands of the community, thus the *República de Indios* was governed by a *Cabildo Indígena* which in the seventeenth century already had political and religious positions (Maruri 2009: 243).

The *Repúblicas de Indios* had an administrative center called *cabeceras indígenas* which in turn had subordinated villages. The *cabecera indígena* was required to pay tribute to the crown on behalf of all the small subordinated villages and hamlets that were part of it; one of the ways those villages covered such payment was through collective work, *faena* or *tequio* (De Gortari 1987). This is a historical community practice that remains today, and it is one of the central

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8 Fundo legal consisted of the recognition of the land as indigenous villages and land assigned to newly created indigenous towns, which would be under the communal property logic and served indigenous populations for production that could be used for the tribute payment (Carrera 2018: 129).

9 For centuries, the governmental structures of the indigenous have religious and civil obligations. Maruri (2009) describes the political organization of indigenous groups of central Mexico during the seventeenth century through the analysis of *Códice Techalayan*, identifying not only political positions but also religious ones. The author mentions that it is clear to observe, within such historical documents, the representation of the cabildo as the leaders of land conflicts that indigenous populations had with the crown as well as those characters who were charged with carrying out religious celebrations.

10 Faena is one of the oldest mechanisms that indigenous villages use to organize the work that the village needs in terms of infrastructure and the collective and communal work that serves the whole community (Bonfil 1996). Chapter II explains what faena is in more detail.
values, forces and energies that sustains the communal project of many indigenous communities in Mesoamerica (Bonfil 1996; Diaz et al. 2014; Tzul 2016a). The structure of cabeceras indígenas was directly linked to the control and regulation of communal land, the territory, and the collection of tribute.  

5.1.1 Cabildo Indio

*Cabildo Indio* was the administrative institution imposed by the Colony to mainly collect tribute, give the tribute to the royal authorities, and coordinate the way the resources were extracted within indigenous land, as well as to organize the *tequio* (De Gortari 1987; 48). Other functions included funding religious obligations such as the patron saint celebrations as well as to pay costs related to public constructions (Camacho & Carrera 2002). The *cabildo indígena* structure was the foundation of the indigenous political organization during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Carrera 2007, 2018), influencing the sociopolitical organization of indigenous populations since the sixteenth century. This was the colonial antecedent to indigenous participation in political life today.

11 The social and political organization based on the República de Indios vs. República de Españoles remained so until the nineteenth century and changed mainly due to The Independence War and the rise of the Nation-State. Further, colonialism, through the structures of both Repúblicas established the bases for the exploitation, segregation, marginalization, and political control of indigenous populations that continued in the following centuries. Schyer (1990) sees the current lands of Huasteca of Hidalgo as a reflection of the colonial segregation between the Indians and the Spanish, dividing the Huejutla region into two zones. The northern zone which during colonial times was mainly located around the boundaries of haciendas or asiendatlali (land of the haciendas), and the southern zone which is compounded by communities that were not close to haciendas, or altepetlali (land of the towns), those zones correspond to República de Españoles and República de Indios, respectively. Atlapexco is located within the República de Indios' zone.

12 The word *indio* is a racial colonial category that Europeans imposed over native peoples. Indio still exists in the everyday use of language among mestizo people in Mexico. This word is a racial and pejorative way to refer to indigenous people. Later the State adopted the term *indigenous* but with more or less the same sense although the term has a relatively less pejorative sense. Aguilar (2020) comments that it is not accidental that the word *indigenous* does not exist in any indigenous language in Mexico. Of course, indigenous languages have many ways to form and use ethnonyms but neither of them refers to that national category which reflects a State monolithic and homogenizing way to see native people.
5.2 The Independence Period and the Installation of the Republic

In 1824, the contemporary municipalities of the Huasteca of Hidalgo were erected, replacing old mayoral offices. By 1869 the state of Hidalgo was officially created and divided into thirteen districts, with Huejutla as the Huasteca district. This district includes the municipalities of Huejutla, Orizatlán, Yahualica, Jaltocan, Atlapexco, Huautla, and Xochiatipan (Camacho & Carrera 2012), meaning that now Yahualica incorporated within the district of Huejutla. With the establishment of the municipalities as the new administrative units, the subordinated villages were now under the control of the State. Villages that during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were subordinated to the cabeceras indígenas now had to fulfill obligations to municipal governments, creating tensions among adjacent villages especially in the southern zone of Huasteca of Hidalgo where some villages separated from each other (Schryer 1990). Within this context the village studied in this dissertation, San Isidro, was created as part of the Atlapexco municipality.

6. San Isidro Atlapexco, Hidalgo

The San Isidro population is around 600 people, positioning it among the most populated villages in the area. San Isidro, as well as many other rural towns within the Huasteca region, mainly bases its economy on subsistence agriculture in which social property is paramount. Villagers rely on rain-fed agriculture with two harvesting seasons. The first season, xopalmili, goes from May to June. The second season, tonalmili, goes from September to December (Rimada 2012). The main crop is corn. Some complementary activities to agriculture are trade
activities, production of handicrafts, woodwork, small-scale livestock breeding, participation in governmental programs, and migration to cities or large plantations of tomato, onion, potato, pepper, fruits and cereals, products that are mainly sent to urban centers and exported to the United States of America.

Figure 6. San Isidro Atlapexco, Hidalgo
(from www.google.com/maps 2020)

6.1 Creation of San Isidro, History, and Land

Now we will focus on San Isidro, the village where this dissertation took place. Going forward, this chapter specifically places San Isidro in the center and positions its recent history within the regional and national salient historical events.

While in 1910 a national revolution against the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz was beginning, San Isidro was being founded by some families who detached from the neighboring community of Iztacuatiitla. People say that the separation was due
to conflicts that arose between the families. However, nobody knows the specific reasons why seven families from Iztcuatitla wanted to create a new town.

Some San Isidro people still have memories of this detachment, which is demonstrated in the following narrative. The narrative was told by one of the San Isidro elders, Mr. Emilio, who was 73 years old at the time of elicitation and is originally from the village. As Van’t Hooft (2007) mentions, the origins of villages in the Huasteca of Hidalgo are barely documented, however, the oral tradition reflects how “Nahua(s) conceive their position within the municipality” (2007:40) and located themselves within the history of the region. Moreover, the people’s perspective provides an insider’s social model and essential values for the community, giving a central space to the Nahua ways of expression (Van’t Hooft 2007: 41). We will see how the narrative communality project also plays an important role in the conformation of the village.

There is a reason for using a solely individual voice to understand better the importance of San Isidro’s history. At the level of the inner society, there are a lot of values placed on the voice of an elder. In other words, Mr. Emilio has the responsibility of retaining his village’s history because he is old, he knows what happened before, he accumulated much wisdom in his long life and has the necessary memories to tell the history of San Isidro. Moreover, he has the responsibility, along with other elders of the community, to gather memories about the past, about the origins of many things, of the town as he mentioned when I interviewed him. However, it is also important to question if this individual voice is representative of larger sets of San Isidro’s voices as Johnstone (1996) wonders when analyzing discourse and individuality. This is a voice of only one man in the
village and it is the reflection of his positionality. His narrative is determined by several features of him, including his gender, his age, his ethnicity, his cultural identity, his class, and so on. All these features position him socially. This narrative reflects the intersection of many patterns of behavior that an elder should have in San Isidro.

On the other hand, Mr. Emilio’s narrative is also a reflection of his individuality, showing his own style and his own version of the history. Then this narrative is both, an individual but also a collective version of what happened in the past. As Johnstone (1996: 56-7) indicates, individuals when telling (hi)stories share a kind of knowledge about the world, events that are reportable and relevant in the local world. In other words, the story has among its functions the referential one. Further, (hi) stories and the telling of them create community identities. In Johnstone’s (1996;57) words, communities tell (hi)stories the same way and tell the same (hi)stories. One of the functions of (hi)stories is also to create social meaning. It is through these lenses that we can look at the following (hi)story and the rest of the provided texts in this chapter that sustain the Nahua version of their own history:

_achtwi ax axkanah eltos se altepetl nikan_
‘first there was no, no town here’

_elto me... elto mili milchiwayayah_
‘there was corn... there was cornfield, they sow cornfield’

_wa(n) mas teipah_
‘and later on’

_ki... kiixtokakeh kehni lugar para mokawaseh_
‘they liked this place to stay’

*pues mokahkeh nikan*
‘well they stayed here’

*kichihkeh ininxahkal*
‘they built their houses’

*wan mokawakoh nikan*
‘and they stayed here’

*wan milchiwayayah*
‘they sow cornfield’

*ki... kichihkeh xahkali*
‘they built huts as houses’

*kampa ni... keman wetsiyaya atl*
‘where hum... when it rained there’

*noponeh moyantiyayah*
‘therewhere the water ran’

*teipah mokahkeh nikan*
‘later they stayed here’

*makwiltih nopa*
‘those five’

*masewalmeh tlen walahkeh nikan*
‘five people of those who came stayed here’

*tlen Ixtakwatitlameh mokawakoh nikan*
‘from Ixtlacuatitla they stayed here’

*mochantlalikoh*
‘they came to built their homes’

*wan mas teipah walahtiwalahkeh*
‘and later they began coming’

*sekinok walahkeh*
‘others came’

*mochantlalikoh nikan*
‘they built their homes here’
momiyakilikheh
‘they became a lot’

wan teipah kinehkeh kichiwaseh se tiopamitl
‘and later they wanted to build a church’

kinehkeh kichiwaseh se tiopamitl
‘they wanted to build a church’

wan kinilwiyayah ne Ixtakwatitla ma kinpalewikah
‘and they asked for help from those of Ixtacuatitla’

wan axkinehkeh kinpalewiseh
‘and they did not want to help them’

enton(ce)s nikan mochihki nopa ni, ni se kali
‘then a house was built here’

se sakakali kichihkeh nopa tiopamitl
‘they built that church in a hut’

mokahkeh nikan
‘they stayed here’

wan kitlalkeh se se tlanawatihketl
‘they assigned an an authority’

tlen axkanah kiiixmatih de nepa Atlapexko
‘who do not know there in Atlapexco’

san nikan kitlalihkeh se tlanawatihketl
‘here they designated one authority’

enton(ce)s nopa tlanawatianih kintlalihkeh nikan se omeh
‘then those authorities designated some here’

kintlalihkeh nikan se omeh
‘they designated some here’

nikan kikixtiyayah tomin tlainamayayah
‘here they took money, they collected it’

wan kikixtiyayah nopa tomin
‘and they took that money’

temakayayah nochi nepa Ixtakwatitla
‘they gave all of it there in Ixtlacuatitla’
nepa konkawayayah
‘they went there to leave it’

axmokawayayah nopa tomin nikan
‘that money did not stay here’

wan teipah ne masewalmeh tlen nikan ewa-nih
‘and later these people who are from here’
ayok kinpaktih kehnopa kinchiwah
‘they no longer liked the way they treated them’

teipah ni mokahkeh
‘later they stayed’

mo.... mokamowihkeh
‘they talked to each other’

wan moilwihkeh para kitlaliseh
‘and they said themselves that they would designate’

se, se tlanawatihketl nikan komo juez
‘one, one authority here as judge’

kitlalihkeh ya
‘they designated him’

tlen ya tlen ya kiixmatkehya
‘the one that they already knew’

(tlen nepa Atlapexco tlanawahtikapah
‘the one over there in the presidency of Atlapexco’

noponeh kimakakehya se amatl para ya mokawa
‘there they gave him a document to state that he stayed’

se tlanawatihketl nikan tlen neliya temachtli
‘an authority here that was really responsable’

enton(ce)s kehnopa elki
‘then it was like that’

wan teipah noponeh ya ki... ki... kipensarohkeh
‘and later they thought it’

tlaya kitlaliseh itokah nikan ni kaltitlamitl
‘what name they would use for this community’
achtowi kitokahtihtoyah ni kalititlamlitl Matiohtla
‘they called first this community Mathiohtla’

wan teipah teipah kiihtohkeh tikkowaseh
‘and later, later they said we will buy’

se, se tlaixkopinkayotl San Isidro
‘one, one image of San Isidro’
wan tiktokahtiseh ni to... to... tochinanko
‘and we would name this our, our town’

San Isidro itokah kiihtohkeh
‘they said it is called San Isidro’

enton(ce)s kikohkeh se, se, se tlaixkopinkayotl
‘then they bought an, an, an image’

tlen nopan San Isidro
‘de ese San Isidro’
‘of San Isidro’

kikohkeh wan yanopa mokahki nikan
‘they bought it and it stayed here’

wan teipah kipensarohkeh
‘and then they thought’

kikohkeh se kikohkeh ne kamapana
‘they bought a bell’

tlanawatihkeh ma kichiwakah
‘they had it done’

kikohkeh
‘they bought it’

teipah kiihtohkeh nopan masewalmeh
‘then that people said’

(n)aman ni tikkohkehya de ni San Isidro
‘now that we bought the San Isidro’

elito totlayekankah komo patron
‘it was our guide, as our patron saint’

totlayekankah (n)aman tikilwichiwiliseh
‘now we will make it a feast’

ipan kaxtoli tonatih de ni mayo
‘on May 15th’

osea 15 de mayo kaxtoli tonatih de ni de ni mayo
‘in other words, May the 15th, the 15th day of May’

kiihtohkeh kihnopa
‘they said like that’

wan kehnopa mokahkeh
‘it remained like that’

wan sampa kiihtohkeh (n)aman tikkowaseh se tonantsin
‘and then they said we would now buy a virgin’

de la virgen del rosario yanopa kikohkeh
‘they bought the virgin of the Rosary’

(n)aman ni no tikchiwiliseh se ilwitl
‘now we will make her a feast too’

ipan chikomeh itekih de ni octubre
‘on the seventh work day of October’

entons ya nopa kiihtohkeh
‘on October 7th’

entons nopa omeh nopa tlaixkopinkayomeh ya kichihkehya
‘then from those images they already did’

se para ni se kamanali para kinixpiyaseh
‘an advertisements for their celebration’

axkanah ni a... san se nopa nopa nopa tonali
‘no this was not going to be only that day’

si no ke si lo ke cada mes tlen kitocaroh
‘but it was supposed to be every month’

kichiwiliseh nopa nopa ilwitl enton(ce)s kehnopa
‘like that they would make that that feast’

entons kinpowalahtiwalahkeh
‘then like that they keep telling’
kichihkeh de nopa kichihtiwalowih nopa ilwitl
‘like that they keep making that feasts’

wan teipah kitlalihkeh se masewali
‘then they put in charge a person’

katiya ni a... ne kintlachilis nopa santomeh
‘who would take care of these saints’
wan ya kiihtos kemanihka  kichiwaseh se, se ilwitl
‘he would say when the, the feast would take place’

enton(ce)s kehnopa kichihkeh
‘then they made it like that’

kitlalihkeh se masewali komo
‘they put a person as’

kitekitlalihkeh komo mayordomo mmm
‘in charge as a steward’

kehnopa kichihkeh para ki... para ya, ya ki-ne...
‘they did like that for him’

kiniyolmelawas nopa tlanawatianeh
‘he would tell the authorities’

komo ne tekichiwanih komo ne teki-chiwa-nih
‘they, the authorities, as authorities’

para kichiwaseh se ilwitl tlan nopa (i)pa(n) kinse
‘they would make the feast on the 15th’

ne ipan kaxtoli itekih de ni mayo wa(n) tle(n) chikome itekih
‘the 15th of May and the 7th’

itekih de octubre
‘of October’

aja yanopa enton(ce)s kehnopa mokahkeh
‘then like that  they agreed’

wan kihnopa kichihtiwalayayah nopa ilwitl
‘like that they came making the feasts’

wa(n) nopa katli... katli(ya) tekichihketl
and the one who performs the communal work’
katli(ya) kitlalihkeh para kinintlachilis nopa
‘whoever was in charge of those’

100.nopa tlaichkonpinkayomeh
‘those saints’

enton(ce)s kipiyya para mokwatotonis
‘then the one who had to take care of’
ya kintlamakayaya nochi nopa masewalmeh
‘he gave food to everyone’

wa(n) kintlamakayaya de nopa tlapisanih
‘he gave food to the musicians’

wa(n) mihtotianih nochi
‘and all the dancers’

ya icuentah kintlamakayaya
‘it was on his own to give people food’

(en)ton(ce)s kihnopa kihnopa walahtiwalayayah
‘then they came making it like that, like that’

wa(n) kino walahtiwalahki
‘and like that they came making it’

teipah kikotonakoh
‘later they finished with that’

ayokakah kinrehki mokwilis
‘nobody wanted to commit anymore’

para kini(n)tlachilis ne... ne tlaixcopinkayomeh
‘nobody wanted to accept to take care of the images’

pampa miyak tomin moyaltih ipan se xiwitl
‘because a lot of money was spent in one year’

wa(n) ayokkiaxilihkeh nopa masewalmeh
‘there was no one else’

tons tlamiko nopone
‘then it finished there’

(n)aman ikuentah se tlanawatihketl
‘now it is the authority who does that’
katli(ya) tlayekantok kitekitlaliah
‘the one the one with the highest authority is who is in charge’

yanopa, yanopa eliko (n)aman
‘it was like that now’

(n)aman kehnopa tiwalalhtiwalowih
‘now like that we have come making’

wa(n) kihnopa panok nopa, nopa tonali
‘and like that it happened that, that day’

asta para (n)aman tiistokeh ni, ni tonali
‘until now we are like that this, this day’

In Mr. Emilio's narrative there are three main themes/contents through which he narrates the origin of his town: 1) a space to cultivate mila or crop field, 2) the necessity of having a church with its patron saint along with the designation of stewards –mayordomos–, persons who would be in charge of watching them and organizing the religious celebrations-, and 3) the existence of tlanawatianihih ‘the ones who command’ or local authorities. The narrative's content shows that these three elements were the three main essential requirements to create a new community. Historically, Nahua societies have had an economy based on subsistence agriculture, and we can note the mentioning of the crop fields as the very first element to set up a village. Second and third topics are directly associated with the political organization. Within the San Isidro political and social organization, there existed two distinct figures: the authorities in charge of the religious aspects of the villages and the authorities in charge of civil ones. Indeed, in many neighboring communities the organization of the cargo system keeps those divisions. That also applies to various communities in Mesoamerica (Cohen 2000). However, in the history of San Isidro, the existence of mayordomos
disappeared but not because the cargo system left aside the religious obligations as it is showed in the lines above. As Mr. Emilio mentions, the *tlanawatiani* ‘the ones who command’ were, in fact, those figures who gave the community its foundational character. As long as the municipality accepted the recognition of the *tlanawatiani* ‘the ones who command’ as well as their own and inner organization, the San Isidro village would have the legitimacy to exist as a separated town. The relevance given to the *tlanawatiani* ‘the ones who command’ in Mr. Emilio’s words shows that the system of authorities is one of the major institutions that indigenous people maintain as a constitutional element of the Nahua society. It also shows that the State allows and cooperates with maintaining this.

Mr. Emilio’s recounting manifests how the presence of the communal political government is a foundational component in the formation of the village and the collective identity. Mr. Emilio highlights that San Isidro reached independence from Iztacuatitla when they could have a *juez*. Under these circumstances, they not only obtained strong self-recognition as a village but also obtained the official State recognition. The written records of Mr. Juan, another

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14 *Juez* refers here to the maximum authority at the local level. The word comes from Spanish and reflects the way the State recognized the local authority of villages at the municipal level. For the municipality, the recognized authority was a *juez*. In the inner community, the maximum authority is the *tlayakanketl* (see Chapter II). Both are the same person. This person has official obligations and communal obligations at the same time. The following chapter explains in detail the governmental structures including the maximum authorities.

15 Mr. Jose has personally recorded historical events of San Isidro in a notebook. He collected and keeps collecting such historical events from conversations with his grandparents and other *wewetsitsi* or elders of the community. Each time he learns of a new historical event, he adds it to his recounting of the history of the town. The records are written in Spanish due to the fact that people are literate in the dominant language but not in Nahuatl. It should be noted that Mr. Juan, as he mentioned in an interview, attended only the two first years of elementary school because when he was a child, the school system only offered the first years of elementary school and his parents did not have enough resources to send their children to school. Thus Mr. Juan became literate later during adulthood because of a personal concern, learning by himself and with the help of a Catholic priest. Mr. Juan allowed me to obtain copies of his notebook.
elder from the village, indicate that it was not until 1929, after the conflict with Iztacuatitla for not helping Matiohtla to build the church, that the latter decided to elect a provisional juez, Ignacio Bautista. The existence of this official allowed them to separate from Iztacuatitla, at least at the inner level. Thus, they no longer had to be accountable to Iztacuatitla authorities. One of the results of being independent was materialized in the purchase of two church bells, which could be possible through economic self-administration. The purchase of the bells was a result of being able to handle its own resources.

According to Mr. Juan records, San Isidro obtained official recognition on January 2nd of 1930, meaning that from 1910 to 1929 the inhabitants of the recently created village were under the control of Iztacuatitla. On this date, the municipality officially accepted Juan Agustín as juez of San Isidro. When the State accepted the existence of a juez, it not only accepted the creation of a new locality, but it also gave legitimacy to the local government and granted validity to an institution that worked similarly to the colonial institution of indigenous political representation.16

6.1.1 After San Isidro’s foundation

Scholars indicate that one of the changes that the Revolution brought to the Huasteca area was the dismantling of the power of former colonial hacienda owners. However, indigenous people were not the ones who benefited from such

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16 Since colonial times, the creation and recognition of the República de Indios took place exclusively through alcaldías mayores with their respective cabildos. After the War of Independence, the Republic, and the formation of the Nation-State, such political and administrative structures were maintained even though their names changed (Baez & Moreno, 2012). In that sense, the creation and recognition of a new village such as San Isidro followed the same scheme in which a central government establishes not only the rules but also the structures that must be fulfilled to administratively exist. It is through such processes of recognition and legitimation through a central government that the San Isidro people became an officially recognized entity and eventually started to create a local identity. In other words, the local indigenous governments since colonial times were recognized as institutions which regulated the collective use of land and as a bridge to control local resources.
changes but instead the local ranchers who came to the area in the previous century, positioning themselves as the wealthy class and political elite (Schryer 1990; Montoya 1991; Navarrete & Dolores 2014). Haciendas or ranchos, once reestablished, kept using labor rent and indigenous labor, employing day laborers and *semaneros*. In some cases, when it had labor shortages, ranchers used violence to obtain workers. As part of the coercion used to get the labor, after the civil war, municipal officers appealed to *faenas*, sending peasants to work for municipal administrative centers and even for reconstructing destroyed haciendas and ranchos (Schryer 1990:122).

When mestizo ranchers regained political and economic power, and developed a new relationship with national politics, a new era of *caciquismo* started (Montoya 1991: 117; Navarrete & Dolores 2014: 17). Colonial *hacendados* were slowly displaced by mestizo ranchers and some wealthy Nahua were also part of this social class. The members of this elite class finally became the actors that applied the same methods to exploit indigenous people and to hold the municipal government offices (Schryer 1990: 124). Some ranchers learned the Nahua language to use it to manipulate indigenous people and gain benefits (Navarrete & Dolores 2014: 25).

A passage from Mr. Juan’s written records indicates the way indigenous populations were exploited and manipulated through the structures of a Nation which helped the State continue to dispossess indigenous people.

> “Desde 1930 a 1961, todos los vecinos de esta comunidad de San isidro tenían la obligación de pagar $50 centavos monthly,”

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17 People served as unpaid servants within the houses of the hacienda owners (Schryer 1990: 110).
The passage indicates that people from the communities had obligations to help build the structure of the State instead of receiving services from it. The support that the indigenous people gave to the municipality was not only through workforce but also monetary.

The land reform of Lazaro Cardenas of 1934 consisted of distributing land to landless peasants. In the Huasteca of Hidalgo, the mestizo rancher rulers who had exploited the indigenous were the ones to implement the land reform led by Lazaro Cardenas’ government. The ranchero local government took for granted that the area was entirely communal property and the implementation of the reform consisted of only demanding the full recognition of the already communal land but now under the label of ejidos18 (Schryer 1990;133). As might be expected, the mestizo ranchers were included in such petitions. Furthermore, the State officials in charge of supervising and implementing the reform, were mostly mestizos, some wealthy Nahuas, and municipal government positions holders and those who could read and write. This left Nahuas peasants with only the option of obeying orders and decisions of those authorities. In other words, the concentration of land by mestizo ranchers that obtained their ranches by buying land in the previous century, and the control of the land reform implementation by caciques that protected their interests made an irregular implementation and

18 Ejido is a social/communal property that arose after the Revolution of 1910 as a result of the agrarian movement.
in favor of local ranchero caciques, favoring and reinforcing caciquismo (Montoya 1996; Navarrete & Dolores 2014: 30). In other words, they favored the land dispossession of the Nahua people.

At the time of the reform the limits of ejido land was not clear, and the agreements were just among communities. Many agrarian conflicts arose because of the irregular implementation of this reform. A more fair implementation of the ejidos took several decades (Plata 2014: 64). With the land reform appeared a new administrative figure called cabeceras ejidales (agrarian head towns) along with the representantes ejidales (agrarian representatives). In the case of San Isidro, the agrarian head town to which it belongs is Cochetla, a neighboring community, which in turn belonged to a fictitious ejido. San Isidro is an annex, meaning that the village depends on Cochetla regarding all agrarian concerns.

In the following excerpt of Mr. Juan’s recount of the history, we see that San Isidro experienced problems because of the irregular implementation of this land reform:

“En el año de 1939-1942, se legisló la colindancia, del ejido de Cochetla y San Tomás Huazalingo, desde Xochiaco hasta San Domingo; la cebece a ejidal de Cochetla y el anexo de San Isidro se tomó un acuerdo verbalmente sin ni un escrito, que los vecinos de San Isidro y Cochetla tendrán el derecho de trabajar dentro del ejido como hermanos y que nadie les podría privar el derecho de sus usos de cultivo. No tardan mucho tiempo a los tres años en 1945, las autoridades ejidales de Cochetla, empezaron a poner queja a la presidencia municipal el C. Leonardo Garcia...que los vecinos de San Isidro que tenían sus parcelas en Tlaltlapaya que dejaran de trabajar y que ocuparían los vecinos de Cochetla, pero el presidente no

“En the years from 1939-1942 the boundary of the Cochetla ejido and Santo Tomas Huazalingo, from Xochiaco to Santo Domingo was legislated; the ejidal head of Cochetla, and the annex of San Isidro had a verbal agreement but without any written record, that the neighbors of San Isidro and Cochetla would have the right to work within the ejido as brothers and nobody could deprive them of their rights to cultivate. Not long after, three years later in 1945, the ejidal authorities of Cochetla started to complain to the municipal president C. Leonar do Garcia...that the San Isidro neighbors who had their parcels in Tlaltlapaya had to stop cultivating them, and the Cochetla neighbors would use the

19 Politicians and ranchers created fictitious ejidos when the land reform started. This allowed them to appropriate estates for a longer period (Schryer 1990: 94).
acepto la propuesta les dijo que si hay un acuerdo, aunque verbalmente se tiene que respetar de trabajar unidos como hermanos, vieron que el presidente no les tomó en cuenta la demanda, para hacer más rápido el despojo de parcelas donde trabajaban, los vecinos de San Isidro, y los que quedaron todavía ocupando sus terrenos en aquel lugar, con el apoyo del comisariado ejidal “Juan Bautista” poco a poco le fueron quitando sus parcelas, aunque, iban a poner sus quejas con el comisariado, de lugar les hicieron justicia los encarcelaban para que dejaran difícilmente sus parcelas”

What Mr. Juan is recounting is not only that the land reform arrives at San Isidro from 1939 to 1942, but also the conflicts that the irregular implementation of the reform brought. Since no official document was given to the local populations, Cochetla verbally agreed with San Isidro to respect the borders of every parcel. The lack of official documents resulted in the encroachment on the peasant’s land by the mestizos, and when they addressed the authorities to complain, they received oppression as a response. Indeed, Mr. Juan points out that the affected peasants were incarcerated when they tried to solve the problems.

A result of reform irregularities is that the annexes would gain agrarian representation years later. For instance, San Isidro had its first ejido representative, representate, in 1976. Mr. Juan registers that the ejidal commissary of Cochetla even supported the encroachments. In other words, through the comisariado figure, the State increased the control and vigilance of land. Further, the representante became part of the local authority structure. With this new land policy, the State then reinforced the links between the tlanawatianihi ‘the ones who command’ and land regulation.

The exploitation of poor indigenous peasants continued through the region with the help of the cacique politicians. Montoya (1991: 122) suggests that
indigenous communities constituted the material base for the preservation and maintenance of the caciques. Moreover, the *faena* system continued to extract peasant labor and some taxes over crop production were charged (Navarrete & Dolores 2014: 29).

The use of communal work as the mechanism to extract indigenous resources remained so in San Isidro and surrounding communities until 1977. Some elders still remember those events, specifically Mr. Juan mentions how the figure of *juez*, of every community that constitutes the municipality of Atlapexco, had among their obligations to bring people to the cabecera to give *faena*. Moreover, other resources were equally extracted from communities under the same scheme as we can see through the following excerpt:

“y desde 1930 a 1977, cada juez de las diferentes comunidades que formaban el municipio de Atlapexco tenían la obligación de llevar sus vecinos a dar faena, a la cabecera municipal de Atlapexco y si desacataba la ordenes tenía que ser detenido en la cárcel, en cada obra como edificación de una escuela o centro de salud, o en cuando de los caciques de Atlapexco necesitaban, cercar sus potreros, el presidente municipal se encargaba de pedir morillos en las comunidades que ayí perteneciamos, la madera se entregaba en la presidencia y el autoridad municipal les repartía a los ganaderos para cercar sus potreros, cada comunidad entregaba los morillos sin ningún pago es regalado totalmente”

“and from 1930 to 1977, every judge from every community that conformed the municipality of Atlapexco had the obligation to bring neighbors to give *faena* to the municipal head of Atlapexco, and if they disobeyed these orders they had to be detained in prison. [They had to work] on every project like the building of a school, or a clinic, or when caciques from Atlapexco needed to fence their paddocks, the municipal president requested wooden poles in the communities that belong to [the municipality], the wood was given to the municipality and the municipal authority gave it to the cattlemen for them to fence their paddocks. Every community gave the wooden poles without any payment, it is [was] totally free”.

If the Nahua authority (*juez*) failed to obey municipal orders to bring people to perform *faena*, they would be detained and incarcerated. Furthermore, Mr. Juan indicates that pieces of wood were also demanded for cacique ranchers of the municipality. Once again, the structure of the local government facilitated the extracting of resources from indigenous peasants as it was from the sixteenth to eighteenth century of the colonial era when the *cabildo indio* specifically was
created and served for tribute payments and the controlling of resources. Moreover, we already saw that communal work was also used in the nineteenth century, not only by the former hacendados but also by the new mestizo ranchers who arrived at the area after the civil war. The continuation of such appropriation of resources during the twentieth century through the communal government suggests the continuation of colonial structures but now reproduced by the structures of the Nation-State.

6.1.2 The agrarian conflict

Even though the agrarian reform pretended to eradicate large scale private states (latifundia), the Huasteca of Hidalgo area as based on the colonial structures and the patronage system, allowed latifundia to continue until the 1970s and 1980s (Plata 2014: 42). It was during the ‘60s, and the end of the ‘70s that the population experienced a considerable growth, and the economic prosperity of the fifties faded way. Such reasons, along with the modernization of cattle production, the intense caciquismo in the area, and the promise of the Mexican government to reactivate the land distribution, caused poor peasants to start an agrarian rebellion (Plata 2014: 42; Schryer 1990:177). With this rebellion, peasants and the indigenous claimed the restitution of their stolen lands as well as questioned the racism with which they had been treated not only by caciques but also by the State institutions (Navarrete & Dolores 2014: 31). What was the language through which people organized and made decisions concerning the agrarian conflict? Although there is no research that highlights the role of the language during the agrarian conflict, in San Isidro people recognize that Nahuatl, the language of the
*Masewalme*\textsuperscript{20}, was the language that allowed them to organize the rebellion. Thus, we can postulate that Nahuatl could have been used in the sense of the hidden transcript: as a tool to negotiate power (Scott 1990).

According to Schryer (1990:178) the land rebellion in the Huastec of Hidalgo was possible in the ‘70s because, apart from the economic reasons, rancheros no longer spoke Nahuatl as a strategy to create alliances with Nahuas when necessary and many indigenous people similarly no longer spoke only Nahuatl but also Spanish. Educated mestizo elite with new values around the idea of modernization thought they did not need to create any link with poor peasants and the indigenous people. With the more significant expansion of the formal school, the indigenous people were forced to learn Spanish and other national symbols, separating two classes that before were, at least in some ideological and lifestyle domains, united. The racial and ethnic differentiation among the mestizo and indigenous people was accentuated with such a linguistic and ideological shift. This indicates that Nahuatl played an essential role in the agrarian conflict.

The first land re-appropriations started towards the end of the 60s and finished in the mid-‘80s. San Isidro is part of an ejido that started its regularization as a result of the agrarian conflict, but internally it continues to be organized for use as communal land. The agrarian conflict helped the people of San Isidro to obtain their ejido titles.

\textsuperscript{20} *Masewalme* literally means people in the Nahuatl language, including only indigenous persons vis a vis mestizo people which are referred to as *coyomeh*. 
When interviewing an elder from San Isidro in 2008, Mr. Marcelino, about how they obtained their property titles he started to narrate the way they participated in the peasant revolt:

_Tipehkeh, bueno pues, na nipehki ni..._
‘we started, well, I started, uhm,’

_nitekiti ininuwanya tocompañero tlen ni San Isidro_
‘working with our comrades of San Isidro’

_nochi tlen tekitl technawatiyayah nochimeh_
‘all the work that we were sent by all’

_nochi mochihtiyahki_
‘everything was doing’

_peronoponeh onkato problemas tlen tlen nopa koyomeh_
‘but there had been issues of mestizos’

_kipixtoyah tlali achi wehweyi_
‘they had great extension of land’

_wan nopa koyomehaxki kohtoyah nopa tlali_
‘and those mestizos had not bought such estates’

_san san kikwitoyah_
‘they had only only appropriated them’

_wa(n) teipan pensarohkeh la gen... ni masewalmeh comiseriadoh_
‘and later people from the agrarian office thought’

_kampa ya kiihtoh ma tikalakitih noponeh_
‘where he said that we entered there’

_para tikkixtiseh nopa tlali_
‘to take out that land’

_wan tohwantih (i)pa tikomontekitih_
‘and we always in the communal work’

_no tiyahkeh (ti)tekititoh_
‘we also went to work’

_maske mosisiniyayah nopa koyomeh_
‘although mestizos were upset’
no timahmawiyayah para tiyaseh
‘we also were afraid of going’

timoilwiah
‘we told to ourselves’

tlan tiyaseh a lo mejor tech... techmiktikih
‘if we go maybe they come to kill us’

pero axtechmiktikoh
‘but they did not kill us’

a la mejor  miyakih tiyahkeh tohwantih
‘maybe we were many’

komo se se 300 gentes tiyahkeh
‘we were like some some 300 people’

titlamewah  titlamewah
‘we hoed, we hoed’

ome  tonal  titekitikeh
‘we worked two days’

kihtoah para walaseh
‘they said that they would come’

wan nikan tlen Cochotla
‘and from Cochotla’

de mero cabecera Cochotla
‘from the head Cochotla’

nochi  kiwikakeh tepostli no
‘they all brought guns also’

armaskiwikakeh
‘they brought guns’

porque tlan walaskiah
‘because if they would come’

pos no no no momanawiskiah campesinos
‘so the peasants would also defend themselves’

pampa inihwantih nopa koyomeh
‘because they the mestizos’

**nopa yohwantih mosenmakayyah kinmiktiseh campesinos**
‘they dared to kill peasants’

**wa(n) noponeh tohwantih tiyahkeh ika tomacheteh guingaroh**
‘and there we went with our machetes and hoes’

**tohwantih axtkipiah caravinah**
‘we have no guns’

**sekin kipixtokeh caravinah inihwantih kiwikakeh**
‘some have carabine they brought it’

**no kiwikakeh retrocargas, rifles, chalaqueras**
‘they also brought breechloader, rifles, chalaqueras’

**sekin kiwikakeh pistolas**
‘some broght pistols’

**la mayoria kiwikakeh retrocargas 20**
‘the majority brought breechloader 20’

**para tlan walaskiah pos no kinmakaskiah**
‘in case they came they would kill them also’

**a parte no istoyah motlatihtoyah ika arma**
‘in addition, they hid with guns’

**para kampeka walaskiah**
‘on the way they would come’

**no kinmakaskiah**
‘they would kill them too’

**wan noponeh nop a ome tonal eyi tonal titekitikeh**
‘and there, there two days, three days we worked’

**ax-tlenoh onkak pero kena waliyayah, kiihtoah**
‘nothing happened but they were going to come, they said’

**pero axahsikoh**
‘but they did not come’

**kimachilihkeh para axaatiseh tlatewikih**
‘they felt they could not fight (with us)’
wan tohwantih kenano timomahmatiyayah
‘and we were also afraid’

tohwantih tlatsalan tikalahkeh
‘we put ourselves in the middle’

pus maneltik titekitikeh
‘we all worked together’

para axkiitakeh konke itstok Cochotla
‘so they don’t see where Cochotla is’

konke itstok San Isidro
‘where San Isidro is’

konke itstok Itstakwatitla
‘where Ixtacuatitla is’

konke itstokeh itsokalmeh
‘where the ones from Itzoca are’

Atencuapa, Atlaltipa, Oxpantla
‘Atencuapa, Atlaltipa, Oxpantla’

eee Atotomoc ne Iztacuayo kaneka
uhm Atotomoc that Iztacuayo for the other side’

poxtako atlahko no yahkeh vecinos
‘from the Poxtla Atlajco neighbors also went’

timiyakih tielitoh
‘we went many’

hasta Akwatinla no yahkeh
‘from Iztacuatinla also went’

pero tikchihkeh nopa tekitl
‘but we made the work’

se samanoh titekitikeh chikwaseh tonal seis dias
‘we worked one week, six days, six days’

timoaguantarohkeh axtlanki nopa tekitl
‘we put up with, the work did not finish’

seyok se samanoh tiyahkeh
‘we went another week more’
titekititoh tiktamiltihkeh
‘we went to work, we finished it’

elto potreroht xawayayah sakatl
‘we weeded grass where the paddock was’

tikkwikeh picos
‘we brought picks’

kiwikakeh k(i)wikakeh nopa barretillas
‘they brought crowbars’

kixawayayah sakatl
‘we weeded grass’

tlaxikohkeh san tlawel 15 dias
‘they lost weight in 15 days’

mohmostlah tel domingo timosewiyayah
‘every day, but Sunday we rested’

maske ax-onkah sintli tlen tlakwaseh
‘there was no corn to eat’

sekin k(i)wikayayah tle(n) tlakwaseh
‘some brought something to eat’

sekin axk(i)wikayayah
‘some did not bring’

porque axonkah axonkah tomin
‘because there is not, there is no money’

puro tekitl techmakayayah
‘they gave us just work’

pero axtlenoh onkah
‘but there was nothing’

nopa coyotl axmosenmak tlatewiki
‘the mestizos did not dare to come to hit us’

o techtewiki
‘or to hit us’

noponeh teipah tohwantih eee... yowiyayah Huejutla
‘later we uhm went to Huejutla’

_sekin no momahmatiyayah_  
‘some were also afraid’

_ _p_ero no _v_ el _a_xakah _ki_ miktihkeh_  
‘but the good thing is that did not happen, they did not kill anyone’

_axakah kiwihwitehkeh_  
‘they did not hit anyone’

_wa(n) sekin kena kinwihwitekiyayah tlen sekanok comunidades_  
‘and they did hit some from the other place, other communities’

_miyak k_ inmiktihkeh _tlen sehkanok ejidos_  
‘they killed many from other ejidos’

_ _p_ero _n_ ikah _tlani cabecera Cochotla axakah k_ imiktihkeh_  
‘but from here Cochotla, the head, they did not kill anyone’

_wan naman nopa coyotl_  
‘and now that mestizo’

_(axtikmatis tlen kihtoh)_  
‘he did not what he said’

_kihtoh _teipah ya kiihtoh_  
‘he said later he said’

_ _p_ara _axkenihki t_ lan _kinehkehya t_ lali _tlen Coch..._  
‘anyway, nothing happens, they appropriated Cochotla’s land’

_Cochotla ma _k_ ikwitikakah _kehnopa kiihtoh_  
‘Cochotla, they will take it, he said like that’

_inihwantih _axkipiah tlali_  
‘they are landless’

_neliya yeka kitilankeh nopa tlali_  
‘they took that land because of that’

_kehnopa _kiihtoh nopa coyotl Efrain_  
‘like that said mestizo Efrain’

_Zuñiga itokah nopa coyotl_  
‘Zuñiga was the mestizo’s name’
teipah ya noponeh
‘after that’

tekitikeh ome xiwitl
‘we worked for two years’

tohwantih axtechmakakeh nopatlan
‘we did not receive that land’

pero kinmakakeh tlali
‘but they gave land’

ne ni, ne ni Iztacuatitla wan ne Mirador
‘to people from Iztacuatitla and El Mirador’

noponeh ewanih kinmakakeh
‘the ones who were born there they gave land’

pero antes de ke kitilanaseh nopatlan
‘before they took that land’

nopa Mirador ewanih ipa(n) kisolicitaroyayah nopatlan
‘they had already claimed it’

wan como inihwantih adelante yowiyayah
‘and like they were ahead’

kena kin(i)miktihkeh nopacampesinos Huejutla
‘in Huejutla they did kill peasants’

mismo Efraín igentes
‘Efrain’s team’

kinmiktihkeh (nik)mati ke 5 campesinos de, de Mirador
‘I think they killed five peasants from El Mirador’

kehnopa kichihkeh
‘they did like that’

wan yeka kwalankeh masewalmeh
‘that is why people got upset’

major kalahkeh noponeh tekitikeh
‘they better went to work there’

(n)aman kikixtihkeh nopatlan
‘they now took that land’
(n)aman kitekiwiah ne Istakwatitla
‘now people from Iztacuatitla work there’

wan Mirador ewanih
‘and the ones who were born in Mirador’

timopalewikeh kwali maske onkak kwalanti
‘even with problems we really helped each other’

pero ax no axakah mas tlen nikah San Isidro axki...
‘uhm nobody else from here Saint Isidro’

ax(a)kah kin(i)makakeh
‘they did not shoot anybody’

pero kena kinmakakeh ne Mirador ewanih
‘but they did shoot people from the Mirador’

makwiltih kinmakakeh
‘they killed five from the Mirador’

seis ika se, se representante de la CCI
‘six with a CCI representative’

en Huejutla nepa kinmakakeh
‘in Huejutla they killed five’ or the president

ka(n) se oficinas CCI noponeh kinmakakeh
‘where the CCI office is, there they shot them’

wan nopa coyotl katli nopa representante
‘and the mestizo, the representative’

o presidente defensor de los campesinos
‘or the president’s defender of peasants’

primero kiitskikhkeh kitemahmatiyayah
‘they first caught him, threatened him’

para kinekiyayah ma ax... axkinpalewi campesinos
‘because they did not want him to help peasants’

kikwikoh judiciales tlen del estado
‘policemen from Pachuca came to catch him’

Pachuca kiitskikoh kiwihwitehkeh
‘they took him, hit him in Pachucha’

*nopa líder tlen agrario pero de momentoh akkimiktihkeh*
‘at that moment, they did not kill that leader’

*ipan 70 kimiktihkeh (nik)mati ipan 70*
‘at that time, the ‘70s, I think, in the 70s’

*72 a los dos años kimiktihkeh*
‘they killed him in 72, after two years’

*coyotl katik techpalewiyaya nopa tohwantih*
‘they killed there the mestizo who helped us’

*kimiktihkeh Huejutla*
‘they killed him in Huejutla’

*kitimiktihkeh kampa, kamapa ne seguro social*
‘they killed him where, where there the hospital is’

*tle(n) entrada de Chacatitla nopone kinmakakeh (i)ka tiros*
‘in the entrance door to Chacatitla, they shot him’

*kehnopa elki*
‘it was like that’

*ajám, noponeh ya kewak tokwantih*
‘uhm, there like us’

*como tlen ejidatarios los 92*
‘as the 92 ejido members’

*ejidatarios comisariado tlen Cochotla kisolicitaroh*
‘the ejido members of Cochotla claimed it’

*tlen nopone cerificados de derechos agrarios*
‘the agricultural duties certificate’

*keman elto... presidente de la republica Caros Salinas de Gorttari*
‘it was when Carlos Salinas de Gortari was the president of the Republic’

*nopa kisolicitarohkeh*
‘they claimed this’

*pampa kinehkeh para ma nesi kena i(t)stokeh*
‘because they wanted to seem like they were there’

*katli derechosos ipan se ejido*
‘the rightful holders of the ejido’
wan yeka noponeh, tohwantih los 92 derechosos
‘that is why we the 92 rightful holders’

kena techmakakeh tocertificadoh
‘they gave us our certificate’

wan noponeh naman kasi kwali tiistokeh
‘and now we are almost good’

axmas onkah problemah
‘there are no more problems’.

Within this narrative, we not only see how San Isidro people participated in the agrarian conflict but also how Mr. Marcelino perceives the fact that they have ejido titles as a result of their participation in this movement. When interviewing him, I asked him to tell me about when and how they received their official land documents. When Mr. Marcelino started to answer my question, I did not expect to hear about San Isidro’s participation in the revolt, especially because the adjusted distribution of the San Isidro land annex took part in 1991, many years after their participation in the agrarian conflict, when Carlos Salinas was president of Mexico. During this presidential period, the land redistribution officially ended, so the national government made its last attempt to correct the irregularities of the 1930s land reform (Navarrete & Dolores 2014).

This means that San Isidro waited almost 20 years to see one of the results from participating in the agrarian conflict, but Mr. Marcelino knows that receiving

21 The need for land was, of course, the main motivation to undertake the recuperation of land. However, the violence and human rights crimes committed against them was another important reason why they decided to undertake this agrarian movement. For example, Reygadas et al. (2015) documented narratives in which people remember how they were whipped and sometimes hanged, threatened with guns, forced to work extremely long hours, forced to sell their parcels and when peasants refused, the caciques took them without paying, accused them of performing witchcraft with the goal of killing and sexually assaulting them.
their titles was a victory. Before the land reform and the agrarian conflict, the people of San Isidro were working the land under the logic of communal property with *tímulos primordiales*. Once the land reform reached the area, San Isidro was one of the communities that the creators of the fictitious ejidos included within the Cochotla ejido. With the land invasion, the victories, and the restructuring, they finally formed part of the ejidal property system. The official certificates only recognize two *ejidatarios* within the whole territory that San Isidro annex possesses, however the *derechosos*, the people who have the right to cultivate the land, as Mr. Marcelino mentions, are 92 people. When receiving such certificates, they decided to keep the communal regime because that allows them to maintain the same system of having private lots and at the same time to have a communal area whose use is determined by the assembly. Further, this is one way the San Isidro people fought and gained distance from the political regimen of the nation-state. This is an excellent example of how communality was the political project behind the fight against disposessions of territories in which communal structures played a crucial role in territorial defense and reclamation (Tzul 2016b:130).

The people from San Isidro used the arable land as communal since the formation of the community. One of the problems with the agrarian conflict was precisely how communities were going to distribute the reappropriated land. San Isidro participated but no arable land was integrated in their annex, as Mr. Marcelino points out, so they did not face the problem of redistribution again.

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22 Colonial land title provided by the Spanish crown to indigenous peoples.
Currently, they still have the communal land modality to organize the arable land and the community, but officially they are registered under the ejido regime.

To organize the tactics used in the rebellion, Nahua communities resorted to discussing issues through the communal government system. The discussions and decisions were made through the assemblies and collective meetings led by the local authority. Moreover, the maintenance of the communal property structure, like in San Isidro, allowed them to precisely maintain their internal political structure. This means that this time the communal authority’s organizational structure as Tzul (2016a), Díaz et al. (2014) and Martínez (2015) suggest served for communal interests instead of controlling the extraction of indigenous resources as it had been used since colonial times. In the case of San Isidro, the narrative of Mr. Marcelino shows how communal work was also used in favor of the conflict. He mentions that peasants were accustomed to participating in communal work and they used the same mechanism to “invade” the mestizo land. He also mentions that those peasants worked together until the caciques accepted that the land was for the people who worked it. They worked the land for two consecutive years until they could make sure it was recognized as peasants’ property.23

Both mechanisms of searching for consensus in collective assemblies, as well as the communal work, this time were utilized in favor of communities. This demonstrates how social groups dynamically take advantage of the institutions, even though the historical structural conditions most of the time disfavor indigenous use of such structures for their interests. Sometimes the conditions

23 The mechanism of appropriation, which consisted of claiming the land that people worked on and belonged to them, became legal around 1972 (Montoya 1996: 122).
allow indigenous people to negotiate with the powerful. The conditions of the agrarian conflict show how the powerless can use their collective agency to navigate power. This time people reverted the historical use of the local and communal government structure for their own purposes, gaining some benefits.

6.2 The 90s and the Twenty-First Century: The Era of Migration

People in San Isidro remember the beginning of an intense migration era in the early 90s. The national crisis of the mid 80s is more clearly reflected by memories about people who had to migrate to other states due to the lack of job offers in the region and the increase in poverty. It was during the ’80 and ’90s that
Mexico started to open its economic policies to the neoliberal tendencies in the world. In 1991, Mexico entered into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), opening a new era for a more globalized economy of the country\textsuperscript{24}. Although the modernization of San Isidro started in the 50s with the presence of formal schooling, it continued with the construction of the highway Mexico City-Pachuca-Huejutla in 1970-72 (Stile 1982), which brought to San Isidro its first road in 1975. However, this only connected to Achichipik, a neighboring community. It was not until the 90s that a road to Huejutla, not yet paved but more viable for transportation, initiated the first wave of migration of people to the urban centers. Modernization is still an ongoing process, and in the last decade San Isidro has been receiving services such as tap water, the paved road, and the sewer system.

Often people move to urban destinations such as Huejutla, Pachuca, Tulancingo, Monterrey, Tampico, and Mexico City, industrialized cities with developed commercial sectors. In those places, men find employment mainly in the construction sector or as industrial workers and women in domestic work as a continuation of the colonial servant notion and exploitation (Cumes 2014). On the other hand, the ’90s also brought another type of migration to work in big plantations located in the north and west-north-central Mexico. It is in those large plantations where people become part of the labor force as day agricultural

\textsuperscript{24} A critical moment of the adoption of the neoliberal project in Mexico was in 1992 when one of the first neoliberal constitutional reforms passed, affecting those living in rural areas (Pastor & Wise 1997). This legal reform involved a shift in land tenure, privileging private property over the collective property (Stanford 1994; Assies 2008). With this change, the ejido and communal property can, for the first time, be sold or leased, removing its properties of being inalienable and imprescriptible (Olivera 2005). Indeed, San Isidro obtained their titles in 1991, in part this final legitimization was because the federal government was preparing the political landscape for such constitutional reform. The neoliberal reform was the entrance door to a prominent land State policy of abandonment. The national programs were dedicated to regularizing the new regime more than providing peasants with agricultural inputs or technological training. The agricultural sector started to face a vast depletion (Schryer 1990).
laborers. This migration happens in several regions of the country, meaning that many rural and indigenous communities were already more connected to urban and capitalist centers of production through a still-precarious road network. Indeed, those communities base their economies increasingly on profiting from their labor force, thus converting this into the primary activity for survival (Báez et al., 2012). In other words, indigenous people represent one of the primary workforces of industrial and large-scale agricultural centers.

In San Isidro people remember periodically going out of the village to work since the early and mid ’90s. Through the local radio advertisements, people heard about contratados (temporary employment contracts) in which they found work harvesting crops, fruits, and cereals in periods of one, three, six, nine months or one year. Large-scale agricultural farms located in several states of the country send contractors to areas like the Huasteca to recruit people.

As in the previous centuries, those who accept work in these plantations receive advance payments that they can leave with their families. The continuation through centuries of such methods of recruitment, once again, indicates that the indigenous people are used as a cheap labor force. Unlike during the previous centuries they must now move far away from home and be away from their families, receive monthly payments, keep isolated in shelters, work compulsory six days per week and perform working days of more than eight hours. The contractors find and transport people up to the place where the workforce is required. Besides accommodation, employers also offer daily food, however, people always express their discomfort about the appalling conditions of shelters where all sleep together on the floor, have meager access to a shower, and have a
minimal diet. Moreover, they must pick specific amounts of crops or fruits to receive the promised payments. If they fail to gather the required amounts, their payments will be decreased, or in some cases, the contractors can decide to fire them, meaning that the advance payment must be returned. Although people in San Isidro know that the conditions of contratos are exploitative and inhumane, they have no other way of surviving. With this way of survival, indigenous people from the Huasteca of Hidalgo close the twentieth century and start a more consolidated global and neoliberal era.

According to my observations from 2005 to date, San Isidro has started at the twenty-first century with a high level of migration of both: 1) the way in which adult men migrate in a short-term fashion through contratos and 2) adolescent and young people migrate for more extended periods to urban centers. Many people who migrate dream of living in urban centers indefinitely, but many conditions prevent them from meeting such wishes. In the case of contratos, the incomes received from such precarious employment do not allow agricultural workers to settle in cities because of the low and temporary salaries they obtain. Moreover, the very conditions of contratos imply people are continually moving back and forth between the communities to the production centers. Further, most of the people taking contratos are adults and sometimes elders who still have strong feelings of attachment to the hometown and a strengthened regional and ethnic identity, returning during the migration periods to the xopalmili and tonalmili harvesting seasons, allowing them not to entirely abandon their agricultural activities as well as to participate in their communal responsibilities. In the case of younger people migrating for indefinite and longer periods, they
primarily face racism and discrimination that along with their low levels of formal education (Cruz 2020), confine them to precarious employment in the industrial and commercial sectors. After experiencing urban poverty, the individualistic logic of the mestizo society, the lack of opportunities, and racial exclusion, they end up returning home where they at least will have the family and communal support.

International migration towards the United States of America has lately been an option for Huasteca people. Specifically, Serrano (2006) indicates that in 2000 Hidalgo state, for the first time, stood out among the states that have considerable rates of international migration with Huasteca as the area that has the most significant number. Although San Isidro people have this possibility in mind, there are very few men who have crossed the border and sent money to their family.

Although the structure of the local authority stays within the political inner organization as the institution that dictates the norms and rules of behavior within San Isidro, the migration is impacting the communal and historical dynamic of faenas and political and religious participation of people within the system. Communal obligations are linked to the rights of individuals to cultivate the land and eventually obtain a solar (a non-cultivable spot of land) in which they would build a house. The cargo system requires unpaid service every year from men and women over 18 years old. This service must be contributed in three main ways: 1) individuals must hold cargos (positions) over their lifetime, 2) they must perform faenas regularly, and 3) every head of household must pay annual cash cooperation. The obligatory character of communal activities, specifically the first and second, obligate people to be uninterruptedly in the community. Many times,
this is a condition that people consider when they decide to return home once they migrate.

7. Thick Translation: The History of San Isidro and San Isidro

Participation in the Agrarian Movement

The texts that follow are the ones used throughout this chapter. I provide here a thick translation of every utterance. The process of translation was based on several lines as it is showed below. I worked on Spanish translations directly with collaborators, especially when glosses and other resources were not transparent in terms of the appropriate sense for certain words. If a chapter utilizes data from texts this will contain a thick translation of them.

7.1 The History of San Isidro

1. aktowi ax axkanah eltos se altepelt nikan
achtowi ax axkanah elto-se al-ttepelt nikan
first NEG be-IRR one water.mountain here
‘primero no, no había un pueblo aquí’
‘first there was no, no town here’

2. elto me... elto mili milchiwayayah
elto me... elto mili mil-chiwa-yaya-h
be field be corn.field corn-field-make-IPFV-PL
‘había mil... había milpa, hacían milpa’
‘there were corn... there were cornfield, they sowed cornfield’

3. wa(n) mas teipah
wan mas teipah
CNJ more late
‘y más tarde’
‘and later on’

4. ki... kixtokakeh kehni lugar para mokawaseh
ki... kix-toka-ke-h kehni lugar para mo-kawa-se-h
3OBJ.SG 3OBJ.SG-like-PAST-PL DEM place to REFLX-let-IRR-PL
‘les gustó este lugar para quedarse’
‘they liked this place to stay’
5. pues mokahkeh nikan
   pues mo-kah-ke-h nikan
   pues REFLX-let-PAST-PL here
   ‘pues se quedaron aquí’
   ‘so they stayed here’

6. kichihkeh ininxahkal
   ki-chih-ke-h inin-xah-kal
   3OBJ.SG-make-PAST-PL 3POSS.PL-hut-house
   ‘hicieron sus casas’
   ‘they built their houses’

7. wan mokawakoh nikan
   wan mo-kaw-a-ko-h nikan
   CNJ REFLX-stay-PUR-PL here
   ‘y se quedaron aquí’
   ‘and they stayed here’

8. wan milchiwayayah
   wan mil-chiwa-yaya-h
   CNJ corn.field-make-IPFV-PL
   ‘y hacían milpas’
   ‘they sowed cornfield’

9. ki... kichihkeh xahkali
   ki... ki-chih-ke-h xah-kali
   3OBJ.SG 3OBJ.SG-make-PAST-PL hut-house
   ‘hicieron casas de jacal’
   ‘they built huts as houses’

10. kampa ni... keman wetsiyaya atl
    kampa ni... keman wetsi-yaya atl
    where DEM when fall-IPFV water
    ‘donde este... cuando llovía ahí’
    ‘where hum... when rained there’

11. noponeh moyantiyayah
    noponeh mo-yanti-yaya-h
    there REFLX-run-IPFV-PL
    ‘ahí donde corría el agua’
    ‘there where the water ran’

12. teipah mokahkeh nikan
    teipah mo-kah-ke-h nikan
    later REFLX-let-PAST-PL here
‘después se quedaron aquí’
‘later they stayed here’

13. makwiltih nopa
makwiltih nopa
five[ABS] DEM
‘esos cinco’
‘those five’

14. masewalmeh tlen walahkeh nikan
masewal-meh tlen walah-keh nikan
people-PL REL come-PAST-PL here
‘cinco personas de los que vinieron se quedaron aquí’
‘five people of those who came stayed here’

15. tlen Ixtakwatitlameh mokawakoh nikan
tlen Ixtakwatitla-meh mo-kawako-h nikan
REL Ixtakwatitla-PL REFLEX-let-PUR-PL here
‘de Ixtacuautitla se quedaron aquí’
‘from Ixtlacuautitla they stayed here’

16. mochantlalikoh
mo-chan-tlali-ko-h
REFLEX-home-put-PUR-PL
‘vinieron a hacer sus casas’
‘they came to make their homes’

17. wan mas teipah walahtiwalahkeh
wan mas teipah walah-ti-walah-ke-h
CNJ more later come-LIG-come-PAST-PL
‘y más tarde empezaron a venir’
‘and later they began coming’

18. sekinok walahkeh
sekinok walah-ke-h
others come-PAST-PL
‘otros vinieron’
‘others came’

19. mochantlalikoh nikan
mo-chan-tlali-ko-h nikan
REFLEX-house-put-PUR-PL here
‘se hicieron sus casas aquí’
‘they built their homes here’

20. momiyakihilihkeh
mo-miyaki-lih-ke-h
se hicieron muchos
‘they became a lot’

21. wan teipah kinehkeh kichiwaseh se tiopamitl
wan teipah ki-nuh-ke-h ki-chiwa-se-h
CNJ later 3OBJ.SG-want-PAST-PL 3OBJ.SG-make-IRR-PL
se tiopamitl
one church[ABS]
y después quisieron hacer una iglesia’
‘and later they wanted to build a church’

22. kinehkeh kichiwaseh se tiopamitl
ki-nuh-ke-h ki-chiwa-se-h se tiopamitl
3OBJ.SG-want-PAST-PL 3OBJ.SG-make-IRR-PL one church[ABS]
‘quisieron hacer una iglesia’
‘they wanted to build a church’

23. wan kinilwiyayah ne Ixtakwatitla ma kinpalewikah
wan kin-ilwi-yaya-h ne Ixtakwatitla
CNJ 3OBJ.PL-say-IPFV-PL DEM Ixtakwatitla
ma kin-palewi-kah
EXHRT 3OBJ.PL-help-EXHRT.PL
‘y les dijeron a los de Ixtacuatitla que les ayudaran’
‘and they asked for help to those of Ixtacuatiitla’

24. wan axkinkehkeh kinpalewiseh
wan ax-ki-nuh-ke-h kin-palewi-se-h
CNJ NEG-3OBJ.SG-want-PAST-PL 3OBJ.PL-help-IRR-PL
‘y no quisieron ayudarles’
‘and they did not want to help them’

25. enton(ce)s nikan mochihki nopa ni, ni se kali
entonces nikan mo-chih-ki nopa ni ni se kali
then here REFLX-do-PAST DEM DEM DEM one house
‘entonces aquí se hizo esta este... una casa’
‘then hum a house was built here’

26. se sakakali kichiwheh nopa tiopamitl
se sak-a-kali ki-chih-ke-h nopa tiopamitl
one grass-house[ABS] 3OBJ.SG-do-PAST-PL DEM church[ABS]
‘en una casa de zacate hicieron esa la iglesia’
‘they built that church in a hut’

27. mokahkeh nikan
mo-kah-ke-h nikan
REFLX-let-PAST-PL here
‘se quedaron aquí’
‘they stayed here’

28. wan kitlalke se se tlanawatihketl
wan ki-tlal-ke-h se se tla-nawatih-ketl
CNJ 3OBJ.SG-put-PAST-PL one one INDEF.OBJ-command-AG.SG
‘y pusieron a una una autoridad’
‘they assigned an an authority’

29. tlen axkanah kiixmatih de nepa Atlapexko
tlen axkanah ki-ixmati-h de nepa Atlapexko
REL no 3OBJ.SG-know-PL of DEM Atlapexko
‘que no lo conocen de allá de Atlapexco’
‘who do not know there in Atlapexco’

30. san nikan kitlalihkeh se tlanawatihketl
san nikan ki-tlalih-ke-h se tla-nawatih-ketl
only here 3OBJ.SG-put-PAST-PL one INDEF.OBJ-command-AG.SG
‘solo aquí lo pusieron un delegado’
‘here they designated one authority’

31. enton(ce)s nopa tlanawatianih kintlalihkeh nikan se omeh
enton(ce)s nopa tla-nawatia-nih
then DEM INDEF.OBJ-command-AG.PL
kin-tlalih-ke-h nikan se omeh
3OBJ.PL-put-PAST-PL here one two
‘entonces esas autoridades pusieron aquí unos cuantos’
‘then those authorities designated some here’

32. kintlalihkeh nikan se omeh
kin-tlalih-ke-h nikan se omeh
3OBJ.PL-put-PAST-PL here one two
‘pusieron aquí unos cuántos’
‘they designated some here’

33. nikan kikixtiyayah tomin tlainamayayah
nikan ki-kixti-yaya-h tomin
here 3OBJ.SG-take-IPFV-PL money

tla-inama-yaya-h
INDEF.OBJ-collect-IPFV-PL
‘aquí sacaban dinero, cobraban’
‘here they took money, they collected it’
34. wan kikixtiyayah nopa tomin
   wan ki-kixti-yaya-h nopa tomin
   CNJ 3OBJ.SG-take-IPFV-PL DEM money
   ‘y sacában ese dinero’
   ‘and they took that money’

35. temakayayah nochi nepa Ixtakwatitla
   te-maka-yaya-h nochi nepa Ixtakwatitla
   INDEF.OBJ-give-IPFV-PL todo DEM Ixtlakwatitla
   ‘lo daban todo allá en Ixtacuatitla’
   ‘they gave all of it there in Ixtlacuatitla’

36. nepa konkawayayah
   nepa k-on-kawa-yaya-h
   DEM 3OBJ.SG-DIR-let-IPFV-PL
   ‘alla lo iban a dejar’
   ‘they were going to leave it’

37. axmokawayaya nopa tomin nikan
   ax-mo-kawa-yaya nopa tomin nikan
   NEG-REFLX-let-IPFV DEM many here
   ‘no se quedaba aquí ese dinero’
   ‘that money did not stay here’

38. wan teipah ne masewalmeh tlen nikan ewa-nih
   wan teipah ne masewal-meh tlen nikan ewa-nih
   CNJ later DEM people-PL REL here born-AG.PL
   ‘y después las personas que son de aquí’
   ‘and later these people who are from here’

39. ayok kinpaktih kehnopa kinchiwah
   ayok kin-pak-ti-h kehnopa kin-chiwa-h
   NEG 3OBJ.PL-happy-PAST-PL DEM 3OBJ.PL-
   make-PL
   ‘ya no les gustó que los trataran así’
   ‘they no longer liked the way they treated them’

40. teipah ni mokahkeh
   teipah ni mo-kah-ke-h
   later DEM REFLX-let-PAST-PL
   ‘después se quedaron (se dejaron)’
   ‘later they stayed’

41. mo.... mokamowihkeh
   mo mo-kamowih-ke-h
   REFLX REFLX-talk-PAST-PL
   ‘se hablaron (platicaron)’
‘they talked each other’

42. wan mo-ilwih-keh para kitlaliseh
wan mo-ilwih-keh para ki-tlali-se-h
CNJ REFLX-say-PAST-PL to 3OBJ.SG-put-IRR-PL
‘y se dijeron que iban a poner’
‘and they said themselves that they would designate’

43. se, se tlanawatihketl nikan komo juez
se se tla-nawatih-ketl nikan komo juez
one one INDEF.OBJ -command-AG.SG here as judge
‘un, un delgado aquí como juez’
‘one, one authority here as judge’

44. kitlalihkeh ya
ki-tlalih-ke-h ya
3OBJ.SG-put-PAST-PL 3PRON.SG
‘lo pusieron a él’
‘they designated him’

45. tlen ya tlen ya kiixmatkehya
3OBJ.SG-put-PAST-PL 3OBJ.SG
REL 3PRON.SG REL 3PRON.SG 3OBJ.SG-know-PAST-PL=ALREADY
‘el que ya el que ya conocieron’
‘the one that they already knew’

46. tlen nepa Atlapexco tlanawahtikapah
3OBJ.SG-give-PAST-PL=ALR
‘ahí ya le dieron un papel para constatar que él quedaba’
‘there they gave him a document to state that he stayed’

49. enton(ce)s kehnopa elki
Entonces fue así.

50. "Y después ahí ya lo... lo... lo pensaron".

51. "Qué nombre pondrían de aquí esta comunidad?"

52. "A esta comunidad primero la habían llamado Mathiohtla".

53. "Y después, después dijeron compraremos".

54. "Una, una imagen de San Isidro".

55. "Ni to... to... tochinanko".
DEM  our...  our...  1POSS.PL-community-LOC

'yo nombraremos este nuestro nuestro, nuestro pueblo'
'and we would name this our, our town'

56. San Isidro itakah kiihtohkeh
San Isidro i-takahki-h
3POSS.SG-name 3OBJ.SG-tell-PAST-PL
'se llama San Isidro dijeron'
'they said it is called San Isidro'

57. enton(ce)s kikohkeh se, se, se tlaixkopinkayotl
enton(ce)s ki-koh-ke-h
then 3OBJ.SG-buy-PAST-PL
se se se tla-ixkopinkayotl
one one one INDEF.OBJ-photo[ABS]
'entonces compraron un, un una imagen'
'then they bought an, an, an image'

58. tlen nopa San Isidro
 tlen nopa San Isidro
 tlen noba San Isidro
REL DEM San Isidro
'de ese San Isidro'
'of San Isidro'

59. kikohkeh wan yanopa mokahki nikan
 ki-koh-ke-h wan yanopa
3OBJ.SG-buy-PAST-PL CNJ DEM
mo-kah-ki nikan
2POSS.SG-let-PAST here
'lo compraron y ese se quedó aquí'
'they bought it and it stayed here'

60. wan teipah kipensarohkeh
 wan teipah ki-pensaroh-ke-h
CNJ after 3OBJ.SG-think-PAST-PL
'y después pensaron'
'and then they thought'

61. kikohkeh se kikohkeh ne kamapana
 ki-koh-ke-h se ki-koh-ke-h ne kamapana
3OBJ.SG-buy-PAST-PL one 3OBJ.SG-buy-PAST-PL DEM bell
'compraron una compraron esa campana'
'they bought a bell'
62. tlanawatihkeh ma kichiwakah
tla-nawatih-ke-h ma ki-chiwa-kah
INDEF.OBJ-command-PAST-PL EXHRT 3OBJ.SG-do-EXHORT.PL
‘mandaron que la hicieran’
‘they had it done’

63. kikohkeh
ki-koh-ke-h
3OBJ.SG-buy-PAST-PL
‘la compraron’
‘they bought it’

64. teipah kiihtohkeh nopa masewalmeh
teipah ki-htoh-ke-h nopa masewal-meh
later 3OBJ.SG-said-PAST-PL DEM people-PL
‘después dijeron esas personas’
‘then those people said’

65. (n)aman ni tikkohkehya de ni San Isidro
naman ni ti-k-koh-ke-h-ya de ni San Isidro
now DEM 2SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-buy-PAST-PL=ALREADY of DEM San Isidro
‘ahora ya compramos este San Isidro’
‘now that we bought the San Isidro’

66. elito totlayekankah komo patron
eli-to to-tla-yekan-ka-h komo patron
be-PUR 1POSS.PL-INDEF.OBJ-leader?-PL as patron.saint
‘fue nuestro guiador (santo) como patrón’
‘it was our guide, as our patron saint’

67. totlayekankah (n)aman tikilwichiwiliseh
to-tla-yekan-ka-h naman ti-ilwi-chiwi-li-se-h
1POSS.PL-INDEF.OBJ-leader?-PL now 2SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-party-go-APPL-IRR-PL
‘ahora le haremos una fiesta a nuestro santo’
‘now we will make our saint a feast’

68. ipan kaxtoli tonatih de ni mayo
ipan kaxtoli tonatih de ni mayo
in fifteen day[ABS] of DEM May
‘el dia 15 de Mayo’
‘on May 15th’

69. osea 15 de mayo kaxtoli tonatih de ni de ni mayo
osea 15 de mayo kaxtoli tonatih de ni de ni mayo
it’s 15 of Way fifteen[ABS] day[ABS] of DEM of DEM May
‘o sea 15 de mayo, el día 15 de este de este mayo’
‘in other words, May the 15th, the 15th day of May’

70. kiihtohkeh kihnopa
ki-ihtoh-ke-h kihnopa
3OBJ.SG-say-PAST-PL DEM
‘dijeron así’
‘they said like that’

71. wan kehnopa mokahkeh
wan kehnopa mo-kah-ke-h
CNJ DEM REFLX-let-PAST-PL
‘y así quedaron’
‘it remained like that’

72. wan sampa kiihtohkeh (n)aman tikkowaseh se tonantsin
wan sampa ki-ihtoh-ke-h
CNJ again 3OBJ.SG-say-PAST-PL now
naman ti-k-kowa-se-h se to-nan-tsin
2SUBJ.SG-buy-IRR-PL one 3POSS.SG-mother-HON
‘y después dijeron ahora compramos’
‘and then they said we would now buy a virgin’

73. de la virgen del rosario yanopa kikohkeh
de la virgen del rosario yanopa ki-koh-ke-h
Virgin of Rosario DEM 3OBJ.SG-buy-PAST-PL
‘de la virgen del rosario ya esa la compraron’
‘they bought’ the virgin of the Rosary’

74. (n)aman ni no tikhiwiliseh se ilwitl
naman ni no ti-k-chiwi-li-se-h se ilwitl
now DEM also 2SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-do-APPL-IRR-PL one feast[ABS]
‘ahora a ella también le haremos una fiesta’
‘now we will make her a feasts too’

75. ipan chikomeh itekih de ni octubre
ipan chiko-meh i-teki-h de ni octubre
LOC six-PL 3POSS.SG-job-SG of DEM October
‘en el séptimo día de trabajo de octubre’
‘in the seventh work day of October’

76. enton(ce)s ya nopa kiihtohkeh
entonces ya nopa ki-ihtoh-keh
then 3PRON.SG DEM 3OBJ.SG-said-PAST.PL
‘entonces eso dijeron’
‘then they said that’

77. enton(ce)s nopa omeh nopa tlaixkopinkayomeh ya kichihkehya
entonces nopa omeh nopa tla-ixkopín-kayo-meh
then DEM two DEM INDEF.OBJ-photo-? PL

ya ki-chih-ke-h=ya
already 3OBJ.SG-go-PAST-PL=ALREADY
‘entonces esos dos esas imágenes ya hicieron’
‘then from those images they already did’

78. se para ni se kamanali para kinixpiyaseh
se para ni se kamanali para kin-ixpiya-se-h
one for DEM one word[ABS] for 3OBJ.PL-celebrate-IRR-PL
‘un anuncio para festejarlos (velarla)’
‘an advertisements for their celebration’

79. axkanah ni a... san se nopa nopa nopa tonali
axkanah ni a... san se nopa nopa nopa tonali
NEG DEM uhm only one DEM DEM DEM day[ABS]
‘no esto no será solo ese ese ese día’
‘no this was not going to be only one that day’

80. si no ke si lo que cada mes tlen kitocaroh
si no ke si lo que cada mes tlen ki-tocaroh
if not what if that every month REL 3OBJ.SG-turn
‘si no que cada mes le tocó’
‘but it was supposed to be every month’

81. kichiwiliseh nopa nopa ilwitl enton(ce)s kehnopa
ki-chiwi-li-se-h nopa nopa
3OBJ.SG-do-CAUS-IRR-PL DEM DEM

ilwitl entonces kehnopa
fiest [ABS] then DEM
‘le harán esa esa fiesta entonces así’
‘like that they would make that that feast’

82. enton(ce)s kinpowalahtiwalahkeh
entonces kin-powalah-ti-walah-ke-h
then 3OBJ.PL-count-LIG-come-PAST-PL
‘entonces así vinieron contando’
‘then like that they kept counting’

83. kichihkeh de nopa kichihtiwalowih nopa ilwitl
ki-chih-ke-h de nopa ki-chih-ti-walowi-h
3OBJ.SG-make-PAST-PL of DEM 3OBJ.SG-do-LIG-come-PAST-PL

nopa ilwitl
DEM feast
'hicieron vienen haciendo esa fiesta'
'like that they keep making that feast'

84. wan teipah kitlalihkeh se masewali
wan teipah ki-tlalih-ke-h se masewali
CNJ later 3OBJ.SG-put-PAST-PL one people[ABS]
y después pusieron una persona’
'then they put a person in charge'

85. katiya ni a... ne kintlachilis nopa santomeh
katiya ni a... ne kin-tlachili-s nopa santo-meh
REL DEM ah DEM 3OBJ.PL-care-IRR.SG DEM saint-PL
'el cual va a cuidar a esos santos’
'who would take care of these saints'

86. wan ya kiihtos kemanihka kichiwaseh se, se ilwitl
wan ya ki-ihto-s kemanihka
CNJ 3PRON.SG 3OBJ.SG-say-IRR when
ki-chiwa-se-h se se ilwitl
3OBJ.SG-do-IRR-PL one one feast
'y él dirá cuando harán un... una fiesta'
'he would say when the, the feast would take place'

87. enton(ce)s kehnopa kichihkeh
entonces kehnopa ki-chih-ke-h
then DEM 3OBJ.SG-make-PAST-PL
'entonces así lo hicieron’
'then they made it like that'

88. kitlalihkeh se masewali komo
ki-tlalih-ke-h se masewali komo
3OBJ.SG-put-PAST-PL one people[ABS] like
'pusieron a una persona como’
'they put a person as'

89. kitekitlalihkeh komo mayordomo mmm
ki-teki-tlalih-ke-h komo mayordomo
3OBJ.SG-job-put-PAST-PL as steward
'encargado como mayordomo’
'in charge as a steward'

90. kehnopa kichihkeh para ki... para ya, ya ki-ne...
kehnopa ki-chih-ke-h para ki...
DEM 3OBJ.SG-do-PAST-PL for 3OBJ.SG

para ya ya ki-ne...
for 3PRON.SG 3PRON.SG 3OBJ.SG-3OBJ.PL
‘así hicieron para que él’
‘they did like that for him’

91. kiniyolmelawas nopa tlanawatianeh
kin-iyol-melawa-s nopa tla-nawatia-neh
3OBJ.PL-heart-warn-IRR DEM INDEF.OBJ-authority-AG.PL
‘que él les avisara a los cargos’
‘he would tell the authorities’

92. komo ne tekichiwanih komo ne teki-chiwa-nih
komo ne teki-chiwa-ni-h komo ne teki-chiwa-ni-h
as DEM work-make-IRR-PL as DEM work-make-IRR-PL
‘ellos, las autoridades, como autoridades’
‘they, the authorities, as authorities’

93. para kichiwaseh se ilwitl tlan nopa (i)pa(n)
para ki-chiwa-se-h se ilwitl tlan to work-make-AG.PL one feast if

nopa ipan kinse
DEM LOC fifteen
‘que hará una fiesta el quince’
‘they would make the feast on the 15th’

94. ne ipan kaxtoli itekih de ni mayo wa(n) tle(n) chikome itekih
ne ipan kaxtoli i-teki de ni
DEM LOC fifhteen 3POSS.SG-work of DEM

mayo wan tlen chikome
May CNJ REL seven
‘el 15 de mayo y el 7’
‘the May 15th and the 7th’

95. itekih de octubre
i-teki-h de octubre
3POSS.SG-job-POSS.SG of October
‘de octubre’
‘of October’

96. ajá yanopa enton(ce)s kehnopa mokahkeh
ajá yanopa entonces kehnopa mo-kah-ke-h
INTJ DEM then DEM REFLX-leave-PAST-PL
‘ese entonces así quedaron’
‘then like that they agreed’

97. wan kihnopa kichihtiwalayayah nopa ilwitl
wan kihnopa ki-chih-ti-wala-yaya-h nopa ilwitl
CNJ DEM 3OBJ.SG-make-LIG-come-IPFV-PL DEM feats
‘y así la venían haciendo esa fiesta’
‘like that they came making the feast’

98. wa(n) nopa katli... katli(ya) tekichihketl
wan nopa katli... katliya teki-chih-ketl
CNJ DEM REL REL work-make-AG.SG
‘y ese que el encargado’
‘and that the one in charge’

99. katli(ya) kitlalihkeh para kinintlachilis nopa
katliya ki-tlalih-ke-h para kin-in-tlachili-s nopa
REL 3OBJ.SG-put-PAST-PL for 3OBJ-PL-DIR-care-IRR DEM
‘el que pusieron para que los vea ese esas’
‘whoever was in charge of those’

100. nopa tlaichkonpinkayomeh
nopa tla-ichkonpin-kayo-meh
DEM INDEF.OBJ-photo-7-PL
‘fotos de los santos’
‘pictures of those saints’

101. enton(ce)s kipiyyaya para mokwatotonis
entonces ki-pi-yaya para mo-kwatotoni-s
then 3OBJ.SG-have-IPFV to REFLX-take.care-IRR
‘entonces él tenia que ocuparse’
‘then that one who had to take care of’

102. ya kintlamayataya nochí nopa masewalmeh
ya kin-tlamaka-yaya nochí nopa masewal-meh
3PRON.SG 3OBJ.PL-feed-IPFV all DEM people-PL
‘él les daba de comer a todas las personas’
‘he gave food to everyone’

103. wa(n) kintlamakayaya de nopa tlapisanih
wan kin-tlamaka-yaya de nopa tlapisa-nih
CNJ 3OBJ.PL-feed-IPFV of DEM musician-AG.PL
‘y les daba de comer a los músicos’
‘he gave food to the musicians’

104. wa(n) mihtotianih nochí
wan mihtotia-nih nochí
‘y a todos los danzantes’
‘and to all the dancers’

105. ya icuentah kintlamakayaya
ya  i-cuentah  kin-tlamaka-yaya
3PRON.SG 3POSS.SG-pocket 3OBJ.PL-feed-IPFV
‘corría por su cuenta para darles de comer’
‘he was on his own to give people food’

106. (en)ton(ce)s kihnopap kihnopawalahtiwalayayah
entonces  kihnopa  kihnopa  walah-ti-wala-yaya-h
then  DEM  DEM  come-LIG-come-IPFV-PL
‘entonces así así venían haciendo’
‘then they came making it like that, like that’

107. wa(n) kihno walahtiwalahki
wan  kihno  walah-ti-walah-ki
CNJ  DEM  come-LIG-come-PAST
‘y así lo venía haciendo’
‘and like that it came making it’

108. teipah kikotonakoh
teipah  ki-kotona-ko-h
later  3OBJ.SG-interrupt-PUR-PL
‘después lo vinieron a cortar (lo acabaron)’
‘later they finished with that’

109. ayokakah kinehki mokwilis
ayok-akah  ki-neh-ki  mo-kwili-s
NEG-nobody  3OBJ.SG-want-PAST REFLX-carry-IRR
‘ya nadie quiso comprometerse’
‘nobody wanted to commit anymore’

110. para kini(n)tlachilis ne... ne tlaixcopinkayomeh
para  kin-in-tlachili-s  ne  ne  tlaixcopin-kayo-meh
to  3OBJ-PL-DIR-care-IRR  DEM  DEM  INDEF.OBJ-photo-?-ABS.PL
‘ya nadie quiso aceptar para cuidar esas fotos de los santos’
‘nobody wanted to accept (the responsibility) to take care of the images’

111. pampa miyak tomin moyaltih ipan se xiwitl
pampa  miyak  tomin  mo-yal-tih  ipan  se  xiwitl
because  much  money  REFLX-spend-AG.PL  LOC  one  year
‘porque en un año se gastó mucho dinero’
‘because a lot of money was spent in one year’

112. wa(n) ayokkiaxililhkeh nopamasewalmeh
95

wan ayok-ki-axilih-ke-h nopa masewal-meh
CNJ NEG-3OBJ.SG-reach-PAST-PL DEM people-PL
’y ya no alcanzaron las personas’
‘there was no one else’

113. (en)ton(ce)s tlamiko nopone
entonces tlami-ko nopone
then finish-PUR there
‘entonces se terminó ahí’
‘then it finished there’
114. (n)aman ikuentah se tlanawatihketl
naman i-kuentah se tla-nawatih-ketl
now 3POSS.SG-pocket one INDEF.OBJ-command-AG.SG
‘ahora la autoridad se encarga’
‘now it is the authority who does that’

115. katli(ya) tlayekantok kitekitlaliah
katliya tla-yekan-tok ki-teki-tlal-ia-h
REL INDEF.OBJ-guide-STAT 3OBJ.SG-work-put-APPL-PL
‘quien tiene el cargo más alto lo dejaron a cargo’
‘the one with the highest authority is who is in charge’

116. yanopa, yanopa eliko (n)aman
yanopa yanopa eli-ko naman
DEM DEM be-PUR now
‘así así fue ahora’
‘it was like that now’

117. (n)aman kehnopa tiwalahiwalowih
naman kehnopa ti-walah-ti-walowi-h
now DEM 1SUBJ.PL-come-LIG-come-PL
‘ahora así hemos venido pasando’
‘now like that we have come making’

118. wa(n) kihnopa panok nopa, nopa tonali
wan kihnopa pano-k nopa nopa tonali
CNJ DEM pass-PAST DEM DEM day
‘y así paso ese, ese día’
‘and like that it happened that, that day’

119. asta para (n)aman tiistokeh ni, ni tonali
asta para naman ti-isto-ke-h ni ni tonali
until for today 1SUBJ.PL-be-PAST-PL DEM DEM day
‘hasta ahora estamos así en este este día’
‘until now we are like that this, this day’
7.2 San Isidro Participation in the Agrarian Movement

1. Tipehkeh, bueno pues, na nipehki ni...
ti-peh-ke-h buen pues na ni-peh-ki
1SUBJ.PL-begin-PAST-PL well uhm 1PRON.SG 1SUBJ.SG-begin-PAST
‘empezamos, bueno, pues yo empecé, este,
‘we started, well, I started, uhm,

2. nitekiti ininwanya tocompañero tlen ni San Isidro
ni-tekti inin-wanya to-compañeros tlen ni San Isidro
1SBJ.SG -work 3POSS.PL-them 1POSS.SG-comrades REL DEM San Isidro
‘a trabajar con nuestros compañeros de San Isidro’
‘working with our comrades of San Isidro’

3. nochi tlen tekitl technawatiyayah nochimeh
nochi tlen tekitl tech-nawati-yaya-h nochimeh
ALL REL work[ABS] 1OBJ.PL-command-IPFV-PL all-PL
‘todo el trabajo que nos mandaban todos’
‘all the work that we were sent by all’

4. nochi mochihiyahi
nochi mo-chih-ti-yah-ki
all REL make-LIG-V.AUX-PAST
‘todo se fue haciendo’
‘everything was being done’

5. pero noponeh onkato problemas tlen tlen nopa koyomeh
pero noponeh onka-to problemas tlen
but DEM be-PUR problems REL

6. kipixtoyah tlali achi wehweyi
ki-pix-toya-h tlali achi weh-weyi
3OBJ.SG-have-PFV-PL land [ABS] little RDP-big
‘tenian grandes extensiones de tierra’
‘they had great extension of land’

7. wan nopa koyomexhaki kohtoyah nopa tlali
wan nopa koyo-meh
CNJ DEM non-indigenous-PL

ax-ki-koh-toya-h nopa tlali
NEG-3OBJ.SG-buy-PFV-PL DEM land
‘y esos mestizos no habían comprado esa tierra’
‘and those mestizos had not bought this land’

8. san san kikwitoyah
san san ki-kwi-toya-h
only only 3OBJ.SG-take-PFV-PL
‘sólo sólo se la habían agarrado’
‘they had only only appropriated it’

9. wa(n) teipan pensarohkeh la gen... ni masewal-meh comiseriadoh
wan teipan pensaroh-ke-h la gen...
CNJ after think-PAST-PL the peo...
ni masewal-meh comiseriadoh
DEM people-PL agrarian office
‘y después pensaron la gen... la gente del comisariado’
‘and later people from the agrarian office thought’

10. kampa ya kiihtoh ma tikalakitih noponeh
kampa ya ki-ihto-h
where 3PRON.SG 3OBJ.SG-tell-PAST
ma ti-kalaki-ti-h noponeh
EXHRT 2SUBJ.SG-enter-PUR-PL DEM
‘donde él dijo que entráramos ahí’
‘where he said that we entered there’

11. para tikkixtiseh noponeh tlali
para ti-k-kixti-se-h noponeh tlali
2SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-take-IRR-PL DEM land
‘para tomar esa tierra’
‘to take that land’

12. wan tohwantih (i)pa tikomontekitih
wan tohwantih ipa ti-komon-tekiti-h
CNJ 1PRON.PL always 2SUBJ.SG-common-work-PL
‘y nosotros siempre en trabajo communal’
‘and we always in the communal work’

13. no tiyahke h (ti)tekiti toh
no ti-yah-ke-h ti-tekiti-toh
also 1SUBJ.PL-go-PAST-PL 1SUBJ.PL-work-PUR-PL
‘tambien fuimos a trabajar’
‘we also went to work’

14. maske mosisiniyayah noponeh koyomeh
maske mo-sisini-yaya-h nopa koyo-meh
ealthough REFLX-be.upset-IPFV-PL DEM non-indigenous-PL
‘aunque se enojaban los mestizos’
‘although the mestizos were upset’

15. no timahmawiyayah para tiyaseh
no ti-mahmawi-yaya-h para ti-ya-se-h
also 1SUBJ.PL-be.afraid-IPFV-PL to 1SUBJ.PL-go-IRR-PL
‘también teníamos miedo de ir’
‘we also were afraid of going’

16. timoilwiah
ti-mo-ilwia-h
1SUBJ.PL-REFLX-say-PL
‘nos decíamos entre nosotros’
‘we told ourselves’

17. tlan tiyaseh a lo mejor tech... techmiktikih
tlan ti-ya-se-h a lo mejor tech... tech-mikti-ki-h
if 1SUBJ.PL-go-IRR-PL maybe 1P.OBJ.PL 1P.OBJ.PL-die-PUR-PL
‘si vamos a lo mejor nos vienen a matar’
‘if we go maybe they come to kill us’

18. pero axtechmiktikoh
pero ax-tech-mikti-ko-h
‘pero no nos mataron’
‘but they did not kill us’

19. a la mejor miyakih tiyahkeh tohwantih
a la mejor miyakih ti-yah-ke-h tohwantih
maybe many 1SUBJ.PL-go-PAST-PL 1PRON.PL
‘quizá nosotros fuimos muchos’
‘maybe we were many’

20. komo se se 300 gentes tiyahkeh
komo se se 300 gentes ti-yah-ke-h
like one one 300 people 1SUBJ.PL-go-PAST-PL
‘fuimos como unos unos 300 personas’
‘we were like some some 300 people’

21. titlamewah titlamewah
ti-tla-mewa-h ti-tla-mewa-h
1SUBJ.PL-INDEF.OBJ-hoe-PL 1SUBJ.PL-INDEF.OBJ-hoe-PL
‘escardamos, escardamos’
‘we hoed, we hoed’
22. ome tonal titekitikeh
tonal ti-tekti-ke-h
two days 1SUBJ.PL-work-PAST-PL
‘dos días trabajamos’
‘we worked two days’

23. kihtoah para walaseh
k-htoa-h para wala-se-h
3OBJ.SG-say-PL that come-IRR-PL
‘decían que vendrían’
‘they said that they would come’

24. wan nikan tlen Cochotla
wan nikan tlen Cochotla
CNJ here REL Cochotla
‘y de aquí de Cochotla’
‘and from Cochotla’

25. de mero cabecera Cochotla
demer cabecera Cochotla
from very head Cochotla
‘de la mera cabecera Cochotla’
‘from the municipal head Cochotla’

26. nochi kiwikakeh tepostli no
nochi ki-wika-ke-h tepostli no
all 3P.OBJ.SG-bring-PAST-PL metal also
‘todos llevaron armas también’
‘they all brought guns’

27. armas kiwikakeh
armas ki-wika-ke-h
guns 3P.OBJ.SG-bring-PAST-PL
‘llevaron armas’
‘they brought guns’

28. porque tlan walaskiah
porque tlan wala-skia-h
because if come-COND-PL
‘porque si vinieran’
‘because if they would come’

29. pos no no no momanawiskiah campesinos
pos no no no mo-manawi-skia-h campesinos
well also also also REFLX-defend-COND-PL peasants
‘pues también también también se defenderían los campesinos’
'so the peasants would also defend themselves'

30. pampa inihwantih nopa koyomeh
    because 3PRON.PL DEM non.indigenous-PL
    'porque ellos los mestizos'
    'because they the mestizos'

31. nopa yohwantih mosenmakayah kinmiktiseh campesinos
    DEM 3PRON.PL REFLEX-all-give-IPFV-PL
    campesinos
    3OBJ.PL-kill-CAUS-IRR-PL peasants
    'ellos se atrevían a matar a los campesinos'
    'they dared to kill peasants'

32. wa(n) noponeh tohwantih tiyahkeh ika tomaroh
    wan noponeh tohwantih ti-yah-ke-h
    CNJ DEM 1PRON.PL 1SUBJ.PL-GO-PAST-PL
    ika to-macheteh guingaroh
    with 1POSS.PL-machete hoe
    'y ahí nosotros fuimos con nuestros machetes y guingaros'
    'and there we went with our machetes and hoes'

33. tohwantih axtikpiah caravinah
    1PRON.PL NEG-1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-have-PL carabines
    'nosotros no tenemos caravinas'
    'we have no guns'

34. sekin kipixtokeh caravinah inihwantih kiwikakeh
    3OBJ.SG-have-?-PAST-PL carabine
    inihwantih ki-wika-ke-h
    3PRON.PL 3OBJ.SG-carry.out-PAST-PL
    'algunos tiene caravina ellos las llevaron'
    'some have carabine they brought it'

35. no kiwikakeh retrocargas, rifles, chalaqueras
    3OBJ.SG-bring-PAST-PL breechloader rifles chalaqueras
    'también llevaron retrocargas, rifles, chalaqueras'
    'they also brought breechloader, rifles, chalaqueras'
36. sekin kiwikakeh pistolas
   sekin ki-wika-ke-h pistolas
   some 3OBJ.SG-bring-PAST-PL pistols
   ‘algunos llevaron pistolas’
   ‘some brought pistols’

37. la mayoria kiwikakeh retrocargas 20
   la mayoria ki-wika-ke-h retrocargas 20
   the majority 3OBJ.SG-carry.out-PAST-PL breechloader 20
   ‘la mayoria llevó retrocargas 20’
   ‘the majority brought breechloader 20’

38. para tlan walaskiah pos no kinmakaskiah
   para tlan wala-skia-h pos no kin-maka-skia-h
   for if come-COND-PL so also 3OBJ.PL-give-COND-PL
   ‘por si vinieran pues también les dispararían’
   ‘in case they came then would kill them also’

39. a parte no istoyah motlatihtoyah ika arma
   a parte no is-toya-h mo-tlatih-toya-h ika arma
   in addition also be-PFV-PL REFLX-hide-PFV-PL with guns
   ‘además también estaban escondidos con armas’
   ‘in addition, they were hiding with guns’

40. para kampeka walaskiah
   para kampeka wala-skia-h
   for where come-COND-PL
   ‘por donde vendrían’
   ‘on the way they would come’

41. no kinmakaskiah
   no kin-maka-skia-h
   also 3OBJ.PL-give-COND-PL
   ‘también les iban a dar (matar)’
   ‘they would kill them too’

42. wan noponeh nopa ome tonal eyi tonal titekitikeh
   wan noponeh nopa ome tonal eyi tonal ti-tekiti-ke-h
   CNJ DEM DEM two day three day 1SUBJ.PL-work-PAST-PL
   ‘y ahí, esos dos días, tres días trabajamos’
   ‘and there, there two days, three days we worked’

43. ax-tlenoh onkak pero kena waliyayah kiihtoah
   ax-tlenoh onka-k pero kena wali-yaya-h ki-ihtoa-h
   NEG-any be-PAST but yes come-IPFV-PL 3P.OBJ.SG-tell-PL
   ‘nada hubo pero si venía, dicen’
‘nothing happened but they were going to come, they said’

44. pero axahsikoh
pero ax-ahsi-ko-h
but NEG-get-PUR-PL
‘pero no llegaron’
‘but they did not come’

45. kimachilihkeh para axaatiseh tlatewikih
ki-machilih-ke-h para ax-aati-se-h tla-tewi-ki-h
3OBJ.SG-feel-PAST-PL for NEG-?-IRR-PL INDEF.OBJ-fight-PUR-PL
‘sintieron que no iban a poder luchar (con nosotros)’
‘they felt they could not fight (with us)’

46. wan tohwantih kenano timomahmatiyayah
wan tohwantih kena no ti-mo-mahmati-yaya-h
CNJ 1SUBJ.PL yes also 1SUBJ.PL-REFLX-be.afraid-IPFV-PL
‘y nosotros también nos espantamos’
‘and we were also afraid’

47. tohwantih tlatsalan tikalahkeh
tohwantih tla-tsalan ti-kalah-ke-h
1SUBJ.PL INDEF.OBJ-below 1SUBJ.PL-get.in-PAST-PL
‘nosotros nos metimos de bajo de las cosas’
‘we put ourselves in the middle’

48. pus maneltik titekitikeh
pus maneltik ti-tekiti-ke-h
well altogether 1SUBJ.PL-work-PAST-PL
‘pues trabajamos revueltos’
‘we worked altogether’

49. para axkiitakeh konke itstok Cochotla
para ax-ki-ita-ke-h konke itsto-k Cochotla
for NEG-3OBJ.SG-see-PAST-PL where be-PAST Cochotla
‘para que no vean donde estaba Cochotla’
‘so they did not know where Cochotla was’

50. konke itstok San Isidro
konke itsto-k San Isidro
where be-PAST San Isidro
‘donde estaba San Isidro’
‘where San Isidro was’

51. konke itstok Itstakwatitla
konke itsto-k Itstakwatitla
where be-PAST Itstakwatitla
‘donde estaba Itstacuatitla’
‘where Itstacuatitla was’

52. konke itstokeh itsokalmeh
konke itsto-ke-h itso-kal-meh
donde be-PAST-PL izote-house-PL
‘donde estaban los de Itzocal’

53. Atencuapa, Atlaltipa, Oxpantla
Atencuapa, Atlaltipa, Oxpantla
Atencuapa, Atlaltipa, Oxpantla
Atencuapa, Atlaltipa, Oxpantla
‘Atencuapa, Atlaltipa, Oxpantla’

54. eee Atotomoc ne Iztacuayo kaneka
eee Atotomoc ne Iztacuayo kaneka
este Atotomoc DEM Iztacuayo on.the.other.side
‘hm Atotomoc ese Iztacuayo del otro lado’
‘uhm Atotomoc that Iztacuayo for the other side’

55. Poxtako Atlahko no yahkeh vecinos
poxta-ko a-tlahko no yah-ke-h vecinos
fish-LOC water-half also go-PAST-PL neighbors
‘los del arroyo de Pochtlá también fueron los vecinos’
‘neighbors from the Poxtla Atlajco also went’

56. timiyakih tielitoh
ti-miyaki-h ti-eli-to-h
1SUBJ.PL-many-PL 1SUBJ.PL-be-PUR-PL
‘fuimos a ser muchos’
‘we went many’

57. hasta Akwatitla no yahkeh
hasta Akwatitla no yah-ke-h
hasta Akwatitla also go-PAST-PL
‘hasta Acuatitla también fueron’
‘from Iztacuatitla they also went’

58. pero tikchihkeh nopa tekitl
pero ti-k-chih-ke-h nopa tekitl
but 1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-make-PAST-PL DEM work
‘pero hicimos el trabajo’
‘but we did the work’

59. se samanoh titekitikeh chikwaseh tonal seis dias
se samanoh ti-tekiti-ke-h chikwaseh tonal seis dias
one week 1SUBJ.PL-work-PAST-PL six day six days
‘una semana trabajamos seis días seis días’
‘we worked one week, six days, six days’

60. timoaguantarahkeh axtlanki nopa tekitl
   ti-mo-aguantaro-h-ke-h  ax-tlan-ki    nopa  tekitl
   1SUBJ.PL-REFLX-put.up.with-PAST-PL    NEG-finish-PAST    DEM  work[ABS]
   ‘nos aguantamos no se acabó el trabajo’
   ‘we put up with it, the work did not finish’

61. seyok se samanoh tiyahkeh
   seyok  se  samanoh  ti-yah-ke-h
   other  one  week  1SUBJ.PL-go-PAST-PL
   ‘fuimos otra semana más’
   ‘we went another week’

62. titekititoh tiktlamiltihkeh
   ti-teki-iti-to-h    ti-k-tlamil-tih-ke-h
   1SUBJ.PL-work-PUR-PL    1SUBJ.PL-finish-PAST-PL
   ‘fuimos a trabajar, lo acabamos’
   ‘we went to work, we finished it’

63. elto potreroh xawayayah sakatl
   elto  potreroh  xawa-yah-h    sakatl
   be  paddock  weed-IPFV-PL  grass
   ‘(donde) estaba (el) potrero escarbábamos pasto’
   ‘we weeded grass where the paddock was’

64. tikkwikeh picos
   ti-k-ki-wi-ke-h    picos
   1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-take-PAST-PL  picks
   ‘tomamos picos’
   ‘we brought picks’

65. kiwikakeh k(i)wikakeh nopa barretillas
   ki-wi-ka-ke-h    k(i)-wi-ka-ke-h    nopa  barretillas
   3OBJ.SG-carry-PAST-PL    3OBJ.SG-carry-PAST-PL    DEM  crowbar
   ‘llevaron, llevaron barretilas’
   ‘they brought crowbars’

66. kixawayayah sakatl
   ki-xawa-yah-h    sakatl
   3OBJ.SG-weed-IPFV-PL  grass
   ‘escarbaban pasto’
   ‘we weeded grass’

67. tlaxikohkeh san tlawel 15 dias
   tla-xiko-h-ke-h    san  tlawel  15  dias
   INDEF.OBJ-lose.weight-PAST-PL    only  really  fifteen  days
‘enflacaron mucho (en) 15 días’
‘they lost weight in 15 days’

68. mohmostlah tel domingo timosewiyayah
moh-mostlah tel domingo ti-mo-sewi-yaya-h
RDP-tomorrow but Sunday 1SUBJ.PL.-REFLX-rest-IPFV-PL
‘diario, pero el domingo descansaban’
‘every day, but Sunday we rested’

69. maske ax-onkah sintli tlen tlakwaseh
maske ax-onkah sintli tlen tla-kwa-se-h
although NEG-there.are corn REL INDEF.OBJ-eat-IRR-PL
‘aunque no hay maíz que comer’
‘there was no corn to eat’

70. sekin k(i)wikayayah tle(n) tlakwaseh
sekin ki-wika-yaya-h tlen tla-kwa-se-h
some 3OBJ.SG-bring-IPFV-PL REL INDEF.OBJ-eat-IRR-PL
‘algunos llevaban que comer’
‘some brought something to eat’

71. sekin axk(i)wikayayah
sekin ax-ki-wika-yaya-h
some NEG-3OBJ.SG-bring-IPFV-PL
‘otros no llevaban’
‘some did not bring’

72. porque axonkah axonkah tomin
porque ax-onkah ax-onkah tomin
because NEG-there.are NEG-there.are money
‘porque no hay, no hay dinero’
‘because there is not, there is no money’

73. puro tekitl techmakayayah
puro tekitl tech-maka-yaya-h
only work[ABS] 1OBJ.PL-give-IPFV-PL
‘nos daban solo trabajo’
‘they gave us just work’

74. pero axtlenoh onkak
pero ax-tlenoh onka-k
buy NEG-any there.are-PAST
‘pero no hubo nada’
‘but there was nothing’

75. nopa coyotl axmosenmak tlatewiki
nopa coyotl ax-mo-senma-k tla-tewi-ki
106

DEM non.indigenous[ABS] NEG-REFLX-all-PAST INDEF.OBJ-hit-PUR
‘el mestizo no se atrevió a venir a golpear’
‘the mestizo did not dare to come hit us’

76. o techtewiki
o tech-tesi-ki
or 1OBJ.PL-hit-PUR
‘o a golpear’
‘or to hit us’

77. noponeh teipah tohwantih eee... yowiyayah Huejutla
noponeh teipah tohwantih eee... yowi-yaya-h Huejutla
DEM later 1PRON.PL INTJR go-IPFV-PL Huejutla
‘ahí después nosostros eee iban a Huejutla’
‘later we uhm went to Huejutla’

78. sekin no momahmatiyayah
sekin no mo-mahmati-yaya-h
some also REFLX-be. afraid-IPFV-PL
‘unos también tenían miedo’
‘some were also afraid’

79. pero no wel axakah kimiktihkeh
pero no wel ax-akah ki-miktih-ke-h
but also NEG-nobody 3OBJ.SG-kill-PAST-PL
‘pero lo bueno no paso a mayores no mataron a nadie’
‘but the good thing is that nothing happened, they did not kill anyone' 

80. axakah kiwihwitehkeh
ax-akah ki-wih-witeh-ke-h
NEG-nobody 3OBJ.SG-RDP-hit-PAST-PL
‘no golpearon a nadie’
‘they did not hit anyone’

81. wa(n) sekin kena kinwihwitekiyayah tlen sekanok comunidades
wan sekin kena kin-wih-witeki-yaya-h
CNJ some yes 3OBJ.PL-RDP-hit-IPFV-PL

tlen sekanok comunidades
REL other.place communities
‘y a otros si los golpeaban de otro lugar (de otras) comunidades’
‘and they did hit some from the other place, other communities’

82. miyak kinmiktihkeh tlen sehkanok ejidos
miyak kin-miktih-ke-h tlen sehkanok ejidos
many 3OBJ.PL-kill-PAST-PL REL other.place ejidos
‘mataron muchos de otros ejidos’
‘they killed many from other ejidos’

83. pero nikah tlani cabecera Cochotla axakah kimiktihkeh
pero nikah tlani cabecera Cochotla ax-akah ki-miktih-ke-h
but here up head cochotla NEG-nobody 3OBJ.SG-kill-PAST-PL
‘pero aquí arriba de la cabecera de Cochotla no mataron a nadie’
‘but from here Cochotla, the head, they did not kill anyone’

84. wan naman nopa coyotl
wan naman nopa coyotl
CNJ today DEM non.indigenous[ABS]
‘y ahora ese mestizo’
‘and now that mestizo’

85. (axtikmatis tlen kihtoh)
ax-ti-k-mati-s tlen k-ihto-h
NEG-2SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-know-IRR REL 3OBJ.SG-tell-PAST
‘no supo que dijo’
‘did not know what he said’

86. kihtoh teipah ya kiihtoh
k-ihto-h teipah ya ki-ihto-h
3OBJ.SG-say-PAST later 3PRON.SG 3OBJ.SG-say-PAST
‘dijo después él dijo’
‘he said later he said’

87. para axkenihki tlan kinehkehya tli tlen Coch...
para ax-kenihki tlan ki-neh-ke-h-ya
for NEG-what if 3OBJ.SG-want-PAST-PL=ALR
tli tlen Coch...
land REL Coch...
‘nimodo no pasa nada si ya se apropiaron las tierras de Coch...’
‘anyway, nothing happens, they appropriated Cochotla’s land’

88. Cochotla ma kikwitikakah kehnopa kiihtoh
Cochotla ma ki-kwi-ti-ka-kah
Cochotla EXHRT 3OBJ.SG-take-LIG-V.AUX-EXHORT.PL
kehnopa ki-ihto-h
DEM 3OBJ.SG-say-PAST
‘Cochotla, que lo agarren, así lo dijo’
‘Cochotla, they will take it, he said like that’

89. inihwantih axkipiah tlali
inihwantih ax-ki-pia-h tlali
3PRON.PL  NEG-3OBJ.SG-have-PL  land
‘ellos no tienen tierras’
‘they are landless’

90. neliya yeka kitilankeh nopa tlali
neliya yeka ki-tilan-ke-h  nopa tlali
right that.is.why 3OBJ.SG-pull-PAST-PL DEM land
‘de verdad por eso agarraron esas tierras’
‘they took that land because of that’

91. kehnopa kiihtoh nopa coyotl Efrain
kehnopa  ki-ihto-h  nopa coyotl  Efrain
DEM  3OBJ.SG-tell-PAST DEM non-indigenous[ABS] Efrain
‘así lo dijo ese mestizo Efraín’
‘like that said mestizo Efrain’

92. Zuñiga itokah nopa coyotl
Zuñiga  i-tokah  nopa coyotl
Zuñiga  3PRON.SG-name DEM non-indigenous[ABS]
‘Zuñiga se llama el mestizo’
‘Zuñiga was the mestizo’s name’

93. teipah ya noponeh
teipah  ya  noponeh
later there DEM
‘después ya ahí’
‘after that’

94. tekitikeh ome xiwitl
tekiti-ke-h  ome xiwitl
work-PAST-PL two year
‘trabajamos dos años’
‘we worked for two years’

95. tohwantih axtechmakakeh nopa tlali
tohwantih  ax-tech-maka-ke-h  nopa  tlali
1PRON.PL  NEG-1OBJ.PL-give-PAST-PL DEM land
‘a nosotros no nos dieron esas tierras’
‘we did not receive that land’

96. pero kinmakakeh tlali
pero  kin-maka-ke-h  tlali
pero  3OBJ.PL-give-PAST-PL land
‘pero les dieron tierras’
‘but they gave them land’

97. ne ni, ne ni Iztacuatitla wan ne Mirador
ne ni  ne ni  Iztacuatitla  wan  ne  Mirador
DE
DE

Iztacuatitla  
CNJ  
Dem

Mirador

‘a estos de Iztacuatitla y El Mirador’
‘to people from Iztacuatitla and El Mirador’

98. noponeh ewanih kinmakakeh
noponeh  ewa-nih  kin-maka-ke-h
DE

born-AG.PL  3OBJ.PL-give-PAST-PL

‘los nacidos de ahí les dieron’
‘the ones who were born there they gave land’

99. pero antes de ke kitilanaseh nop a tlali
pero  antes de  ke  ki-tilana-se-h  nop a  tlali
but  before  of  what  3OBJ.SG-pull-IRR-PL  DEM  land
‘pero antes de que agarran esas tierras’
‘before they took that land’

100. nop a Mirador ewanih ipa(n) kisolicitaroyayah nop a tlali
nop a  Mirador  ewa-nih  ipan  ki-solicitaro-yaya-h  nop a  tlali
DE

Mirador  born-AG.PL  in  always 3OBJ.SG-request-IPFV-PL  DEM  land
‘los del Mirador desde antes solicitaban esas tierras’
‘the ones from Mirador had already claimed that land’

101. wan como inihwantih adelante yowiyayah
wan  como  inihwantih  adelante  yowi-yaya-h
CNJ  as  3PRON.PL  ahead  go-IPFV-PL
‘y como ellos iban adelante’
‘and since they were in front’

102. kena kin(i)miktihkeh nop a campesinos Huejutla
kena  kin-imiktih-ke-h  nop a  campesinos  Huejutla
yes  3OBJ.PL-kill-PAST-PL  DEM  peasants  Huejutla
’si mataron a los campesinos en Huejutla’
‘in Huejutla they did kill peasants’

103. mismo Efraín igentes
mismo  Efraín  i-gentes
the same  Efraín  3POSS.SG-people
‘la misma gente de Efraín’
‘Efrain’s people’

104. kinmiktihkek (n)mati ke 5 campesinos de, de Mirador
kin-miktih-ke-h  ni-k-mati  ke  5
3OBJ.PL-kill-PAST-PL  1SUBJ.SG-know what five

campesinos  de  de  Mirador
peasants from from Mirador
‘los mataron creo que cinco campesinos de El Mirador’
‘I think they killed five peasants from El Mirador’

105. kehnopa kichihkeh
      kehnopa   ki-chih-ke-h
      DEM      3OBJ.SG-make-PAST-PL
‘así lo hicieron’
‘they did it like that’

106. wan yeka kwalankeh masewalmeh
      wan       yeka     kwalan-ke-h   masewal-meh
      CNJ       that.is why  be.upset-PAST-PL  people-PL.
‘y por eso se molestaron las personas’
‘that is why people got upset’

107. major kalahkeh noponeh tekitikeh
      mejor      kalah-ke-h  noponeh    tekti-ke-h
      better     come.in-PAST-PL  DEM  work-PAST-PL
‘mejor entraron ahí a trabajar’
‘instead they went to work there’

108. (n)aman kikixtihkeh nopae tlali
      naman     ki-kix-tih-ke-h nopae  tlali
      now       3OBJ.SG-take-PAST-PL DEM land
‘ahora sacaron esas tierras’
‘they now took that land’

109. (n)aman kitekiwiah ne Istakwatitla
      naman     ki-tekiwia-h  ne    Istakwatitla
      now       3OBJ.SG-use-PAST-PL DEM Istakwatitla
‘ahora lo trabajan los de Iztacuatitla’
‘now people from Iztacuatitla work there’

110. wan Mirador ewa-nih
      wan       Mirador   ewa-nih
      CNJ       Mirador   born-AG.PL
‘y los nacidos en Mirador’
‘and the ones who were born in Mirador’

111. timopalewikeh kwali maske onkak kwalanti
      ti-mo-palewi-ke-h kwali    maske onka-k   kwalanti
      1SUBJ.PL-help-PAST-PL well  although there.is-PAST problem
‘nos ayudamos bien aunque hubo problemas’
‘even with problems we really helped each other’

112. pero ax no axakah mas tlen nikah San Isidro axki...
      pero       NEG also   ax-akah  mas  tlen
      NEG        also    ax-akah     mas  tlen
‘pero also no algunos más tienen de San Isidro axki...’
nikah San Isidro  ax-ki...
here San Isidro  NEG-3OBJ.SG
‘no pues también nadie más  de aquí de San Isidro’
‘uhm nobody else from here San Isidro’

113.  ax(a)kah kin(i)makakeh
ax-akah    kin-imaka-ke-h
NEG-nobody  3OBJ.PL-give-PAST-PL
‘a nadie le dieron’
‘they did not shoot anybody’

114.  pero kena kinmakakeh ne Mirador ewanih
pero kena kin-maka-ke-h ne Mirador ewa-nih
but yes 3OBJ.PL-give-PAST-PL DEM Mirador born-AG.PL
‘pero sí les dieron a los nacidos en el Mirador’
‘but they did shoot people from the Mirador’

115.  makwiltih kinmakakeh
makwiltih kin-maka-ke-h
five 3OBJ.PL-give-PAST-PL
‘a los de Mirador les dieron a cinco’
‘they killed five from the Mirador’

116.  seis ika se, se representante de la CCI
seis ika se se representante de la CCI
six with one one official of the CCI
‘seis con un un representante de la CCI’
‘six with a CCI representative’

117.  en Huejutla nepa kinmakakeh
en Huejutla nepa kin-maka-ke-h
in Huejutla DEM 3OBJ.PL-give-PAST-PL
‘en Huejutla allá les dieron’
‘in Huejutla they killed five’

118.  ka(n) se oficinas CCI noponeh kinmakakeh
kan se oficinas CCI noponeh kin-amaka-ke-h
where one offices CCI DEM 3OBJ.PL-sell-PAST-PL
‘donde están las oficinas de CCI, ahí les dieron’
‘where the CCI office is, there they shot them’

119.  wan nopa coyotl katli nopa representante
wan nopa coyotl katli nopa representante
CNJ DEM non.indigenous[ABS] REL DEM official
‘y el mestizo el cual era representate’
‘and the mestizo, the representative’
120. o presidente defensor de los campesinos
or president defender of los campesinos
‘o el presidente de defensor de los campesinos’
‘or the president defender of peasants’

121. primero kiitskikoh kitemahmatiyayah
primero ki-itskih-ke-h kitemahmati-yaya-h
first 3OBJ.SG-take-PAST-PL 3OBJ.SG-INDEF.OBJ-frighten-IPFV-PL
‘primero lo agarraron, lo asustaron’
‘they first caught him, scared him’

122. para kinekiyayah ma ax... axkinpalewi campesinos
para ki-neki-yaya-h ma ax... ax-kin-palewi campesinos
because 3OBJ.SG-want-IPFV-PL EXHRT NEG... NEG-3OBJ.PL-help peasants
‘porque querían que no que no les ayudaran a los campesinos’
‘because they did not want him to help peasants’

123. kikwikoh judiciales tlen del estado
ki-kwi-ko-h judiciales tlen del estado
3OBJ.SG-take-PUR-PL policeman REL of.the State
‘lo vinieron a traer los judiciales del estado’
‘policeman from Pachuca came to catch him’

124. Pachuca kiitskikoh kiwihwitehkeh
Pachuca ki-itski-ko-h kiwih-witeh-ke-h
Pachuca 3OBJ.SG-take-PUR-PL 3OBJ.SG-RDP-beat-PAST-PL
‘(en) Pachuca lo vinieron a atrapar, lo golpearon’
‘they took him, hit him in Pachuca’

125. nopa lider tlen agrario pero de momentoh axkimiktihkeh
nopa lider tlen agrario pero de
DEM leader REL agrarian but of
momentoh ax-ki-miktih-ke-h
moment NEG-3OBJ.SG-kill-PAST-PL
‘a ese líder agrario de momento no lo mataron’
‘at that moment, they did not kill that leader’

126. ipan 70 kimiktihkeh (nik)mati ipan 70
ipan 70 ki-miktih-ke-h ni-k-mati
ipan 70 in 70s 3OBJ.SG-kill-PAST-PL 1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-know in 70s
‘en los 70s lo mataron, creo en los 70s’
‘at that time, the 70s, I think, in the 70s’

127. 72 a los dos años kimiktihkeh
72 a los dos años ki-mik-tih-ke-h
72 to the two years 3OBJ.SG-kill-CAUS-PAST-PL
‘en el 72 a los dos años lo mataron’
‘they killed him in 72, after two years’

128. coyotl katik techpalewiyaya nopa tohwantih
coyotl katik tech-palewi-yaya nopa tohwantih
non.indigenous[ABS] REL 1OBJ.PL-help-IPFV DEM 1PRON.SG
‘el mestizo que nos ayudaba ahí a nosotros’
‘the mestizo who helped us there’

129. kimiktihkeh Huejutla
ki-miktih-ke-h Huejutla
3OBJ.SG-kill-PAST-PL Huejutla
‘lo mataron en Huejutla’
‘they killed him in Huejutla’

130. kimiktihkeh kampa kamapa ne seguro social
ki-miktih-ke-h kampa kamapa ne seguro social
3OBJ.SG-kill-PAST-PL where where DEM hospital
‘lo mataron donde, donde el hospital’
‘they killed where, where the hospital is’

131. tle(n) entrada de Chacatitla nopone kinmakakeh (i)ka tiros
tlen entrada de Chacatitla nopone
REL enter of Chacatitla DEM
kin-maka-ke-h ika tiros
3OBJ.PL-give-PAST-PL with shots
‘en la entrada de Chacatitla, ahí lo mataron a tiros’
‘in the entrance Chacatitla, they shot him’

132. kehnopa elki
kehnopa el-ki
DEM be-PAST
‘así fue’
‘it was like that’

133. ajám, noponeh ya kewak tokwantih
ajám noponeh ya kewak tokwantih
ITRJ DEM there like 1PRON.PL
‘ajám, ahí como nosotros’
‘uhm, there like us’

134. como tlen ejidatarios los 92
como tlen ejidatarios los 92
as REL ejidatarios the 92
‘como los 92 ejidatarios’
‘as the 92 ejido members’

135. ejidatarios comisariado tlen Cochotla kisolicitaroh
ejidatarios comisariado tlen Cochotla ki-solicitaroh
‘los ejidatarios del comisariado de Cochotla lo solicito’
‘the ejido members of Cochotla claimed it’

136. tlen nopah cerificados de derechos agrarios
tlen nopa cerificados de derechos agrarios
‘los cerificados de derechos agrarios’
‘the agricultural duties certificate’

137. keman elto... presidente de la republica Caros Salinas de Gorttari
keman elto... presidente de la republica Carlos Salinas de Gorttari
cuando be... president of the republic Carlos Salinas de Gorttari
‘cuando estaba el presidente de la republica Caros Salinas de Gorttari’
‘it was when Carlos Salinas de Gorttari was the president of the Republic’

138. nopah kisolicitarohkeh
nopah ki-solicitaroh-ke-h
‘eso lo solicitaron’
‘they requested this’

139. pampa kinehkeh para ma nesi kena i(t)stokeh
pampa ki-neh-ke-h para ma nesi kena itsto-ke-h
‘porque quisieron que se viera que si estaban’
‘because they wanted to seem like they were there’

140. katli derechosos ipan se ejido
katli derechosos ipan se ejido
‘los derechosos en el ejido’
‘the rightful holders of the ejido’

141. wan yeka noponeh, tohwantih los 92 derechosos
wan yeka noponeh, tohwantih los 90 derechosos
‘y por eso ahí nosotros los 92 derechosos’
‘that is why we the 92 rightful holders’

142. kena techmakakeh tocertificadoh
kena tech-maka-ke-h tocertificadoh
‘eso lo certificado’
‘they gave the certificate’
‘si nos dieron nuestro certificado’
‘they gave us our certificate’

143. wan noponeh naman kasi kwali tiistokeh
wan noponeh naman kasi kwali ti-isto-ke-h
CNJ DEM today almost well 1SUBJ.PL-be-PAST-PL
’y ahí ahora casi estamos bien’
‘and now we are almost good’

144. axmas onkah problemah
ax-mas onkah problemah
NEG-more be problem
‘no hay más problema’
‘there are not more problems’.

8. Conclusions

This chapter gave a general account of the San Isidro people and how some of the historical events in which their communal project and the Nahuatl language played a central role in the reproduction of the community. The objective was to understand that the communal project is a historical way of life that has had Nahuatl at the center and that both relate to the communal indigenous government. The following chapter will describe the cargo system or the communal government system, including the ideologies of the Nahuatl and Spanish language within the structures, spaces, and activities of such a Nahua way of governance.
CHAPTER II. STRUCTURES OF SAN ISIDRO LOCAL GOVERNMENT: 
THE CARGO SYSTEM AND NAHUATL LINGUISTIC IDEOLOGIES

1. From Structure to Agency: Existing Literature on the Cargo System

The cargo system is an institution of public and ranked offices that individuals hold to serve the community by participating in religious and civic obligations. The cargo system has been a central object of Mesoamerican anthropology and its structure is based on the so-called political and religious hierarchy. Scholarship on the cargo system has focused on 1) defining the importance of cargo systems and their particularities in each community; 2) the function of the cargo system in redistribution of wealth inside the community; 3) the function of cargo systems in reinforcing poverty inside the community; and, 4) its origins as being either pre-Hispanic, the product of colonialism, or an outcome of the late nineteenth century (Medina 1995, 1996; Korsbaek 2009). More recently, postcolonial theorists have examined systems of indigenous governments, consensus-driven governments such as cargo systems as fields of conflict within states, and sites of resistance to capitalist and neoliberal domination (Fenelon & Hall, 2008: 1874), analyzing the role that indigenous forms of governance play in the resistance and revitalization of the indigenous people’s identity (Bonfil 1996; Alfred & Corntassel 2005; Rius 2011). This dissertation draws from this recent postcolonial perspective and recognizes that indigenous government systems carry a colonial burden that is important to understand when rendering account of the weight of history in contemporary indigenous life. In other words, this dissertation brings together previous structural, functional, and historical understandings of the role of cargo systems with recent analyses of the system of indigenous
governments to broaden our thinking and shed light on the role of language in the ideology and practices of the cargo system as well as the way that this system of governance and its decision-making processes affects the continuity of Nahuatl language use.

There is extensive anthropological literature on the cargo system. The first analysis of this religious and political institution started as early back as the first quarter of the twentieth century and continues until the late 1980’s (Tax 1937; Carrasco 1961; Harris 1974 [1964]; Cancian 1966; DeWalt 1975; Rus & Wasserstrom 1980; Friedlander 1981; Chance & Taylor 1985)25

During the previous decades of the 80s, the analysis of cargo systems was based on the idea of closed corporate peasant societies26. Thus, strong focus on supposedly classless and egalitarian societies left aside issues around power, power structures, and agency. Likewise, the historical factors were also marginal until the 1980s when cargo system research incorporated a more dynamic analysis, questioning the pre-Hispanic and/or colonial origins of the system and observing considerable changes of it due to historical circumstances (Rus & Wasserstrom

25 Sol Tax (1937) describes the system among the various municipalities in Guatemala. Later Tax (1953) suggests that cargo systems function as a leveling mechanism meaning that the wealth within the community would be equally distributed. Carrasco (1961) published an article in which he develops his idea of the cargo system pre-Hispanic origin and characterizes it as one of the main features of the traditional Indian peasant societies. Contrary, Harris (1964) sustains that the “fiesta system” is a Spanish and Catholic mechanism to maintain indigenous control and to extract resources for the church, incorporate indigenous people to the labor market, and stimulate the commercial exchange among indigenous and mestizos. Later, Cancian (1966) describes the complex cargo system in Zinacantán, Chiapas. DeWalt (1975) wrote an article comparing cargo systems of twenty-six Mesoamerican communities in Guatemala and Mexico in order to prove that there are communities which have experienced minimal changes within the cargo system’s hierarchies. Rus & Wasserstrom (1981), drawing on historical records about the raise of brotherhoods or cofradías in the eighteenth century in the highlands of Chiapas, point out that cofradías served to assure that the Church obtained tribute from indigenous pueblos. Similarly, to Rus & Wasserstrom (1980), Chance & Taylor (1985) analyzed data that corresponds to Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca, and central Mexico.

26 Excepting Harries’ (1965) proposition.
In the 1980s, the closed corporate community perspective was initially challenged giving more agency to the indigenous and a more prominent role to historical factors.

Early research considers that the system served to reproduce hierarchy within the community, little attention was paid as to how such hierarchy produces inequalities and power relations as well as ideologies that sustain such inequalities. Moreover, this literature on cargo systems based its analysis on the functionalist paradigm, that as Hernández (2018) points out, it tended to emphasize the supposedly harmonious relationships, silencing conflict, and power relations. Indeed, Korsbaek & Ronquillo (2018:9) identify the political analysis of cargo systems as “the Aquilles’ heel” of the cargo scholarship because of the limited research on that dimension. Based on a summary of the existing literature of cargo systems, these authors propose a “paradigm of cargo system”, pointing out that the vast ethnographic research has shown that the cargo system does not level neither wealth nor poverty; it has little to do with democracy, and it is not necessarily an institution that protects communities from external changes (Korsbaek & Ronquillo 2018: 40). According to them, if some of the postulates of the cargo system paradigm are still valid, they would be that such institutions produce ethnic identity, define community borders, and somehow design legitimate channels of communication with the Catholic and national political systems. With the change

27 Specifically, Rus & Wasserstrom (1980) sustain that the cargo system instead of being a “bulwark of traditionalism” is a result of economic and demographic changes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For its part, Friedlander (1981) highlights that it’s important to pay attention to the ideological and cultural content of the activities organized by the cargo system. Chance & Taylor (1985) continue the discussion about the temporality of the cargo system, recognizing that the cargo system has its origins during the colonial as well the nineteenth century.
of anthropological inquiry from structure to agency in the ‘90s along with the assumption of the weakening of the cargo system and its disappearance, anthropological interests moved away from this institution (Magazine 2012: 42).

In a recent book that focuses on the relationship between the cargo system, family, and ethnicity in highland Mexico with an emphasis on human actions more than structure, Magazine (2012:43) posits that the focus on the structure itself was merely a distraction because the cargos and their related structures were seen as an end instead of seeing them as a “means to an end”. Far from disappearing, the cargo system in San Isidro is quite active and complex power relationships take place within its activities. Thus, this dissertation takes the system and its structures as a backdrop to human actions, in Magazine’s words, as a means to an end, means that somehow structure actions. Moreover, what this dissertation looks for is how the cargo system impacts the contemporary political life of this Nahua group within the village. What are the distinctive communicative features and language ideologies that pertain to the decision-making processes within the cargo system of governance, and secondly, how does this impact the continued use and vitality of the indigenous language?

Aligning with the change of focus of the anthropological inquiry from structure to agency, as Magazine (2012) suggests in his book, more recent action-oriented research highlights some aspects of the agency that we can observe within cargo systems (Monaghan 1990; Sierra 1992; Portal 1995; Cohen 2000; Good 2004; Millan 2005; Medina 2007; Magazine 2012). Nevertheless, just a few include the analysis of language use (Sierra 1992). What is the role of historical and political structures in the continuation of the native language? Is there any
relationship between the use of language in political arenas and the vitality of the language? Even though the literature on cargo systems is rich and plentiful, no work is concerned with the linguistic and discursive dimensions that are involved in cargo system actions and activities. The present dissertation tries to fill that gap and understand the way linguistic ideologies and discourse practices play a role in negotiations within indigenous communities, leading to the continuation or abandonment of the native language.

In that sense, we are obligated to return to the questions of temporality of the cargo system as a point of departure for our argument of cargo systems as being in many ways a colonial institution which facilitates the installation of colonial power (Gómez 2017), but at the same time it might also be an institution that serves to defend collective interests (Korsbaek 2009). It is what Magazine (2012: 43) calls for: an analysis of the cargo system that provides a “base on which people can produce each other as active subjects”. Even though this dissertation takes into consideration how the colonial structures of the cargo system impact human actions produced by active subjects, it does not only focus on the structure but on how such historical structures have certain effects on relations, actions, knowledge, and languages. This perspective highlights the agency of subjects and gives also space to observe when and under which circumstances the institution can serve against and/or in favor of communities. This research sees the communal government system and the people who constitute it as a cluster of dynamic and dialectic forces that move and relate according to historical and contextual factors.

In a recent article, Gómez (2017) precisely reintroduces the issue of whether the cargo system origins date back to the pre-Hispanic times or if they are a result
of the colonial impositions. Although the objective in this dissertation is not to demonstrate that the origins of cargo systems or the system of cofradías in Huasteca date back to the colonial period –Carrera (2007) already accomplished that goal\textsuperscript{28}--, we follow Gómez’ (2017: 64) work in which he asserts that Mesoamerican cofradías present structural and functional features similar to the ones found in Spain, giving them an undeniable Hispanic character. Moreover, we support the argument in turn supported by the de-coloniality theory positing that the life of the Americas was transformed through the colonial institutions, later perpetuating such changes through the coloniality of power (Mignolo & Escobar 2010). Gómez (2017:65), in a general manner, argues that the contemporary cargo system or system of cofradías constituted one of the foundations of the colonial strategy for the integration and evangelization of the multiethnic society found in the Americas, ending in a nuclear institution of the local indigenous life. The successful implementation of this institution resulted in such an efficacy that indigenous peoples would see their identity reproduced to an extreme and use the institution as an ethnic resistance tool (Gómez 2017:65).

A fact that might also demonstrate the colonial influence on cargo systems is the mere existence of a hierarchy at the core of the institution. Western ontology successfully introduced its idea of a leveled society based on a series of hierarchies:

\textsuperscript{28} Gómez (2017) similarly to Chance & Taylor (1985), argues that cofradía system in Huasteca, Hidalgo increased its civil and political character without decreasing the religious one. On the other hand, patronage within cofradías was an essential element of the institution, imprinting the pyramidal and clientele structure even more. Here it is important to highlight that the historical process that allowed the fusion of the system of cofradías with the cabildo indígena, tells us something about the degree of colonial rationality that the Mexican national-state project entailed since its formation; it is precisely the compatibility of both regimes that allows such hierarchical institutions to become one and rooted, gaining momentum at the end of the colonial period and the beginning of the creation of the Mexican state in the nineteenth century.
racial, gender, class, age (Coronil 1996; Quijano 2000; Trouillot 2002; Maldonado-Torres 2010; Schiway 2010; Lugones 2010). Thus both the cabildo indígena29 and the cofradía system perfectly fused to keep reproducing the colonial hierarchical rationality as the institutions were introduced by the colonial rule to carry its hierarchical structures and logic. Paradoxically, cofradías were corporative systems based on reciprocal assistance, an element that would support the cohesion of collectivities which in turn would give a character resistance tool for ethnic identity (Palomo 2004; Carrera 2018), especially for being a space that contained social cohesion and identity expression of indigenous communities (Gómez 2017: 60).

This perspective allows for questions of power and politics and an understanding of how colonial structures are deeply embedded, and sometimes challenged within indigenous societies. This takes special relevance in the context of neoliberalism and globalization in which many colonial strategies regain strength to keep dispossessing indigenous people not only of their territory and other material resources but also of their knowledge, subjectivities, worldviews, and languages (Alfred 2005). Moreover, in sites such as the cargo system of San Isidro, the language of assemblies is mainly the native language, Nahuatl with some uses of the colonial language, Spanish, especially through borrowings and code-switching. In this regard, it is essential to wonder: Could we think that the efficacy and continuity of the cargo system is related to its public character and its

29 Cabildo Indio was the administrative institution imposed by Spaniards in order to collect tribute, give the tribute to the royal authorities, and coordinate the way the surplus was extracted within indigenous land, as well as to organize the tequio (De Gortari 1987).
nature of political negotiation and all of these features to the continuation or abandonment of language or vice versa? What has been the role of the use of indigenous language in such processes and for communities which see their identity reproduced in sites like this? We could be facing a phenomenon in which both forces reverberate in both directions: the existence of a historical political local structure impacts the use of the indigenous language, and the use of the indigenous language also impacts the continuation of historical political structures.

The way we can explore how a colonial institution impacts language continuation or abandonment is through looking at the cargo system as a site for producing or reproducing social structures and relationships. As Philips (2008) suggests, sites are loci of cultural research analysis. According to this author, the concept of site is important because it is an actual locus filled with ideas, “claiming a kind of materiality for them” (232). In that way, site has a strong side in which the ideological is essential; in fact, site is the ideological construction of a framework. Similarly, to Philips’ (2008) analysis, the relevance of site as a concept resides here with the fact that the cargo system, more specifically the activities that take place as part of it, are sites in which linguistic ideologies along with social relationships are reproduced. Furthermore, as language is one the most inescapable resources in the constitution of identity (Bucholtz & Hall 2004), and a vehicle for social action (Bucholtz 2011), the analysis of the use of language as well as the linguistic ideologies within cargo activities in San Isidro will help elucidate the possible answers of precisely what a study of language use and language ideology together can reveal.
Identity of racialized peoples who speak minoritized languages, as in the case of Nahua people, undeniably intersects with the language use (Gal 2012; Urciuoli 2013 [1996]. Moreover, identity as an interactional construction in which language is a fundamental element of interactions (Bucholtz 2011) many times is specifically the point of intersection of exclusion and stigmatization (Urciuoli [2013] 1996). The Nahua people of San Isidro face strong linguistic discrimination, mainly outside of the village because in the frame of the nation-state policy, they speak a different language than the legitimate or authorized one; thus, the use of Nahuatl plays a role in the constitution of their ethnoracial identity and marks a specific dynamic in the distribution of resources.

On the one hand, San Isidro people have dealt with many attempts at assimilation including the one that attempts to dispose them of their language. On the other hand, they also have resisted it. Language is then a power resource for them. In that sense, both language practices as well as ideas about language become elements to understand the dynamics of the continuation or abandonment of Nahuatl.

Another essential theorization for this research is the scholarship on language ideologies to understand how people’s perception of language and its uses configure linguistic and social behavior. The most recurrent definition of language ideologies is Silverstein’s concept as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (Silverstein 1979: 193) as well as Irvine’s definition as ‘the cultural system of ideas of social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests’ (Irvine 1989: 255). Silverstein’s notion
highlights the participation of social actors in the use of language and the way people justify their assumptions about language. Irvine’s concept, on the other hand, emphasizes the political economic side of communication, specifically the political significance of ideas about the social use of language. One contribution of those concepts is that research on language ideologies aims to understand the multiplicity and political economic nature of human communicative activities through the analysis of ideas regarding languages and their political implications within social life. Studies indicate that a full understanding of language must include the study of perceptions or ideologies about language because linguistic practices and linguistic structures are culturally and socially perceivable and interpreted. Those interpretations are the mediating sides of social relations and interactions.

According to a linguistic ideological point of view, language structures and linguistic practices are not objective facts; they are important human perceptions that are part of broader aspects of human life such as the political, the economic, and the cultural dimensions. The study of language ideologies has demonstrated that the ideological side of communicative interaction is a direct link to inhabitable positions of power – social, political, and economic. In this sense, ideology is seen as “ideas, discourses, or signifying practices in the service of the struggle to acquire

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30 For more about linguistic ideologies see also Kroskrity (2007) who recognizes the dynamic and multiplicity of language ideologies and suggests five levels of significance: (1) language ideologies respond to a certain interest of specific groups; (2) there are multiple language ideologies; (3) individuals are aware of language ideologies to different degrees; (4) languages ideologies are mediating links among social life and ways of speaking; and (5) language ideologies play an important role in the constitution of identities such as nationality and ethnicity. Thus, the significance of language ideologies includes power, social structure, and identity, indicating that such domains are an essential part of human communication. Indeed, some of the focus of studies around language ideologies is the relationship between language and the domains of power, social structure, and identity.
or maintain power” (Woolard 1998:213). This dissertation explores such dimensions and intends to reveal the role of linguistic ideologies and discursive practices in San Isidro within the dynamics of political negotiations of the village.

2. Cargo System in San Isidro Atlapexco

The cargo system has been at the center of San Isidro’s social, religious, and political organization since the community’s founding around 1910. In San Isidro, the cargo system requires one year of unpaid service from men and women over 18 years old. However, only men can hold the main positions. Cargo positions are ranked, and individuals may ascend to more prestigious positions over the course of their life with positions requiring the investment of significant time and resources. The main representatives in the cargo system or tlanawatianih ‘the ones who command’ oversee negotiating with the federal and state governments to obtain funding to meet the needs of the community. This negotiating character makes the cargo system a bridge between the San Isidro people and the federal and regional governments. In terms of local affairs, they lead the decision-making in community assemblies, organize the collective work, and administer the resources – including the finances – of the community through caja de comunidad ‘communal treasury’ 31. To hold office is a communal obligation for every individual and represents both prestige but also a burden. In other words, it is the way the community evaluates the active participation of individuals in the civil, religious, and political life of San Isidro. Moreover, the fulfillment of the offices is a

31 See page 141 for the definition.
requirement to keep being a member of the community. Consequently, no one can escape this obligation. To be a member of the community means to have certain rights such as living in the community, inheriting land, keeping and cultivating it, receiving a plot of land (solar) in order to build a house\textsuperscript{32}, sending your offspring to the community schools, and having a space in the cemetery. In sum, participation in the cargo system “serves to institutionalize the individual’s role in the community” (Szeljak 2016:136).

Although there are main positions of the system which are considered to be occupied by the authorities of the village, the community assembly exercises the highest authority. Community assemblies elect local officials in the cargo system. The election is a collective effort every year that takes place within the assembly, proposing individuals for every position with hands up voting. Previously, elders along with the officials in turn, gathered to discuss and nominate the possible new members of the cargo system. They used to visit their houses and let them know their decision to nominate them in an assembly. They used to nominate several individuals, and the voting was carried out in an assembly specifically for this purpose. With the increasing migration and the refusal of many to hold a position, the election process has recently been modified. Currently, elders and officials in turn, discuss who will be the next authority. However, only one person for office is nominated now. Thus, there is no space for candidates to justify that people did

\textsuperscript{32} Solar are spots of land of approximately 1,292 ft\textsuperscript{2}. This point has been lately the origins of many conflicts since the collective land is rapidly decreasing because of the demographic explosion. Part of the negotiations of the assembly is if it can still be one right for the ones holding cargos or eliminate it. Many who have to migrate in order to work do not feel motivated to come back and serve the community because they will not have a plot where to construct a house. This is especially a problem for those who belong to a family without land so they could not either inherit any property.
not vote for them in previous years in the case that they were candidates, arguing that they did not reach the number of votes to serve as officials. Through this new way of proposing only one person for office, candidates cannot deny holding the positions. This is a strategy to reduce the possibility of the refusal to hold appointments, but it is also a strategy to maintain the legitimacy of the system itself because voting among many candidates may result in reducing the importance of certain individuals as equal citizens of the community. This is just one example of how San Isidro people constantly innovate the system according to the new needs of the community. Again, as Magazine (2012) suggests, the cargo system is just the backdrop of how San Isidro people dynamically mobilize and modify according to what they consider is the best way to carry out their social and political life.

The notion of citizenship in San Isidro revolves around the active participation in the community of every individual, the cargo system is then the structure behind all the activities in which an individual must participate as a citizen. Once individuals turn 18 years old, they start their life of obligations gaining the title of tekichiketl ‘the ones who performs work’ or faeneroa. The only way to delay the age of receiving this title and beginning obligations is by still being at school or having a job outside of the community. In the case of the latter, individuals still have to fulfill their obligations by paying cash fines and paying a peon who would perform the faena on their behalf. According to Szeljak (2016:138), the lack of religious rites of passage in Huasteca Nahua societies make the cargo system participation as well as the initiation in the communal labor a rite

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33 Faenero (a) comes from the Spanish word faena which means ‘collective work’, also called tequio which in turn comes from tekil ‘work’. All faeneros performs faena as part of every citizen or every in the village.
that publicly displays the individuals’ transition into adulthood.

Another important component of the system is the _caja de comunidad_ or communal treasury which is an internally managed financial mechanism inherited from both cabildo and _cofradías_. As Carrera (2007: 75) explains, _caja de comunidad_ ‘communal treasury’ was the main source of credit for Nahuas of Huasteca. It was through the administration of such _cajas_ ‘communal treasury’ that the indigenous villages came to be governed in the same structure as a small corporation (Carrera 2007:166). By virtue of this imposed mechanism to administer tributes and religious finances, villages could trade and have their own ‘bank’. As in the colony, _cajas de comunidad_ ‘communal treasury’ is currently the way in which villages many times can reach some demands of the national-state regime. For example, in February 2019 the municipal government tried to introduce a sewer system to the area. The program included use of the storm drain infrastructure built in 2015-2016. Although the needed storm drains were already constructed, the community had to invest money to install a water treatment plant and have the necessary infrastructure to finally have the complete sewer system. The municipal program did not include a budget for such an investment, so villages needed to self-fund the work. The only way to gather the necessary funds was through the _caja de comunidad_ ‘communal treasury’ in which every _tekichiketl_ ‘the one who performs work’ equally had to contribute to the investment. It was only through this mechanism that San Isidro could have the service\(^{34}\).

Likewise, many of the basic services the village has acquired since the

\(^{34}\) See chapter 4 for the assembly negotiations regarding the sewer.
second half of the twentieth century such as schools and public buildings, electricity, paved roads, potable water, have been partly installed thanks to the self-finance of the village and the communal labor, which consists of the cleaning and maintenance of roads and streets, conservation of churches, and the policing of territories. Further, several activities are carried out with this self-finance procedure such as the patron saint celebrations, the administration of the communal mill, and until recent times the provision of economic support in case of illness or economic difficulty in individual households. In sum, caja de comunidad ‘communal treasury’ is the economic base of the communal organization and life.

In that sense, it is important to analyze how the cargo system serves as a medium of articulation of the indigenous with the national societies and the state. For instance, in many cases, the state –in a similar fashion to the Crown during colonization –imposes its hegemony through the structures and functions of the cargo system (Sierra 1992). Indeed, Ruvalcaba (2004: 181) indicates that indigenous societies –unlike the rest of the national society– are the only ones for which the state demands collective work to accomplish tasks that in other communities are fulfilled by the state itself. It perfectly reflects how the cargo system thoroughly fits with state policies. Since such tasks existed and were institutionalized during colonization, the state uses institutions such as the cargo system to evade its responsibilities, be absent, and introduce its ideologies and hegemony under the label of “uses and customs” instead of providing a real frame of respect for indigenous autonomy. As we have seen in chapter I, much of the mistreatment from the municipal government and caciques in the recent history
of the Huasteca of Hidalgo was more prevalent because of the structure of the cargo
system and the indigenous governments (Schryer 1990).

2.1 The Tlanawatianihi: The Tlayakanketl and his Tekiweh

The cargo system in San Isidro has a pyramidal structure, where the bottom
comprises positions considered less important whereas the top holds the
maximum authority in the village. In principle, all men in the community must
follow the trajectory from the bottom to the top without receiving any payment for
their services. The positions’ holders must be renewed every year and they must
occupy all the positions in the structure, resulting in at least ten years of service in
their lifespan. The structure is comprised of five men, the tlanawatianihi ‘the one
who command’, which are the 1. tlayakanketl ‘the ones who leads’, juez ‘judge’, or
delegado ‘delegate’35, the 2. tlakwiloketl ‘the one who writes’ secretary,
subdelegado ‘substitute delegate’, the 3. tominpixketl ‘the one who collects money’
or treasurer, and 4. two tekiweh ‘the one who works’, vocals or aides, all of whom
are socially recognized as the authority of the village. They are ordered in a
pyramidal fashion within the structure (see figure 7). From the bottom to the top,
we found two tekiweh ‘the one who works’ who are in charge of providing support
to the rest, but more specifically to the tlayakanketl ‘the one who leads’. The third
one at the bottom is the tominpixketl ‘the one who collects money’, the person in
charge of administering the village finances through caja de comunidad
‘communal treasury’. The next office before reaching the very top is the

35 Juez and delegado are both used within the community. The first is a name that many old people use and
deleagado is the current title used by the municipal administration.
The tlakwiloketl ‘the ones who writes’. The latter is the right hand of the judge. The tlakwiloketl ‘the ones who writes’ is charged with registering all the agreements, concerns, and issues to have written Spanish records. The tlakwiloketl ‘the ones who writes’ is also responsible for holding the tlayakanketl’s ‘the ones who writes’ position in case the latter is absent. Finally, at the very top of the hierarchy, the tlayakanketl ‘the one who leads’ holds all the responsibilities of the community and represents the maximum authority within and outside of the village.

The tlayakanketl’s main functions are 1) to represent the village with the municipal and regional government, 2) to coordinate and organize tequio ‘communal work’ or faenas, 3) to solve and mediate any problem that happens within the border of the villages, 4) to organize the religious and civil celebrations, and 5) to guard the community. All these responsibilities are carried out not only by the tlekalayanketl but also by all his aides and the committees organized for every great task. However, the judge is the head of the community, and the collectivity associates such functions as the final tasks that he must report publicly at the end of his administration. The word tlayakanketl ‘the one who leads’ comes from the verb tlayakana which means being at the front of a group. That is, to guide or lead. Then the conception of this figure is a person who goes in front of the community, someone who guides and leads the village.
Figure 7. The Structure of the Cargo System.

The *tlayakanketl* ‘the one who leads’ represents, for the collectivity, the figure of the community’s father. In fact, among its tasks is to function as a conciliatory judge in case of familial conflicts including domestic violence (e.g. violence against women). The San Isidro cargo system, as Guardino (2005) indicates, is a patriarchal institution that embraces colonial hierarchies\(^\text{36}\). As we

\(^{36}\) There exists a rich conversation about the origin of gender among indigenous communities mainly from Latin-American decolonial women scholars. On the one hand, Segato (2015) suggests that indigenous and Afro-American societies had a patriarchal organization in which the notion of gender existed although different than the one imposed by the colonial order. She describes such organization as a low-intensity patriarchy. On the other hand, Lugones (2010) proposes that gender understood in binary terms was introduced through the patriarchal colonial state. Furthermore, she proposes a colonial/modern gender system which disintegrates communal relations, egalitarian relations, ritual thinking, collective decision making, collective authority, and economies. She posits that “the imposition of this gender system was as constitutive of the coloniality of power as the coloniality of power was constitutive of it” (Lugones 2010: 383). As the concept of a colonial/modern gender system is based on the concept of Quijano’s coloniality of power, she sees gender as a system of domination. This dissertation considers both perspectives but analyzes the gender domination in San Isidro as a type of colonial domination because, among other things, many of the domination patterns including the ones reproduced within the cargo system activities obey the gender system introduced by the colonial order. As already mentioned in this chapter, the cargo system, as the system that organizes the social, civil, religious and political life in San Isidro has its origins in the colonial institution.
will see later in this chapter, women in San Isidro cannot hold the main positions and are often excluded from the spaces of decision-making. Gender hierarchies settle in the politics of San Isidro through this institution.

The Spanish linguistic and communicative competence of representatives had not been an impediment to be elected as the maximum authority. However, in 2006 the community had its last monolingual tlayakanketl. This indicates that the process of major contact with the outside world and the modernization of the villages started to have a significant impact on the governmental structures over ten years ago. The metapragmatic discourse of “salir adelante” or “forging head” (Messing 2007) was initially introduced with the elementary school and its castellanization project but is now reaching the political sphere of the community. This ideology favors the idea to abandon Nahuatl, substituting it with the dominant language. People associate a fully Spanish speaker with modernity and economic progress (Messing 2007), so many think that a judge should speak Spanish for the well-being of the community because knowing Spanish will help modernization happen sooner than later. There is still conflict or ambivalence (Hill 1996; Messing 2007) among those who think that the judge’s linguistic and communicative competence needs to reach the standards imposed by the state and those who think the opposite; however, the force of bilingualism and the “salir

37 Messing (2007) analyzes the metadiscursive practices of a Nahua town in Tlaxcala, Mexico. She proposes that multiple linguistic ideologies interact and result in language shifts. The discourses she identifies are the forging ahead or salir adelante, the discourse of menosprecio or denigration of indigenous identity, and the pro-indígena or pro-indigenous discourse. All of them promote different attitudes toward language and ultimately affect language shift. This dissertation similarly analyzes metadiscursive practices in the political domain to understand the role they play in the continuation of Nahuatl in San Isidro.

38 Castellanization refers to the national policy of assimilation through the introduction of Spanish (Castilian) to indigenous communities. The national school system has had among its goals to castellanizar indigenous populations during the first years of elementary school (Hammel 2016).
 adelante” ideology have had its first consequences even though some insist on saying that there is no such requirement to be an authority. From 2007 on, all the judges have been bilingual. In contrast, older people think that the tlakwiloketl ‘the ones who writes’ must compulsorily speak Spanish. Moreover, it is this official who is more directly associated with literacy in the dominant language as one of his main functions is to record every argument in writing.

At first glance, the cargo system structure might appear simply comprised of only five men. However, when we dig into the structure, it becomes more complex because those five men represent only the top of the system. Several individuals, both men and women, are part of the system mainly as committees of specific tasks that they must perform in order to complete all the work that those five men determine to do for the well-being of the community along with the communal labor every tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’ performs throughout the year. The system is predominantly masculine; however, women have increasingly participated in recent years. Other important positions of the system are described in the following lines.

2.2 Wewetsitsin, Nanameh and Council of Elders

After a man has served the community holding all the positions in the hierarchy and turning 60 years old, he can retire from the community obligations. Retired men still have their rights but no longer have the obligation to continue working for the community. They have no further obligation to attend assemblies; however, they become wewetsitsin ‘elders’ and members of the council of elders. Elders represent wisdom and knowledge. Their main function is to provide advice
to the five *tlanawatianih* ‘the one who command’ in case they fail to solve any problem. Elders also evaluate the work of the five authorities every year and submit recommendations for the next five. For women, there also exists a similar pathway once they turn 60 years old, they are *nanatsitsin* ‘elderwomen’ and exempted from the communal obligations. Younger women also consult them in case there is a need for their moral help.

Although the council of elders is highly respected because they are experienced and wise and they are the ones who know how things were done in the past (Iceak 2013:173), they have gradually lost their authority. Indeed, as Iceak (2013) reports for another Huasteca Nahua community, this loss of authority provoked the displacement of the decisive power from the council to the assembly. The elders’ authority has suffered such attrition because individuals who are not elders yet have increasingly gone to school and gained considerable respect for having a profession. Additionally, the lack of official recognition of the council as authority, the requirements imposed by the state regarding the election of committees, the procedures to obtain social programs and infrastructural works and the current notions of justice, all reinforce the weakening of its authority, often leaving aside the council of elders (Iceak 2013: 145).

The *ex-tlayakanketl* ‘the one who leads’ in a 2015 interview commented that the *tlanawatianih* ‘the ones who command’ still consult with *wewetsitsin* ‘eldermen’ who nominate the future authorities. After listening to the council of elders, the *tlanawatianih* ‘the ones who command’ nominate them in an assembly on November 2nd every year (this date indicates the beginning of the community cycles and coincides with *mikailhwitl* or Day of the Dead, also called *Xantolo*).
Finally, the assembly determines the next members, especially when many deny the appointments, forcing the assembly to pick the upcoming *tlanawatianih* ‘the ones who command’.

My research showed that community attitudes towards the elders’ knowledge of Nahuatl were mixed. On the one hand, they are considered to have the best communicative competency, which is greatly valued but only in some situations such as rituals and celebrations, and for providing moral advice. They are also the reference of *tlen kwali nawatlahtoa*, ‘the ones who speak the language well’. On the other hand, community members are aware that from the perspective of state authorities and policies,
their monolingualism is considered an obstacle to the progress and modernity and a result of failing to attend school, which is part of the reason why they are decreasingly recognized as an authority.

From the linguistic ideology of the elders being the ones who properly speak the language there is another linguistic ideology derived that permeates the life of San Isidro people: a purist ideology. Some researchers have already documented it in other Nahua speaking communities (Hill & Hill 1986; Messing 2007; Pharao 2016a/b) and several multilingual societies. This ideology has to do with trying not to mix the native language(s) with the colonial or dominant language. Hill and Hill (1986) and other linguists have shown that purist language ideologies can often work against the use of a vernacular language when they stigmatize popular forms of code-switching and lexical borrowing as “polluted.” This is also applicable to San Isidro where both adults and younger generations think they do not speak properly because they use Spanish within Nahuatl phrases and discourses. Since my first arrival to San Isidro in 2005, and especially when people knew I was interested in the Nahuatl language, they expressed their concern about mixing Spanish and Nahuatl. People say *wewetsitsin* and *nanameh* speak the real Nahuatl and many claim not to understand the way that *wewetsitsin* speak very well. However, they communicate with them without problems.

Although it is not within the political arenas, one way this language ideology impacts the language maintenance and language use is through the role of *wewetsitsin* and *nanatsitsin* in terms of transmitting Nahuatl. Several women have expressed that they are not afraid of their children no longer speaking the native language because they acquire it through their grandparents. This also
happens when young fathers have to migrate to the outside world and work for long stretches of time away; often, they leave their children with elders forcing them to speak the language.

2.3 Ejido Officials

One of the important functions of the cargo system is to maintain proper order in the community as well as to administer the collective resources, since the time of the land reform which took place in Huasteca in the 1970s and 1980s (see chapter 1), representatives of the ejidos must be part of the authorities and work together in case land issue arise. San Isidro is an annex of the Cochotla head (see
Chapter I) so a representative must be linked to the ejidal head but also to the representatives of the system. Only landowners can have such an appointment and unlike cargo offices, this position lasts three years because it must obey the national norms regarding land regulations. The official is called *representante ejidal*. The main functions are: 1) to be present at the ejido meetings in Cochotla, 2) to mediate disputes with adjacent communities in case of boundaries and land issues, and 3) to explain new governmental land programs and regulations to the community. Although the ejidal official works under the laws of the ejidal commission, the main representatives of the cargo and the ejidal figure are closely connected. In ejido meetings, everything must be discussed with the five main officials and later in assembly and no decision can be made by the office unless the ejidal representative has consulted with the assembly.

As the ejidal representative is normally a person from the older generations, so far, the representatives have had a better competence than Spanish. In general, the assemblies and topics related to land possession are in Nahuatl complying with both the linguistic preference of the officials who fill the appointment but also with the way other communities publicly treat land issues. San Isidro representatives must attend meetings with all the ejido representatives from at least 11 surrounding communities. Such meetings are carried out in Nahuatl.

2.4 The Committees

The modernization process of the second half of the twentieth century brought the need to expand the active participation of more people in the village widening the structure of the cargo system (Iceak 2013: Szeljak 2016). Whereas
before all the community affairs were solved through the main representatives or the tlanawatianih ‘the ones who command’, now the organizational work requires more individuals. The way San Isidro people solved this necessity was through the conformation of committees, which are groups of komontekitinih or faeneros and faeneras that are responsible for performing specific tasks under the supervision of the main representatives of the cargo system. The committees are in the middle of the hierarchy. They are placed between the five tlanawatianih ‘the ones who command’ and the tekichiwanish ‘the ones who perform work’, the latter are at the base of the pyramid (see figure 7). To be part of any committee is considered holding a cargo for the community. Although some committees are permanent, the number of committee members varies from year to year, and some are temporary. Whereas the permanent ones are the kindergarten committee, elementary school committee, middle school committee, drinking water committee, women’s health committee, others are temporary. The latter are committees that are formed in order to fulfill a task that will eventually finish, and the committee will no longer exist. An example is the committee to defend the communal land formed in the mid 1990s when a federal program for parceling plots arrived in the community because of the neoliberal land reform of the same decade.

Such a committee was formed to collectively represent the village and exert pressure on the government and on some communities that accepted parceling its territory. The San Isidro people refused to accept parceling their land because they concluded such change would affect their communal organization. Once the federal government accepted not to force villages to adopt the division of the land
into individual parcels, the committee dissolved. Other temporary committees have been in charge of the installation of the electricity service, the paved road committee, the committee for the construction of the local shelter, the committees in charge of conducting the social welfare programs, etc. The tasks that demand the integration of a committee generally have a long timeframe. Many of the committees were initially formed as temporary and later stayed permanently such as the school committees because, as mentioned above, maintenance of the services in the community depends on the collective labor.

Some scholars have demonstrated that some groups inside the community—mainly professional and wealthy individuals who enjoy special status due to their education—play a role of power. Such groups who are the “socially and educationally privileged” (Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003: 458) impose their ideas on the rest as to how politics should be conducted and how Nahuatl should be spoken. These actors are also carriers of linguistic ideologies who along with the monolingual state policies, hinder the development and wider use of the language. Even though the communicative competence of the individuals who constitute committees is not explicitly mentioned as a requirement, many of the meetings are carried out in Spanish. For example, the school committee meetings are almost always in Spanish, indicating that such activities are associated with the dominant

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39 The permanency of these committees depends on what the state and federal agencies determine. Since 1988, a welfare program was introduced to rural and indigenous villages to decrease poverty. Since the presidential period is six years, its name and application have changed every time a new president takes office. For example, from 1988 to 1994, the program was called Solidaridad (solidarity), from 1994 to 2000 it changed to Progresa (progress), later it was called Oportunidades (opportunities), in 2014 it changed to Prospera (prosperity). Changes in the federal and state policy bring changes within the communities to which the cargo system adapts whenever necessary. The social programs have among their main goals to bring modernity to people through the modernization of communities.
and colonial language. The presence of teachers, even teachers from the community who are bilingual,40 leads to the use of linguistic codes that index the relationship of San Isidro people with the national society and the state policies. Additionally, teachers exercise a specific kind of power and are the wealthiest in the villages. In the village, there is a family that has built a certain status thanks to its economic power. The Lopez family is one of the families that has extensive cultivable land, the head of the family is the tepahtiketl ‘doctor’ of the village, and his sons had access to study and became elementary school teachers. They have embodied, in a certain way, the figures of modernity and progress so their economic power became political. They influence the assembly decisions, and their interventions are often entirely in Spanish.

A teacher from this family (he lives out of the community) is an activist. He has created an alphabet for teaching Nahuatl and teaches courses in Nahuatl to earn a living with some of his own pedagogical materials. He has written three books in Nahuatl and often participates in events, and programs related to diffusion, strengthening, and revitalization of the language. His participation within the political organization is frequently through other people in the village because he is always absent except during holiday periods. However, his influence is such that he often pays someone else who represents him in the assembly. His position, due to writing in Nahuatl, is embedded in the purist ideology since he condemns the use of Spanish words and the use of letters such as ‘w’ because it is a letter used and associated with the English alphabet. People respect him because

40 Chapter 4 shows how native teachers who use Nahuatl as their first language and are natives from San Isidro sometimes dictate the way the assembly is led, especially in terms of the linguistic codes used.
él tiene libros y sabe cómo escribir el Náhuatl ‘he has books and knows how to write Nahuatl’. His power is transferred through all his family and the voices of his brothers in the assembly are also respected because of him.

2.5 The Catechists

As seen in the two narratives about the origins of the village in Chapter I, the religious offices were eliminated from the cargo system for representing an economic burden no longer bearable. Thus, mayordomos are absent from the hierarchy; however, the official church mandates the participation of catechists. Catechists are two or three individuals who receive religious training and perform Catholic rituals such as praying the rosary, holding mass, guiding the Holy Week procession, leading Xantolo rituals, the saint celebration ceremonies, and the funeral rituals, all of which are conducted in Nahuatl. They also perform other duties such as patrol, clean, and maintain the church. Although these individuals participate in the organization of religious celebrations, the five main representatives are responsible for organizing such celebrations. Catechists give their service voluntarily and mainly based on their Christian faith but partially as a communal obligation. Even though Catechist participation is considered part of communal service, they are not collectively elected in assembly.
3. The Assemblies

The assemblies consist of the gatherings of all faeneros and faeneras of the villages to collectively present, discuss, and make decisions in and for the community. This is the main mechanism to let everyone know about the political, civil, and religious aspects of the village as well as the way everyone exercises their right to expose their points of view. It is through the assembly that the representatives of the cargo system, the ejido officials, and the committees are elected. It is also in the assembly where people discuss the governmental programs, organize the komontekitl ‘communal work’, and decide actions in cases of emergencies. Importantly, all the discussions and decision making are mostly carried out in Nahuatl. Assemblies may last as long as it takes to resolve an issue.

One of the strongest structures of the cargo system is the existence of assemblies to make decisions concerning the community. Although there is extended literature on cargo systems, little attention is paid to the role of assemblies within the cargo system as spheres of social action and as a site of
producing and reproducing social relations and interactions. Indeed, in the historical reconstruction of the institution based on colonial *cabildo* and *cofradías*, the assembly is not mentioned as a mechanism of the decision-making process. This dissertation pays particular attention to the dynamics of interaction and communicative actions within assemblies because it considers that the collective force displayed within it might be the engine to transgress, oppose, challenge, and eventually change the hegemony of the state which is mainly implanted through governmental interventions along with state ideologies. As the collectivity and the search for unanimity and/or consensus within assemblies are the basis of the social organization, in this dissertation I seek to use my ethnographic and sociolinguistic analysis to explore the extent to which assemblies contain a possibility to challenge national ideologies such as the monolingual ideology of Spanish sustained since the installation of the Republic in the nineteenth century through current times. Moreover, the local ideology of cooperation, solidarity, and the practice of collective mutual help materialized in the *komontekitl* ‘communal work’ may be resisting the monolingual liberal ideologies and policies sponsored by the Mexican state.

It is this structure of collective authority of the cargo system, more specifically the structure of the assembly and how San Isidro people utilize it that can be seen again through the lenses of de-colonial theory. We can see the assembly and the way people collectively make decisions within it through the frame of what Mignolo (2010) calls de-linking. For him, de-linking “implies working at the fringes, at the border of hegemonic and dominant forms of knowledge, of economic, and of political demands, using the system but doing something else,
moving in different directions” (Mignolo 2010: 7). The cargo system may carry many of the colonial features including gender hierarchy and serve the state for several purposes, but at the same time the assembly also functions in favor of communities. This dissertation tries to discover when and how the assembly acts as negotiating, opposing, challenging, and even resisting the monolingual state ideology and when the assembly reinforces or confirms key elements of the monolingual national ideology.

The salient value that people invoke for why they speak Nahuatl at assemblies is that they have a strong respect for the elders. Otherwise, if people speak Spanish the elders cannot understand what is collectively discussed. Under the assumption that elders would barely understand and engage in the discussions, people speak Nahuatl publicly. Although, as mentioned previously, the rules of the cargo system dictate that elders no longer must participate in assemblies and fulfill communal obligations. It is true that sometimes they indeed attend assemblies so the argumentation of using Nahuatl because of their presence is accurate in practical terms. However, it also has an ideological side because Nahuatl is ideologically associated with cultural values of respect, cooperation, and, solidarity and overall with the primary importance of the work performed by and for the collective.

The assembly is then the public social space where the social and collective forces act through the participation of every individual in relation to the collective. Individual participations represent parts of the whole system, so all the participants and participations are interconnected. One of the purposes of this participation and exchange between individuals is to reach decisions in which the
collective agrees because the final deliberation would eventually benefit everyone. Within this frame, the decision-making process is then a discursive action that implies long discussions and the exchange of points of view, aiming to find consensus. The long pathway to arrive at a unique decision is highly dynamic and many forces such as power relations, interactions, the use of different codes and registers, and subjectivities are at play. This dissertation aims to explore how it is that assemblies confirm, resist, or otherwise challenge dominant social language ideologies.

3.1 General Assembly

The general assembly is socially and politically central for the San Isidro people. Every collective matter, concern, and issue must be treated in assembly. The assembly is the most important legislative institution of the village and the tlanawatianih ‘the ones who command’ are responsible for executing the assembly’s decisions (Iceak 2013:158). The general assembly happens at least once a month and is summoned and guided by the representatives of the cargo system. Although these gatherings are called general assembly, only men faeneros can attend it. These assemblies are devoted to discussing general problems and topics. For example, the first assembly of 2019 in which the incoming elected representatives introduced themselves to the collective, presented their plans for their one year period of governance, and explained the activities that would give continuity to the ones executed by the former tlanawatianih ‘the ones who command’. Major matters or concerns must also be treated in a general assembly such as public health issues, organization of religious celebrations and feasts,
introduction of new governmental programs, problems caused by individuals in public spaces, land conflicts with adjacent communities, issues related to community schools, conflicts provoked by political parties among the population, and so on (for a more detail analysis of this assembly see a Chapter III, section 4).

Women’s participation is limited to the women whose husbands are outside of the community. They should attend general assemblies on behalf of their husbands. Women’s participation has depended, at least in the last decade, on the tlanawatianih ‘the ones who command’ in turn. For example, in 2008 and 2009, the judges decided to open the general assembly to faeners and faeneras. In later years, women’s presence only happened when a problem involved them directly. In 2018, the refusal of many to hold an office forced the authorities to summon a general assembly with the presence not only of faeners but also of faeneras. After many general assemblies with only men, the judge decided to include faeneras because he considered their contribution to the appointment of the new authorities. It was only after this general assembly occurred with both women and men present that they finally elected the authorities of 2019.

2015 was an important year for women’s participation in general assemblies; they were previously prohibited from them because of a conflict between the Coamontax village and San Isidro. In June of that year, Coamontax neighbors clashed violently with the community of San Isidro pressing for a decision in favor of the construction of a bridge that would connect Coamontax with the new road leading to the city of Huejutla. The Coamontax people blocked San Isidro’s entrance/exit of the community and cut electricity for five days. With machetes, sticks, rifles, and the threat to sexually abuse and kill the women in the
community, they wanted to force the San Isidro local government to accept the construction of the connecting bridge which would affect a land plot in San Isidro. This situation is only one of many territorial issues between these two communities, and in actuality the issues surrounding land have historically marked the relationship of these two towns. The tlayakanketl ‘the one who leads’ of that year decided and gave the order to exclude women from general assemblies under the argument that women would gossip to the Coamontax women and let them know which decisions or discussions took place within the assemblies. He wanted to avoid gossip. This is another semiotic process that impacted women’s participation in the decision-making process through what has been called erasure (Irvine & Gal 2000). Irving & Gal (2000) define erasure as ‘a process in which ideology, simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some person or activity (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible…a social group or a language may be imagined as homogenous; its internal variation disregarded. Because a linguistic ideology is a totalizing vision, elements that don’t fit in its interpretative structures—that cannot be seen to fit—must be either ignored or transformed’ (38). With the ideology of women being the only ones who participate in gossip, the political negotiation erases women’s voices concerning the most general village decisions. This is an example of control of talk as a form of power (Philips 2008) and one crystalized way of the colonial/modern gender system (Lugones 2010) by which

41 These authors (Irvine & Gal 2000) explore the ideological aspects of linguistic differentiation. They explain how people separate linguistically from others through three semiotic processes: iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure. In these three semiotic processes, three different signs are involved: icon, index, and symbol. The presence of these three types of signs, in turn, participate in the construction of linguistic ideologies. Thus, speakers through these signs rationalize and justify the existence of certain linguistic forms as part of broader human activity, including linguistic differentiation.
men gain control of discursive resources that end up being the mediums for political decision-making concerning all citizens in San Isidro. Furthermore, through this measure men also create a negative image of women that becomes part of the representational economy and semiotic ideology (Keane 2003) of San Isidro that in turn might become part of the ‘representation of the world’ (Kockelman 2013) of the San Isidro people⁴².

Women’s involvement in general assemblies during the last two decades has been intermittent and dependent on the historical and contextual circumstances. However, they increasingly participated in the last half of the twentieth century. The writing records of Sr. Juan (see Chapter 1) indicate that the first participation of women in the cargo system was in 1960⁴³. Although women’s work is fundamental to carry out collective work, the general assembly often excludes them. The way women have counteracted such exclusion is by having their own meetings following the same scheme of general assemblies but dedicated exclusively to a women’s sphere of actions. Even though much of this feminine sphere has mainly been demarcated through the introduction of governmental programs (e.g. the women’s health committee), it provides women with their own space to gather, discuss, and make decisions. As many of these spaces depend on welfare programs, women’s meetings obey national guidelines of these programs.

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⁴² As Kockelman (2013) suggests, it is important to care about signs because they are essential in creating meaning. Indeed, human representation abilities translate into what he calls ‘representation of the world’ (Kockelman, 2013). In other words, representations of the worlds are modes of meaningful behavior. Context also becomes an essential element in representing the world. It is at this level that indexical signs come to be part of the whole. The Linguistic ideologies approach might be part of what Keane (2003) calls the representational economy and semiotic ideology.

⁴³ Mr. Juan indicates that the women’s participation started with the formation of a women-only committee for cleaning the streets and the river. The teacher of the community at that time Gabriel Nieto Enriquez encouraged the formation of such committee.
So far this year, women have had no meeting because the *Prospera* program was interrupted when the new president took over. Women not only lost their funding support but also stopped having meetings. Both the gendered nature of the concept of gossip and the image created within the community and specifically the political life as well as the national agenda affect women’s participation in the political life of San Isidro.

3.2 *Siwameh’s Assemblies*

To understand the role of the political and public use of Nahuatl in its continuation, it is essential to understand public feminine spaces not only because *siwameh* ‘women’ are socially expected to transmit the language but also because the increasing need of men to migrate has provoked growing political participation of women within the cargo system activities. Women’s participation in the cargo system merits some attention. As mentioned in the last section, women’s active participation started in the last half of the twentieth century when the modernization of villages started taking place.

*Siwameh*, first of all, help their husbands when they are serving as authorities. They are socially recognized as having a cargo for the fact that their husbands are *cargueros*\(^\text{44}\) and they perform much of the work. The workload that women have to perform in such circumstances is heavy, and their participation contributes greatly to the collective activities of the village. Whereas *cargueros’* wives contribute to the authority’s activities, other women must hold cargos

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\(^{44}\) *Cargueros* is a Spanish name similar to *tlanawatiani* ‘the ones who command’. *Cargueros* mainly refers to the five principal authorities of the community.
related to the organization of the collective corn mill\textsuperscript{45}, and offices within different committees. Other important cargos are the ones that they have to cover for the distribution and organization of the governmental programs. The notion of political participation in San Isidro involves all types of collective work; as such, the work related to such welfare programs is also considered a cargo.

Women’s assemblies are then public feminine spaces where women gather in order to mainly inform and organize the work that corresponds to them such as cleaning the streets at least once every two weeks, cleaning the river during rainy seasons, administering the collective mill, cooking for religious celebrations, and conducting activities for social programs. Many of such topics relate to personal, familial, and communal sanitation, contraceptive methods, and others that mainly correspond to the western-urban ways of conceptualizing progress and development.

As with the rest of the cargos, the communicative competence of women is not an explicit requirement but if the cargo is more related to tasks involving the exterior world, the women holding the cargo are expected to speak Spanish; whereas if the task involves more internal affairs, the communicative competence in Nahuatl is enough. In other words, the pressure to speak the dominant language is always present and we can maybe think that the internal affairs require people

\textsuperscript{45} In 1976 Instituto Nacional Indigenista INI granted corn mills to communities as part of its indigenist policies. Since then, women constitute a yearly committee in which they organize to administer it. The corn mill is paramount not only for the political and economic participation of women but also for the daily diet of the community. Corn, being the food staple, must be ground every day. Women use the mill at least once a day and many use it once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The administration of the mill functions as a cooperative. The money that is charged every time a woman grinds her corn is gathered and is used for credit loans. At the end of the year, all the money gathered is equally distributed among the faeneras including the retired. The mill committee is comprised of five women: the president, the secretary, the treasurer, and two aides. This committee has the same structure as the tlanawatianih’s ‘the ones who command’ offices.
to only speak their native language, at least only on a superficial level. However, community life is not categorically divided among the activities that are more directly related to the exterior and activities more directly related to the inner community. Instead, every communal problem, concern or issue reflects how San Isidro life is connected to wider realities: realities at the regional, national, and global levels. In this sense, it is important to highlight that women’s assemblies are carried out almost exclusively in Nahuatl regardless of the topics, concerns, and problems to be addressed. As in the rest of the assemblies, many linguistic, communicative, and semiotic resources are at play as well as linguistic ideologies. One important ideology related to language is the one that indicates that women are responsible for transmitting it.

It is true that San Isidro women’s political participation is less visible than men’s; however, the visibility of it should not be interpreted as the absence of women in public life. Their lack of visibility is also connected to what Segato (2016) explains as the marginality of women in public spaces. She proposes the term minoritization for the process of “treating women as lesser beings and relegating them to the realm of the intimate, the private, the particular, treating them as a minority (and consequently minor) issues” (Segato 2016: 615) which is a process that started with the conquest and colonization of the Americas that led to the transition of colonial-modernity. Such transition refers to a change from the communal life to modern societies. This included the colonial binarism in which there exists one space for women and one space for men, the private and the public, respectively. Both sides are not complementary but hierarchically placed. In fact, the author states that the history of the public space is the history of gender, and
more specifically patriarchy. This is another example in which colonial legacy is crystallized in San Isidro. Following this colonial scheme, the position of women outside of the public sphere reflects what Segato (2016) indicates for the public space as the “locus of the enunciation for all politically valued speech” (2016: 617). The minoritization of San Isidro women through the erasure of their voices in the general assembly might be affecting the continuation or abandonment of the Nahuatl language or at least the image of women’s roles and voices within this Nahua society.

Although women’s participation is often restricted to private spaces, it should not be interpreted as passive. Indeed, the androcentric interpretation of women’s voice sometimes leads to the translation of the role of women as unheard or passive (Gómez & Masson, 2011); however, if we delve deeper into their roles within communal life, we will better understand how they contribute to challenging the monolingual, colonial, and national linguistic policy in Mexico. I draw insight from the work of Tzul (2016b) who argues that the Mayan feminist fights for communality and distribution of resources based on the women’s desire to produce concrete means for daily life and life in general. This perspective, the politics of desires, helps her to understand that women are fighting for communality as the base of life. Similarly, San Isidro women are exercising power from the communal desire to produce the life in which Nahuatl is a central element. Here we can locate a linguistic ideology that opposes the salir adelante ideology: the one that suggests Nahuatl is una lengua bonita ‘a beautiful language’.
When I asked women why they speak Nahuatl in assemblies and with their offspring, they told me that Nahuatl is a beautiful language. Their answers were followed by remembering how painful and traumatic it was to learn Spanish at school as well as the racism and discrimination they face because they speak *un dialecto* ‘a dialect’. They recognize that Spanish is a need in today’s world but they refer to the community as the space to feel more comfortable speaking their native language. Behind the notion of Nahuatl being a beautiful language, we can find
traumatic experiences associated with the Spanish and the mestizo world that this language indexes. The San Isidro people experience a type of violence, raciolinguistic violence (Rosa 2016) when learning Spanish and being in the cities because language is a part of, or interwoven with, the racialization process. Their language has become an index of race and racial inferiority (Omi & Winant 2015; Myers 2005; Urciuoli 2013 [1996]); they experience what has been called racialization of language (Veronelli 201546; Urciuoli 2013 [1996])47.

Such a racialization of individuals for speaking an indigenous language plays out in two directions. On the one hand, it has provoked the abandonment of the native language and, on the other it makes people feel more comfortable using their native language. The ambivalence of the colonial discourse, in this case about languages, in Bhabha’s (2012 [1994]) terms, makes San Isidro people desire to speak Spanish to no longer experience racism but it also produces anxieties when fulfilling the monolingual ideal of the nation-state and the mestizo world because

46 Veronelli (2015) approaches linguistic racialization within the framework of modernity/coloniality. This framework is useful to understand that racial hierarchy is a historical imposition from the colonizer to the colonized. Moreover, it is helpful to understand that language along with race is immersed in power relationships. Through the two axes, coloniality and modernity, that ‘organize the meaning and forms of control and domination in every domain of social existence’ (Veronelli 2015, 110). Veronelli (2015) explains how race and language come together to construct the communicative agency of the colonized as limited. Indeed, in the racial hierarchy, the colonized is placed as non-human or less-human than the colonizer. In that sense, because non-European languages are spoken by the colonized, they are not conceived as full systems of communication with grammar. Thus, there is a linguistic racialization in which the language spoken by the non-human is then not languages or less-languages.

47 In racializing a particular language, as Urciuoli (2013 [1996]) comments, language is objectified in a way that assigns values to it. Language sets a connection of specific values with the speakers of that language. She argues that in the case of Puerto Rican in New York, it is through the racialization of language that Spanish comes to be less valuable than English and it then becomes the means by which Puerto Ricans are being judged. ‘Accents,’ ‘bad grammar’ and ‘mistakes’ are some of the objectified signs assigned to Spanish; their interpretation is framed around the axes of race and class. Indeed, for the author ‘language, dialects, and accents are constructs that classify people, as do race, nationality, ethnicity and kinship’ (Urciuoli 2013 [1996]: 3). What Urciuoli is indicating here coincides with Veronelli’s assertions of language as an aspect through which racial hierarchy is consolidated, placing speakers of specific languages as inferiors and bearers of less worthwhile values. For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see Chapter IV.
they still face exclusion and discrimination. From this ambivalence, it is that the linguistic ideology Nahuatl as a *lengua bonita* operates against the monolingual ideology.

Although women are many times left aside from the main public space of decision-making, the role of language ideology that Nahuatl is a beautiful language held by women can be essential in the maintenance and continued use of the native language in San Isidro. As Cumes (2012) notes, because indigenous women are placed in such a subordinate position of gender, race, and class, they can provide new liberating ways of life that go beyond unilateral perspectives of emancipation. Cumes (2012) remarks that it is not the same to challenge domination from the center as it is from the margins as indigenous women, thus these women represent epistemic authorities for exploring power and its multiple faces. In this respect, this dissertation explores the role women in San Isidro play in the language maintenance and use of language. As Tzul (2016b) indicates, such maintenance might be based on women’s desire to reproduce the politics of the communal. In other words, they are preoccupied with maintaining the necessary conditions for life. Within this preoccupation, the use of the Nahuatl language may be a strategy in which that reproduction of the communal is implicated.

4. Komontekitl and Religious Celebrations

Fundamental parts of the political organization of men and women in San Isidro crystallize in two great activities: *komontekitl* and religious celebrations. Both activities gather every citizen in the community together to carry out activities
for the well-being of the village. *Tequio* ‘communal work’ directly refers to work that everyone performs to physically maintain the community, whereas religious celebrations require the work -and additionally the enjoyment of the feast- of everyone to ritually offer celebrations to spiritual beings, “ensuring the spiritual safety of the community” (Szeljak 2016:141).

*Faena* or *komontekitl* “communal work” consists of working together in public spaces used by everyone such as the church, the cemetery, the building devoted to *tlanawatiani* ‘the ones who command’ meetings and assemblies, roads, the river, communal corn plots, schools, and streets. There are at least nine *faenas* per year; however, in previous years they performed around twenty yearly. The decreased number of *faenas* is related to the increase in migration of people to work in urban areas and selling their labor force as journey laborers (see chapter 1). The required work for religious celebrations is also part of the *komontekitl* ‘communal work’. Everyone gathers to perform tasks that will finally end with the feasts. The main celebrations are: 1) the candlelight mass on the 2nd of February, 2) the patron Saint Isidore on the 25th of May, 3) the feast of corn on the 7th of October, 4) *Xantolo* or day of the dead on the 1st and 2nd of November, 5) the celebration of Virgen de Guadalupe on the 12th of December, and 6) Christmas on the 24th of December.
If someone fails to participate in *faenas*, either by attending or paying someone else to work on her/his behalf, they risk their citizen status. The consequences might be punishments that go from cash fines to expulsion from the community. On the one hand, the notion of authority and political organization revolves around participation in collective activities, most of the time having communal labor as the core of the organization. On the other, religion plays an important role in concepts of political participation so the *tlanawatianih* ‘the ones who command’, the committees, *faeneras*, and *faeneros* in general work together to provide the village with all the necessary conditions, both materials through communal labor and spiritual through the various religious celebrations, to keep life continuity.

As long as communal work represents the basis of indigenous identity
Guardino (2005)\(^{48}\), it holds much of the collective strength. For instance, in San Isidro we find the solidarity and cooperation ideologies as the basis of the notions of collectivity which in turn is materialized through *tequio* ‘communal work’; the majority of problems are solved with collective organization and the participation of the community in the solution proposed by the collectivity. Paradoxically, it has been through such work that the communities have also been exploited during colonization and the Republic times. In this sense, as Guardino (2005) posits, the cargo system is important in terms of prestige but it’s more important because its significance is extended to social life, identity and, I would add, language use. As we have seen throughout this chapter, the cargo system has become the background where people display native language use, specific discursive practices, and ideologies around language.

5. Conclusions

As Meek (2010) indicates, the endangerment of indigenous languages is a

\(^{48}\) Guardino (2005:62) suggests that community service is one of the essential elements of indigenous identity. He, analyzing the influence that liberal law of the nineteenth century had on the reshaping of indigenous governments from colony to republic, indicates that it is evident that the transition caused many communities to reshape themselves. Indigenous communities adopted the egalitarian aspect of the liberal ideology which goes very well with the idea of communal service. At the same time, liberal law failed to fully incorporate the idea of the individual citizenship, allowing communities to continue with the *tequio* as a fundamental structure that kept reproducing and maintaining the social and political organization of communities. For him, the failure was probably intended because of the importance of such resources for communities, keeping community services as central to the exercise of authority and the center of the indigenous identity. The republican legal system did not eliminate the indigenous governments nor communal service. Instead, it recognized the latter as an “undeniable duty of citizenship” (Guardinos 2005:59). As the indigenous identity kept reproducing based on collectivity, the liberal project of a nation compounded by individuals did not completely reach the indigenous political culture. Guardino’s argument also underlines the issue of the degree of compatibility among the colonial and the modern nation-state regimes. Although the liberal republican order promoted individuality over collectivity, the state conveniently allowed the persistence of colonial structures of indigenous governments and the collective work.
consequence of colonial assimilation and a result of contemporary ideologies, practices and contradictions. This chapter has documented that the structure of the San Isidro local government is in part a legacy of colonialism as well as some of the ideologies and practices within the political arena including the dynamics of the gender system which in turn is also embedded in colonial heritage. This chapter also documents the ideologies and practices related to the use of Nahuatl in political arenas and other factors that contribute to the maintenance of Nahuatl as the language of political decision-making. This chapter tries to show that the analysis of the maintenance or abandonment of a language is a complex process in which many forces are at stake, including ideologies, practices, and contradictions. It is through a semiotics perspective that this dissertation will investigate how such ideologies, practices and contradictions are part of social and linguistic behavior and as such are culturally and socially perceivable and interpreted. More importantly, such interpretations are mediations of social relations and interactions, including dynamics of power, social structures, and identities.
CHAPTER III. THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE ASSEMBLY IN SAN ISIDRO: INTERACTIONAL STRUCTURES AND SOME FEATURES OF NAHUATL POLITICAL SPEECH

1. Introduction

Using Linguistic Anthropology research methods, this chapter describes and explains the structure of assemblies in San Isidro and their discursive practices. Based on the analysis of two audio and video-recorded assemblies in 2019, this chapter explores the turn-taking system and the order of themes addressed in assemblies to determine how members of the community interact linguistically and discursively within political arenas. The description identifies the rules that govern these political discussions as well as some discursive strategies and certain verbal skills involved in this political exercise of the village. The description includes features of the more formal and ritual part of the political speech of the assembly and explains some political categories of the Nahua communal political project expressed through the Nahuatl language. The first meeting lasted 2 hours 47 minutes and the second gathering lasted 1 hour 38 minutes.

2. Approaches to the Study of Language in Social Contexts in Linguistic Anthropology

Duranti (2003) describes how anthropologists have historically explored language as part of a broader cultural view. According to Duranti, language as
culture has been the object of study across three different paradigms\(^{49}\): 1) the linguistic relativity perspective which originated in the 1920s, 2) the long accepted paradigm of linguistic anthropology, closely related to sociolinguistics, developed in the 60s with the Ethnography of Speaking and Communication, and 3) the third paradigm established during the 80s and 90s and supported mainly by Giddens’s structuration theory, Bourdieu’s practice theory, Bakhtin and Volosinov’s dialogism, and Foucault’s insights on knowledge and power\(^{50}\). This research takes various concepts from and contributes to the second and third paradigms.

The Ethnography of Speaking and Communication utilizes the structural analysis of language in relation to speech and performance as a theoretical and methodological frame. This method proposes to analyze speech acts and the

\(^{49}\) Duranti (2003: 324) defines paradigm as a “research enterprise with a set of recognizable and often explicitly stated (a) general goals, (b) view of the key concepts (e.g., language), (c) preferred units of analysis, (d) theoretical issues, and (e) preferred methods for data collection”.

\(^{50}\) The first paradigm known as linguistic relativity perspective has the following characteristics: 1) Goals: the documentation, description, and classification of indigenous languages, especially those of North America; 2) View of language: as lexicon and grammar, that is, rule-governed structures, which represent unconscious and arbitrary relations between language as an arbitrary symbolic system and reality; 3) Preferred units of analysis: sentence, word, morpheme, and, phoneme; also texts (e.g., myths, traditional tales); 4) Theoretical issues: appropriate units of analysis for comparative studies (e.g., to document genetic classification or diffusion), linguistic relativity; and 5) Preferred methods for data collection: elicitation of word lists, grammatical patterns, and traditional texts from native speakers’ (Duranti 2003:326). Whereas the second paradigm already known as linguistic anthropology, has the following characteristics: 1) Goals: the study of language use across speakers and activities; 2) View of language: as a culturally organized and culturally organizing domain; 3) Preferred units of analysis: speech community, communicative competence, repertoire, language variety, style, speech event, speech act, genre; 4) Theoretical issues: language variation, the relationship between language and context; 5) Preferred methods for data collection: participant observation, informal interviews, audio recording of spontaneous language use (Duranti 329-30). Finally, the third paradigm established during the 80’s and 90’s has the following characteristic: 1) Goals: the use of linguistic practices to document and analyze the reproduction and transformation of persons, institutions, and communities across space and time; 2) Theoretical issues: micro-macro links, heteroglossia, integration of different semiotic resources, entextualization, embodiment, formation and negotiation of identity/self, narrativity, language ideology; 3) View of language: as an interactional achievement filled with indexical values (including ideological ones); 4) Preferred units of analysis: language practice, participation framework, self/person/identity; 5) Theoretical issues: micro-macro links, heteroglossia, integration of different semiotic resources, entextualization, embodiment, formation and negotiation of identity/self, narrativity, language ideology; and 6) Preferred methods of data collection: socio-historical analysis, audiovisual documentation of temporally unfolding human encounters, with special attention to the inherently fluid and moment-by-moment negotiated nature of identities, institutions, and communities (Duranti 2003:333).
structure of speech acts using various components of the speech situations such as code, channel, setting, message, form, topic, and event (Hymes 1977; Gumperz 1982; Bauman 1984; Briggs 1988; Sherzer; 1990). Specifically, works on genres and verbal art and performance have revealed that considering both form and content together in a situated discourse shed light on the relationship between language and local use of knowledge and conduct (Hymes 1977; Bauman 1984; Briggs 1988; Duranti 1994; Sherzer 1990).

The analysis of content shows how discourse is transformed and at the same time transforms some aspects of social life such as beliefs, values, and assumptions of the world (Duranti 1988), while the analysis of linguistic structures sheds light on language varieties as well as how verbal performance takes place in social context through language itself (Gumpertz, 1982; Hymes 1987)51. Through the analysis of rhetorical resources such as parallelism, discursive markers, metaphors, the presence of couplets or triplets, and also of the performative character of speech acts, scholars have posited that a particular speech is not an individual voice52 but rather many voices in one (Bakhtin 1981; Hill 1995). This

51 Duranti (1988) mentions four different ways in which Ethnography of Speaking has explored language as a matter of social praxis: (1) 'Language use' which must be understood as 'the use of linguistic code(s) in the conduct of social life' (212). In other words, what speakers do with languages intentionally or unintentionally, consciously, or unconsciously, directly, or indirectly; (2) Communicative competence which implies ‘participation, performance and intersubjective knowledge that are essential features of the ability to ‘know a language’. (214); (3) Context which, for issues of including potential speakers, spatial-temporal dimensions, and the participant’s goal, has been divided into three components: speech community, speech event, and speech act; and (4) Conversation analysis as one of the alternatives to all of the above mentioned but with some points of agreement such as ‘stress the role of speech in creating context, the need to take the participants’ perspective in the analysis of their interaction, and the cooperative nature of verbal communication to the claim of the emergent nature of the social order’ (Duranti 1988: 225).

52 The notion of voice here is one that Bakhtin (1981) proposes, and Hill (1995, 1996) utilizes to understand the role that consciousness plays in selecting various linguistic resources. For these authors, voices are the reflection of consciousness, “the site of consciousness and subjectivity in discourse” (Hill 1995; 98). According to Woolard (2004) through the concepts of heteroglossia, polyphony, and voicing, Bakhtin provides a view of language as highly variable and diverse even in the context of monolingualism. In that variability, context is the clue. Circumstances in which words are produced are then primary elements of languages and meaning.
perspective sees the emergence of discourse/texts as products of social interaction in which different genres originate (Brigg & Bauman 1990; Agha 2007). As such, the study of different ways of speaking requires analysis at the translinguistic level (Bakhtin 1981, Hill 1995).

The Ethnography of Communication approach is crucial for this research because it examines communicative competence within a political economy of the language (Urciuoli, 2013 [1996]; Gal and Irvine, 2000). In other words, the communicative economy of speakers along with sociocultural norms and language functions can be analyzed through the linguistic forms and content to understand specific identity formations (Urciuoli, 2013 [1996]) as in the case of Nahua people in the Huasteca Region.

One specific approach that derives from the Ethnography of Speaking and Communication is called *ethnopoetics*, which concentrates on exploring the poetic and aesthetic functions of language (Epps, Webster & Woodbury 2017: 54). Following Jakobson’s (1960) postulate of the multifunctionality of language, ethnopoetics challenges the idea that language serves only for referential purposes. This is a discourse-centered approach in which the poetics of language is seen as a crucial part of human creativity (Sherzer 1987, 2002; Hoseman & Webster 2021). Although Ethnopoetics and this discourse-centered approach were mainly developed for and applied to Native American narratives (Sherzer & Woodbury

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Voice concept especially emphasizes social intentionality because the voice is the way linguistic forms are infused with a social intention. A linguistic form carries the infusion of other speakers. Thus, it carries other voices. In her analysis of Don Gabriel’s voices, a Mexicano speaker of central Mexico, Hill (1995) identifies a system of voices within the narrative in which don Gabriel gives accounts of his son’s death and reveals the linguistic practices in which he “claims a moral position among conflicting ways of speaking, weighted with contradictory ideologies” (98). The two languages involved in Hill’s analysis are also Nahuatl and Spanish.
1987; Hymes 1987; Tedlock 1987; Sammon & Sherzer 2000), this same framework can be helpful in analyzing political discussion and the decision-making process in this context because those speech phenomena are carried out through discourse and discourse practices with observable patterns. This chapter will describe examples of poetic and rhetorical structures and patterns within political speeches delivered in the Nahuatl language.

The other research approach of Linguistic Anthropology used in this and the following chapters, explores the relationship between communicative actions, power, and social inequality through theoretical and analytical devices that appeal to the semiotic side of language and culture. This perspective, also following Jakobson’s (1960) idea of the multifunctionality of language, challenges the limited vision of language having only referential functions. This body of work relies to a large extent on the study of indexicality and language ideologies. Such notions not only disclose the semiotic side of social communication but also reveal the essential role of language in the production of social meaning. These concepts have served as a guide to semiotic processes of making sense and meaning within the social world. Indexicality is a way in which social meaning is expressed by means of pointing out one instance from another. It is a construction of meaning rooted in one source that comes to be linked to another (Silverstein 1979; Ochs 1992). Primarily, because indexical signs set up a relationship between social context and social meaning, indexicality involves presupposition and entailments (Hill 2009). Assigned values to different languages can then be presupposed by the social context in which languages are being used.
It is thus necessary to explain the importance of language ideologies as the indexical value transits from context to context, from context to the speaker, as well as from speaker to context (Woolard, 2004). With this dynamic, indexical values are transmitted through the ideological channel. According to Bucholtz & Hall, “indexicality mediates between the ideology and practice, producing the former through the latter” (2004, 381). Indeed, language ideologies are mediating links between social and cultural life and forms of talk (Woolard, 1998).

Research on language ideologies, the way in which speakers rationalize or justify how they perceive language structure and use (Silverstein 1979; Gal & Irvine 2000), has demonstrated that the ideological side of communicative interaction is a direct link to inhabitable positions of power on social, political, and economic scales. In this sense, ideology is seen as ‘ideas, discourses, or signifying practices in the service of the struggle to acquire or maintain power’ (Woolard 1998:213). The ideological perspective of language is an essential theoretical tool for this research on political speeches and how indigenous people negotiate and navigate power, and at the same time lead their political life (see also chapter II, section 4.2).

This chapter offers several contributions to the material mentioned above: it uses ethnographic examinations of the use of speech acts and events in the Nahuatl language elucidating specific linguistic forms and rhetorical sources that are linked to the political exercise of communality as the political project of Nahua people that allows them to have certain self-determination and display their agency in decision-making processes. The chapter draws attention to the performative aspect of those specific linguistic forms and rhetorical resources in
Nahuatl as powerful elements within discourses, impacting the decision-making process. Further, this research considers the linguistic ideologies of the use of language in political arenas, and how linguistic forms and rhetorical resources are used under those ideological frameworks. Linguistic ideologies and indexical values are mediating links between the way people in San Isidro talk within the assemblies and the ways they conceptualize and put into practice both the political communal project as well as the modernization project.

2.1 Discourse genres

The concept of discourse genre greatly serves to further our understanding of the relationships between communicative practices and broader social, cultural, ideological, and economic formations in which they occur as well as their implications. The field of Linguistic Anthropology has advanced in the understanding of discursive interactions mainly through theories of discourse genres. As Bauman (1999) points out, the notion of genre has played an important role since the foundation of the discipline, but it was not until the 1960s that scholars revitalized the interest in elaborating a more encompassing concept to explain speaking practices53.

Briggs & Bauman (1992) and Bauman (2004) offer an important discussion of the influence of Bakhtin’s notions in oral poetics or, more generally, oral

53 The work of Bakhtin has served as the basis to elaborate notions of communicative practices and their relations to other aspects of human life. For Bakhtin (1986:26) speech genres are specific types of utterances that correspond to specific spheres of use of language within the frame of human praxis and/or human activity. Moreover, the author argues that the specific conditions of such spheres are reflected by the linguistic style, the thematic content, and the compositional structure of the utterances. In other words, any speech genre would have these three components which in turn compose and organize the utterances (Bakhtin 1986).
tradition and discourses as well as the antecedents of such an approach. Anthropology as well as Folklore have passed down a tradition of viewing texts as cultural products. In other words, as “durable, repeatable, linked to other texts by relationship of descent...and generic similarities” (Bauman 2004: 2). Although such a conception is now problematic because it erases dynamism and complexities of many kinds in the use of language, it is the precursor of Linguistic Anthropology scholarship of today and leads our understanding of genres. Likewise, the Ethnography of Speaking and Communication greatly contributed to the current understanding of genre, articulating it with notions of speech act, speech event, and speech style, and overall viewing genre as “conventionalized yet highly flexible organizations of formal means and structures that constitute complex frames of reference for communicative practices” (Briggs & Bauman 1992:141). Through articulating speech events as specific types of genres, scholars realized that the organization of the discourse itself was not enough to understand communicative practices. This led to the development of more complex methods of analysis through the incorporation of the performative side of speaking as well as the role of an audience evaluating a given performance (Hymes 1972: 64; Duranti 1997: 94). This contribution relies on the fact that the conditions of the production, the situational contexts, and the reception of a discourse are fundamental elements in understanding verbal interactions and speech genres54.

54 Based on many of the principles of the Ethnography of Speaking, the notion of genre is now much more dynamic and flexible because it is immersed in the frame of looking at “social life as discursively constituted, produced, and reproduced in situated acts of speaking and signifying practices that are simultaneously anchored in their situational contexts of use and transcendent of them, linked by interdiscursive ties to other situations, other acts, other utterances” (Bauman 2004: 2). Such interdiscursive relationships result in a sociohistorical continuity of cultural repertoires of concepts and practices which in turn conventionalize and become “orienting frameworks for the productions, reception, and circulations of discourse” (Bauman 2004: 2).
The San Isidro assemblies can be seen through these theoretical frameworks which view assemblies as situated constitutive speech events in the social life of San Isidro village. Speech is central and is at the core of these types of events. Their relevance is at the level of its constituent character as well as at the level of production and reproduction of social life. The discourse that is produced, received, and circulated within the assemblies becomes a signifying practice for the people of San Isidro. The situated acts of speaking are anchored in the dynamic of the assembly, but they transcend the immediate context and are related to other situations, other acts, and other utterances.

An example of this is how people discuss political issues within their homes after attending an assembly. This is a discourse practice I have observed over the years I have been conducting fieldwork in the village. When men go back home after attending a meeting, they often talk to their wives and adults in their homes about what was discussed in the meeting and the decisions that were made. This is a topic of conversation among San Isidro people. Sometimes, the authorities ask men to talk to their wives about any specific topics and vice versa when the topics are addressed at the meetings. In this way, attendees bring messages and decisions from the meetings to other members of the family.

Bakhtin proposes the concept of genre to be as the compositional organizing principle that “guides us in the process of our speaking under definite

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2). Then in the tradition of oral poetics and discourses, two meta-discursive concepts that have been the foundation of our understanding of the social life are genre and performance (Duranti 1997:14). Duranti (1988:210) provides a definition of situated discourse as “linguistic performance as the locus of the relationship between language and socio-cultural order”. 
conditions of performance and perception” (Bakhtin 1986:81). Further, for Briggs & Bauman (1992:141) and Bauman (2004: 3-4) genre is

“one order of speech style, a constellation of systemically related, co-occurrent formal features, and structures that serves as a conventionalized orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse...of a particular kind of text.”

From this point of view, the assemblies are discursive spaces where speech style establishes an order. Assembly speech consists of systemically related and co-occurrent features and structures that serve the people of San Isidro as conventionalized and routinized frameworks of orientation for the production and reception of political discourse. This notion allows us to elaborate the current definition of assembly, which covers just one layer of the many layers and complexities of the speaking practices of San Isidro in political arenas.

When people enter the assembly space, they know the social rules and norms associated to this space. They also know what speaking practices they must use, including the style. They know the topics they will discuss, they know the gestures they are permitted to use, and they know the way the speech event is structured and the way the assembly needs to be conducted. Every assembly participant knows that the dynamic of the meeting requires certain behavior and ways of speaking. Given this, the political discourses that take place in such a political space function as the orientational framework that allows both tlanawatianih ‘the ones who command’ as well as tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ to partake in the community’s political life. Moreover, the discourses that are produced and received through such frameworks are highly institutionalized by the cargo system which regiment the political life of the village.
The orientational frameworks that operate in the assembly are institutionalized because they are built within the cargo system, a deeply historical and colonial institution that arose from a colonial policy to regulate the religious and economic life of indigenous peoples at least three centuries ago (see chapter II, section 1).

Finally, by exploring ways of speaking in assemblies as types of a speech genre, it is possible to understand social actions in specific contexts through the organization and structure of the discourse that takes place in such situated contexts. Understanding the political discourse of San Isidro in the situated context of the assemblies is a way to understand the political and civil practice and life in San Isidro, while at the same time describing the use of the variety of Nahuatl in the village.

Political discourses, including ways of speaking within assemblies, are a door which allows access to other dimensions of political life such as the ideology. Scholarly works in Linguistic Anthropology have demonstrated that, as Bucholtz (2011:14) posits, “language is not simply a transparent reflection of speakers’ inner states but a sociopolitical tool of ideological representation that merits investigation in its own right”. That is why this dissertation takes into consideration not only what chapter II documented in terms of linguistic ideologies of Nahuatl and Spanish language use (see sections 2 and 3), but also the discursive practices that take place within political arenas, reflecting the linguistic ideologies of the assembly participants or the way such ideologies are associated/indexed to certain discursive practices.
Through the close examination of political discursive practices and ideologies, we access the ideas and motivations behind using specific linguistic, pragmatic, and discursive resources. This allows us to explore when, how, and why these resources are being used and mobilized to ultimately produce social meaning. Next, this chapter will explore what takes place within assemblies in San Isidro Atlapexco, Hidalgo.

3. The way an assembly looks and sounds

Chapter II described an assembly in San Isidro. Here I look closer at those discursive spaces in which the community discusses and negotiates their political life. In this section, I will describe the overall structure of the assembly based on two I recorded in January 2019, transcribed, translated, and annotated.

3.1 Types of assemblies in a one-year cycle

In San Isidro there are two types of assemblies: those that are planned in advance to routinely occur throughout the year such as: 1) the assemblies dedicated to the election of the new representatives of the cargo system; 2) the assembly at the beginning of the year in order to let the community know the one-year agenda of the new representatives of the cargo system; 3) the assembly in which the new incoming representatives accept office and the outgoing members of the cargo system pass their appointments on; 4) the assemblies in which religious and civil celebrations are organized; among others. Throughout the year there are at least 6 planned gatherings which are obligatory. They are routinely scheduled in a one-

56 Keeping track of people on a roster of all the tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ or faenero in the village is the mechanism by which assemblies become obligatory. Rosters are important documents to register
year cycle that allow community members to organize political life as they have been doing for generations\textsuperscript{57}.

There are also emergency gatherings in which the community discusses unplanned issues. These are dedicated to discussing new arising problems or the arriving and implementation of governmental programs\textsuperscript{58}. The obligatory assemblies have a specific agenda with several discussion points that must be covered during meeting. The emergency meetings are dedicated to discussing the novel issue that requires rapid responses.

The following description of the overall structure of the assemblies will consider these two types. The first meeting analyzed is the first assembly of the year. It generally happens in the first days of January. The first meeting or the first assembly is when incoming representatives of the cargo system officially begin their activities. In the last meeting of the year, the outgoing and incoming committees participate in the performance of passing and receiving appointments. In the first assembly, analyzed here, the new cargo system members take the floor alone, formally taking office. This first assembly cannot happen until the municipality gives the representatives an official act issued specially for them to

\footnotesize{communal participation in the political organization. Rosters along with documents where agreements are recorded are written in Spanish.}

\textsuperscript{57} The first obligatory assembly in the year takes place between January 1\textsuperscript{st} and 5\textsuperscript{th} during which the new members of the cargo system take over the local governmental offices and the previous leaders leave office; later in January, a second meeting takes place as the first meeting for the new officials to present their one year-agenda including the decision about the agreement of the annual cash contribution for maintaining the village; in March a third assembly happens, mainly to organize one of the main religious celebrations on May 25\textsuperscript{th} (Saint Isidore), this meeting also includes the discussions and organization of the corn feast on October 7\textsuperscript{th}; in September another obligatory meeting occurs to discuss the details for the corn feast; at the end of October an obligatory meeting takes place to organize the celebration of the dead or Xantolo in November; it is normally in this obligatory assembly that the incoming cargo system officials are named; beginning December another obligatory gathering is held to organize the two religious celebrations at the end of the year: day of the Virgin Guadalupe and Christmas (see Chapter II, section 5)

\textsuperscript{58} The number of emergency gatherings may vary depending on the number of issues the village faces in the entire year.
hold office. As the State must recognize local authorities, they have the power to determine who holds the legitimate authority to govern the village.

Official recognition may happen between January 5th and January 15th each year in the municipal head. Once the new representatives obtain this municipal recognition, they can start officially running the cargo system government. To do this, they need to summon the first assembly and introduce themselves as authorities of the village, present their one-year agenda, and explain how they will proceed to continue the organization of the political, civil, and economic life of San Isidro. This chapter will present the structure of the first assembly of 2019, which took place on January 27th.

The second assembly that will be analyzed in this chapter was an emergency gathering that took place on January 19th 2019, before the first assembly of that year because a decision had to be made on an on-going municipal governmental project to complete drainage systems in various villages belonging to the municipality of Atlapexco. In San Isidro, all the households had latrines by 2019, although the drainage system was partially introduced to the villages in 2015-2016. At that time, the municipal government gave a small budget so the villages obtained sewer systems but they were not completely functional yet. In 2019, officials from the new municipal head instructed the new representatives to begin the paperwork that would allow construction to resume. Despite not yet having their first assembly, the urgency of the matter pushed the incoming officials of the cargo system to call for an emergency gathering in which the tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ discussed if they wanted to continue with the culmination of the system or not.
In the following scheme, I show the overall structure of an assembly in San Isidro. The structure is interactional because there is distribution of participation across all parties within the speech event. The first assembly lasted 2 hours 47 minutes and the emergency gathering lasted 1 hour 38 minutes. As mentioned in section 3 chapter II, an assembly may last as long as it takes to resolve an issue, however the tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ and tlanawatiani ‘the ones who command’ may decide to stop the discussion and continue it in another meeting.

During the first-meeting people discussed several issues and exhausted all the topics in the agenda. In the emergency gathering tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ and tlanawatiani ‘the ones who command’ decided to stop the meeting before a decision was made because many of the tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ who were supposed to attend the meeting were not there.

3.2 Overall structures of assemblies as interactional structures

As I have documented in chapter II (see figure 7), figure 7 represents the structure of the cargo system which in turn represents the participants of an assembly. The participants are the tlanawatiani ‘the ones who command’, the tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ or citizen, and some wewetsitsin

59 Although the final decision was not made during this emergency gathering, in Chapter IV we will see the decision-making process because the tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ embarked on a discussion which would eventually lead to the final decision. Indeed, through the analysis of this emergency gathering, we will observe how the decision is shaped throughout the course of the gathering. As the meeting lasted more than one hour, the tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ had the opportunity to expose and interchange arguments which sustained the final decision.
‘eldermen’. Sometimes municipal or state officials participate. In the assemblies we are presenting here, only citizens of the San Isidro community were present.

**PEWA ‘opening’**

1. XINECHILIKAH TLEN PANOK SE
   ‘explaining issue one’
2. MA TIMOTLAHTOSEH KENIKATSAMOCHIWAS
   ‘requesting everyone’s participation’
3. TIKTLALIH SE KAMANALI
   ‘giving thoughts and words’
4. TIMOKAWAH DE AKWERDO
   ‘making the decision’
5. TITLAMIH
   ‘conclusion’

**Figure 8. Assembly structure: Opening and Issue 1.**

1. XINECHILIKAH TLEN PANOK OME
   ‘explaining issue two’
2. MA TIMOTLAHTOSEH KENIKATSAMOCHIWAS
   ‘requesting everyone’s participation’
3. TIKTLALIH SE KAMANALI
   ‘giving thoughts and words’
4. TIMOKAWAH DE AKWERDO
   ‘making the decision’
5. TITLAMIH
   ‘conclusion’

**Figure 9. Assembly structure: issue 2**
Figure 10. Assembly structure: issue 3

1. XINECHILIKAH TLEN PANOK EYI
   ‘explaining issue three’

2. MA TIMOTLAIHTOSEH KENIKATSAMOCHIWAS
   ‘requesting everyone’s participation’

3. TIKTLALIH SE KAMANALI
   ‘giving thoughts and words’

   ➢ KAMANALI SE
     ‘participation 1’
   ➢ KAMANALI OME
     ‘participation 2’
   ➢ KAMANALI EYI
     ‘participation 3’
   ➢ KAMANALI...N
     ‘participation n’

4. TIMOKAWAH DE AKWERDO
   ‘making the decision’

5. TITLAMIH
   ‘conclusion’

Figure 11. Assembly structure: issue 4

1. XINECHILIKAH TLEN PANOK NAWI
   ‘explaining issue four’

2. MA TIMOTLAIHTOSEH KENIKATSAMOCHIWAS
   ‘requesting everyone’s participation’

3. TIKTLALIH SE KAMANALI
   ‘giving thoughts and words’

   ➢ KAMANALI SE
     ‘participation 1’
   ➢ KAMANALI OME
     ‘participation 2’
   ➢ KAMANALI EYI
     ‘participation 3’
   ➢ KAMANALI...N
     ‘participation n’

4. TIMOKAWAH DE AKWERDO
   ‘making the decision’

5. TITLAMIH
   ‘conclusion’
What we see from figure 8 to figure 12 is the structure of a routinely scheduled assembly. As mentioned previously, this is an assembly where more than one issue is discussed. Each diagram represents an individual topic, all discussed within just one meeting. As the diagrams show, every topic is discussed following the same scheme, replicating the same sequential structure. The next figure is the image that reflects the replication of every structure represented in figures 8 to 12.
Figure 13a & b. The overall structure of the San Isidro assembly

Figure 13 shows the overall structure of an assembly in San Isidro. In structural terms, figure 13 represents the condensation of figures 8 to 12, including the opening and the end of the assembly speech event. During the first-assembly seven topics were discussed. The agenda consisted of the following issues: 1) the annual cash contribution of every *tekichiwanih* ‘the ones who perform work’; 2)
the inauguration of the new middle school; 3) the paving project of a street in the village; 4) a trial and the agreement on a sanction for a tekichiketl ‘the one who performs’ work’ who offended the new local governmental officials; 5) the problem of respecting the borders of cultivable land with neighboring villages and solares ‘backyards’ of San Isidro citizens; 6) the continuation of the drainage system; and 7) the case of an ill tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’, making it impossible for him to perform faena ‘communal work’ and how the community could provide help and support to him.

Every discussed topic represents a sequential structure within another sequential structure. This chapter explores the assembly structure through the very first part of the speech event: the opening message.

4. Looking closer: The first part of the assembly and some features of the formal political speech

The second half of this chapter explores the formal features of the political speeches that take place in assemblies. The analysis of text-discourses sheds light on, among many other things, the tone in which people use Nahuatl language, especially of the more solemn, ritualistic, respectful, and formal character of their speeches as frames to negotiate political life. Because formal features of political speech in Nahuatl encompass various linguistic levels, transcription, translation, and annotation of text-discourses are important aspects, both methodologically and theoretically, when analyzing language in social contexts as this research does. This preoccupation also comes from Ethnopoetics scholars who face the need to
reflect and create methods for representing linguistic and discourse practices and problematize what we can represent or not.

For example, from Hymes we inherited the need to represent the performative side of speaking whereas from Tedlock we learned to represent paralinguistic features such as pauses and prosody as features that organize discourse (Hoseman & Webster 2021). Sammons & Sherzer (2000) offer important insights to the problem of representing and translating texts in indigenous languages of Latin America, saying that ‘translation from one language to another must move along a continuum between being faithful and literal about the original text and capturing the spirit of the original in a different language’ (Ibid: xiii).
That quote refers to the care and attention we must give when translating from one language to another. This care goes through two directions: 1) translation implies care regarding language and linguistic grammar, vocabulary, and style and, 2) translation also implies care concerning cultural assumptions and presuppositions. The discourse-centered perspective of Ethnography of Speaking and Communication and Ethnopoetics argues that “discourse is not transparent but rather requires analysis at every level from pronunciation to grammar, vocabulary, and metaphor and the relations to social and cultural context.”
(Sammons & Sherzer 2000: xiii). To make visible the cultural and linguistic richness of the culture, the translation must be visible as well. The translation must be visible in several ways; it should be visible in the ways “discourses encode, express, and create the language-culture-society relationship, including metaphors, caring, humor, and resistance to outsiders” (Ibid:xiii). According to these authors, the text-context relation posits another challenge in presenting Latin American Indigenous texts, because it “refers to the unsaid in the text as pragmatic and metapragmatic messages and points out their significance, including the potential to encode critiques of the surrounding dominant society” (Ibid:xv). This exercise is an example of how “meaning emerges from the interaction between the text and its contexts” (Ibid:xvi) but further it is an exercise that reclaims verbal art immersed in Native American languages through the verbal art discourse analyses of Native Latin American societies so we will be able to understand the full extent of their cultural richness. As the authors note to present and translate indigenous texts is a contribution to the knowledge of the many endangered languages in Latin America. In fact, I will use here the proposition of a thick translation (Woodbury 2007) from the language documentation perspective and linguists who have been documenting endangered languages (Woodbury 2007; Epps, Webster & Woodbury, forthcoming) such as Nahuatl. I use this methodological tool because as Epps, Webster & Woodbury (2017: 60-61) note, the increasing interest in discourse from documentary linguistics comes along with the development of useful annotation methods for texts. Thick translation consists of several basic interlineal Boasian style transcriptions to make grammar and lexical levels transparent (Woodbury 2007;
Hoseman & Webster 2021). It also includes other creative forms to represent performance. Combining thick description (Geertz 2017 [1973]) with thick translation, this research contributes not only to the discipline of Linguistic Anthropology but also to Language Documentation proving a mixed complementary methodology. In other words, thick description and thick translation allow for a fine-grained analysis including not only meaning but also how contexts impact meaning. Importantly, through this combined methodology, we can access various levels of meaning and contexts. In terms of meaning, we can access linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic levels and in terms of contexts, we can similarly identify broader historical and national contexts or more regional and local contexts to finally access the context of enunciation.

4.1 A generic frame device: Opening the assembly

The assembly is inaugurated by the tlayakanketl ‘the one who leads’ through the opening message, represented in figure 8 as OPENING. This message consists of at least two elements. 1) It is considered formal and polite to offer a thankful message towards the attendees. Attendees would perceive it a lack of courtesy if an assembly were started without hearing at least one feature of gratitude in the authorities’ opening message. And 2) authorities typically take time to remind the attendees of the value of being in the meeting in their opening messages. The following is the opening that corresponds to the first assembly where the tlayakanketl ‘the one who leads’ opens the meeting by saying:
1. *Naman ni 27 de ni mes enero*
   ama ni 27 de ni mes enero
   today DET 27 of DET month January
   ‘today January the 27th’
   ‘hoy 27 del mes de enero’

2. *ihyohyok timechtlskamatiliah xtlal*
   ihyohyok ti-mech-tlskamat-li-a-h xtlal
   for.the.first.time 1SUBJ.PL-2PO.PL-thank-APPLIC-PL NEG
   ‘for the first time we thank you, right?’
   ‘por primera vez les agradecemos, ¿verdad?’

3. *inwalahtokeh para tikchiwah*
   in-walah-tok-eh para ti-k-chiwa-h
   3SUBJ.PL-come-STAT-PL to 1SUJ.PL-do-PL
   ‘you have come to conduct’
   ‘que han venido para hacer’

4. *ni toprimera reunion*
   ni to-primera reunion
   DET 1POSS.PL-first meeting
   ‘this our first meeting’
   ‘esta nuestra primera reunión’

5. *tlen inmohwanti intechtlapehpenihkeh*
   tlen inmohwanti in-tech-tlapehpenih-keh
   REL 2PRON.PL 2SUB.PL-1PO.PL-pick-PAST.PL
   ‘those of you that elected us’
   ‘los que ustedes nos eligieron’

6. *para ma titlatekipanoseh*
   para ma ti-tla-teki-pano-seh
   to EXHRT 1SUBJ.SG-UNSPEC-work-continue-IRR.PL
   ‘to pass working’
   ‘para que pasemos en el trabajo’ ‘para que trabajemos’

7. *sokera se xiwitl ipan ni tokomunidad*
   sokera se xiwitl ipan ni to-komunidad
   at least one year in DET 1POSS.PL-community
   ‘at least one year’
   ‘si quiera un año en nuestra comunidad’

8. *wan nikan tiistokeh tla imowaya*
   wan nika ti-istok-eh tla imo-waya
   and here 1SUBJ-be-PL DUB 2POSS.PL-with
   ‘and here we are with you, right?’
   ‘y aquí estamos con ustedes, ¿verdad?’
9. *wan inmohwantih initsstokeh nohki ika tohwantih*
   wan inmohwanti in-itstok-eh nohki ika tohwanti
   CNJ 2PRON.PL 2SUBJ-be-PL also with 1PRON.PL
   'and you are also with us'
   'y ustedes también están con nosotros’

10. *wan tikchiwaseh ni toreunion*
    wan ti-k-chiwa-seh ni to-reunion
    CNJ 1SUBJ-3PO.SG-do-IRR.PL DET 1POS.SL-meeting
    'and we will conduct our meeting,
    'y haremos nuestra reunión

11. *tiistokeh…*
    ti-istok-eh
    1SUBJ-be-PL
    'are'
    'somos'

12. *56 tlen tiitstokeh presentes*
    56 tlen ti-itstok-eh presentes
    56 REL 1SUBJ.PL-be-PL in.attendans
    '56 the ones who are present’
    '56 los que estamos presentes’

13. *casi la mayoría*
    casi la mayoría
    almostthe majority
    ‘almost the majority’
    ‘casi la mayoría’

14. *welis tlen tla seki towanpoyowa*
    weli-s tlen tla seki to-wanpoyo-wa
    can-IRR REL if some 1POS.PL-comrade-PL
    ‘maybe if some of our comrades’
    ‘quizá si algunos compañeros’

15. *tlen yahtokeh tlapalewitoh sehkanok*
Examples are divided by utterances to thick translate each of them. I understand here utterances in the sense that Bakhtin (1986:74) proposes as the most basic units of speech genres. Utterances for him are more complete than sentences and circumscribe unity which gives results in terms of the social aspect and not only of the system of language as it is with grammar. In fact, utterance is for Bakhtin the unity of speech communication. For Bakhtin (1986) one clear element to define the utterance is that it has a beginning and an end. The beginning and the end of the utterance are its limits. Such initial and final parts of the utterances are determined by the change of the subject speaking. The understanding of the utterances relies precisely on the active responsive character of the speaker/listener. It is when we can understand that the responsive utterance is real and delimited by the change of the speaking subject. The chain manifests just in the link of the present utterance with precedent utterances and the utterances resulting in the responsive character of the listener (it
place not through interchanges of sentences and words, but through utterances; the latter are built of the units of the language, that is clusters of words and sentences, but what is interchanged to create speech communication is utterances. These kinds of Nahuatl utterances are the type of utterances we find in political speech.

The message starts, utterances 1-5, with the authorities acknowledging the date of the first-meeting and then expressing gratitude to the attendees. In utterances 6 and 7, the authorities note that they were elected by the community. These utterances are especially important because of the two verbs that comprise these statements. The close analysis of these utterances allows us to see two important principles of the communal and political project of San Isidro: 1) The right for the people of San Isidro to be represented by their own political representatives, elected by rules which are different from those of the national

could be the same speaker). It is important to mention that such change can adopt heterogenous forms because it will depend on the functions of the language in every human activity, in other words the conditions of the communication in which the utterance is taking place. For example, in conversation that is a quiet transparent speech genre, the change of speaking subjects is clear because every turn or participation represents bounded utterances. The relations that the participants in the conversation establish are based on the position of everyone regarding the utterances that are in play. Such relationships can be of questioning, responding, agreeing, objection, ordering, executing, suggesting, respecting, or contesting, etc. These relationships are at the level of the utterances and speaking subjects and not at the level of words and sentences. Such relationships presuppose other speakers. The utterance then is the unit of communication while the sentence is the unity of language. At separating the sentence from the utterance, Bakhtin (1986) posits that the sentence has as its context, the utterance of the same speaking subject. The sentences would never mark its boundaries thanks to the change of speaking subjects; this instead would mark the limits of the utterance. The sentence by itself does not relate to the more encompassing context, or with sentences of other wider context; it does it through the utterance in which it is immersed. Moreover, a sentence can become an utterance when it has a whole sense and can be agreed with, disagreed with, and evaluated. These attributes constitute the nature of the utterance. The sentence then has no contact with the reality, nor defines its limits according to the change of speaking subject; it does not have a complete sense, nor has the possible response of any possible position taken by another speaker. Besides the limits of the utterances established by the change of the speaking subjects, the second feature of the utterance is its finalization. In other words, when an utterance has its final limit, it means that it is finished and that the speaker has said everything he wanted to say in such moment and conditions. One of the criteria to know if an utterance has finalized is the possibility of responding to it or the possibility to have a position in relation to the utterance.
society; 2) The importance of work as the core of holding a local governmental office.

5. *tlen inmohwantih intechtlapehpenihkeh*
   
   tlen  inmohwantih  in-tech-tlapehpenih-keh
   REL  2PRON.PL  2SUB.PL-*pick-*PAST.PL
   ‘as you elected us ‘
   ‘como ustedes nos eligieron

6. *para ma titlatekipanoseh*
   
   para  ma  ti-tla-teki-pano-seh
   to  EXHRT  1SUBJ.SG-UNSP-work-continue-IRR.PL
   ‘to pass working’
   ‘para que pasemos en el trabajo’

The first verbal phrase in 5 intlapehpenihkeh refers to the right of every citizen in the village to elect their authorities, containing the action of selecting/picking tlapehpenia ‘it, she, he picks’ as well as the second-person plural subject morpheme in- and first-person plural object morpheme -tech-, meaning that the tlayakanketl ‘the ones who leads’ is using such forms to indicate that it was all the citizens, in this case the ones who are attending the meeting, who elected him and the other officials to lead the civic, religious, and political life of the village. The second verbal phrase in 6 titlatekipanooseh refers to the intention to keep working for the community. According to several of the collaborators in this research, this verb connotates performing work without receiving any payment. The verb is compounded by the noun tekitl ‘work’ and the verb panoa ‘it, she, he continues’. The lack of payment is important in the connotation of the verb, and it is what defines that the work performed as an authority is under the notion of communal work.
In chapter 2, I documented that one of the designations in Spanish for members of the cargo system is *los pasados* ‘those who continuously worked’ or *

*los que ya pasaron* ‘those who already continuously worked’. With this micro-

analysis we can also trace the origins of such a denomination as the Spanish denomination might come from the root of the Nahuatl verb *panoa* ‘it, she, he continues’ which in Spanish literally means ‘*pasar*’, found in this construction\(^{62}\).

4.1.1 Speech play and togetherness: poetic structures

Later, in utterances 8 and 9, the *tlayakanketl* ‘the ones who leads’ includes in his opening the idea of being together, which is also a fundamental principal of communality.

8. \textit{wan nikan tiitstokeh tla imowaya}

\textit{wan nikan ti-itstok-eh tla imo-waya}

\textit{CNJ here 1SUBJ-be-PL DUB 2POSSD-with}

‘and here we are with you right? and you are also with us’

9. \textit{wan inmohwantih initstokeh nohki ika}

\textit{wan inmohwantih in-itstok-eh nohki ika}

\textit{CNJ 2SUBJ.PL 2SUBJ.PL-be-PL also with}

\textit{1SUBJ.PL}

‘y aquí estamos ¿verdad? con ustedes y ustedes están también con nosotros’

These utterances can also be analyzed in terms of form, or more specifically in terms of their poetic form. First, both utterances are very similar to one another, creating a very similar structure in each one. Within these utterances there are some repetitions at different levels. Both utterances a) start with the conjunction

\(^{62}\) People also use *los pasados* in Spanish to refer to ex-authorities.
wan ‘and’ setting a repetition at the lexical level, b) they both use the verb itstok ‘it, she, he is’ conjugated in first and second person plural which gives both the same structure within the verbs themselves, consisting of 1subj-be-pl and 2subj.pl-be-pl, respectively; and, c) both utterances contain relational phrases with inmowaya ‘with you all’ and ika tohwantih ‘with us’. What we see with these similarities is the tlayakanketl ‘the ones who leads’ creating a parallel structure where there are corresponding elements in each of his utterances.

This raises the question, how is the tlayakanketl ‘the ones who leads’ accomplishing such creativity? The authority is verbally playing with the morphology and syntax of the sentences to create a parallel structure. The Nahuatl language has a predominantly VSO word order (Steele, 1976; Sullivan, 1988; Launey, 1992) and it does not need the presence of personal independent pronouns (Beller & Beller 1979:269). Additionally, this language does not need to include the subject syntactically either, because there is a marker in the verb that indicates subject, as in the first utterance where we see with the prefix ti- indicating a first plural subject or ‘we’.

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63 Parallelism is a phenomenon that has served linguistic anthropologists to analyze poetic strategies within different languages. Parallelism refers to repeated linguistic structures that can happen at different linguistic levels: phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic (Jakobson 1960). Both the second and third paradigms in Linguistic Anthropology are interested in various functions of language as Jakobson proposed in 1960. These perspectives pay attention to the six different factors that constitute the speech event according to Jakobson. These factors in turn have a corresponding function: emotive, conative, referential, poetic, phatic, and metalinguistic (Jakobson 1960: 357).

64 The notion of play here is used in the sense of Sherzer’s (2002) work of speech play as the source for verbal art, which is part of human creativity and innovation. Speech play is a kind of manipulation of different levels of language – phonological, morphological, syntactical, semantic, and discursive – within specific social and cultural contexts. Such manipulation usually involves consciousness, and many times implies specific communicative purposes. Because speech play does comprise not only referential functions but also social, expressive, metacommunicative, and poetic functions, Sherzer’s perspective of speech play draws on a dynamic vision of language and culture. The linguistic dimension of speech play occurs through rhetoric, stylistic, poetic, and discursive aspects and it is found in everyday speech through specific linguistic forms such as parallelisms, repetitions, metaphors, and narrative manipulations. For this scholar, speech play is a rich topic that reveals aspects of culture and grammar, and it is an excellent example of the intersection of culture, society, language, and individuals.
We see all the above features in the first utterance of the utterance 8 which follows the expected word order. As could be expected from the linguistic point of view, since the verb already includes the first-person plural prefix ti-, the speaker does not include the first person plural independent pronoun tohwantih ‘we’. Instead, the tlayakanketl ‘the ones who leads’ introduces the adverb nikan ‘here’ right before the verb as a temporal marker that is important to use for contextualizing the message.

In contrast, the second part of the parallelism, that is the second utterance, does not obey this order that has been deemed predominant through linguistic research. This changes the order of the subject and brings it to the front. Through a non-canonical structure, the authority is bringing the tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ to the center of the utterance by using the independent pronoun inmohwanatih ‘you all’, using the exact same place that the adverb holds in the first part of the parallel structure. Furthermore, in this second utterance, the authority is using the independent pronoun inmohwantih ‘you all’ that is not linguistically required.

This can also be seen through a social lens because what the authority is doing is socially recognizing the audience, in this case the whole assembly, as important and an honorable body. It is a way to show respect for them. The use of this structure here is intentional, with the goal of sounding respectful. The use of this form by the authority is a great complement to the movement within the order because it creates a more respectful tone. Further, the syntax of these utterances

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65 I use the word “tone” here in the sense of what Hymes (1974) refers as key in his SPEAKING model.
is giving it formal character. By using the second plural independent pronoun *inmohwantih*, the authority reinforces the importance of the audience.

Finally, the parallelism also lies in the fact that the two phrases in 8 and 9 are of the same type, both using obliques or adjuncts - *inmowaya* ‘with you’ and *ika tohwantih* ‘with us’ - respectively. Although obliques can be placed anywhere in the utterance, both are at the end of the utterance occupying the same position within both utterances. These ways of playing with the word and the structures that each utterance displays at various levels — lexical, morphological, and syntactical— is precisely what is giving the enunciation its poetic character with a respectful tone. Here we can see one of the central ideas on Ethnopoetics, manipulation of linguistic forms is intentional for social purposes (Epps, Webster & Woodbury 2017). Indeed, this is a type of speech play carried out with intentions (Sherzer 2002).

An interesting point worth mentioning is that the second oblique *ika tohwantih* ‘with us’ is using the relational noun *ika* to mark instrumentality with human subjects. Several grammars indicate that *ika* “with” is exclusively used for non-human entities (Beller & Beller 1979: 291). However, here we can observe that *ika* is accompanying the first person plural *tohwantih* ‘we’. This unexpected use may also be related to an aesthetic function.

The utterance can also be analyzed in terms of its content. Scholars have documented that the togetherness of collectivity is one of the values that sustains many of the indigenous philosophies and political practices, being the base of the communal project (Díaz et al. 2014; Tzul 2016a). Here we see the way such values and ideas are being reproduced within the political discourse of this assembly. This
opening message is not particularly different from other opening messages of other assemblies. This is a formula that is used at the beginning of every meeting and is similar to other opening messages I have recorded. This is similar to the classic example of the generic framing device of the western tales “once upon a time”. Hearing the formula leads us to a specific kind of discourse genre (Bauman & Briggs 1992:145). As Bauman & Briggs (1992) posit:

“Viewed synchronically, genres provide powerful means of shaping discourse into ordered, unified, and bounded texts. As soon as we hear a generic framing device, such as 'once upon a time', we unleash a set of expectations regarding narrative form and content” (Bauman & Briggs, 1992: 145).

This opening is functioning as a generic framing device for political speech in San Isidro, giving order, unity, and bounds to the political discourse that takes place within the assembly space. Once people hear this formulaic message, they know, as we mentioned previously, the topics they will discuss are going to involve the politics of the village. They also know the features of the speech they are expecting to hear. In other words, they know the ways of speaking and verbal behavior that are expected during the assembly. In that sense, these generic openings are constitutive of political speech and at the same time make up part of the concept of politics in San Isidro. Further, its formulaic character allows for repetition of this message every time there is an assembly. Authorities are constantly reproducing the idea of gratefulness, work, and togetherness within political speech.

Finally, genres are “conventionalized yet highly flexible organizations of formal means and structures” (Briggs & Bauman 1992:141). Such flexibility allows the tlayakanketl ‘the ones who leads’ to include a contemporary problem that
permeates San Isidro village as described in chapter I (see section 3.2). As the *tlayakanketl* ‘the ones who leads’ proceeds with utterances 10 to 19, at the same time he is reinforcing gratefulness again with the attendees, he mentions those who are far away working to provide their families with the basic needs to survive. By mentioning that some of the citizens may have to be in other places working, he is justifying the absence of those comrades because the local economy demands they work far away. In openings from other assemblies, this specific part of the formula is filled by different content.

For instance, in one assembly I observed in the summer of 2015, when the *tlayakanketl* ‘the ones who leads’ began thanking the audience, he also supported the message of gratefulness by mentioning some of the communal principles we find in the example provided above; but instead of talking about the need to migrate outside of the community to work, he included a message in which he pointed out that many people do not attend meetings because sometimes the call to meetings bothers them. This communicates the idea that if the *tekichiwanîh* ‘the ones who perform work’ were in the maximum authority’s position, they might be upset by the absence of those who did not attend the meeting. We then have a generic framing that still allows for some flexibility, which adapts to the *tlayakanketl’s* ‘maximum authority’ words and the current situation. Consequently, what we find here is, on the one hand, a message constituted by a gratitude reaffirming unity as an important value for the communality, and, on the other, a recognition of a contemporary issue San Isidro people face.
4.1.2 Between work and help: an important semantic notion of Nahua culture

In this same sense, in line 15 when the authority mentions the absence of other individuals in the meeting because they need to go far away to work, he uses the verb *palewia* ‘he, she, it helps’. This choice is important because this verb mixes the notion of work with the notion of help, a value that we have highlighted throughout the dissertation as the central tenet of the political project of communality. This verb is used exclusively for men who work in the fields cultivating crops. An important feature of this verb is that there is no payment as working in the field means work for themselves. As I documented in Chapter I, migration is one of the phenomena that the community has faced since the 90s because of the advance of capitalism and modernization. Here, this verb also refers to the work that men perform in the fields when they migrate to work in the *contratos* (see chapter I), including the notion of pay labor.

15. *tlen yahtokeh tlapalewitoh sehkanok*
    *tlen yah-tok-eh tla-palewi-to-h sehkanok*  
    REL go-STAT-PL UNESP-help-PUR-PL another.place  
    ‘aquellos que han ido a trabajar a otros lugares’  
    ‘those who have gone to work in other places’

However, not too long ago people helped each other working in the fields during harvest time or with constructing homes for new families. That help was not monetarily remunerated but an exchange of work for the ones who already helped. In other words, people exchanged labor in terms of *tequio* ‘communal work’ or communal reciprocity. Nowadays this practice is not as usual as before for various reasons. In current times, if someone needs help in their fields, they hire someone from San Isidro or other nearby communities, mostly those who do not have their own land, and pay them for their labor. Moreover, people used to build adobe
houses -the mixture of dry grass and mud. Now, most houses are made from materials such as cement, metal rods, and industrial materials associated with the urban houses and infrastructure, which in turn, are associated with modernization and mestizo ways of life.

To build a house with these materials implies hiring construction workers which also increases the economic resources people must have when deciding to have this kind of house. Because of modernization, having this kind of house represents a status as materials must be bought, meaning that those who have a house made from cement must have economic resources. When people would help others build a house, they also used *tlapalewia* connotating work but in collective and with the goal of helping someone in the village. Although it seems the *tlapalewia* is changing its semantic category, it is still part of the discourse resources that people use when they talk under the frame of communality. Various features as well as meanings within Nahuatl political speeches are closely associated with the communal project of the village.

The following section will analyze the next steps that follow the opening to continue widening our view into what happens during assemblies in San Isidro.

4.2 *Exposing issues and asking tekichiwanih to give their kamanali ‘words, thoughts, and knowledge’*

Immediately after the opening message, the authorities begin to discuss the first issue on the agenda. In the case of the obligatory meetings, the whole agenda is not explained from the beginning, but rather each issue has its own space within the structure of the meeting. Steps 1 and 2 in figures 7 to 11 correspond to the
explanation of the issues, including the request to the *tekichiwanih* ‘the ones who perform work’ for their participation. It is the *tlayakanketl* ‘the ones who leads’ who explains to the rest of the assembly the topics and the objectives of the meeting. Later, other members of the cargo system, usually the second in the hierarchy the *tlakwiloketl* ‘the ones who writes’ takes a turn to support what the *tlayakanketl* ‘the ones who leads’ has pronounced for the opening of the assembly and step 1. The *tlakwiloketl* ‘the ones who writes’ proceeds to explain the objective of the assembly again in a way to underpin what the *tlayakanketl* ‘the ones who leads’ has said. The authorities then request the rest of the assembly give their thoughts. This moment is represented in the figures as step 2.

20. *weno compañeros pus tlaskamati tla inwalahkeh tla*

*weno compañeros pus tlaskamati tla in-walah-keh tla* well comrades so thanks **DUB IN-COME-PAST.PL DUB**

‘well comrades, um, thanks right? to those who came right?
‘*bueno compañeros pues gracias ¿verdad? a aquellos que vinieron ¿verdad?*

21. *nesi kampa inmohwantih no initstokeh towaya*

*nesi kampa inmohwantih no in-itstok-eh to-waya* seems where **2PRON.PL also 2SUBJ.PL-be-PL 1POSS.PL-with**

‘it seems (where) that you are with us also’
‘se ve (donde) que ustedes también están con nosotros’

22. *pues naman tlen mechonilikiya tla ni todelegado*

*pues naman tlen mech-on-il-ki=ya* so **now REL 2OP.PL-DIR-say-PAST=ALREADY**

*tlá ni to-delegado* **DUB DET 1POSS.PL-authority**

‘so now that our delegate just said to you, right?’
‘pués ahora que ya les acaba de decir ¿verdad? nuestro delegado’

23. *de que tiknekih timechilhwiseh tla*

*de que ti-k-neki-h ti-mech-ilhwi-seh tla* of **what 1SUBJ.PL-3OP.SNG-want-PL 1SUBJ.PL-say-IRR.PL DUB**

‘that we want to tell you, right?’
‘de que queremos decírselos ¿verdad?’

24. **tlen nopa cooperacion tla nopa 300 pesos tla**
   tlen nopa cooperacion tla nopa 300 pesos tla
   REL DEM cooperation DUB DEM 300 pesos DUB
   ‘about that, the cooperation, right? of the 300 pesos, right?’
   ‘de eso, la cooperación, ¿verdad? ‘de esos 300 pesos ¿verdad?'

25. **ékenikatsa inkıı̂htoah inmohwantih?**
   kenikatsa in-ki-ıhtoa-h inmohwantih
   how 2SUBJ.PL-3OP.SNG-say-PL 2PRON.PL
   ‘what do you say?'
   ¿cómo dicen ustedes?

26. **étlan timoinamaseh?**
   tlan ti-mo-inama-seh
   if 2SUBJ.PL-charge-IRR.PL
   ‘whether we will charge us?’
   ‘¿si nos vamos a cobrar?’

27. **ma mochihtiyas nopa pililhwitsitsin**
   ma mo-chih-ti-ya-s nopa pil-ılwı-tsitsin
   EXHRT REFL-make-LIG-AUX.V.go-IRR DEM HON-celebration-DIM.PL
   ‘to start organizing those little celebrations’
   ‘para que se vayan haciendo esas fiestitas’

28. **wan tlen tekitl monekis tla**
   wan tlen tekitl mo-neki-s tla
   CONJ REL work REFL-need-IRR DUB
   ‘and the work that it will be needed, right?’
   ‘y qué trabajos se necesitarán, ¿verdad?’

29. **monekis para mochiwas gestoria tla**
   mo-neki-s para mo-chiwa-s gestoria tla
   REFL-need-IRR to REFL-do-IRR negotiation BUD
   ‘what will be needed to carry out negotiations, right?’
   ‘se necesitará para hacer gestorias, ¿verdad?’

30. **tlen tekitl moı̂hlamikis ipan ni tokomunidad**
   tlen tekitl mo-ıhlamiki-s ipan ni to-komunidad
   REL work REFL-remember-IRR in DEM 1POSSESS.PL-community
   ‘of the work for our community you might remember’
   ‘que trabajos se recordarán en nuestra comunidad’

31. **wan monekis tlachtlawili tla**
   wan mo-neki-s tlachtlawili tla
   CONJ REFL-need-IRR payment DUB
'and it needs payment, right?
'y se necesitará el pago ¿verdad?'

32. **wan na yeka naman timechsentiliyah**

*ti-mech-senti-lia-h*

1SUBJ.PL-2OP.PL-gather-APPL-PL

'and I, that is why, we are now gathering you'

'y yo, por eso, ahora los reunimos'

33. **tlan ēkenkatsa inkitepotstokaseh inmohwanti? xtlal**

*tlan kenkatsa in-ki-tepotstoka-se-h inmohwanti xtlal*

2SUBJ.PL-3OP.SG-continue-IRR-PL 2PRON.PL DUB

'yes, how will you continue with it? right?

'si, ¿ustedes cómo continuarán? ¿verdad?'

34. **yeka ti-mech-tlahtlani-h ne to-delgado tla**

*that.is.why 1SUBJ.PL-2OP.PL-ask-PL DEM 1POSS.PL-authority DUB*

'that is why we ask you all our delegate right?

'por eso les preguntamos nuestro delegado ¿verdad?'

35. **wan na no nimechtlahtlanih innoparticipacion inmotelnamikilis**

*inmo-participacion inmo-tlahtlanemikilis*

2POSS.PL-participation 2POSS.PL-knowledge

'and I also asked you your participation your knowledge'

'y yo también les pregunté su participación y su conocimiento'

36. **kenikatsa tikwikatiyaseh tla**

*how 1SUBJ.PL-3OP.SG-bring-LIG-V.AUX.go-IRR-PL DUB*

'how we will be carrying it on right?'

'como lo iremos llevando ¿verdad?'

37. **timosenikapalewitiyaseh**

*ti-mo-sen-ika-palewi-ti-ya-se-h*

1SUBJ.PL-REFL-all.of.us-with-help-LIG-V.AUX.go-IRR-PL

'all together we will be helping each other'

'todos juntos nos iremos ayudando'

38. **wan yani ika timechsentilihtokeh xtlal**

*CONJ DEM with 1SUBJ.PL-3OP.PL-STAT-PL DUB*
‘and for this we have gathered you right?’
y por esto es que los hemos reunido ¿verdad?’

39. **wan tiknekih no ximotlaihtoseh**  
wan ti-k-neki-h no xi-mo-tla-ihto-se-h  
CONJ 1SUBJ.PL-3OP.SG-want-PL also IMP-REFL-UNESP-say-IRR-PL
‘and we also want you all to give your opinion’
y queremos también que den su opinión’

40. **no timechtlakakilishtlan kenikatsa mochiw-s**  
no ti-mech-tla-kaki-li-se-h  
also 1SUBJ.PL-3OP.PL-UNESP-listen-APPL-IRR-PL

tlan kenikatsa mo-chiwa-s  
if how REFL-make-IRR
‘we will listen to you of how it will be done’
también los escucharemos de cómo se hará’

Utterances 20 to 31 demonstrate the *tlakwiloketl*’s ‘the one who writes’ words in which they support and repeat the *tlayakanketl*’s ‘the ones who leads’ opening message and explanation of the first issue on the agenda, which were given immediately prior. First, the speech similarly begins thanking the others who have attended the meeting, immediately followed by the idea of togetherness. Finally, it addresses the first issue, in this case, the annual cash cooperation for the organization of the one year cycle of the civic, religious, and political life of the village. Utterances 33 to 36 refer to step number 2 in figures 7-11. Here, the *tlakwiloketl* ‘the one who writes’ requests everyone else in the meeting provide their thoughts. The *tlakwiloketl* ‘the one who writes’ asks specifically for their participation and knowledge. Furthermore, this request is framed under the idea of mutual help, as in line 37, which is another important principle of communality. Finally, the *tlakwiloketl* ‘the one who writes’ concludes his participation in utterances 38 to 40 by stating that one of the aims of gathering people that day is to listen to their thoughts on how to proceed with the social organization.
In this sense, the assembly space becomes not only a space of talking but also a space of listening as a prerequisite to making decisions. It is common to observe all the attendees looking downwards when someone is speaking. That is a sign of respect because it indicates that people are listening and paying attention to what someone is saying.

![General assembly in San Isidro. Looking downwards. Photo by author.](image)

Further, several times in my interviews, authorities and people who had already held an office in the past would put the *tekichiwanih* ‘the ones who perform work’ at the front of the social organization. They posit many times that authorities’ functions are first and foremost to guide the life of the village, but not to decide for it. They sustain that they cannot make any decisions concerning the public life of the village without requesting everyone’s thoughts, opinions, and experiences. With the examples provided so far, we see not only some of the principles of the collective social organization, but also the importance of listening as an essential part of the political life of San Isidro.
4.2.1 Sounding respectful: entities and situations which merit honorific treatment

In terms of structures, it is important to note that when the *tlakwiloketl* ‘the one who writes’ talked about the celebrations in 27, he used honorific forms through the *pil-* as well as the diminutive -*tsin*. Both the honorific *pil-* and the diminutive -*tsin*, in this case in his plural form -*tsitsin* reflect a high respect the authority has for the word *ilhwitl* ‘celebration’. Because the authority is talking about a sacred entity, he uses such honorific forms. As I documented in chapter II (see section 4) celebrations are one of the important moments in the life of San Isidro because people enjoy celebrating their patron saints and at the same time keep the religious and spiritual life alive. To use such a word deserves this respectful connotation.

27.  

\[
\text{ma mo-chih-ti-ya-s nopa pil-ilhwit-tsitsin}
\]

EXHRT REFL-make-LIG-AUX.V.go-IRR DEM HON-celebration-DIM.PL

‘to start organizing those little celebrations’
‘para que se vayan organizando esas fiestitas’

The previous morphological strategy to mark respect and gentleness along with the use of different forms of demonstratives such as *ni* ‘this’ in 22 and 30, *ne* ‘this’ in 34 and *nopa* ‘that’ in 24 and 27, *yanopa* ‘this’ in 42 (below) and *yani* ‘this’ in 38 that accompany certain nouns show the gentleness he wants to convey. *Yani*, *nopa* and *yanopa* are demonstratives that contain more emphasis than *ni* and *ne*. Although the last ones are less emphatic, their presence means that the *tlakwiloketl* ‘the one who writes’ is attempting to speak smoothly and with respect. With the emphatic words the respect is still higher.
23. *pues naman tlen mechonilkiya tla ni todelegado*
pues naman tlen mech-on-il-ki=ya
so now REL 20P.PL-DIR-say-PAST=ALREADY

tla ni to-delegado
DUB DET 1POSS.PL-authority
‘so now that our delegate just said to you, right?’
‘pues ahora que ya les acaba de decir ¿verdad? nuestro delegado’

24. *tlen nopa cooperacion tla nopa 300 pesos tla*
tlen nopa cooperacion tla nopa 300 pesos tla
REL DEM cooperation DUB DEM 300 pesos DUB
‘about that, the cooperation, right? of the 300 pesos, right?’
‘de eso, la cooperación, ¿verdad? de esos 300 pesos ¿verdad?’

25. *yeka timechtlanih ne todelgado tla*
yeka ti-mech-tlahtlani-h ne to-delgado tla
that.is.why 1SUBJ.PL-2OP.PL-ask-PL DEM 1POSS.PL-authority DUB
‘that is why we ask you all our delegate right?
‘por eso les preguntamos nuestro delegado ¿verdad?’

26. *wan yani ika timechsentihtokeh xtla*
wan yani ika ti-mech-sentilih-tok-eh xtla
CONJ DEM with 1SUBJ.PL-3OP.PL-gather-STAT-PL DUB
‘and for this is that we have gathered you right?
‘y por esto es que lo hemos reunido ¿verdad?’

4.2.1.1 Impersonal structures: toning down political speech

One of the characteristics that I observed in the assembly discourse is the use of the passive voice or impersonal structures and even though Beller & Beller (1979:219) sustain that it is used very little, I find it quite often in texts. Further, impersonal structures are observed in various of his utterances to refer to the organization of civil and political life. These structures are formed with the reflexive prefix *mo-* plus a verb. The use of such structures is presented from 28 to

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66 Beller & Beller (1979: 2019) sustain that in this variety of Nahuatl the passive is not a true passive. That is why I prefer to use the term impersonal structures.
32 and all of them refer to the work and money that are needed to carry out the celebrations as well as referring to the celebrations themselves.

27. ma **mo-chih-tya-s** nopa pil-ilhwi-tsitsin
   EXHRT REFL-make-LIG-AUX.V.go-IRR DEM HON-celebration-DIM.PL
   ‘to start organizing those little celebrations’
   ‘para que se vayan haciendo esas fiestitas’

28. wan tlen tekitl **mo-neki-s** tla
    CONJ REL work REFL-need-IRR DUB
    ‘and the work that it will be needed, right?’
    ‘y qué trabajos se necesitarán, ¿verdad?’

29. **mo-neki-s** para **mo-chiwa-s** gestoria tla
    REFL-need-IRR to REFLX-make-IRR negotiation BUD
    ‘what will be needed to carry out negotiations, right?’
    ‘se necesitará para hacer gestorias, ¿verdad?’

30. tlen tekitl **mo-ihlamiki-s** ipan ni to-komunidad
    REL work REFL-remember-IRR in DEM 1POSS.PL-community
    ‘of the work for our community you might remember’
    ‘que trabajos se recordarán en nuestra comunidad’

31. wan **mo-neki-s** tlaxtlawili tla
    CONJ REFL-need-IRR payment DUB
    ‘and it needs payment, right?’
    ‘y se necesitará el pago ¿verdad?’

Something that speakers note when talking about the above utterances is the fact that the use of the reflexive *mo-* tones down authority’s speech. The use of *mo-* is perceived as indirect speech. This is a form used when speakers would avoid addressing someone among the audience. In example 27 the use of the impersonal is even more evident for speakers regarding the intent of tuning down their speech because of the presence of two honorifics in the word *pil-ilhwi-tsitsin* ‘little celebration’. In fact, the verb *yamanilia* ‘to tone down’ would be the option when talking about toning down certain speech. One collaborator suggested the expression *xikyamanili mokama* ‘tone down your language’ when explaining the
Semantics of the verb *yamanilia* ‘to tone down’. Something else speakers note regarding the use of *mo*- is that it is more or less in opposition to the imperative *xi*-. The same collaborator suggested that the authority was toning down their speech because he was not commanding everyone in the audience to perform the required work. In a direct speech the authority would choose the imperative form *xi*-. The use of impersonal structures made his speech to sound respectful. Hill & Hill (1986: 169) report that *mo*- is used as honorific in one of the highest level of intimacy in the honorific system of *Mexicano* of central Mexico. This morpheme is added to the stem *miki* ‘die’ and is used when referring to God and other religious entities. In the case of the assembly this structure along with the use of suffixes, prefixes, and demonstratives endow the authority’s speech with respect and gentleness.

4.2.3 Political categories in and through the Nahuatl language

It is only in the base of listening as a crucial element of the regimentation of political life through the cargo system institution that speaking also becomes a very fundamental collective action. Indeed, the notion of giving one’s thoughts and words is an essential idea in terms of political discussions and participation as well as of the decision-making process. The way people respond to the authorities’ request to participate in the discussion is through the notions of giving thoughts and words to reach a solution to any issue. The way people start participating, as in example 46, is mostly by referring to their intervention by the verb *kitlalia* ‘he, she, it puts’ following by nouns such as *kamanali* ‘word’, *tlahnamikili* ‘thought’, or
**propuesta** ‘proposal’; the latter from Spanish. The following example comes from the assembly in which people discussed the introduction of the drainage system in the village.

41. na nikneki niktlalis se kamanali

na nik-neki ni-k-tlali-s se kamanali  
1SUBJ.SG 1SUBJ.SG-want 1SUBJ.SG-3OP.sg-put-IRR one word[ABS]

‘I want to give a word’  
‘yo quiero dar unas palabras’

People refer to their political participation as an act of putting what they think or say into discussion. In other words, they recognize that to be listened to and insert their thoughts and opinions into the discussion is one of the main values within assemblies and consequently is an essential part of the political exercise in the village.

Similarly, when both authorities and **tekichiwanih** ‘the ones who perform work’ finish putting their thoughts and words into the discussion, they use the following phrase to close their participation:

42. yanopa ni-mech-on-il-ki-ya  
DEM 1SUBJ-2OP.PL-DIR-say-PAST=ALREADY

‘this which I have already told you’  
‘esto que les acabo de decir’

Speaking and listening are fundamental linguistic practices in the political life of Nahuas of San Isidro and the continuation of the political project of communality. What is conveyed in and through the word **kamanali** ‘word’ is the importance of doing things with words (Austin 2009 [1962]). In other words, the performative power of words and speech.
In this sense, it is possible to explore the semantics of *kamanali* ‘word’. *Kamanali* ‘word’ is part of the utterance seen in example 46. This is a Nahua concept in the repertoire of political speech. One of the fundamental elements in the assemblies is precisely the *kamanali*, which would be ‘word’ in one of its most basic meanings, but it is also thought, experience, knowledge, and politically valid opinion. It is also a proposal that will contribute to the discussion that finally will also contribute to reaching a solution. Putting *kamanali* ‘word’ into the discussion is implied in the whole utterance. *Kamanali* ‘word’ is a notion that must be put into practice. The commitment of people in the assembly to put their ideas, thoughts and opinions into discussion is finalized when people put their *kamanali* ‘word’ into practice.

We can understand the relevance of the *kamanali* category if we think of the importance of free, private, and direct voting for liberal democracies of nation-states. Voting in its material sense is something real that we carry out, but in its symbolic sense it is a political mechanism by which we make use of a right to choose our leaders. That same importance is held by the Nahua concept of *kamanali* ‘word’. This is the reason that each of the citizens in the assembly begins their verbal participation with the phrase: *Nikneki niktlalis se kamanali* ‘I want to say a word.’ This is the utterance which the notion of *kamanali* ‘word’ belongs to. *Kamanali* ‘word’ is then a decision-making mechanism. It is a political mechanism that the Nahua people use to decide on their political organization, and at the same

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67 People also use the same expression in Spanish. They say *ya fuimos a poner nuestra palabra a la junta* ‘we already went to the meeting to put our words into discussion’.
time it is the right of each citizen to participate in the conduct of the political, civil, and religious life of the village.

4.2.3.1 Women’s voices and political participation within the assembly

As I documented in Chapter II section 3.1, the presence of women in assemblies has been sometimes banned by male authorities in San Isidro. The assembly space is a male dominated space. Strikingly, the communal political project allows and dictates that women are outside the scope of this right or this mechanism. This might be that patriarchal rules are influencing the Nahua concept of political participation and that the communal project might be patriarchal in its foundations. The exclusion of women is due to a structural factor in this society. Patriarchal structures of the communal project might be reflected in the linguistic ideology of women as gossips when it comes to political affairs (see chapter II, section 3.1). This not only might reflect the vision of domination that is implicit in the ideology of women as gossips, but it might be used as justification for prohibiting their presence in the assemblies and they are therefore not considered relevant to politics. They cannot give their kamanali ‘word’ in the assembly. When the authorities say they could not make any decision without first consulting the people they are referring to men only. In this assembly, the voices of women were marginal. Erasing their voices might means that they are not considered full citizens of the Nahua society.

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68 One of the important points of Bakhtin’s perspective is that it integrates not only the formal side or style of speech genre but also the ideological one. To grasp the ideological side Bakhtin (1986) proposes the concept of intertextuality, which refers to the relation of present utterance to past utterances and future utterances.
After the authorities and attendees complete opening messages and take turns discussing the issue, they embark on what I will analyze in Chapter 4— the argumentation. In emergency gatherings, the first part usually takes about 10 or 15 minutes Argumentation normally takes the rest because the meeting is mainly devoted to arriving at a solution and/or agreement. The time is similar in the already scheduled meetings.

4.3 Discursive markers: beyond grammatical meanings, the pragmatics of tla and xtla

The last section of the chapter shows the use of an important discourse marker tla (or xtla) that is observed in the introductory speech of the assemblies and in the discussions of different topics. It is often used when authorities address the audience after an issue has already been discussed, and a solution has been reached. It is especially important when authorities are giving advice to the audience. The following example corresponds to the speech that the tlayakanketl ‘the ones who leads’ gave when attendees arrived at an agreement about the issue of the annual cash cooperation in the first meeting.

When an issue is resolved, the maximum authority delivers a speech in which he summarizes the decision and adds a message characterized by giving advice, especially when attendees discussed different points of view. In the case of the annual cash cooperation, they discussed the lack of cooperation from some of the citizens in previous years, including some ex-authorities. As we can see in the examples below, the discursive particle tla is playing a role in the discourse
structure. There are two possibilities of this particle: an affirmative form \textit{tla} and an its negative counterpart \textit{xtla}.

The authority asserts himself through this dubitative particle. By using \textit{xtla} within his speech, the authority is showing the intention to include the audience. He is making sure everyone listening is following what he is saying, maintaining a communicative channel with the \textit{tekichiwanih} ‘the ones who perform work’ or, in Jakobson (1960) terms, reflecting the phatic function of the Nahuatl language. Thus, \textit{tla} is functioning as a type of question tag that is pragmatically important. Political discourse is full of this kind of discursive particles. Moreover, this particle is a structuring device because it gives structure to the discourse as a whole.

43. Kompañeros ya timokahkeh de akverdo \textit{¿xtla}?
44. este 300 pesos para ti- timokoperaroseh
45. na kena ken kiũhoah ni tokompañeros
46. wan (in)mohwanti no se ome kamatkehya \textit{¿xtla}?

47. \textit{Ni xitlaxtlawaseh}
48. wan xi- xi- xikchiwakah
49. tikchiwaseh lo posible \textit{¿xtla}?

50. \textit{Axkanah inmoilwiseh tohwantih nikan tiitstoseh}
51. axtitlachtlawaseh tokoperacion
52. \textit{kena titlachtlawaseh}
53. wan yeka na niknekiski
54. \textit{este techpalewiseh ¿xtla}?

55. Komo na komo tohwanti \textit{¿xtla}?
56. inmohwantih inpanokeh
57. tlen seki itstokeh delegados pasados
58. axkema inmechtlawikilihtok
59. desde kema na pehki ni komontekiti \textit{xtla}

60. Kema inmohwantih intechnlalatlaniah se koperacion
61. o se kantla ps noponeh niistok imowaya
62. wan yeka tohwanti en lo personal nohki
63. niknekixikchiwahka ika tohwantih \textit{¿xtla}?

64. Yeka na nikihtoh este
65. tohwantih si tlan intechtlapehpenikeh
66. para ma titlatekipanoka ipan ni komunidad
67. tohwantih tikchiwaseh ika miyak este pakilistli
68. tikhiotskiah \textit{xtla}.

69. A la mehor keman na nikihtoh na nimasewali
70. ni nokompañeros tlen tiistokeh
71. nochi timasewalmeh
72. wan tikpiah debilidad
73. wan tikpiah
74. kemantika timokwapoloah \textit{¿xtla?}.

75. Wan kampa inmohwantih inkitaseh timokwapoloah
76. xitechihwika o o xi- xi- xikihtoka
77. ‘sabes que axkwali propuesta titlali yani’
78. na nikselis ika miyak noyolo
79. wan ihkino solamente timo... nimoxitlatiyas
80. para kwal ti timowikatiyaseh ipa ni tokomunidad \textit{xtla}.

81. Ihyohyok reunion tikchihkeh
82. na no nikintlahtlanih ni nokompañeros
83. \textit{¿xtlaya techpoloh?}
84. \textit{¿kenikatsa ti- tielkeh?} \textit{xtla}.

85. Kiski se tokompañero kiihtoh
86. ‘uta kehni tielki’
87. niktlaskamatilih na nikilhwih
88. kwaltitoka tikchiwa nopa observación \textit{xtla}.

89. Nimasewali, nimokwapoloah
90. komo inmohwantih inmokwapoloah \textit{xtla}.

91. \textit{¿xtla?}
92. komo na axnimechmahawas
93. na nikhtoh tiistokeh tiistokeh
94. tikihtoskiah diferentos partidos
95. pero tiistokeh nika ipan ni tokomunidad sansehko \textit{¿xtla?}.

96. San se pueblo tlen tiistokeh
97. na axkana nikchiwas distincion ika ne se partido ika ne se
98. kema inmohwantih inwalaseh
99. tohwanti tiistokeh nikan
100. ni delegacion inmoaxka \textit{¿xtla?}.

101. Para timechpalewiseh
102. pero inmohwantih nohki nikneki
103. xichiwaka weyi inmoyolo \textit{¿xtla?}.
Ma axkana timochiwakan
kemantika se todelgado
kemantika titla... titlachiwah tohwanti
tikpinawaltiah ¿xtla?

Kema axonka musica ¿xtla?
axonka banda
tikwi se pilxiwiltsi
wan pewah titlapitsah ¿xtla?.

Axtimomakah kwenta
si tlan na axnikpalewih ne totlanawatika ¿xtla?

O sea yanopa ma tikpiyakah
nopa nopa, tikihtoskiah, nopa respeto xtla.

Wan si tlan neli timokahkeya de akwerdo
tikkumpliroseh xtla.

Wan tokompañeros tlen tlawikah koperasion nopeka
xiktemotiyakan ika yolik xtla.

Nochi axakah axtikpiyah tomin
nochi tikpiyah necesidad
tokonewah inmokonewah momachtiah eskwela xtla.

Pero se kentsi ma titlaaportalosheh ipan ni todelgacion kompañeros
yanopa nimechonilwih.

‘Comrades you already agreed, right?’
‘uhm, 300 pesos we are going to cooperate’
‘yes, I, how our comrades say here’
‘and some of you that also already talked to, right?’
‘you will pay this’
‘and do it’
‘we will do the possible, right?’
‘do not think that we who are here’
‘we are not paying the cooperation’
‘yes, we will pay it’
‘and that is why I would want’
‘uhm, help us, right?’
‘like me, like us, right?’
‘you all that were authority’
57. ‘the other previous delegates that are (here)’
58. ‘I have never been to owe you’
59. ‘since I began to perform communal work, right?’
60. ‘when you request a cooperation’
61. ‘or a hand, well, I am with you’
62. ‘and that is why we personally also’
63. ‘I want that you make with us, right?’
64. ‘that is why I said, uhm’
65. ‘if you chose us’
66. ‘to be the authorities in this community’
67. ‘we will do it very happy’
68. ‘we would say, right?’
69. ‘maybe when I said, I am a Nahua person’
70. ‘my comrades the ones we are’
71. ‘we all are Nahua people’
72. ‘we have weakness’
73. ‘and we do’
74. ‘sometimes we make mistakes, right?’
75. ‘and when you see that we are wrong’
76. ‘tell us or say’
77. a. ‘you know what, this proposal that you suggest is not good’
78. ‘I am going to receive it with all my heart’
79. ‘and only then am I going to free myself from the cargo’
80. ‘to get along well in this our community, right?’
81. ‘For the first time we had a meeting’
82. ‘I also asked my comrades’
83. ‘what did we lack?’
84. ‘how were we?, right?’
85. ‘a comrade came out and said’
86. a. ‘uhm that is how you were’
87. ‘I thanked him, I said’
88. ‘it is good you to make that observation, right?’
89. ‘I am a person, I was wrong’
90. ‘as you are wrong, right?’
91. ‘but do not abandon us right?’
92. ‘as I am not going to abandon you’
93. ‘we would say from different political parties’
94. ‘but we are here in our community together, right?’
‘We are only from one town’
‘I am not going to make a distinction with that political party and with the other’
‘when you come’
‘we are here’
‘this delegation is yours, right?’
‘to help you’
‘but I also want you to’
‘make your heart big, right?’
‘that we do not make ourselves’
‘sometimes our delegate’
‘sometimes we do’
‘we ashamed each other, right?’
‘when there’s no music, right?’
‘there is no band’
‘we grab a little leaf’
‘we start whistling, right’
‘we do not realize’
‘If I didn’t support our authority myself, right?’
‘So that we had’
‘we, would say, that, that respect, right?’
‘and if, indeed, we have already agreed’
‘let’s do it, right?’
‘and our colleagues who owe the cooperation there’
‘start looking for it slowly, right?’
‘no one has money’
‘we all have needs’
‘our children, your children study at school, right?’
‘But even a little bit but let’s contribute in this our delegation comrades’
‘that’s what I just told you’

As we see in the examples above, there are utterances of dialogue between every *xtla*. Primarily this discourse marker appears at the end of utterances. Although it is less common, it can appear in the middle. It is not possible to find
it at the beginning of an utterance. In fact, when it appears at the beginning of an utterance it might be the conditional particle tlan ‘if’.

_Tla or xtla_ in this way is marking the rhythm of the discourse because it is distinguishing couplets, triplets, quatrains, quintet and even groups of six utterances. At every group of utterances, the _tlayakanketl_ ‘the ones who leads’ rhythmically reaffirms the audience that he is constantly maintaining the channel of communication with this rhetorical structure. As De Gerde (2000) suggests, discourse markers create the content-form organization of a discourse and many times this rhetorical component is used based on repetition, embellishing, and giving cohesion to the text. In the case of this speech, we see various instances of repetitions, especially the number of utterances every chunk defined by _tla or xtla_ contains.

This is also a breath for the _tlayakanketl_ ‘the ones who leads’ to introduce new ideas in the chain of his discourse. If we observe every group of utterances, we can identify that each contains utterances that contribute to a single idea. In other words, every time the _tlayakanketl_ ‘the ones who leads’ uses this discourse marker he is finalizing or closing a whole idea. If we analyze the discourse in this way, we can see Bakhtin’s term of intertextuality as a salient feature of speech genres. To introduce the notion of intertextuality (the relation of certain utterances to the previously spoken utterances and future utterances) through the active role of the listener in the speech communication, Bakhtin (1986) critiques the image of structural linguistics in which the speakers seem to be the only requirement for the speech communication. Instead, Bakhtin (1986) posits that the listeners need to be considered as active participants who have responsive attitudes to the speakers’
participation. Listeners recognize that the utterances of the speaker have precedents from other utterances because every utterance is part of a greater organized chain of utterances. The intertextual relationships are the ways listeners establish the relations between such utterances and their precedents.

In the last examples, the presence of the discourse marker *tla* or *xtla* tells us something about the poetics of the discourse but it also serves to make it clear that an idea is finished, and a new idea is going to be introduced. That intertextual relation is been manifested by means of using *xtla*. Most of the time, *xtla* is allowing the *tlayakanketl* ‘the ones who leads’ to smoothly change ideas except in utterances 54, 66 and 100, which are utterances that contain *xtla* at the end yet are the first utterances of a group of lines containing a unified theme, the rest finish the group of lines with *xtla*. Using this discourse marker allows the *tlayakanketl* ‘the ones who leads’ to tell the audience when he is going to introduce a new idea. Moreover, once he introduces this new idea, he immediately develops it and finishes it with the discourse marker *xtla*. This type of utterances and group of utterances are rhetorical structures that characterize the political speech in San Isidro.

5. **Thick Translation: Discursive Markers Tla and Xtla**

5.1 *Tla and Xtla*

1. *Kompañeros ya timokahkeh de akwerdo ¿xtla?*  
   *Kompañeros* ya ti-mo-kah-ke-h de akwerdo  
   *comarades* 3PRON.SG 1SUBJ.PL-REFLX-let-PAST-PL agree  
   ‘Compañeros ya quedaron de acuerdo ¿verdad?’
‘Comrades you already agreed, right?’

2. **este 300 pesos para ti... timokoperaroseh**
   este 300 pesos para ti... ti-mo-koperaro-se-h  
   ‘uhm, 300 pesos we are going to cooperate’

3. **na kena ken kikontoah ni tokompañeros**
   na kena ken ki-htoa-h ni to-kompañeros  
   ‘yes, I, how our comrades say here’

4. **wan (in)mohwantih no se ome kamatkehyá ¿xtla?**.
   wan inmohwantih no se ome kamat-ke-h-yá ¿xtla?.
   ‘and some of you that also already talked to’

5. **ni xitlaxtlawaseh**
   ni x-itlaxtlawa-se-h
   ‘you will pay this’

6. **wan xi... xi... xikchiwakah**
   wan xi- xi- xi-k-chiwa-kah
   ‘and do it’

7. **tikchiwaseh lo posible ¿xtla?**
   ti-k-chiwa-se-h lo posible ¿xtla?  
   ‘we will do the possible’

8. **axkanah inmoilwiseh tohwantih nikan tiitstoseh**
   axkanah in-mo-ilwi-se-h tohwantih nikan ti-itsto-se-h
   ‘do not think that we who are here’
9. **axtitlaxtlawaseh tokoperacion**
ax-ti-tlaxtlawa-se-h to-koperacion
NEG-1SUBJ.PL-pay-IRR-PL 1POSS.PL-cooperation

‘no vamos a pagar nuestra cooperación’
‘we are not paying our share’

10. **kena titlaxtlawaseh**
kena ti-tlaxtlawa-se-h
yes 1SUBJ.PL-pay-IRR-PL

‘si, vamos a pagarla’
‘yes, we will pay it’

11. **wan yeka na niknekiski**
wан yека на ni-k-neki-ski
CNJ that is way 1PRON.SG 1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-want-COND

‘y por eso yo quisiera’
‘and that is why I would want’

12. **este techpalewiseh өxtla?**
este tech-palewi-se-h өxtla?
este 1OBJ.PL-help-IRR-PL DUB

‘uhm, nos ayuden өверdad?’
‘uhm, they will help us, right?’

13. **komo na komo tohwantih өxtla?**
kомо na комо tohwantih өxtla?
as 1PRON.SG as 1PRON.PL DUB

‘como yo como nosotros өверdad?’
‘like me, like us, right?’

14. **inmohwantih inpanokeh**
nmohwantih in-pano-ke-h
2PRON.PL 2SUBJ.PL-pass-PAST-PL

‘ustedes que pasaron’
‘you all that were authority’

15. **tlen sekin itstokeh delegados pasados**
tlen sekin itsto-ke-h delegados pasados
REL some be-PAST-PL delegates previous
‘de los otros delegados pasados que están (aquí)’
‘the other previous delegates that are (here)’

16. **axkema inmechtlawikilihtok**
ax-kema in-mech-tlawi-lih-tok
NEG-when 2SUBJ.PL-2OBJ.PL-owe-APPL-STAT

‘nunca les he quedado a deber’
‘I have never come to owe you’
17. desde kema na peh-ki ni komon-tekiti xtla
since when 1PRON.SG begin-PAST DEM common-work DUB
‘desde cuando yo empecé a hacer faena ¿verdad?’
‘since I began to perform communal work, right’

18. kema inmohwantih intechtlaniah se koperacion
when 2PRON.PL 2SUBJ.PL-1OBJ.PL-request-PL one cooperation
‘cuando ustedes nos piden una cooperación’
‘when you request our share’

19. o se kantla ps noponeh niistok i(n)mowaya
or one help well DEM 1SUBJ.SG-be 2SUBJ.PL-come
‘o un apoyo, pues, ahí estoy con ustedes’
‘or assistance, well, I am with you’

20. wan yeka tohwantih en lo personal nohki
that is why 1PRON.PL personally also
‘y por eso nosotros en lo personal también’
‘and that is why we personally also’

21. nikneki xikchiwahkah ika tohwantih čxtla?
1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-want IMP-3OBJ.SG-make-IMP.PL with 1PRON.PL DUB
‘quiero que hagan con nosotros ¿verdad?’
‘I want that you make with us, right?’

22. Yeka na nikihtoh este
That is why 1PRON.SG 1SUBJ.SG-sayl-PAST uhm
‘Por eso yo dije este’
‘that is why I said uhm’

23. tohwantih si tlan intechtlapehenikeh
yes if 2SUBJ.PL-1OBJ.PL-O.INDEF-choose-PAST-PL
‘si a nosotros nos escogieron’
‘if you chose us’

24. para ma titlatekipanokah ipan ni komunidad
1EXHRT 1SUBJ.PL-O.INDEF-JOB-pass-EXHRT.PL LOC DEM community
‘para que hagamos el cargo en esta comunidad’
‘to be the authorities in this community’

25. **tohwantih tikchiwaseh ika miyak este pakilistli**
    tohwantih ti-k-chiwa-se-h ika miyak este paki-lis-tli
    1PRON.PL 1SUBJ.PL-do-IRR-PL with many uhm happy-APPL-ABS
    ‘nosotros lo haremos con mucha, uhm, alegría’
    ‘we will do it very happy’

26. **tikihtoskiah xta.**
    ti-k-ihto-skia-h xta
    1SUBJ.PL.-3OBJ.SG-say-COND-PL DUB
    ‘diríamos ¿verdad?’
    ‘we would say, right?’

27. **a la mehor keman na nikihtoh na nimasewali**
    a la mehor keman na ni-k-ihto-h
    maybe when 1PRON.SG 1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-tell-PAST
    na ni-masewali
    1PRON.SG 1SUBJ.SG-Nahua.people[ABS]
    ‘a lo mejor cuando yo dije que soy persona nahua’
    ‘maybe when I said, I am a Nahua person’

28. **ni nokompañeros tlen tiistokeh**
    ni no-kompañeros tlen ti-isto-ke-h
    DEM 1POSS.SG-comrades REL 1SUBJ.PL-be-PAST-PL
    ‘mis compañeros los que estamos’
    ‘my comrades the ones we are’

29. **nochi timasewalmeh**
    nochi ti-masewal-meh
    all 1SUBJ.PL.-Nahua.people-PL
    ‘todos somos personas nahuas’
    ‘we all are Nahua people’

30. **wan tikpiah debilidad**
    wan ti-k-pia-h debilidad
    CNJ 1SUBJ.PL-have-PL weakness
    ‘y tenemos debilidad’
    ‘and we have weakness’

31. **wan tikpiah**
    wan ti-k-pia-h
    CNJ 1SUBJ.PL.-3OBJ.SG-have-PL
    ‘y tenemos’
    ‘and we do’
32. *kemantika timokwapoloah juana?*

sometimes 1SUBJ.PL-REFLX-wrong-PL DUB

*a veces nos equivocamos ćverdad?*

‘sometimes we make mistakes, right?’

33. *wan kampa inmohwantih inkitaseh timokwapoloah*

where 2SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-see-PL

*y cuando ustedes vean que nos equivacamos’

‘and when you see that we are wrong’

34. *xitechilwikah o xi... xi... xikihtokah*

say-IMP.1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.PL or IMP IMP IMP-3OBJ.SG-tell-IMP.PL

‘diganos o digan’

‘tell us or say’

a. *‘sabes que, axkwali propuesta ti(k)tlali(h) yani’*

know what NEG-good proposal 2SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-put-PAST DEM

‘sabes que, no está bien esta propuesta que pones’

‘you know what, this proposal that you suggest is not good’

35. *na nikselis ika miyak noyolo*

with

'I am going to receive it with all my heart’

36. *wan ihkino solamente timo... nimoxitla(h)tiyas*

only 2SUBJ.SG-REFLX

‘y solamente así me voy a ir liberándome del cargo’

‘and only then am I going to free myself from the cargo’
37. para kwali timowikatiyaseh ipan ni tokomunidad xtla.
para kwali ti-mo-wika-ti-ya-se-h ipan ni for good 1SUBJ.PL-REFLX-carry-LIG-go-IRR-PL in DEM
to-komunidad xtla 1POSS.PL-comunidad dub
‘para irnos llevando bien en esta nuestra comunidad ¿verdad?’
‘to get along well in this our community, right?’

38. Ihyohyok reunión tikchihkeh
Ih-yohyok reunión ti-k-chih-ke-h 3POSS.SG-? meeting 2SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-make-PAST-PL
‘por primera vez hicimos una reunión’
‘for the first time we had a meeting’

39. na no nikintlahtlanih ni nokompañeros
na no ni-kin-tlahtlan-i-h ni no-kompañeros 1PRON.SG also 1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.PL-ask-PAST DEM 1POSS.SG-comrades
‘yo también les pregunté a mis compañeros’
‘I also asked my comrades’

40. ¿tlaya techpoloh?
¿tlaya tech-polo-h?
algo 1SUBJ.SG-lack-PAST
‘¿qué nos faltó?’
‘what did we lack?’

41. ¿keni(h)katsa ti... tielkeh? Xtl.a.
kenihkatsa ti... ti-el-ke-h xtla.
how 1SUBJ.PL- 1SUJB.PL-be-PAST-PL DUB
‘¿cómo estuvimos ¿verdad?’
‘How were we?, right?’

42. kiski se tokompañeroh kiihtoh
kis-ki se to-kompañeroh ki-ihto-h
come.out-PAST one 1POSS.PL-comrade 3OBJ.SG-say-PAST
‘salió un compañero que dijo’
‘a comrade came out who said’

a. ‘uta kehni tielki’
uta kehni ti-el-ki
uta like.that 2SUBJ.SG-be-PAST
‘uta así estuviste’
‘uhm that is how you were’
43. niktlaskamatilih na nikilwih
ni-k-tlaskamati-li-h na ni-k-ilwi-h
1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-thank-APPL-PAST 1PRON.SG 1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-say-PAST
‘yo le agradecí, le dije’
‘I thanked him, I told him’

44. kwaltito(h)ka tikchiwa(h) nopa observación xtlal.
kwal-titoh-ka ti-k-chiwa-h nopa observación xtlal
well-? 1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-do-PL DEM observation DUB
‘está bien que hagas esa observación ¿verdad?’
‘it is good you to make that observation, right?’

45. nimasewali nimokwapoloh
ni-masewali ni-mo-kwapolo-h
1SUBJ.SG-people 1SUBJ.SG-REFLX-be.wrong-PAST
‘soy persona, me equivoqué’
‘I am a person, I was wrong’

46. komo inmohwantih inmokwapoloah xtlal.
komo inmohwantih inmo-kwapoloa-h xtlal
as 2PRON.PL 2SUBJ.PL-be.wrong-PL DUB
‘como ustedes se equivocan ¿verdad?’
‘as you are wrong, right?’

47. Pero amo techmahawaseh ıxtla?
Pero amo tech-mahawa-se-h ıxtla
but NEG 1SUBJ.SG-abandon-IRR-PL DUB
‘Pero no nos vayan abandonar ¿verdad?’
‘But will not abandon us, right?’

48. komo na axnimechmahawas
komo na ax-ni-mech-mahawa-s
as 1PRON.SG NEG-1SUBJ.SG-2OBJ.PL-release-IRR
‘como yo no los voy a abandonar’
‘as I am not going to abandon you’

49. na nikhtoh tiistokeh, tiistokeh
na ni-kihto-h ti-isto-ke-h ti-isto-ke-h
1PRON.SG 1SUBJ.SG-say-PAST 2SUBJ.PL-be-PAST-PL 2SUBJ.PL-be-PAST-PL
‘yo dije estamos, estamos’
‘I said we are, we are’

50. tikihtoskiah diferentes partidos
ti-k-ihto-skia-h diferentes partidos
2SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-say-COND-PL different political.parties
‘diríamos de diferentes partidos’
‘we would say from different parties’
51. **Pero tiistokeh nikan ipan ni tokomunidad sansehko ñxtla?**  
   Pero ti-isto-ke-h nikan ipan ni to-komunidad  
   But 2SUBJ.PL-be-PAST-PL here in DEM 1POSS.PL-community  
   ‘pero estamos aquí en nuestra comunidad’  
   ‘but we are here in our community’

52. **sansehko ñxtla?**  
   sansehko ñxtla?  
   ‘juntos ¿verdad?’  
   ‘together, right?’

53. **San se pueblo tlen tiistokeh**  
   San se pueblo tlen ti-isto-ke-h  
   Only one village REL 2SUBJ.PL-be-PAST-PL  
   ‘Solo estamos de un pueblo’  
   ‘We are only from one town’

54. **na aaxkana nikchiwas distinción ika ne**  
   na aaxkanah ni-k-chiwa-s  
   1PRON.SG NEG 1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-do-IRR  
   distincion ika ne  
   distinction with DEM  
   ‘yo no voy a hacer distinción con’  
   ‘I am not going to make a distinction with’

55. **se partido ika ne se**  
   se partido ika ne se  
   one partido with DEM one  
   ‘ese partido y con el otro’  
   ‘that political party and with the other’

56. **kema inmohwantih inwalaseh**  
   kema inmohwantih inwalaseh  
   where 2PRON.PL 2SUBJ.PL-come-IRR-PL  
   ‘cuando ustedes vengan’  
   ‘when you come’

57. **tohwanti tiistokeh nikan**  
   tohwanti ti-isto-ke-h nikan  
   1PRON.PL 1SUBJ.PL-be-PAST-PL here  
   ‘nosotros estamos aquí’  
   ‘we are here’

58. **ni delegacion inmoaxka ñxtla?**
ni delegacion inmo-axka xtlax
DEM delegation 2SUBJ.PL-yours DUB
‘esta delegacion es de ustedes ¿verdad?’
‘this delegation is yours, right?’

59.  *Para timechpalawiseh*
para ti-mech-palewi-se-h
to 1SUBJ.PL-2OBJ.PL-help-IRR-PL
‘para ayudarlos’
‘to help you’

60.  *p*ero inmohwantih nohki nikneki
pero inmohwantih nohki ni-k-neki
‘pero también quiero que ustedes’
‘but I also want you to’

61.  *x*(k)chiwakah weyi inmoyolo xtlax?
xi-k-chiwa-kah weyi inmo-yolo xtlax
IMP-3OBJ.SG-do-IMP.PL big 2SUBJ.PL-heart DUB
‘hagan grande su corazón ¿verdad?’
‘let others into your heart’

62.  ma axkanah timochiwakah
ma axkanah ti-mo-chiwa-kah
EXHRT NEG 1SUBJ.SG-REFLX-make-EXHRT.PL
‘que no nos hagamos’
‘that we do not make ourselves’

63.  kemantika se todelgado
kemantika se to-delgado
sometimes one 1POSS.SG-delegate
‘a veces nuestro delgado’
‘sometimes our delegate’

64.  kemantika titla... t*itlachiwah tohwantih*
kemantika ti-tla... ti-tla-chiwa-h tohwantih
sometimes 1SUBJ.SG-INDEF.OBJ 1SUBJ.SG-INDEF.OBJ-do-PL 1PRON.PL
‘a veces nosotros hacemos’
‘sometimes we do’

65.  tikpinawaltiah xtlax?
ti-k-pinawa-ltia-h xtlax?
1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-be.embarrassed-CAUS-PL DUB
‘que nos apenemos ¿verdad?’
‘that we embarrass each other, right?’
66. *kema axonka(h) musica ¿xtla?*
   kema ax-onka(h) musica ¿xtla?
   when NEG-there.is music DUB
   'cuando no hay música ¿verdad?'
   'when there's no music, right?'

67. *axonka(h) banda*
   ax-onkah banda
   NEG-there.is band
   'no hay banda'
   'there is no band'

68. *tik(k)kwih se pilxiwitsi*
   ti-k-kwi-h se pil-xi-tsi
   1SUBJ.PL.-3OBJ.SG-take-PL one HON-leaf-HON
   'agarramos una hojita'
   'we grab a little leaf'

69. *wan pewah titlapitsah ¿xtla?*
   wan pewa-h ti-tla-pitsa-h ¿xtla?
   CNJ begin-PL 1SUBJ.PL-INDEF.OBJ-whistle-PL DUB
   'y empezamos a silbar ¿verdad?'
   'and we started whistling, right?'

70. *axtimomakah kwenta*
   ax-ti-mo-maka-h kwenta
   NEG-1SUBJ.PL-REFLX-give-PL realize
   'no nos damos cuenta'
   'we do not realize'

71. *si tlan na axnikpalewi ne totlanawati(h)ka ¿xtla?*
   si tlan na ax-ni-k-palewi-h
   yes if 1PRON.SG NEG-1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-help-PL
   ne to-tla-nawati(h)-ka ¿xtla?
   DEM 1POSS.PL-INDEF.OBJ-authority-? DUB
   'si yo mismo no apoyé a nuestra autoridad ¿verdad?'
   'if I didn’t support our authority myself, right?'

72. *O sea yanopa ma tikpiyakah*
   o sea yanopa ma ti-k-piya-ka-h
   o sea DEM EXHRT 1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-have-EXHRT-PL
   'o sea eso que tuvieramos'
   'so that we had'
73. *nopa, nopa tikihtoskiah nopa respeto xtl'a.*
nopa nopa ti-k-ih-to-ski-a-h
DEM DEM 1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-say-COND-PL
nopa respeto xtl'a
DEM respect DUB
‘ese ese diríamos ese respeto ¿verdad?’
‘we would say that, that respect, right?’

74. *wan si tlan neli timokahke(h)ya de akwerdo*
wan si tlan neli ti-mo-kah-ke-(h)-ya de akwerdo
cnj yes if really 1SUBJ.PL-REFLX-let-PAST-PL=ALREADY agree
‘y si, de veras, ya nos pusimos de acuerdo’
‘and if, indeed ,we have already agreed’

75. *tikkumpliroseh xtl'a.*
ti-k-kumpli-ro-se-h xtl'a
1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-comply-IRR-PL DUB
cumplamos ¿verdad?’
‘let’s do it, right?’

76. *wan tokompañeros tlen tlawikah koperasion nopeka*
wan to-kompañeros tlen tla-wi-ka-h
cnj 1POSS.PL-colleagues rel indef.obj-carry-PL
koperasion nopeka
cooperação DEM
‘y nuestros compañeros que deben la cooperación por ahí’
‘and our colleagues who owe the cooperation there’

77. *xiktemotiyakah ika yolik xtl'a.*
xi-k-te-mo-ti-ya-kah ika yolik xtl'a
imp-3OBJ.SG-search-LIG-V.AUX-IMP.PL with slowly DUB
‘vayan buscando despacio ¿verdad?’
‘start looking for it slowly, right?’

78. *nochi axakah axtikpiyah tomin*
nochi a-xa-kah a-xtik-pi-ya-h tomin
all neg-somebody neg-1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-have-PL money
‘nadie tenemos dinero’
‘no one has money’

79. *nochi tikpiyah necesidad*
nochi ti-k-pi-ya-h necesidad
all 1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-have-PL need
‘todos tenemos necesidad’
‘we all have needs’
80.  tokonewah, inmokonewah momachtiah eskwela xtlai.
toko-konewa-h  inmo-konewa-h  mo-machtia-h  eskwela  xtlai
1POSS.PL-child-PL  2SUBJ.PL-child-PL  REFLEX-study-PL  school  DUB
‘nuestros hijos, sus hijos estudian en la escuela ¿verdad?’
‘our children, your children study at school, right?’

81.  pero se kentsi ma titlaaportaroseh
pero  se  ken-tsi  ma  ti-tla-aportaro-se-h
but  one  little-HON  EXHRT  1SUBJ.PL.-INDEF.OBJ-contribute-IRR-PL
‘aunque sea un poquito pero aportemos’
‘at least a little but we should contribute’

82.  ipan ni todelgacion kompañeros
ipan  ni  to-delgacion  kompañeros
LOC  DEM  1POS.PL-delegation  comrades
‘en esta nuestra delegación companeros’
‘in this our delegation comrades’

83.  yanopa nimechonilwihi
yanopa  ni-mech-on-ilwi-h
DEM  1SUBJ.SG-1OBJ.SG-2OBJ.PL-DIR-say-PAST
‘eso es lo que les acabo de decir’
‘that’s what I just told you’

6. Conclusions

This chapter shows both the structure of the assemblies as structures of interaction within political meetings, and some of the features of the discourse itself as features that intertwine dialectically to create effects such as formality, gentleness and respect when talking. All these features together characterize this type of Nahua discourse. On the one hand, we can observe the order followed in a meeting in terms of thematic content and, on the other, we can also observe a cluster of features that describe the stylistic side of the political speech. As mentioned in the introduction, this chapter discussed these topics using two approaches in the Linguistic Anthropology tradition.
While the paradigm of the Ethnography of Speaking and Communication, including Ethnopoetics along with some principles of linguistic documentation, allows us to observe rhetorical structures of the political discourse of the assemblies, the paradigm of the Linguistic Ideologies and Indexicality allows us to understand how such rhetorical structures are associated through indexical values with notions of formality, respect, solemnity, and gentleness.

Moreover, this chapter shows how Nahua political discourse produces and reproduces values of the political project of the San Isidro people. This discourse contains many of the principles of the communality as a historical way of life for an indigenous and peasant society, in which the Nahuatl language plays a central role.
CHAPTER IV. LINGUISTIC RESOURCES AS POWER STRATEGIES: RACE, DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, AND ARGUMENTATION

1. Introduction

Whereas the last chapter mostly used two different approaches within the framework of Linguistic Anthropology to describe the structure of an assembly as well as the use of linguistic and pragmatic resources within political speech, the present chapter mostly utilizes concepts and notions related to Indexicality and Linguistic Ideologies to analyze the moment of the assembly in which participants make decisions for the wellbeing of the village. Using Bourdieu's (1977) concept of the linguistic market, this chapter focuses on the way speakers create arguments and attempt to persuade the audience to finally carry out the political decision-making process. This chapter specifically focuses on the content of the January 19th assembly as an example of how modernization generates pressures and tensions among the San Isidro community. This final chapter also highlights the participation and registers of individuals who enjoy a certain status, such as young teachers and elders, reflecting two different styles of speaking within the assemblies. I use Agha’s (1998, 2004, 2007) concept of register as a model of discursive behavior. Register is a “linguistic repertoire that is associated, culturally, with particular social practices and with persons who engage in such practices” (Agha 1998: 52). In this model “utterance indexes stereotypic images of social personhood or interpersonal relationships. The model is formulated by semiotic practices that differentiate a register’s forms from the rest of the language, evaluate these repertoires as having specific pragmatic values (e.g., as ‘high’ vs. ‘low’ forms of speech) and make these forms and values known to a population of
users through processes of communicative transmission” (Ibid: 80-81). Agha (2004: 24) suggests, the competences of register are key in social interactions, allowing access to different situations of social life. In other words, if a person manages to know a specific kind of register or a range of registers this will equal the entitlement of this person’s participation in social activities. That is why the author states that “differences of register competence are thus often linked to asymmetries of power, socioeconomic class, positions within hierarchies, and the like” (2004: 24). This chapter will show that the management of a political register in Nahua or a register used during assemblies would lead to such asymmetries among Nahua people.

Through this exploration, the current chapter explains the way people discursively navigate state initiatives, through which the colonial and national rhetoric establishes a series of conceptualizations of indigenous peoples in the frame of the racial mestizaje ideology.

2. The national and racial monolingual ideology of the Mexican State

In Mexico there is a hegemonic ideology of monolingualism in Spanish that has existed at least since the formation of the Nation-state in the nineteenth century with significant colonial antecedents. As Heath (1972) indicates, the history of language policy in Mexico demonstrates how values of colonialism and nationalism are linked to unity and homogeneity in which the role of a unique language, Spanish, is fundamentally important.69 The imposition of Spanish as the

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69 Heath’s (1972) argument is that language policy has been in the hands of elites that through history have changed according to historical, social, and economic circumstances. Thus, elites and privileged groups,
national language is an integral part of the project of mestizaje. Mestizaje is a hegemonic race ideology in which the mixture between Europeans and Indigenous is the principal mechanism of forced acculturation and assimilation (Machuca, 1998; Castellanos, 2000, 2001, 2003; Alonso, 2004; Speed, 2008). Further, Bauman & Briggs (2003: 193) note that in the European project of modernity and other areas controlled and influenced by the West, the history of the Herderian ideology “one people, one fatherland, one language” is especially important, and it is a prevailing ideology in both developing and developed nations. Thus, in Mexico there is a highly racialized language ideology coming from the state that advocates the colonial language, Spanish, as the language of modernization and the language of mestizaje.

Indigenous peoples, along with their languages, have been racialized subjects. For that reason, in the study of the use and disuse of indigenous languages, it is essential to approach race as the frame to understand that those languages are presumed to be less valuable languages; in other words, those languages and their speakers are objects of racialization. In Mexico, indigenous languages are framed as dialects or non-standard languages. These frames represented through missionaries, church officials, teachers, and social scientists, have been able to dictate the language and the ways in which to standardize and eventually impose it among the native groups. All of them are agents of change who inscribe their own values and attitudes of their worlds onto the general policy. Therefore, the ideas of which language would be best for a colony, or a nation have traveled through different identities, ideologies, and beliefs.

In 2003 the Mexican state recognized the indigenous languages as national languages through the General Law of Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Haviland & Flores 2007). This law ideally seeks to place indigenous languages at the same level as Spanish. This state recognition of indigenous languages obeys an adoption of a more extensive neoliberal project, including neoliberal multiculturalism as a new way to govern diversity (Speed, 2008; Hankins, 2016). Such recognition is not a solution of the language eraser as part of the colonial dispossession and domination of indigenous peoples (Alfred 2005). A powerful, current, and pervasive language ideology is the Monoglot Standard Ideology. This ideology has impacts in modern nation-states. Silverstein (1998) asserts that this ideology is the product of the nation-state continually trying to unify people within its borders. The way that unification works best is linguistically. Consequently, the nation-state imposes the Standard, which is a unique and prestigious way of speaking.
mainly obey colonial ideologies and colonial power structures in which there is a hierarchical division between Europeans and non-Europeans. Consequently, Spanish, as the colonial language, is the language of prestige and modernity, while in contrast indigenous languages, such as Nahuatl, are languages racially associated with backwardness and tradition. Mexico is a good example of how the Monoglot Standard Ideology and the Herderian Language Ideology are well complemented. As Bauman & Briggs (2003) affirm, these two ideologies operate in many modern, post–colonial nation-states and work towards the homogenization of diversity. Because of the historical moments where such ideologies were born, other social categories such as race and ethnicity also operate in reproducing linguistic and ethnoracial inequalities.

Despite multilingualism, the idea of the Standard underlies people's appreciation of language use in their own speech communities. The standard is the linguistic creation of standardization, the imposition of just one linguistic variety. This imposition is made by institutions, especially powerful institutions such as those controlling writing and printing. In Mexico the national school system is one of these institutions. The existence of the Standard implies an idea of only one correct language that can communicate all properties of a language. The Standard language holds values attached to it such as real, proper, unique, and superior. Consequently, all languages or linguistic forms are understood as inferior to the Standard, such as the Mexican indigenous languages. The use of Standard is also associated with public and political use, leaving non-standard languages to the private sphere. As Gal (2012) posits, the standard language is linked to a neutral register, a language of nobody and nowhere whereas other languages are indexed to specific places, peoples, and times.

Bauman and Briggs (2004) analyze how the construction of modernity uses language as a means to create and transmit ideologies and practices that justify politics of inequality. The authors explain how ideas and concepts about language have permeated the project of modernity in Europe and other areas controlled and influenced by the West. These ideologies are raised to a universal status with all the legitimacy that a universal tenet might have in order to justify the alleged inferiority of other types of speech (and many times negating the right to speak) especially of women, the poor, the rural, the peasants, the aboriginal, the working class, the ignorant, the old-fashioned, and the indigenous. Unlike other realms such as science and society, language might go unnoticed in the construction of these ideologies, but that hidden character crucially gives it an unprecedented strength. Because of its supposed character of transparency and neutrality, a language is a powerful tool for domination and control, manipulating the discourse itself. For the authors, the way tradition has been conceptualized, mainly from a folklorist perspective, inequality stands as a central base in the project of modernity. The unequal binary modern vs. tradition has been embedded in the discourse and metadiscourse regimes since sixteenth century, and it is still valid in the twenty-first century. Most important, that binary “consistently lends itself to the articulation of other asymmetries that have been useful in the construction of modernity and social inequality: female/male, rural/urban, working class/bourgeois, unsophisticated/educated, oral/literate, European/oriental” (11). The standardization of a language is a clear example in which the authors show the process of purification while allowing hybrids (dialects or variants). However, the use of a non-standard form corresponds almost always to the private sphere whereas standard forms have booked to the public and political sphere.
Much of the contemporary literature about race defines race solely regarding color-coded physiognomies (Hesse 2007). However, that perspective fails to highlight the fact that racial classifications are the result of coloniality. As Hesse (2007: 646) posits, race refers to “colonial designations of Europeanness and non-Europeanness, in various assemblages of social, economic, ecological, historical and corporeal life”. Even though race is many times understood as exclusively biological differences, it is necessary to frame it historically because this is part of western rationality, and consequently of the project of modernity. The modernity frame is especially useful for a Mexican reality where the process of mestizaje has hidden racial ideologies. Following Rosa & Flores (2017) and Bonilla & Rosa’s (2017) suggestion of looking at the race not as a body-based diversity project but as a colonial enterprise, this chapter intends to frame mestizaje as part of the racist project of modernity. In Mexico, unlike other contexts such as the USA, there is not a clear distinction between black and white bodies mainly because of mestizaje. However, this does not mean there is an absence of racist ideologies and practices. Conversely, mestizaje has been a racist strategy that hides the existence of race and racialization. Indeed, Castellanos (2000, 2001, 2003) notes that mestizaje has been the primary strategy to deny racism against indigenous peoples in Mexico.

According to Castellanos, mestizaje has been a violent process that has hidden practices such as forced assimilation, acculturation, and ethnocide. Since the nineteenth century, mestizaje and the idea of unity of the Mexican nation have been symbols of nationalism that led to a mestizophilia in which the concept of “mestizo” became socio-ethnic, and I would say a racial, category representing
Mexican-ness. Mestizaje became a core of the ideological and political discourse that legitimizes forced assimilation and integration. In this historical process, indigenous peoples represent the Others in terms of racial and ethnic differentiation, whereby indigenous languages are the most representative factor associated with indigeneity. The State gives the category of ‘indigenous’ to those who speak an indigenous language. Further, the State is constantly attempting to assimilate indigenous people through the public school system.

In this sense, the State has exercised linguistic violence towards speakers of indigenous languages and the school system has played a crucial role in the reproduction of this type of racial violence. Raciolinguistic violence is very prevalent because for a long time, communities were strongly punished and continue to be punished for speaking these languages. Coercion and physical violence within the school system of the Mexican State has been one of the mechanisms responsible for the linguicide (Miranda-Juárez 2021). As Aguilar (2020) notes, one of the reasons why indigenous languages are endangered is because of violence that people who speak those languages face. That violence is a part of the state project of mestizaje. Further, indigenous populations face violence not only in their school life but also in other contexts, especially in the interaction with mestizo people when migrating to the cities and urban centers, as the configuration of mestizo society has among its principle tenets the monolingual ideology of Spanish. In San Isidro many people talked to me about the discrimination they suffer in the outside world.

Castellanos (2000) also points out that the recognition of the exclusionary and racist character of mestizaje is a contemporary phenomenon. This relatively
new recognition also includes the recognition of developmental discourse as part of the racial discrimination ideology, in which the Nation-State and its institutions are reviled as ethnocidal and racist. The classical study of indigeneity in Mexico barely recognized that race, as a colonial project, has an impact on the daily life of indigenous people, especially that it is a significant cause of the inequalities and exclusions that the indigenous population has often faced. This lack of recognition reflects the fact that there was a gap in understanding the foundation of colonial relations that structure the life of indigenous populations. This dissertation aims to contribute to this contemporary discussion.

As a western discipline that was created with and for explicitly colonial purposes, the field of Anthropology in Mexico has participated in the present for reproducing colonial structures and consequently developing discourse that legitimizes ethnocentric and racist practices (Alonso 2004; Saldivar 2011). In the case of Mexico, the indigenista movement engaged and still participates in feeding and revitalizing colonial logics of power in which racial ideologies and racial practices are paramount. Linguistic research in Mexican indigenous languages mostly uses structuralist perspectives which do not allow the inclusion of issues of power, ideology, race, and linguistic inequalities.

Castellano (2000) identifies that there are few works of research in Mexico that note the existence of racist ideologies and practices. Mainly the literature focuses on inter-ethnic relations and uses notions such as ethnocentrism, racism, 

73 It is essential to mention that it was the uprising of the Zapatista movement in 1994 which brought race and racism to the national political scene because, indeed, racialization and racism were fundamental factors in the uprising of the movement.
racial discrimination, and racial stigmatization, but the few works available fail to rigorously explain the nature and social implications of these paradigms. Further, linguistic studies of colonial structures of power, such as the monolingual racial ideology and the use of indigenous languages, are limited. Thus, it is necessary to undertake research that deepens our understanding of all racial expressions, which reveal the concrete forms of racism and its relationship with modernity. Following Bonilla and Rosa’s (2017) statement of the critical character of anthropological research, positing that if anthropology does not undertake a Decolonial project it will continue contributing to the establishment of racial hierarchies, this chapter attempts to maintain a critical view of the study of race, racialization, language use, and languages ideologies. In sum, this dissertation attempts to mainly contribute to the conversation of the relationship between indigeneity, race, coloniality, linguistic use and linguistic ideologies.

2.1 Race and the Racial Modernity Project

Omi & Winant (2015) conceptualize race as “a marker of difference [that] has permeated all forms of social relations. It is a template for the processes of marginalization that...shape social structures as well as collective and individual

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74 Reflections on race and its impacts on society are important. Race is in our lives more than we realize, and as such there is a need to make it visible. Its importance also relies on the fact that race, like other forms of classification, has practical consequences concerning relationships and interactions every day. In other words, race influences our lives in many domains. Mainly, it justifies and reproduces unequal interactions within and among social groups. Critical Race Theory calls for critical examinations of how race is an essential component in many types of inequalities. For that reason, I use Critical Race Theory to understand the notion of race as a socio-cultural construct. Indeed, Critical Race Theory sees race as a cultural construction rather than a biological fact. According to Delgado & Stefancic (2017), races are social inventions. In other words, race is not determined by our genetic information, but rather it is socially determined, obeying social ideas of how to represent humans. Race is a marker of differentiation. As long as one sets some differences on an Other, one can draw a differentiation boundary.
psyches” (107). In other words, race is deeply embedded in our very understanding of humans as classifiable individuals. Those ideas are presented at personal, social, institutional, and structural levels. Furthermore, to understand how race is bound to social structures, the authors developed the concept of racial formation as “the socio-historical process by which racial identities are created, lived out, transformed and destroyed” (109). Racial formations are similar to what Mignolo (2010) calls racial identities. Race formations have been present for so long in modern societies that they are now profoundly internalized and transmitted from generation to generation. For this reason, social structures and social institutions are impregnated with race.

As Omi & Winant (2015) indicate, race is a principle that organizes social systems. This organizational principle is a result of a specific place and a particular time in the history of humanity. Even though classifying people is part of the human ability to create mental representations, the contemporary category of race emerges from a social-historical development in our recent history. It was precisely with the European colonial enterprise that this tendency to classify humans based on their bodily features originated (Mignolo 2003). For Hesse (2007), race is an essential part of modernity, which in turn has its origins in the philosophy of Enlightenment and the formation of the modern world in the sixteenth century, particularly with the colonial system imposed by Europeans.

With the conquest of the Americas and other continents, the colonial enterprise resided precisely in the domain and control of human and material resources that inhabited the recently “discovered” continent. In their eagerness to separate themselves from native groups, Europeans developed a classification of
groups based on physical attributes (Mignolo 2003). Indeed, the main component of this system is visual. Racial classifications are human body classifications. Omi & Winant (2015:13) posit that “race is ocular in an irreducible way. Human bodies are visually read, understood, and narrated by means of symbolic meaning and associations”. The interpretation of phenotypic traits varies across time and space. In the case of the Western understanding of race, skin color, as well as other elements of appearance, were used as the principal aspects of the classification that served to dominate and maintain control over the bearers of such characteristics. As Quijano (2010) suggests, race is a cultural construction of colonialism. Indeed, race was the way Europeans qualified the Others as inferior to them.

In the same vein, Coronil (1996) and Trouillot (2002) postulate that notions of race have to do with a hierarchical worldview and especially with positioning certain humans in the highest level of a hierarchy. It was at the time of the conquest and at the beginning of the colonization of America, that white man built his identity in turn on the cultural difference found on this continent. At the same time, they established an unequal power relationship in which the control of the colonized lays precisely in those racial differentiations. In the racial hierarchy, the colonized is placed as non-human or less-human than the white European colonizer (Veronelli, 2015). Some white European men represented the position of privilege: modern and civilized. This is a representation from the West which expanded with the help of the hegemonic power of domination that Europe has held since colonization (Coronil, 1996). The modern contemporary notion of race is inherited from centuries of colonialism. Thus, race is an ideology that sustains the categorization of superior races and inferior ones, materializing in the
existence of a racial hierarchy. The Mexican monolingual project is a racial project or one that creates racial identities, because those who do not speak the colonial language, in other words those who speak one or more indigenous languages, are classified as non-mestizo and consequently lower in the racial hierarchy.

Ideas of modernity and progress came along with classifications of humans as superior or inferior. Colonialism brought those principles and ideologies to modern societies (Veronelli, 2015). According to Escobar (2010), for the modernity/coloniality research program, race is a central category that points out that the system of political domination imposed by Euro-centered colonialism is not a question of the past and it is still valid. Once colonialism was formally eradicated, it leaves behind, in the former colonies, the same structure of domination and unequal relationships between the colonizer and colonized. For Mignolo (2010:24), coloniality is “the most general form of domination in the world today”. Indeed, race was a crucial component of the classification of Europeans and Non-Europeans as part of that form of domination. As Mignolo (2010) notes, this form of domination created racial identities such as ‘whites,’ ‘Indians,’ ‘yellows,’ and ‘negroes’ that later, with the establishment of modern geopolitical formations, became European, American, Asian, African and so on. Therefore, race is a matter of representation and perception based on principles established historically and reproduced culturally75.

75 Racism is a system of oppression that works at the ideological level, producing concrete and dramatic consequences of exclusion. According to Myers (2005), racism is “a systematic means of restricting—if not denying—access to resources and opportunities to a group of people based on race/or ethnicity” (18). Under this conception, the unequal treatment among different race/ethnic groups is understood as a hierarchy. Hierarchy and exclusion have a dialectic relationship, and they complement each other. One group presides over another as long as the group below stays excluded from the group above. This exclusion is maintained and justified by the ideological channel. It is then hegemonic because it becomes naturalized. Racism is so
As long as race has a role in access to resources, it becomes a fundamental part of social conflicts. For example, in struggles of social identification, race indexes attributes beyond the bodily attributes with which it primarily is associated. In other words, race assigns phenotypic characteristics to different symbolic attributes, specifically meaningful characteristics of differentiation. This association of race with other traits is called racialization (Omi & Winant 2015; Myers 2005; Urciuoli 2013 [1996]). Racialization is then a practice that may fall in the political realm, particularly when it comes to setting unequal differentiations. Indigenous languages are clear examples where we can see the process of racialization.

As mentioned above, the social structure of modern societies builds on race as an organizational principle, so the notion of race is in the structure itself, but it also has a representational character. These two aspects of race cannot be disassociated. Race is interpreted through social meanings; it denotes social meanings. The connection between social structure and social signification is the basis of what Omi & Winant (2015) call racial projects. “A racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial pervasive in our societies that it has impregnated many institutions such as the economy, school, law, and churches. This is exactly what has happened with the racial monolingual ideology in Mexico. An important point of racism as social practice is what Myers (2005) claims, ‘racism can be practiced only by those with the means and the hierarchical authority to exclude the others’ (2005: 20). This assertion relies on the fact that racism is structural, so non-European people have a position within the structure that does not allow them to have the power or authority to practice racism (Hackers, 2003). What the author is advocating here is that racism at structural and institutional levels is more rigid than at interactional levels. Exclusion is the axis of the perpetuation of racism. Thus, racism is a system of exclusion with real consequences. Further, racism crosses many human realms: identities, attitudes, health, opportunities, and actions. According to Myers (2005), there are three social levels at which racism performs: 1) structural, 2) interactional, and 3) ideological. All of these levels, combined, make race and racism complex phenomena in contemporary human life, especially when it comes to having access to resources.

Omi & Winant (2015) define racialization as “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group” (2015:111).
identities and meanings, and an effort to organize and distribute resources (economic, political, cultural) along with particular racial lines” (125). Indeed, the national and colonial project of Spanish monolingualism is in itself a racial project implying erasing identities of racialized populations such as the Nahuas of San Isidro.  

On the other hand, the category of ethnicity is related to the category of race. Both function in the same way to classify people. Ethnicity is also a social construction whereby humans build identities. In many cases, race and ethnicity work closely together. Sometimes drawing a border between race and ethnicity is almost impossible. As Urciuoli (2013 [1996]) recognizes, in abstract terms these domains are thought to be discrete entities with natural boundaries, however, in real interactions, there are no such limits between them. They are combined complexly. Bonfiglio (2007) argues that race is connected to the nation. He points out that race is a priori a notion of arranging a group as a carrier of a national character, whereas the rest are classified as foreign the national domain. Similarly, for Mignolo (1995) race and ethnicity always go together. Even though at the

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77 The concept of racial projects helps understand the dynamic character of race. That is, race itself is constantly creating and recreating, and this constant reproduction flows from structure to individuals and from individuals to structure. That flow happens mainly through reiterative practices and relationships. Because race is immersed in social structure and it provides us with interpretations of the social world, our social practices and relationships become racially coded. In fact, Omi & Winant (2015) posit that racism happens when a racial project “creates or reproduces structures of domination based on racial significations and identities” (128). The semiotic character of race gives it a powerful side that makes race fill the social structure with racial meanings. Here there is a clear connection of race seen as a product of colonialism (Mignolo 2010) and the perpetuation of the colonial structures of domination. In other words, the system of human hierarchy and white race as the supposed place at the top was established through identities and relationships. Race allowed Europeans to justify abuses over the colonized, resulting in a clear structure of domination and a system that favored Europeans to access and control symbolic and material resources.
beginning of colonialism race did not entail a national character, it was with the formation of nation-states that race and ethnicity became entangled.

Categorization of ethnicity, unlike race, relies on cultural attributes such as language, food, religion, beliefs, lifestyle, and nationality (Urciuoli 2013 [1996]). In Mexico, this connection is clear because indigenous populations are perceived racially and ethnically different. For Urciuoli (2013 [1996]), one of the differences is the ideological emphasis. Ethnicity refers to cultural features, whereas race refers to natural features. Discourses of race associate natural characteristics such as notions of dirtiness, danger, or unwillingness; while discourses of ethnicity associate cultural characteristics such as notions of safety, pride, and order. When cultural attributes are at play in identification, what is at stake is the extent of authenticity. When natural attributes have a role in identification, what is at stake is a matter of superiority and inferiority.78

Race and ethnicity are organizational principles of social life inherited from colonialism and nationalism that have concrete consequences in the distribution of resources, control, and power. What is discussed in the following pages is how language comes into play and helps reproduce and maintain the racial meaning already permeated throughout social structures and institutions, more precisely in daily interactions and social relationships of the Nahua people in San Isidro.

78 Sometimes ethnicity and race amalgamate, sometimes they are separated. The way these two categories are sometimes merged and sometimes separated is crucial in the construction of differences, therefore of identities.
2.2 *The assemblies as linguistic markets*

A useful theoretical approach for the subject of this dissertation is the one proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977), who sees linguistic interchanges as linguistic markets. In his attempts to understand the role of cultural features in the reproduction of class inequality, Bourdieu (1977) proposes that linguistic interchanges are places where people possess and seek to gain linguistic capital and consequently benefits. Linguistic markets are places of battle in which people use their linguistic resources to acquire more or less power. This power provides one with the ability to take advantage of linguistic resources and gain added value. In other words, for Bourdieu (1977:652) a linguistic market exists when someone produces a discourse and interlocutors evaluate it and give it a price.

In this way, we can look at the assemblies as linguistic markets and the linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic resources used within these political scenarios as linguistic capital. Using Bourdieu’s perspective, we can view assemblies as spaces where discourse is central and the production of discourse is framed within the logic of a market, including the laws of price formation and the profit some can use in their favor or against the agendas or others\(^9\). The assembly, in concrete terms, is a more or less ritualized social situation where citizens of San Isidro, *faeneros* and *faeneras*, participate in the political and civil life of the village. In abstract terms, it is one of the spaces of the village where the laws of price

\(^9\) Another significant aspect of Bourdieu’s (1977) work refers to linguistic legitimacy. The legitimacy that someone has to speak is a direct result of the application of linguistic market laws. Legitimacy undoubtedly is related to authority; because of the market laws, not everyone has the same authority to speak and not everyone has the legitimacy to say something.
formation of the Nahuatl linguistic, pragmatic, and symbolic resources as linguistic products are determined and displayed.

The importance of assemblies in the life of San Isidro is paramount because it is a public political space where linguistic behavior is regimented and evaluated. That is, discourses in the assembly are produced and evaluated by the various participants, giving the discourses a price. For instance, the discourse production of a person who is placed in a position of authority will be evaluated as such, while this same person at a different historical moment may verbally participate in a discussion while not in the place of authority. When this person is instead in the place of a tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’, their discourse production will be evaluated differently by the rest of the participants. Further, the impact that their participation has in the process of decision-making will be different. In the case of an elder, their voice wouldn’t have the same value when this person was younger because he/she had not accumulated the wisdom through their lifespan.
Thus, the linguistic capital of every participant is evaluated through discourse production. Moreover, the handling of such capital allows participants to exercise power over the mechanisms of linguistic price formation. In other words, to have a certain kind of linguistic capital equates to the existence of certain benefits within the linguistic interactions as we will see in this chapter through very specific kinds of linguistic, pragmatic, and symbolic resources within political discourse in Nahuatl in San Isidro.

To see an assembly through the lens of a linguistic market implies connecting micro instances of verbal interaction to broader contexts because they are inevitably connected. That is, the discourse of a municipal state official within the communal assembly, which would be given in the colonial language, Spanish, has a different value than the discourse of a local peasant, which would be given in Nahuatl. Because race and ethnicity are the differentiating categories in the broader historical and national contexts, that specific interaction would be intersected by those differentiating categories. In that specific scenario, the relationship between the Nahua peasant and the mestizo state official would be an ethnoracial hierarchical relationship. Further, that social hierarchical relationship would take place through only one language: the colonial Spanish. This would happen because the state official, as a mestizo but also representing the Mexican state, would impose the colonial language, the only language the official probably speaks because of the Spanish monolingual ideology.

The same Nahua’s speech would have a different value in an assembly when only tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ participate, establishing a less hierarchical relationship at least in ethnoracial terms because other factors may be
involved as this chapter shows. Then, in this heteroglossic society the value of each language and/or discourse is determined in part because of those two categories. The value of these two discourses depends on the relationship between broader and more immediate social structures. From 2005 on, I have observed several instances of this type of interaction.

All discourse production given within assemblies is constrained by social and economic structures. This is what determines what Bourdieu (1977: 647-8) calls linguistic production relations. Within such relationships, linguistic domination may occur, which in turn has to do with the different values of linguistic or discourse products. In the described instances of interactions, linguistic domination takes place because imposing Spanish is a result of the racial monolingual ideology of the State.
What is at play in the dynamic of the linguistic market, in this case in the dynamic of the assembly, is the way every individual as well as the collectivity are embedded in structures. On the one hand, the local political structure and communal government is imposing over individuals’ actions; on the other, there are national and colonial social, political, and economic structures that also permeate individuals’ linguistic behaviors. Such structural embeddedness is dynamic, the weight of every layer of structures has impacts depending on the situated contexts. For example, the verbal interactions that teachers establish within an assembly are impacted by the class status they hold in the village. As we will see with real instances of discourse production, those verbal interactions lead a specific dynamic in terms of the use of registers (see chapter II, section 2.4). Because of their status as teachers and professionals, their voices and styles carry certain legitimacy. The use of such legitimacy translates into the use of a linguistic authority. Consequently, teachers have more linguistic authority than others, giving them more benefits over other participants in the assembly.

How may we look more specifically at the discursive production within the assembly, at the text-discourses themselves, or at text-discourse as the condensation of the weight of layers of historical and contemporary structures over verbal interaction? Next, we will examine the decision-making process that allow us to observe and analyze specifically the way participants interact using their linguistic capital.
3. Argumentation as the core of the decision-making process: the communal project and the modernization project

To examine and dissect argumentation as the core of the decision-making process among the people of San Isidro means revealing another deeper layer of the political discourses and practices. The linguistic market and the categories of race and ethnicity help us understand, on the one hand, that there are hierarchies, different linguistic capitals, and different social positions of the subjects that impact the communicative behavior in assemblies. On the other hand, there are also specific ways to use language to index certain contextual elements. Specific features of the discourse used within assemblies might be indicating who must open the speech event as well as who has the authority to use the opening generic framing device. Similarly, certain features of the discourse of explanation of the issues as well as the request for participation in the discussion, point out who can pose questions and who needs to respond to them as we saw in chapter III. Moreover, as this chapter examines, the use of such linguistic, pragmatic, and symbolic resources within discourses might also be indicating the way people try to obtain several types of benefits from the discussion. To discover these features and how they are operating, it is necessary to go deeper into another layer of political discourse. We will analyze what, in the domain of these interactions, constitutes the political life of the villages. Thus, we will now describe the structure of argumentation, allowing us to see micro-interactions that entail the political discussions.
As shown in figure 14, argumentation happens in step 4 in the sequential order of an assembly (see Chapter III, section 4). It is a highly dynamic moment of the assembly. It is when people actually put their kamanali - their words, thoughts, and knowledge - into play (see chapter III, section 4.2.3). As I stated in chapter III, what people say is as important as the way they say it. Form and content, as well as context, all matter in the process of creating social meaning - in this case, political meaning that ultimately impacts the political life of the village. Now we will explore the argumentation that took place when deciding the outcome of the continuation of the drainage system.

Before exploring how arguments are put into play, it is paramount to understand the two projects behind the argument for the continuation of the drainage system: the local and historical communal project, and the colonial and national modernization project. The January 19th assembly took place because it was urgent to know the collective opinion around continuing with the drainage
system (see Chapter III, section 3.1). In the racial colonial and national historical context of Mexico mentioned previously, the lack of services in indigenous communities is seen as an index of subdevelopment and an indicator of the lack of willingness of their inhabitants to embark on progress. Providing services is the material target of the modernization of villages, which in turn becomes fundamental in the racial project of modernity. Although services such as drainage are associated with modernization and are one of the ultimate goals of state policies, the lack of services is an evident abandonment of those communities by the state often under the excuse that providing services is extremely expensive because they are far away from urban centers.

Picture 11. Tlayakanketl ‘the ones who leads’ in the first assembly of 2019. Photo by author.

In this sense, not having a drainage system is part of the racial stigma indigenous communities face because of the supposed lack of the hygienic conditions that progress would bring. Of course, this absence affects villages in different ways, one being the symbolic dimensions it entails through stigma. For
example, one important connotation as an example of racial stigma based on services such as the drainage system is that members of indigenous communities are sometimes labelled as dirty. Of course we are talking about a racial prejudice. However, as we will see in the analysis, to have a drainage system not only implies the participation of state investment but also the ability of villages to sustain the modernization project because they must monetarily invest as a condition to continue with the sewer system works.

The specific argument of the communal project of San Isidro that we have described so far - based on the values of collective work, togetherness, and mutual aid - sometimes serves to support the argument that opposes the state modernization project through the culmination of the drainage system. The values of both projects as well as the features of the speech associated with such values interact dialectically. In other words, people mobilize the values and ideas of each project when arguing in favor or against the drainage system and they do this using specific styles or registers. The January 19th assembly is an excellent example of how community members negotiate with and for these two projects, which can be visualized as the extremes of a continuum that is full of social, economic, and ideological tensions.

The idea of the continuum which has the modernization project on one end and the communal project on the other helps demonstrate that often these different projects are opposed to one another. Through negotiations, participants dynamically move along the continuum to position themselves where they desire and decide to be. Here, their agency as subjects comes to the front, without forgetting that the decisions they make within assemblies are permeated by
broader structures as we have highlighted along the way in this dissertation. What is most interesting is to identify in what way the historical and broader structures impact the decision-making process and the dynamic between human agency and social structures. It is under this framework that I will follow with the analysis of the argumentation as the core of the decision-making process.

3.1 Visualizing the arguments: kena ‘yes’ or axtle ‘no’

Once people start giving their words to discuss whether they wanted the work to continue, they begin the argumentation. The two stances expressed about the continuation of the incomplete drainage system are *kena* ‘yes’ or *axtle* ‘no’. Thus there are those who agree to continue work on the drainage system, and those who disagree with continuing the work. The assembly is divided into 134 turns or participations along the hour and 34 minutes it lasted. Van Ememern & Grootendorst (2004) identify the development of arguments in three stages or phases: opening, argument, and conclusive phases. The following figure shows these phases in this assembly.
The argumentation part of the assembly is also divided into different moments or phases. The very first phase corresponds to step 1 in the overall structure of the assembly, which includes the explanation of the issue people will proceed to discuss. In the case of this assembly, this phase goes from turn 1 to turn 7, which were taken by the tlayakanketl ‘the ones who leads’ and the tlakwiloketl ‘the one who writes’. They both explained the aim of gathering citizens of San Isidro that day. Example 124 shows the specific utterances that finishes the opening phase of the argumentation. This is the moment when the tlakwiloketl ‘the one who writes’, after the explanation of the issue, asks everyone else whether they agree or not to pay a lease to the federal government to obtain a water treatment plant which will treat the drainage system water.
Indeed, what authorities explain during the opening phase of the argumentation is that people need to pay for the plant and to constantly pay the electricity that the plant will consume once it starts working. Although, after the *tlakwiloketl* ‘the one who writes’ uses this utterance to begin with the argumentation phase, the authorities continue explaining the issue. The importance of the utterance that opens the second phase relies on the fact that it is the moment when the rest of the assembly is welcome to start giving their *kamanali* ‘word’. In fact, this moment corresponds to step 2 in the overall structure of the assembly (see figure 13).

As shown in figure 15, there are overlapping moments between phases, illustrated by the overlap of the lines that encompass every phase. When we trace the utterances, we can see important moments and instances of the discursive dynamic which create blurred boundaries between phases. Example 32 is closing the explanation phase and, from the authorities’ perspective, this moment is the right moment to ask *tekichiwanih* ‘the ones who perform work’ if they agreed or not with the project.
3.2 Two different codes in the decision-making process

Immediately after turn 7, a member of the assembly, the first tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’ who gives their words, expresses his opinion in the following utterance:

125. pues yo sí estoy de acuerdo amigo
    well 1PRON.SG yes be agree friend
    ‘well, I do agree, my friend’.
    ‘pues, yo sí estoy de acuerdo, amigo’.

What this moment inaugurates is precisely the argumentation phase. This utterance is the first statement that supports one of the two possibilities in the argumentation. Here we see that the tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’ is in favor of the continuation of the drainage system. The first element to highlight is that the utterance is delivered completely in the colonial language, Spanish. Further, at the end of the utterance, the tekichiketl ‘the ones who perform work’ uses the word amigo ‘friend’. These two elements allow us to observe the importance of the use of different codes in argumentation. The tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’ is using a code directly associated with the outside mestizo world, in which Spanish is the main language and as the colonial language holds a higher status, while Nahuatl does not even have the category of a full language and is considered to be a dialect (see Chapter II, section 3.2). The utterance is referring to a world that many people in the village associate with urban places, mestizo people, and modernization. It refers to the idea of progress and economic opportunities. But at the same time, it also refers to a world in which Nahua people face racial violence, exclusion, and discrimination. Much of that discrimination is linguistic discrimination.
On the other hand, by referring to the authority with the term *amigo*, the *tekichiketl* ‘the one who performs work’ is also indicating that the relationship he is establishing with the authority when answering the question in example 32 is not respectful, at least not the way we saw in the previous chapter when authorities opened the assembly. Unlike authorities who use a discourse of gratitude to show respect and reverence for the *tekichiwanih* ‘the ones who perform work’, addressing the authority here through the word *amigo* creates a more hierarchical relationship in which the *tekichiketl* ‘the one who performs work’ does not respond to the authorities with the same formal register, not showing the respect everyone else would expect.

The word *amigo* ‘friend’, as well as the use of Spanish, gives this utterance a tone of defiance. This example is an instance of what we reflected on at the beginning of this chapter in terms of linguistic domination, in which two different codes are being used: 1) a code associated with the dominant ideology and lifestyle of the mestizo world, impregnated with high status; and 2) a code associated with
the Nahua communal lifestyle and political courtesy through a respectful discourse but with less status than the first. Thus, the use of the word amigo can be seen as a social index which points out a ethnoracial hierarchical relationship between the tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’ and the tlakwiloketl ‘the one who writes’.

One of the few sociolinguistic studies and one of the most important works of Mexicano (Nahuatl) is the work of Hill & Hill (1986) Speaking Mexicano. The Dynamics of Syncretic Language in Central Mexico. In this book, the authors describe how Mexicano (Nahuatl) is borrowing plenty of linguistic material from Spanish, resulting in a syncretic language. They labeled this phenomenon a ‘syncretic project’ because the conceptualization as a syncretic language instead of a mixed language is less disqualifying, allowing them to analyze this project as a place where the speakers are negotiating, in creative ways, the usage of Mexicano. The authors identify different codes in the Malinche ways of speaking: Spanish, Hispanicized Mexicano power code, and Mexicano purist code. Each code is related to different values such as power, prestige, solidarity, and reciprocity and to cultural practices such as rituals, kinship relationships, and compadrazgo. The Hispanicized Mexicano power code is a variety of Nahuatl that includes a lot of lexical material from Spanish and with some borrowed grammatical structures as well. According to these authors, the power code might have its origins in the colonial period and has been found in other varieties of Nahuatl (Hill & Hill 1986: 122). This code incorporated Spanish material as symbolic resources and was used in formal settings when the contact between Nahuatl and Spanish was not as intense as it is now.
I also identify some uses of Spanish in political speeches, especially in the form of codeswitching (Woolard 2004)\textsuperscript{80} or translanguaging practices (García & Wei 2014)\textsuperscript{81} as in the example above. Further, I identify a code that has less Spanish material and uses some forms that are polite, formal, respectful and with a hint of a reverential tone documented in the previous chapter. This code is similar to what Hill & Hill (1986: 142-3) call solidarity code. In this context, the form of example 125 is part of the Hispanized Nahuatl people utilize in assemblies. The utterance in example 125 has a social meaning and reflects the speaker’s intentions to accept

\textsuperscript{80} Woolard (2004) defines codeswitching as “an individual’s use of two or more language varieties in the same event or exchange...codeswitching can occur between forms recognized as distinct languages, or between dialects, registers, or styles of a single language” (71-2). According to this author, there are two general types of inquiries around codeswitching: a) one more concerned with grammatical constraints and b) the other more leaning to the social meaning of this phenomenon. The former is the one in which Linguistic Anthropology has been interested. One contribution of this discipline about codeswitching is to think of it as part of the political and economic systems in which speakers are immersed. In that sense, codeswitching is not seen just as ‘an automatic response to social structural factors but the practice of codeswitching is mediated by speakers’ own understanding of their position in the structure (Gal 1987 in Woolard 2004). It is ultimately not any objective positioning or value of a language, but rather speakers’ ideological interpretation of and response to that value that are mobilized in codeswitching. Because of this, codeswitching and related translanguaging phenomena can provide a window on social and political consciousness’ (82). As a result of looking at codeswitching on a larger scale, social theory has explained the role of codeswitching in understanding ‘language processes, interaction order and the macrosocial order’ (85).

\textsuperscript{81} The recent research on of translanguaging helps this dissertation to avoid using static conceptions of language such as the ones proposed by structuralist and formalist perspectives such as Saussurean and Chomskian traditions of the study of language (García & Wei 2014: 9). Instead, languaging is a concept that focuses on language practices “emphasizing the agency of speakers in an ongoing process of interactive meaning-making” (García & Wei 2014: 9). The last idea relies on the fact that people use different resources in strategic ways. In that sense, when individuals or collectives hold more than what has been called language, they in fact have multiple meaning systems. This perspective does not see languages as autonomous entities in the mind of people but as meaning systems that are interrelated and that there is a flow in the mind of people when using the resources of such systems. Speakers are seen as languagers who uses semiotic resources, which include linguistic resources, to act in the world. In this same sense, the notions of bilingualism and multilingualism become dynamic and takes into consideration other aspects such as ideology surrounding linguistic productions. As the authors say, “dynamic bilingualism suggests that the language practices of bilinguals are complex and interrelated; they do not emerge in a linear way or function separately since there is only one-linguistic system. Instead, it connotes one linguistic system that has features that are most often practiced according to societally constructed and controlled ‘languages’, but other times producing new practices” (García & Wei 2014: 14). So, what we see in the Nahuatl speeches is a practice of translanguaging in which there are features used according to the contextual and interactional factors as in the examples provided. Nahuatl people use their entire repertoire of linguistic features according to specific contexts. This perspective erases the stigmatizing view of mixing languages because it erases the supposedly deviant notions of interferences of the “one language” into “another”. A salient aspect these authors highlight is the fact that the classical notion of language as an autonomous entity and a cluster of linguistic forms has served national-state interests as we demonstrate in this dissertation. The monolingual ideology in Mexico, or the Harderian ideology of “one language, one fatherland, one language” throughout many nations in the world, plays a crucial role in the detriment of linguistic diversity and in the productions of inequalities.
modernization. In a pragmatic sense, he is implying that he desires to accept modernization and chooses Spanish as the language to convey his desires\textsuperscript{82}. The \textit{tekichiketl} ‘the one who performs work’ is somehow implying his intentions by using the colonial language.

This preference might be indicating that the \textit{tekichiketl} ‘the one who performs work’ who delivered example 125 prefers the modern ideology and practices. The \textit{tekichiketl} ‘the one who performs work’ is one of the teachers in the community. As opposed to the rest of the speech events that have taken place so far in the assembly, the use of Spanish here is a strong contrast to the previous dynamic of the assembly. This contrast is also marked by the ethnoracial categories that are at play in the assembly dynamic.

The study of politeness and its relations to forms of address is already a classic topic in various fields such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology. For example, Uber (2011) explores the use of pronouns of address, \textit{tú} vs. \textit{usted}, in contemporary Spanish of Bogotá, Colombia. Through a historical review of the development of such pronouns in Latin, Old Spanish as well as their use in the Americas, the author found that the use of these pronouns mainly coincides with the dimensions of solidarity and power, also described as familiarity.

\textsuperscript{82} The speech act theory also provides us with important concepts such as implicature which, according to Grice (1967), consists of the speakers’ intention behind the sentences they utter. Conversational implicature relates to what can be inferred from words that are said in specific ways and circumstances (Sbisa, 2009; Allot, 2010). Grice (1967) defines conversational implicatures as part of the speaker meaning. An implicature is an aspect of the meaning that a speaker refers to without saying it (Horn, 2004). This notion is connected to illocutionary and perlocutionary effects (Searl, 1969) which are not the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts themselves but the effects that are caused on the hearers. As Sadock (2004) suggests ethnographic studies of speech acts, such as this dissertation, are central to the understanding of the interpersonal relationship between speakers and their audience.
vs. formality or friendly vs. polite. The findings in Bogotá and the comparison with other cities in the Spanish contemporary world help Uber conclude that the main factors for address are: (1) “the semantic concept of power (the age, profession, rank of employee, or the perceived position of addressee); and (2) the semantic concept of solidarity (the degree of confidence between speakers)” (282).

Taking into consideration the dimension of solidarity and power (Uber 2011), the relationship between the tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’ and the authority is one of respect, politeness, and formality because of the political hierarchy between them. The use of a tú register through the word amigo in the utterance pues, yo si estoy de acuerdo, amigo ‘well, I do agree, my friend’ intends to revert that hierarchy, establishing a relationship of familiarity and if not friendly less formal than the one documented in Chapter IV. Because the utterance is executed in the colonial language, the ethnoracial factor comes to the scene to set another hierarchy between the tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’ and the authority. This time the hierarchy is ethnoracial and favors the tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’ because Spanish and the project it often carries dominates the national context and holds higher status. Additionally, the status of the tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’, in this case as teacher, reinforces that ethnoracial hierarchy because his profession gives him certain legitimacy. This is a good example of the use of a register in which factors such as race, ethnicity, and class come together to determine a power relationship through language and between these two subjects within the decision-making process. In this sense, the use of this utterance might be part of the power code found by Hill & Hill (1986).
People in San Isidro mention that those men who go constantly outside of the community because of job purposes use the Hispanized Nahuatl code. Some collaborators mention that it is when men return home after a long period of being working in cities that they start speaking Hispanized Nahuatl. Other collaborator ironically point out that those who use Hispanized Nahuatl sometimes boast of having lost their Nahuatl competency while being in urban centers. These same collaborators express that those who no longer want to speak Nahuatl or those who pretend they forgot it, those are the ones who often do not want to participate in communal obligations.

After this first statement in favor of the continuation of the drainage system, another tekichiketl ‘the one who performs work’ expresses his position against the continuation of the system by the following utterance:

126. tohwantih axtle

1PRON.PL  NEG

‘we do not’

‘nosotros no’

This second utterances contrasts with the one already analyzed because it is entirely in the Nahuatl language, it is uttered by a milatekitiketl ‘peasant’, and it conveys a negative answer to the proposition of continuing the modernization project of the State. Additionally, the tekichiketl ‘the one who performs’ uses the plural pronoun tohwantih ‘we’ to include a collectivity in his statement. Interestingly, right after this utterance other tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ in the assembly echoed it, standing against the continuation of the sewer system.
Although the citizens do not arrive at a final decision in this assembly, the decision is taking shape throughout the argumentation process. People discussed this topic for over an hour and a half. In the following figure, we will see the number of statements in favor and against the drainage system. Further, we can see the way in which the whole speech event was built, showing the distribution of arguments, and indicating who uttered each statement.

Figure 16. Argumentation Phase

The right side of the figure represents the statements of those who declared an opposition to the continuation of the sewer system, whereas the left side represents the statements of those who pronounced themselves in favor of the system. The number represents the turn which subjects took to explain their arguments. Under the indication of the turn, the position of the person that uttered the statement is listed. Figure 16 clearly shows that during this argumentation phase, most of the statements are under the label of *kena* ‘yes’ and fewer are on the
side of *axtle* ‘no’. We will talk about the concessions showed in figure 16 in section 4.3.

3.3 *The order and disorder of the turns: the social meaning of noise*

The turn-taking system is not as tidy as presented in figures 7 to 11 in Chapter III (see 3 section 3.1.1). If we take the idea of describing the turn-taking system as an orderly step-by-step model of adjacency pairs from Conversation Analysis (Snidel 2010), then what we find in the assembly many times is disorder. Of course, there are moments when the ambience is calm and follows an orderly structure, respecting turns and listening to the person who is speaking. In fact, there are also adjacency pairs when participants ask and answer simple questions. Nonetheless, during other moments this structure becomes disorderly. People speak out at the same time and try to be the loudest to gain the attention of the audience and be heard. Many voices sounding at the same time creates noise, which is a signal of disagreement and tension. Noise in the assembly has a social meaning and it is a pragmatic resource often involved in the decision-making process.
Figure 17. Noise and authorities trying to calm dawn the audience

The meaning of noise in the assembly context is one of conflict and tensions. It is when the two participating sides are clashing in the utterances of argumentation. It is when people put opposing *kamanali* ‘word’ on the table. Assembly noise occurs various times throughout argumentation. One important interaction when noise is taking place is to shout as loud as possible to take a turn. People shouting implies that they are advocating for a moment of silence and calm to be heard. Everyone shouting and giving their opinions at the same time means there is a serious disagreement. In other words, through noise people are claiming a space of legitimacy (Pasquel 1996:16) for their voices. When someone finally gets the attention of everyone, that means this person wins the turn everyone was trying to take. This person probably would have more opportunities to mobilize their interests and gain some type of benefits within this linguistic market.

Of course, winning the turn is also determined by various factors. An example is the case of the ejido official, who, as seen in Chapter II (section 2.3) is
an important authority. The ejido official is usually an elder, for 2019 the one in the middle of the picture in figure 16, who knows about the historical regulations of land tenure. Further, he oversees one of the most precious and valuable resource of the Nahua people: land. In Mexico, many Mesoamerican groups see themselves as peasants first before identifying as indigenous (Speed 2008: 85). This is the case in San Isidro. Thus, his authoritative position is one of respect in terms of the political hierarchy within the cargo system because land is paramount to the San Isidro lifestyle, providing them sustenance since their creation as a community. We already mentioned the importance of land not only in its symbolic dimension, but also in the political domain as it was the engine of the agrarian fight of the Huasteca in its recent history (see Chapter I, section 3.1). In the January 19th assembly there is an instance in which we can observe the importance of this authority position and the legitimacy of the ejido official’s voice.

Immediately after they embarked on the discussion of accepting or refusing the continuation of the drainage system described in examples 33 and 34 in section 4.1, a moment of intense conflict occurred between those who were in favor and those who were against it. Figure 17 illustrates through the spectrogram an instance of such noise. After several minutes of noise, authorities were trying to calm down the audience. The central argument against the continuation was the

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83 Speed (2008) identifies how community identity emerges dialogically throughout history. The author describes the trajectory of community formation of a Zapatista community in Chiapas. This community had an indigenous identity, but later, due to the relationship they had with the agrarian state and indigenista policies, they turned more towards a campesino identity. Finally, with the Zapatista uprising they returned to their indigenous identity. In the case of San Isidro, they still hold a strong campesino identity but at the same time, with the multiculturalism and later the neoliberal multiculturalism aided by the national school system, in the recent decades they also share an indigenous identity. As Speed sustains many times the State “has formed the basis of claims about indigenous identity and indigenous rights” (Speed 2008:89).
financial issue this would entail in terms of the increase in the electricity bill of everyone in the village. Given the need for a water treatment plant, the village would consume a lot of electricity which would clearly need to be paid by someone. The discussion, at some point, was around whether everyone needed to pay this increased bill or only those who would accept and have the service. They also discussed who needed to pay the lease the government was implementing to have the water treatment plant. Thus, the people who were refusing the service argued against it because they did not want to pay for something that they would not use, whereas those who were for the continuation argued that everyone needed to pay it because they might change their view in the future and accept service.

After turn number 22 at minute 18:22 there was a confrontation between two tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ who each defended a contrary position. When this verbal conflict escalated and they were shouting at each other, a lot of noise took place. The authorities as well as other tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ shouted that tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ shouldn’t fight in the assembly, trying to regain calm. This is when the instance of gaining the turn becomes relevant. It was the ejido official who, among many, was trying to calm everyone down. From his position of land authority, he was shouting and trying to fill the turn and capture everyone’s attention. It was at minute 20:28, after two minutes of many others trying to take the turn, when the ejido official finally took it. Interestingly, it was with the help of the other authorities and some members of the assembly saying disorderly and loudly xitlakakilikah, torepresentante kamatis, xitlakakilikah “listen, our ejido official is going to speak, listen” that he finally could get everyone’s attention.
3.4 Past voices and recounting stories of the past: features of the elder’s code

The ejidal official brings past experiences to the argument for modernization through sharing *tlen panok wehkaki* ‘stories of the past’ with the rest of authorities and the *tekichiwanih* ‘the ones who perform work’, as one collaborator refers to when talking about an elder’s way of speaking and register within assemblies.

127. _niman xitlachilikah_
   ‘ahora miren’
   ‘now look’

128. _niman xitlachilikah_
   ‘ahora miren’
   now look’

129. _tohwantih keni tlawili_
   ‘nosotros cuando la luz’
   ‘when the electricity we’

130. _nohki, este, tlawili_
    ‘también, este, (cuando) la luz’
    ‘also, well, (when) the electricity’

131. _nohki apenas 40 tiknehkeh_
    ‘también quisimos apenas 40’
    ‘only 40 of us wanted it as well’

132. _wa nopone itstoya sekin_
    ‘y así estaban algunos’
    ‘and some were like that’

133. _nohki axkinekiyahay_
    ‘tampoco querían’
    ‘they did not want it either’

134. _kiihtoah tlen nopa 40 kinehkeh_
    ‘dicen, los 40 que quisieron’
    ‘the 40 who wanted it say’
This was an important verbal intervention for the argument. The ejido official not only gained the turn, he also introduced the previous experience of modernization into the discussion and at the same time he could finally calm down the audience. This is also an example of the legitimacy of an elder’s voice, which reflects the important role of the voice of experience in the Nahua worldview (Mannheim & Hill:1992) as well as some of the rules of governance in San Isidro (see chapter II, section 2.2). This discourse in fact was pivotal for the rest of the argumentation. Most of the arguments turned around the experience of getting electricity as an example of modernization in the village, and the way people made decisions when electricity service arrived.
With this intervention, we also see some of the poetic and rhetorical features as the discourse documented in Chapter III. There are various points to notice about such features. For instance, we can see three different types of parallelisms: lexical, morphological, and syntactical. The ejido official begins his speech with a clear parallel structure in examples 127 and 128. The complete utterances are identical, so repetition plays a role from the very beginning of the speech. In addition to these identical utterances, the bold parts of utterances indicate there is either lexical or morphological parallelism. The whole phenomenon of parallelism in the speech is set in a way that gives it a certain style, a characteristic style of political oratory seen so far. We can visually follow the parallelism, either lexical as in the case of tlawili ‘electricity’ in 129, 130, 137, 138, and 139 or created with other classes of words such as the adverb nohki ‘also’ in 130, 131 and 133. The first person plural pronoun tohwantih ‘we’ in 136 and 137 or quantifiers such as nochi ‘all,’ act as the utterance subject in 139 and 140. This is a kind of serial concatenation of repetitions. With these examples we see that these poetic strategies are also a feature of that code of respect, gratitude and mutual help, or I would argue the communal code, within the ejido official’s discourse when arguing. As seen in chapter III, this is the rhetoric feature that shows an actual speech play, a creative and intentional manipulation of speech not only as a source of verbal art but also as a political act through which the ejido official tries to persuade his audience. Seen in this last political dimension, as Hill (1995) posits, voice is a site for conflict where morality takes place through chosen voices. In the case of the examples so far, it is possible to grasp that conflict between using the colonial language and the language of the communal.
In addition to the poetic strategies, there are other resources the ejidal official uses through which we can explore his agency. One of these resources is reported speech shown in examples 43, 44 and 45. Through this resource, the ejido official changes his voice, or in Goffman’s (1981) terms, his footing, through indirect speech to mimic the voices that were mobilized in the past when the electricity arrived. Goffman’s (1981) contributions of the participation framework and the different interactive roles of subjects in the process of communication are central because they provide dynamicity to the notion of speaker and shed light on
the complexity of the act of speaking. Here, I am using Goffman’s notion of shifts in footing as the movement between roles that speakers partake in when they unfold their stances towards specific verbal interactions.

Goffman (1981: 144) proposes three roles of speakers: animator, author, and principal. As he explains, animator refers to the role a given speaker plays when uttering certain words. Those words can be from the speaker or not because the emphasis is on the mobilization or animation of the words. Author refers to the role that speakers play when composing words. This role emphasizes the authorship of the uttered words. Principal refers to the role speakers play when their ideas, opinions, and stances are being stated and enacted. In this case, what the ejido official is doing through reported speech is precisely a shift in footing. That is, through discourse he travels back in time and brings the past to the present by playing the role of animator of some individuals who previously were the authors of what he now contributes to the argumentation. Because of this, he is at the same time playing the role of the principal through sharing stances of the past authors in the past experience of modernization.

This is then a resource that the ejidal official uses to make a more vivid past experience, making it a central part of his argument. Reported speech helps him highlight that people might change their views about the sewer service. Reported speech is also the resource that allows the ejido official to demonstrate his stance regarding the two possibilities for a final decision. Through reported speech, the ejido official implies that he is in favor of the continuation of the drainage system. We can visually see examples 43, 44 and 45 aligned to the right, pointing out that the ejido official separated the utterance that he wanted to highlight and used
different voices in terms of Bakhtin (1981) and moves among the interactional roles in terms of Goffman (1981).

The use of reported speech leads us also to another symbolic meaning within this specific register within the decision-making process. With this kind of register in which there are poetic structures such as repetitions and parallelism and reported speech elders recount experiences of the past. This code in which many of the values of communality are expressed, as seen in the previous chapter, is associated with ideas of being boring and non-concrete. In the context of the assembly people would express this idea through utterances such as *ne awelo ahachika kihto* ‘this elder is being repetitive’ or *kilnamiki tlen panok wehkaki* ‘he reminds what happened long time ago’. These are some of the expressions I heard in various assemblies that were also confirmed by younger speakers. Some younger *faeneros* and *faeneras* think that the style of recounting stories of the past takes a lot of time and makes the discussions slower. This discourse practice is associated exclusively with elders in the villages. As documented in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2) in the last decades the authority of elders is being weakened because authority is being gained by professionals, literate and bilingual individuals who fulfill the mestizo model of governance. Additionally, in the decision-making process that register is not shared by younger generations of *tekichiwanih* ‘the ones who perform work’ and it is somehow stigmatized. Thus, reported speech highlighting past voices is also not viewed very highly by many. In the following section we will talk more about the implications of stigmatization of this type of register.

Finally, the last sentence, 141, in which the ejido official finished his speech, is a strong assertion. With this utterance, the authority preemptively projects a
result and takes for granted what would be the final decision. Of course, with this strategy to affirm that they will have the same experience as in the past, he is trying to persuade everyone else to follow his position. This is a powerful strategy, not only because it has been stated by an important authority with the legitimacy of his experience and his position in the cargo system, but also because of the utterance itself. What this utterance shows is an intention to persuade the audience.

3.5 Persuading (and convincing) as power strategies

Classical scholarship on political oratory (Bloch 1975; Comaroff 1975; Firth 1975; Rosaldo 1980) has explored the relationship between forms of utterance and social control in which formality plays a significant role. Thus, there is a connection between formal ways of speaking and the hierarchical structure which places the superior over the inferior as such use of formality leads to a highly hierarchical situation. According to Bloch (1975:10), there is “an exercise of power through formalization”. For this author, formality is a way of speaking that does not allow a no as an answer, setting a hierarchical interaction. Moreover, if formality does not allow a no as an answer, subjects must put their creativity to work because to say no in front of an audience implies using much more discourse resources to establish a dialog, to negotiate, to agree or to disagree. In that sense, formal speech within assemblies becomes a kind of invitation to show arguments and the way those arguments function to negotiate.

In this matter, persuasion is one of the communicative strategies involved in the political oratory and in audience evaluation of the strategies and the orator’s skills (Firth 1975). Indeed, rhetorical discourses are “constructed to have an impact
on the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of its audience” (Fahnestock 2011:4). It is through persuasion that rhetorical discourses have an impact on the audience. What follows is an analysis of utterance as part of persuasion. I will present two arguments as examples not only of exploring the process of argumentation as part of the decision-making process, but also as ways of persuading an audience. I focus on persuasion because it is an important linguistic and pragmatic strategy within political discourse in San Isidro.

3.5.1 The two arguments and concessions in the Assembly’s Negotiations

Immediately following the participation of the ejido official, authorities decided to call every tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’ on their roster to ask individually if they wanted or not to have the service which meant that they agreed or refused to pay both the lease and the increase on the electricity bill. Those in favor of the work were the minority, and then the discussion continued for at least one more hour. I will present an excerpt of one argument against the work and one argument in favor of the work to demonstrate how two discourses corresponding to two different projects are mobilized to make a decision that will ultimately favor or advance one of these projects. As we saw in figure 16, most of the tekichiwanih’s ‘the ones who perform work’ opinions were in favor of the sewer service whereas few of his statements were rejecting it.

142. en su momento, en aquellos tiempos,
‘at the time, in those times’

143. abuelos a lo mejor nohki kiihtohkeh,
‘our grandparents maybe said as well,’
“de manera personal na axtle nechserviros,”
‘de manera personal a mí no me sirve,‘
‘personally I will not use it,’

pero hoy, ¿(ah)kia axkipi(a) luz?,
‘pero hoy, ¿quién no tiene luz?’
‘but today, who does not have power?’

(n)aman ma kikotonilitih se se towampo iluz,
‘hoy que alguien le vaya a cortar la luz a nuestro compañero’
‘today a comrade had his light cut off,’

al día siguiente quien sabe kenihi kichihtokeh,
‘al día siguiente quien sabe como le hicieron’
‘the next day who knows where they stole from?’

pero tlaxtlawatih para ma axyas luz ichan,
‘pero fueron a pagar para que no se les fuera la luz en su casa,’
‘but he went to pay to have power at his house,’

a lo mejor en este momento igual no techsucederoh,
‘a lo mejor en este momento igual nos sucederá también,’
‘maybe at this moment the same will happen to us,’

a lo mejor namantsin, a lo mejor tikamatih que namantsin axtechserviroh,
‘a lo mejor ahorita, ‘a lo mejor decimos que ahorita no nos sirvió,’
‘maybe right now, ‘maybe we say that right now it doesn’t work for us,’

a lo mejor na axnechserviroh,
‘a lo mejor a mí no me sirvió,’
‘maybe it didn’t work for me,’

wa(n) a lo mejor nopone nokone yohya axtiserviros,
‘y a lo mejor a mi hijo tampoco le servirá,’
‘and maybe my son won’t use it either,’

a lo mejor, pero noïxwi, entonces,
‘a lo mejor, pero a mi nieto, entonces’
‘but then maybe my grandson will,’

¿qué herencia le vamos a dejar a los niños, a los hijos o a los nietos?
‘¿qué herencia le vamos a dejar a los niños, a nuestros hijos, a nuestros nietos?’
‘what legacy are we going to leave to the children, to our sons or grandchildren?’
It was a teacher who uttered example number 142-154. If we compare examples 127 -141 to example 142-154, we see what Hill & Hill (1986) identify as hispanized Nahuatl. There is an age factor in this, as the teacher is younger than the ejido official who is an elder. However, there are also other factors that explain why the teacher is speaking with this type of speech. First, he is one of the wealthiest in the village because he had access to formal education and became a professional. He migrated to the city in order to enroll and attended pedagogy school. He was formally educated in Spanish and he, as a member of the national schooling system, has among his tasks teach Spanish to children from the area. Among all the tekichiwanih ‘the ones who perform work’, he is considered ixtlamatinih ‘the experienced ones, the wise ones’, because he knows how to read. Many of their characteristics as individuals are associated with the modernization process. In fact, later in his argument he points out the example of Huejutla, saying that if in the city someone wants to have service, they need to pay for it. So, his argument is supported not only by his words but also his experience.

If we look at his speech, we notice that he begins his kamanali ‘word’ entirely in Spanish and he closes it in the same exact way. In the middle we find in bold the translanguaging practices he uses throughout his speech. For example, unlike the ejido official in 149- a lo mejor en este momento igual nohki techsucederoh ‘maybe at this moment the same will happen to us’, the teacher is using the hispanized Nahuatl register in which Spanish is playing a crucial role. The ejido official in 141 mentions the same content of example 149, ‘that will happen to us’, when closing his speech but using a different code or style. Both
subjects use the same argument to persuade those who are against the continuation of the sewer system, however the manner by which they accomplish that goal is different. The teacher is using his connection with the modern world, but he also uses the ejido official’s argument to convince those who think differently. Interestingly, at the end of example 63 he talks about leaving a legacy, the sewer system as a legacy, and in this case the legacy of modernization. The teacher embodies many of the values and ideologies of the modern project.

The following example pertains to an individual who argues against the continuation of the drainage system.
155. **seki jóvenes** no eli **beneficiarios**
   ‘algunos jóvenes también son beneficiarios’
   ‘some young people are also beneficiaries’

156. **pero** axkinekih techpalewiseh ika se **tekitl** čtla?
   ‘pero no nos quieren ayudar con un trabajo, ¿verdad?’
   ‘but they do not want to help us with the work, right?’

157. **mas** tla sa eli **beneficiarios**, axkinekih inkichiwaseh nopa **tekitl**,
   ‘más si ya son beneficiarios, no quieren hacer el trabajo’,
   ‘moreover if they are already benefiting, they do not want to do the work’,

158. čki vohwanti kichiwah?
   ‘¿qué hacen ellos?’
   ‘what do they do?’

159. tohwanti, tle nika nika itstokeh, čtla?,
   ‘nosotros, los que estamos aquí, aquí, ¿verdad?’
   ‘we, the ones who are here, here, right?’

160. na nika niitstok, intectlalihtokeh,
   ‘yo estoy aquí, ustedes me han puesto’
   ‘I am here, you have placed me here’

161. na niiitstok **de akwerdo** inmechpalewis ika **tekitl**,
   ‘yo estoy de acuerdo de ayudarles con el trabajo’
   ‘I agree to help you with the work’

162. nimechpalewis ika ni **tekitl**
   ‘les ayudaré con el trabajo’
   ‘I will help you with the work’

163. **pero** na axniselis nopa **beneficio**
   ‘pero yo no voy a recibir el beneficio’
   ‘but I will not receive the benefit’

164. čkenki elis nikipalewis sekinok kampa na axnielis **niparticipe**?
   ‘¿como va a hacer que les voy a ayudar a otros donde yo no voy a ser parteicipe?’
   ‘how is it that I will help where I will not be a participant?’

At first glance, we can see less material from Spanish in this speech, meaning that this is a less hispanized Nahuatl code. Although there are some words in bold, there is still a different code from the one utilized previously by the teacher.
Here, the person who uses these words to oppose the drainage system is an authority. He is the second in the hierarchy of the cargo system: the tlakwiloketl ‘the one who writes’. This is relevant because among the six authorities who were in the assembly, this one is the only one who gave arguments against the sewer system. This is pointing out that even if someone is part of the cargo system, he can disagree with the rest as we see in examples 64 to 73. The tominpixketl ‘the one who collects money’, and one tekiwe ‘the one who works’ proclaimed themselves in favor of the continuation. The tlayakanketl ‘the one who leads’, the highest authority, mentioned that he might accept this service in the future. The current example opposes the example in which the ejido official told the audience his position that goes more in favor than against the drainage system. The tlakwiloketl ‘the one who writes’ was the only authority who disagreed with it.

There are three distinct observable parts of the argument. In the very first, the speaker begins mentioning a problem with the young people who, although they want the drainage system, do not perform communal work as they are obligated to. This introduction is key in the sense that it is presenting the audience with a negative aspect of what they are discussing. If we follow the arrows, we see his argument begins with this idea of the young being beneficiaries but not participating in communal obligations.

Second, the tlakwiloketl ‘the one who writes’ poses a very powerful question to those who are not fulfilling their communal obligations. Unlike the ejido official who at one moment uses reported speech to persuade the audience, the tlakwiloketl ‘the one who writes’ uses a very direct strategy launching a question in 67. ēki yohwantih kichiwah? ‘what do they do?’ In a very clear manner, he is
trying to make the audience reflect on the fact that the young are not participating as they are supposed to. Immediately following this question, he begins the core of his argument. He is arguing that he, as an elected authority, is eager to help with the work that the drainage system entails. Later, the notion of tekitol ‘work’ appears again as fundamental in the sense that it is a very central part of the communal project. As we have seen in this dissertation, one of the most important values of the communal project is the participation of every faenera and faenero or tekichiwanihi ‘the ones who perform work’ in the communal work or kommontekitl. As the arrows show, tekitol ‘work’ is at the core of the authority’s argument.

Then, he is advocating for this value and uses it to closes his argument by first pointing out that he works even if he is not going to receive the service. Here, he comes back to the point of benefitting from the project. Finally, he leaves an open question to the audience to close his participation and interestingly he finishes it by going back to the ideas that allowed him to start his argument. If we look at this argument in detail, we see a chaining of three elements: beneficiaries, those who do not fulfill the communal obligations, and work.

3.5.2 Making the decision, authority, and alliances

When do they decide, after everyone gives their kamanali ‘word’? What was finally the decision? What are the factors that are implicated in this decision-making process? As we have seen so far, most of the arguments were in favor of the continuation of the drainage system. It was an utterance at turn 107, taken by the tlayakanketl ‘the one who leads’, that finishes the argumentation phase and
inaugurates the conclusion phase (see figure 15). It was after another teacher’s opinion that the maximum authority states the following:

165. *ke kiihto ni maestro pues kwaltitok ñxtla?*
   ‘como dice el maestro, está bien, ¿no?’
   ‘as the teacher says, it is okay, right?’

166. *kiïhtoski tlaxtawaseh nochi*
   ‘dirá que todo pagarían’
   ‘you would say that all would pay’

These two utterances were significant for the final decision. What the highest authority is saying corresponds to a previous participation by another teacher. The teacher suggested that all should pay because that opens the possibility that, if someone did not want the service at that moment but they may change their mind in the future, they could then access the service. He said it is the way utilities operate in cities. It seemed that this argument convinced the authority who spoke in examples 74 and 75. After this authority’s intervention, fewer arguments against the continuation of the drainage were discussed. People still discussed the matter for around 30 minutes more. However, this moment was decisive because of, among other things, the importance of the highest authority’s voice.
The *tlayakanketl* ‘the one who leads’ used his authority to mark guidelines in the decision-making process and he chose to support the teacher’s arguments. As seen in figure 18, after the authorities’ guidelines only two people argued against the work. Figure 18 also shows that eight people argued in favor of it. Moreover, there were some concessions as seen in the middle of the figure. Concessions are arguments in which the arguer cedes part of their argument to persuade the opponent and tries to convince the listener to consider their own argument (Musi et al. 2018). This strategy has a rhetorical effect. That is, a speaker, “by giving up part of his argument, he can strengthen it” and at the same time “make it easier to defend it” (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tytheca 2006 [1969]:488 in Musi 2018).

Figure 16 shows that during the argumentation phase, there were more concessions than during the conclusion phase. However, during the last phase there were still three instances when people used this strategy to continue convincing others to be in favor of the continuation of the drainage system as seen
in figure 18. In fact, the last intervention with turn 130, used by the *tlayakanketl* ‘the one who leads’, was a concession. This means that even at the end, he was trying to convince the rest that the decision to continue with the work of the drainage system was the correct one. Although the final decision was not reached in this assembly but rather in another meeting, this meeting shaped the final decision. The town met later in the week, hoping to gather more people, and finally decided to continue with the work and that everyone would contribute to pay the lease for the water treatment but that only the people who accept service would pay the increase in the monthly electricity bill. If someone changes their mind, they will have the right to sign up for service. In that case, they would then be included among those who also pay the electricity bill for the sewage treatment plant.

4. **Thick Translation: Naman xiktlachilikah, En su momento, en aquellos tiempos, Seki Jovenes no eli beneficiarios**

4.1 *Naman xiktlachilikah*

1. *naman xi(k)tlachilikah*
naman  xi-k-tlachili-kah  
now  IMP-3OBJ.SG-watch-IMP.PL  
‘ahora miren’  
‘now look’

2. *naman xi(k)tlachilikah*
naman  xi-(k)-tlachili-kah  
now  IMP-3OBJ.SG-watch-IMP.PL  
‘ahora miren’  
now look’

3. *tohwantih keni tlawili*
tohwantih  keni  tlawili  
1PRON.PL  like.that  electricity[ABS]  
‘nosotros cuando la luz’  
‘when the electricity we’
4. nohki, este, tlawili
nohki est tlawili
also uhm electricity[ABS]
‘también, este, (cuando) la luz’
‘also, well, (when) the electricity’

5. nohki apenas 40 tiknehkeh
nohki apenas 40 ti-k neh-ke-h
also only 40 1SUBJ.PL.3OBJ.SG-want-PAST-PL
‘también quisimos apenas 40’
‘only 40 of us wanted it as well’

6. wa nopone itstoya sekin
wa nopone its-toya sekin
CNJ DEM be-PFV algunos
‘y así estaban algunos’
‘and some were like that’

7. nohki axknekidayah
nohki ax-ki-neki-yaya-h
also NEG-3OBJ.SG-want-IPFV-PL
‘tampoco querían’
‘they did not want it either’

8. kiihtoah tlen nopa 40 kinekeh
ki-ih-toa-h tlen nopa 40 ki-neg-ke-h
3OBJ.SG-say-PL REL DEM 40 3OBJ.SG-want-PAST-PL
‘dicen, los 40 que quisieron’
‘the 40 who wanted it say’

a. “naman yohwantih ma kitlanananatih nopa poste
naman yohwantih ma ki-tlanana-ti-h nopa poste
now 1PRON.PL EXHRT 3OBJ.SG-lift.up-PUR-PLDEM lamppost
‘ahora ellos que vayan a levantar ese poste’
‘now they should go lift that fence post’

b. tohwantih axtimokalakiseh
tohwantih ax-ti-mo-kalaki-se-h
1PRON.PL NEG-1SUBJ.PL-REFLX-enter-IRR-PL
‘nosotros no nos meteremos’
‘We will not be involved in it’

c. tohwantih axti(k)nekih nopa tlawili”
tohwantih x-ti-(k)-neki-h nopa tlawili”
1PRON.PL NEG-1SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-want-PL DEM luz[ABS]
‘nosotros no queremos esa luz’
9. *keman ya asihka tlawili*

keman ya asih=ka tlawili
when 3PRON.SG arrive=ALREADY electricity[ABS]

‘cuando ya llegó la luz’
‘when the electricity arrived’

10. *nochi kinehkeh tlawili*

nochi ki-neh-ke-h tlawili
all 3OBJ.SG-want-PAST-PL luz[ABS]

‘todos quisieron luz’
‘everyone wanted electricity’

11. *nochi kipixtokeh*

nochi ki-pix-to-ke-h
all 3OBJ.SG-have-?-PAST-PL

‘todos tienen’
‘everyone has it’

12. *ni nohki topantis*

ni nohki to-pant-s
DEM also 1POSS.PL-pass-IRR

‘esto también nos pasará’
‘that will also happen to us’

4.2 *En su momento, en aquellos tiempos*

1. ‘*en su momento, en aquellos tiempos’*

‘at the time, in those times’

2. *abuelos a lo mejor nohki kiihtohkeh*

abuelos a lo mejor nohki ki-ihtoh-ke-h
grandparents maybe also 3OBJ.SG-say-PAST-PL

‘los abuelos quizá también dijeron,’
‘the grandparents maybe said as well’

3. ‘*de manera personal, na axtle(n) nechserviros”*

‘de manera personal na axtlen nech-serviro-s”
personally 1PRON.SG nothing 1OBJ.SG-serve-IRR
‘de manera personal, a mí no me sirve de nada’
‘personally, I will not use it at all”

4. *pero hoy, ¿(ah)kia axkipi(a) luz?*

pero hoy ¿ahkia ax-ki-pi(a) luz?
but today who NEG-have electricity[ABS]

‘pero hoy, ¿quién no tiene luz?’
‘but today, who does not have power?’
5. *(n)*aman ma *kikotonilitih se se towampo iluz
toman ma *ki-kotoni-li-ti-h* se se
today EXHORT 3OBJ.SG-cut-APPL-PUR-PL one one
to-wampo iluz
1POSS.PL-partner 3POSS.SG-light
‘hoy que a un compañero le vayan a cortar la luz’
‘today that a comrade had his light cut off’

6. *al día siguiente quien sabe kenihki kichihtokeh*
al día siguiente quien sabe kenihki ki-chih-to-ke-h
the next day who knows how 3OBJ.SG-do-?-PAST-PL
‘al día siguiente quien sabe como le hicieron’
‘the next day who knows where they stole from?’

7. *pero tlaxtlawatih para ma axyas luz ichan*
pero tlaxtlawa-ti-h para
but pay-PUR-PL to
ma *ax-ya-s luz i-chan*
EXHRT NEG-go-IRR luz[ABS] 3POSS.SG-house
‘pero fueron a pagar para que no se les fuera la luz en su casa’
‘but they went to pay to have power at his house’

8. *a lo mejor en este momento igual no techsucederoh*
a lo mejor en este momento igual no tech-suceder-o-h
maybe at this moment same also 1OBJ.PL-happen-PL
‘a lo mejor en este momento igual nos sucederá también,’
‘maybe at this moment the same will happen to us’

9. *a lo mejor namantsin, a lo mejor tikamatih que namantsin axtechserviroh*
a lo mejor naman-tsín a lo mejor ti-kamati-h
maybe now-HON maybe 1SUBJ.PL-say-PL
que naman-tsín ax-tech-serviro-h
what today-HON NEG-1OBJ.PL-serve-PL
‘a lo mejor ahorita, a lo mejor decimos que ahorita no nos sirvió,’
‘maybe right now, maybe we say that right now it doesn't work for us,’

10. *a lo mejor na axnechserviroh*
a lo mejor na ax-nech-serviro-h,
maybe 1PRON.SG NEG-1OBJ.PL-serve-PL
‘a lo mejor a mí no me sirvió,’
‘maybe it didn’t work for me,’
11. *wa(n) a lo mejor nopone nokone yon ya axkiserviros*

wa(n) a lo mejor nopone no-kone
CNJ maybe DEM 1POSS.SG-children

yon ya ax-ki-serviro-s
NEG 3PRON.SG NEG-3OBJ.SG-serve-IRR
‘y a lo mejor a mi hijo tampoco le servirá’
‘and maybe my son won’t use it either’

12. *a lo mejor, pero noixwih, entonces*

a lo mejor pero no-ixwih entonces
maybe but 1POSS.SG-grandson then
‘maybe, pero a mi nieto, entonces’
‘but then maybe my grandson will’

13. ¿qué herencia le vamos a dejar a los niños, a los hijos o a los nietos? ‘¿what legacy are we going to leave to the children, to our sons or grandchildren?’

4.3 Seki jóvenes no eli beneficiarios

1. *Sekin jóvenes no eli beneficiarios*
Sekin jóvenes no eli beneficiarios
Some youth also be beneficiary
‘algunos jóvenes también son beneficiarios’
‘some young people are also beneficiaries’

2. *pero axkinekih techpalewiseh ika se tekitl ñtla?*
pero ax-ki-neki-h tech-palewi-se-h
but NEG-3OBJ.SG-want-PL1OBJ.PL-help-IRR-PL

ika se tekitl ñtla?
with one work[ABS] DUB
‘pero no nos quieren ayudar con el trabajo, ¿verdad?’
‘but they do not want to help us with the work, right?’

3. *mas tlan sa(n) eli beneficiarios axkinekih*
mas tlan san eli beneficiarios axkinekih
more if only be beneficiaries, NEG-3OBJ.SG-want-PL
‘más si ya son beneficiarios,’
‘moreover if they are already beneficiaries’

4. *inkichiwaseh nopa tekitl*
in-ki-chiwa-se-h nopa tekitl
3SUBJ.PL-3OBJ.SG-make-IRR-PL DEM work[ABS]
‘no quieren hacer el trabajo’,
‘they do not want to make the work’,
5. ¿ki... yohwantih kichiwah?
ki... yohwantih ki-chiwa-h
3OBJ.SG 3PRON.PL 3OBJ.SG-do-PL
¿qué hacen ellos?
‘what do they do?’

6. tohwantih tlen nikan nikan itstokeh, ñtla?,
tohwantih, tlen nikan nikan itsto-ke-h, ñtla?,
1PRON.PL REL here here be-PAST-PL DUB
‘nosotros, los que estamos aquí, aquí, ¿verdad?’
‘we, the ones who are here, here, right?’

7. na nikan niitstok, intechtlalitokeh
na nikan ni-itsto-k in-tech-tlalih-to-ke-h
1PRON.SG here SUBJ.SG-be-PAST 2SUBJ.PL-1OBJ.PL-put?-PAST-PL
‘yo estoy aquí, ustedes me han puesto’
‘I am here, you have placed me here’

8. na niitstok de akwerdo inmechpalewis ika tekitl
na ni-i-itsto-k de akwerdo
1PRON.SG 1SUBJ.SG-RDP-be-PAST agree
in-mech-palewi-s ika tekitl
2SUBJ.PL-2OBJ-PL-help-IRR with work[ABS]
‘yo estoy de acuerdo de ayudarles con el trabajo’
‘I agree to help you with the work’

9. nimechpalewis ika ni tekitl
ni-mech-palewi-s ika ni tekitl
1SUBJ.PL-2OBJ.PL-help-IRR with DEM work[ABS]
‘les ayudaré con el trabajo’
‘I will help you with the work’

10. pero na axni(k)selis nopa beneficio
pero na ax-ni-k-selis-s
but 1PRON.SG NEG-1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.SG-receive-IRR DEM benefit
‘pero yo no voy a recibir el beneficio’
‘but I will not receive the benefit’

11. ¿kenki elis nikanpalewis sekinok
kenki eli-s ni-kin-palewi-s
how be-IRR 1SUBJ.SG-3OBJ.PL-help-IRR others
¿como va a hacer que les voy a ayudar a otros’
‘how is it that I will help’
5. Conclusions

During one of the various moments of tension when people were intensively arguing for and against the drainage system, one authority, one of the tekiwe ‘aide,’ said:

167. ne coyomeh intlachichiwal
     ‘los actos de los mestizos’
     ‘the acts of mestizos’

168. ta titekiwiya ne coyomeh intlachichiwal
     ‘tú ya estás usando los actos de los mestizos’
     ‘you are already using the acts of mestizos’

The utterance referenced here took place in a tense moment of the discussion when the tekiwe insisted that one of the audience members was not accepting the continuation of the drainage work, but he was already using the sewer that was in front of his house to throw out dirty water. The way the tekiwe conceptualizes the sewer system was through directly associating it with mestizo acts. The drainage system is seen as a mestizo way of life brought to an indigenous community. Coyomeh is a noun that comes from the singular coyotl ‘coyote’ and the pluralizing -meh. It designates mestizo people. This concept involves a dangerous animal that steals as the coyote does. This differentiating category in Nahuatl refers metaphorically to the tension between mestizo and Nahua people.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the ethnoracial relationship between
Nahua people and *coyomeh* is one of tensions and conflicts. The use of this category here manifests that tension-filled relationship.
CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation analyzes the discursive strategies used when making decisions in political arenas as a mechanism that reveals aspects of Nahuatl language maintenance. This research explores how Nahua people and Nahuatl language exist within a broader Hispanic colonial history and Mexican national society in which the Spanish language and mestizo ethnicity dominate in various aspects of contemporary social life. In that sense, we have seen that the history of Nahuas is one of countless racial and interethnic conflicts. Part of the more recent, as well as the extended, history of this Nahua group and many other native groups in post-colonial Mexico is a history of western colonialism characterized by a tense relationship between non-indigenous groups and indigenous groups. This can be described as the difference between a racial colonial and national character, and a more local and communal project. The local and communal project is a historical project that implies the existence of a language, Nahuatl, which is different from the colonial Spanish of the majority.

General Context: communal government structures and language ideologies

Since colonial times the structure of the indigenous governments, at least since cabildo indio, facilitated the extracting of resources from indigenous peasants. From the sixteenth to eighteenth century of the colonial era, the cabildo indio specifically was created and used for tribute payments and the controlling of resources. Moreover, faena, one of the central values and the central energy of the communal project, was also used in the nineteenth century by the former
hacendados and by the new mestizo ranchers who arrived in the area after the civil war. The continuation of such appropriation of resources during the twentieth century through the local government suggests the continuation of colonial structures of power and dispossession of native peoples, however this is now reproduced by the structures of the Nation-State.

Although most of the time the colonial and national structures disfavor indigenous communities, social groups can dynamically utilize institutions for their own interests. Sometimes the conditions may allow indigenous communities to negotiate with the powerful, as in the case of the agrarian conflict which showed how the powerless can use their collective agency to navigate power. The agrarian conflict reverted the historical use of the local government structure for the community’s own interests, benefitting the people of the community. The communal government system, or the cargo system, is one institution that has served this kind of purpose in San Isidro.

This research analyzed the cargo system and the people who constitute it as a cluster of dynamic and dialectic forces that move and relate to one another according to historical and contextual factors. This perspective allowed for questions of power and politics and an understanding of how colonial structures are deeply embedded, and sometimes challenged, within indigenous societies. This carries special relevance in the context of neoliberalism and globalization, in which many antiquated colonial strategies regain strength to continue dispossessing indigenous people not only from their territory and other material resources, but also from their knowledge, worldviews, and languages (Alfred 2005).
Further, this research explored how a colonial institution impacts language continuation or abandonment through analyzing the cargo system as a site for producing and reproducing social structures and relationships. We looked at the communal governmental system as a loci of cultural research analysis (Philips 2008). For Phillips (2008:232), site is important because it is an actual locus filled with ideas, ‘claiming a kind of materiality for them’. In that way, the institution of communal government has a fundamentally important ideological side; in fact, a site is the ideological construction of a framework (Philips 2008:232). In the case of San Isidro, the communal government system is a site supported by the ideological construction of the communality framework in which the Nahuatl language represents a ‘vehicle’ (Pharao, 2016b) for communal projects. The framework of the communality with and within the Nahuatl language is an important historical support for the existence and reproduction of this indigenous language.

The relevance of site as a concept resided here with the fact that the cargo system, more specifically the activities that take place as part of it, are sites in which linguistic ideologies along with social relationships are produced and reproduced. Furthermore, as language is one the most inescapable resources in the constitution of identity (Bucholtz & Hall 2004), and a vehicle for social action (Bucholtz 2011), the analysis of the use of language as well as the linguistic ideologies within cargo activities in San Isidro elucidated general answers regarding Nahuatl language use and Nahuatl language ideologies within the context of a majority speaking colonial Spanish. Consequently, this research also showed some of the conflicts and
tensions implied with the existence of two historically different projects and languages within one society.

In Mexico and other countries in Latin America, the concept of dialect is also a racialized colonial notion of supposedly incomplete linguistic systems. This complements the monolingual ideology of Spanish mainly because indigenous languages are stigmatized as supposedly not being complete systems of communications. These languages have become indexes of race and racial inferiority (Omi & Winant, 2015; Myers, 2005; Urciuoli 2013 [1996]); in other words, people experience what has been called racialization of language (Veronelli 2015; Urciuoli 2013 [1996]). The San Isidro people experience raciolinguistic violence (Rosa 2016) when learning Spanish and being in cities where the majority speak Spanish because language is a part of, or interwoven with, the racialization process (Chun & Lo 2016). This stigmatization is reproduced in state institutions such as the national school system, but also among mestizo people who refer to indigenous languages as dialects in a very pejorative way often accompanying practices of disdain and mistreatment towards the indigenous. That shows that violence is one of the consequences of these racial ideologies.

The State has exercised linguistic violence towards speakers of indigenous languages, and the school system has played a crucial role in the reproduction of this type of racial violence. Raciolinguistic violence is very current because for a long time communities were strongly punished, and today continue to be punished, for speaking indigenous languages. Coercion and physical violence within the school system of the Mexican State has been one of the mechanisms responsible for linguicide as Aguilar (2020) name the phenomenon of language
disappearance (Miranda-Juárez 2021). As Aguilar (2020) notes, one of the reasons indigenous languages are endangered is because of the violence that people who speak those languages face. That violence is a part of the state project of mestizaje. Further, indigenous populations face violence not only in their school life but also in other contexts, especially in their interaction with mestizo people when migrating to cities and urban centers, as the configuration of mestizo society has among its principal tenets the monolingual ideology of Spanish.

The idea of indigenous languages as dialects is so naturalized that in some cases the communities speaking an indigenous language refer to them as dialects. In addition, the mestizo population that uses the term do so with all the racist charge it connotes. In our Mexican society we still have those colonial ideas, which we see as very antiquated, but they are socially naturalized and individually internalized (Miranda-Juárez 2021). Thus, languages become places where race and racism are reproduced. The linguistic racialization of Nahuatl language and its speakers endangers not only the language, but the mere way of living of this society. It is in that sense of national and colonial dispossession that Nahuatl becomes an endangered language. In other contexts, the endangerment of indigenous languages is also a consequence of colonial assimilation and a result of contemporary ideologies, practices, and contradictions (Meek 2010). The continuation or abandonment of a language is a complex process in which many forces are at stake, and the current research confirms the same motivations as in Meek (2010) including ideologies, practices, and contradictions.

This dissertation uses a semiotic perspective to demonstrate how such ideologies, practices and contradictions are part of social and linguistic behavior
and as such are culturally and socially perceivable and interpreted. These interpretations are mediations of social relations and interactions, including dynamics of power, social structures, and identities. This research identifies the racial and national monolingual ideology of Spanish as the raciolinguistic macro-ideology of the State, and this is one of the forces involved in the endangerment of indigenous languages such as Nahuatl in Huasteca. It is in the context of the domination by the colonial Spanish that this research documented the structure of the San Isidro local government and some of the linguistic ideologies and practices within the political arena of San Isidro.

**Local ideologies and the role of women, elders, and professionals**

Urla (2012) demonstrates that it is possible to contest and resist the dominant language ideology of monolingualism and nationalism, looking at language as an instrument that influences the political project of Basque as this research demonstrated for the communal political project of the Nahua people. In those senses, she notes that “[the] demise of any language [is] not the result of inherent features of the language...but rather the outcome of structural inequality and knowable social forces having to do with the social status of its speakers and its historically meager presence in social institutions” (Urla 2012: 203).

Similarly, this research found that women’s roles within communal life contributes to challenging the monolingual, colonial, and national linguistic policy in Mexico. The perspective of the politics of desires (Tzul 2016b) helps this dissertation understand that women are fighting for the communality as the basis of life. San Isidro women are exercising power from the communal desire to
produce a life in which Nahuatl is a central element. That is why women’s ideological work (Gal & Irvine 2019), through the ideology of Nahuatl being ‘a beautiful language,’ is important.

The ideology of the beautiful language is working against raciolinguistic discrimination in the outside world and more specifically against the pain and trauma of learning Spanish at school as well as the racism and discrimination faced because Nahua speak un dialecto ‘a dialect’. Women recognize that Spanish is a need in today’s world but they refer to the community as the space to feel more comfortable speaking their native language. Behind the notion of Nahuatl being a beautiful language, we can find traumatic experiences associated with Spanish and the mestizo world that this language indexes.

Second, this research also identified the role of elders in the cargo system and their ambivalent positions regarding their authority and the respect they hold in a gerontocratic society such as San Isidro. Although the council of elders is highly respected because they are considered experienced and wise and they are the ones who know how things were done in the past (Iceak 2013:173), they have gradually lost their authority. This loss of authority has provoked the displacement of the decisive power from the council to the assembly (Iceak 2013). The elders’ authority has suffered such attrition because individuals who are not yet elders have increasingly gone to school and gained considerable respect once they have a profession. Additionally, the lack of official recognition of the council as an authority, the requirements imposed by the state regarding the election of committees, the procedures to obtain social programs and infrastructural work, and the current notions of justice, all reinforce the weakening of the council’s
authority. This often times results in younger generations leaving aside the council of elders (Iceak 2013: 145).

Further, the elders’ knowledge of Nahuatl is in an ambiguous position and contributes to the process of erosion of their authority. On the one hand, they are considered to have the best communicative competency, which is greatly valued but only in some situations such as rituals or celebrations and providing moral advice. They are also the reference of los que hablan bien la lengua, ‘the ones who speak the language well’. On the other hand, from the national perspective, their monolingualism is considered an obstacle to progress and modernity and a result of failing to attend school, which is part of the reason why they are decreasingly recognized as an authority.

The role of professionals or the ixtlamatinih, ‘the ones who know’ because they have attended schools and entered a profession, is also important in the retention of Nahuatl as the language of the decision-making process and as the frame of the communal way of life. Many times professionals, such as teachers, bring linguistic practices to the process of decision-making when advocating for the modernization of the village that are associated with the mestizo way of life and with the language of the modernity project, Spanish.

As Hill and Hill (1986) sustain, it is interesting to learn how linguistic contact changes linguistic structures as many sociolinguistic scholars have argued. However, we have a more encompassing analysis if we look at how the mobilization of ideologies gives us clues to why people prefer to speak one language or the other or use one code over the other for certain speaking styles. In other words, certain linguistic ideologies might be pushing speakers towards their stance in terms of
the preferred language, so their choice among various linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic resources might be reflecting those ideologies that circulate in political arenas. In turn, the election of those resources creates certain styles within the speeches in the assembly.

**Linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic practices within assemblies**

We looked at a deeper scale of the process of the maintenance of Nahuatl to identify actual linguistic practices within assemblies. One of the strongest structures of the cargo system is the existence of assemblies to make decisions concerning the community. Like the idea of the cargo system as a site, assemblies within the cargo system are also spheres of social action and sites of producing and reproducing social relations and interactions. The collectivity and the search for consensus within assemblies are the basis of social organization. Thus, in this dissertation I used an ethnographic and sociolinguistic analysis to explore the extent to which assemblies allow the possibility to revert colonial and national ideologies such as the monolingual ideology sustained since the installation of the Republic in the nineteenth century through current times. Through this, I identified that the local and communal ideology of cooperation and solidarity; the practice of collective, mutual, help; and its materialization as *komontekitl* ‘communal work’ may be resisting the monolingual liberal ideologies and policies sponsored by the Mexican state.

I saw the assembly and the way people collectively make decisions within it through the lens of de-colonial theory, using what Mignolo (2010) calls de-linking. This structure of collective authority of the cargo system, more specifically the
structure of the assembly and how people in San Isidro utilize it, is a work of de-linking which “implies working at the fringes, at the border of hegemonic and dominant forms of knowledge, of economic, and of political demands, using the system but doing something else, moving in different directions” (Mignolo 2010: 7). The cargo system may carry many of the colonial features, including the gender hierarchy, and serves the state for several purposes, but at the same time the assembly also functions in the favor of communities.

Using Linguistic Anthropology research methods, the second part of this dissertation explored the structure of assemblies and discursive practices in San Isidro, Atlapexco, Hidalgo, including the rules that govern these political discussions and specific discursive and verbal skills involved. The description includes, on the one hand, the more formal and ritual part of political speech and political categories of the Nahua communal project that are expressed through speech in assemblies. On the other hand, this research also explores
argumentation as the core of the political decision-making process and some of the tensions involved in collective discussions. Describing the turn-taking system and the order of themes addressed, this research draws a general picture of how members of the community interact linguistically and discursively within political arenas.

Moreover, this dissertation uses ethnographic examinations of the use of utterances in the Nahuatl language which elucidated specific linguistic forms and rhetorical resources linked to the political exercise of communality as the political project of the Nahua people. The use of such linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic resources allows the Nahua people to have certain self-determination regarding the State, the mestizo society, and the racial project of modernity. Through utilizing agency in the decision-making processes, it reinforces the ideological frame of communality in which Nahuatl is paramount.

Further, this research draws attention to the performative aspect of specific linguistic forms and rhetorical sources in Nahuatl as powerful elements within discourses, impacting the decision-making process. Through the tools of the third paradigm in Linguistic Anthropology, this research considered another layer of linguistic ideologies in the use of language in political arenas. This time, the ideologies found are related to specific linguistic structures, styles, and codes. Finally, this dissertation explored how linguistic forms and rhetorical resources are used under the two ideological frameworks that coexist in San Isidro village.

The Bakhtian notions of speech genres (Bakhtin 1986) helps this research to look at assemblies as discursive spaces where speech style establishes an order. Assembly speech consists of systematically related and concurrent features and
structures that serve the people of San Isidro as conventionalized and routinized frameworks of orientation for the production and reception of political discourse. The orientational frameworks that operate in the assembly are institutionalized because they are built within the cargo system, a deeply historical and colonial institution that arose from a colonial policy to regulate the religious and economic life of indigenous people over three centuries ago.

Through the close examination of political discursive practices and ideologies, we access the ideas and motivations behind using specific linguistic, pragmatic, and discursive resources. This allows this dissertation to explore when, how, and why these resources are being used and mobilized to ultimately produce social meaning. The analysis of text-discourses shed light on the tone in which community members use Nahuatl, especially of the more solemn, ritual, respectful, and formal character of their speeches as frames to negotiate the political life of San Isidro.

The repetition, parallelism, and discourse markers as rhetorical elements of and within Nahuatl discourses and speeches, showed how people use poetic structures to negotiate the political life and continue reproducing the communal project. Through such discourses and speeches, authorities are constantly reproducing the ideas of respect, gratefulness, work, mutual help, and togetherness. Thus, various features as well as meanings within Nahuatl political speeches are closely associated with the communal project.

Further, this dissertation described how speaking and listening are fundamental linguistic practices in the political life of Nahuas in San Isidro and the continuation of the political project of communality. Looking at these two
linguistic practices, this analysis finds that \textit{kamanali} ‘word’ is a decision-making mechanism. It is a political mechanism that the Nahua community uses to decide on their political organization, granting the right of each citizen to participate in the conduct of the political, civil, and religious life of the village. All of these features and meanings together characterize this type of Nahuatl discourse. In other words, through analysis at the discourse level, this research analytically described the architecture of political speech in the Nahuatl language.

**The two Projects Implied in the Decision Making Process**

Finally, this dissertation utilizes concepts and notions of the third paradigm in Linguistic Anthropology to analyze the moment of the assembly in which participants make decisions for the wellbeing of the village. Through the lens of Bourdieu’s (1977) contributions to the linguistic market, this dissertation focused on the way speakers create arguments and attempt to persuade the audience to finally carry out the political decision-making process. This research analyzed a specific assembly as an example of how modernization generates pressures and tensions among the San Isidro community. It also highlighted the participation and registers of individuals who enjoy a certain status, such as young teachers and elders, reflecting two different styles of speaking within the assemblies.

Through this exploration, this research documents the way people discursively navigate state initiatives, through which the colonial and national rhetoric establishes a series of conceptualizations of indigenous people in the frame of the racial mestizaje ideology. This was an excellent example in which the ideological frame of modernity was involved, through the modernization project of
the State, in the decision-making process. On another scale, this was an analysis of linguistic practices looking at utterances as tools to participate, negotiate, defend, persuade, and convince others of arguments. The style of those speeches index certain values, both the values of the communal project and values of the racial modern projects. The use of the colonial Spanish through code-switching as a translanguaging phenomenon indexes certain kind of power. Further, this translanguaging phenomenon indexes hierarchical relations within politically loaded discourses between those who use a code of power and those who use a code of solidarity in terms of Hill & Hill (1986). More precisely, for the case of San Isidro, I argue that Nahuatl is a code of communality in which the value of solidarity is just one among others.

The position of the subjects in the political system as citizens, including elders, professionals, peasants, and communal authorities, is important because different codes are associated with each of those subjects and each is also associated with categories of race and ethnicity. Here, identity becomes very relevant when deciding which linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic resources to use. The preferences for one project over the other, each with a different discourse framework - 1) the framework of the Nahuatl language or 2) the framework of the Spanish language and with a different style, and 1) the code of communality and 2) the code of power, respectively - reveals that ethnoracial identity along other categories of age, gender, and class play a crucial role in the selection of codes or registers.

This research demonstrated how subjects embody certain values and ideas pertaining to both projects by mobilizing them in the decision-making process. The
code of power, often loaded with lexical material from Spanish, is a marked discourse (Woolard 2004). In this code, translaguaging practices in the colonial language become important resources that people use when they desire. Those marked practices might be indicating something about identity. As Bucholtz & Hall (2004) indicate, the concepts of sameness and difference are the starting points to analyze identity regarding contextual, social, and linguistic interaction that implies four semiotic processes: practice, indexicality, ideology, and performance. Here this linguistic practice is indexing a preference by the professional. As we saw in Chapter 1, sameness and difference as elements to determine identity are not pre-established conditions (Bucholtz & Hall 2004); they are dynamic elements in constant movement. When subjects in the assembly use resources associated with one project or another, they are mobilizing their agency and establishing a linguistic relation between language and identity. The resources they choose to use might be indexes of speakers’ affinity toward either the mestizo modern way of life and the modern project or the communality and the communal project.

According to the above-mentioned authors, an outstanding result of creating differences in the process of social identification and differentiation is hierarchy. Once there is a hierarchy, identities are associated with inequalities. That is, “the group with the greater power establishes a vertical relation in terms beneficial to itself” (Bucholtz & Hall 2004; 372). In turn, more powerful identities are recognized as the norm to which different groups will be compared. In this sense, the markedness approach has been useful in understanding how the norm has come to be defined as the default group. In the authors’ words, markedness is “the hierarchical structuring of difference” (Bucholtz & Hall 2004; 372).
Thus, what the professionals are doing is establishing a hierarchy between those who use a code of communality and those who use a code of power. The teacher is marking his discourse using several items from the colonial language, Spanish. Here we see there is a direct relationship between marked categories and inequalities, “because markedness implies hierarchy, differences between groups become socially evaluated as deviations from a norm and, indeed, as failures to measure up to an implied or explicit standard. Hence such differences are used as a justification for social inequalities” (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 372-3). What is interesting here is that the teacher is marking his speech as the deviation of the norm: a sign that indicates status. That is because the communal code, Nahuatl, is the one that dominates in political discussions. The prominence of Spanish in his statements differentiates him from the more common use of Nahuatl by other speakers. Then, through the process of identifying himself higher in the hierarchy, he might be embodying the values of the racial and modern project of the Mexican state.

**Linguistic Resistance and Tensions Within Nahuatl Political Discourses and Speeches**

A resulting point in this dissertation is that the tensions reflected in discourse and practices by the two projects, 1) the historical communal project and 2) the racial modern project, are indexes of communal, cultural and linguistic resistance that individuals put forth when making decisions. The tensions could be showing that there is resistance to the imposition of a racial modern project and the values that are associated with it and mestizo life -values that emphasize the
individual over the community and the monoglot language ideology. The values of the racial modern project are in opposition to the values that inform the governance of social life or the values of the communal project of this Nahua society. In this case, the way to resist might be by arguing in favor of the communal project. Some of these tensions are brought forth due to categories of race, ethnicity, age, gender, and class. These categories intersect at times, and other times operate separately. In the assembly, tensions are indicators that there are opposing points present in the discussion and an ongoing struggle within the community about which values should prevail. Often, these opposing points symbolically represent the two projects involved when decision-making is being carried out. Because of the various hierarchies that operate in the Nahua political space, those tensions are intricate parts of power relationships.

The ideology and the racial project of modernity and progress that aspires to the mestizo way of life, along with racial disdain towards indigenous people that speak an indigenous language as part of racial violence, including linguistic violence, are often the motivations when speakers decide to abandon their indigenous languages. This dissertation demonstrates, on a minor scale, that what is disputed in the in the assembly that was analyzed here is whether the people want the drainage service or not. On a larger scale, what is in dispute is if the people of San Isidro accept the modernity project. On this larger scale, the modernity project plays an important role as it is the project that would displace, or at least weaken, the communal idea of governance and the ideological framework that sustains the continuation of the Nahuatl language.
Interestingly, in the analyzed assemblies, the professionals are pushing for the modernity project. In the case of teachers, they are not only contributing to the mestizaje project from their classrooms as they put in practice the castellanization process, but they are also bringing the same principles to the assembly. Further, through language they are embodying some of the principles of modernity. In a way, they are bringing such principles to one of the most intimate and political spaces of the village where people can have certain autonomy from the nation-state and the mestizo people.

On the other hand, authorities, such as the ejido official and the tlayakanketl ‘the one who leads’, establish alliances with professionals as is shown with the Nahuatl speech in which the assembly accepts that all would pay for the work to finish the sewer system. In this case, the tlayakanketl’s ‘the ones who leads’ intervention, as well as the ejido official’s, expressed their opposition to the communal project by supporting the idea of everyone paying for the required work of the drainage system. These two actors that are positioned in a high place in the communal government hierarchy support the voice of those who argue in favor of the modernity project. This demonstrates that those who have economic power, along with those who have political power and legitimate authority within the community, generate forces to advance the modernization of the village. At the same time that the modernity project is favored, the communal project might be disfavored. This does not mean that modernization, in the form of infrastructure, roads, sewers, health facilities, etc., should not arrive in these communities; it instead means that the modernization of the village often brings the ideology of the racial modern project of the mestizo way of life. The moments of translinguaging
or code-switching are examples of exercising power, as the Hispanized Nahuatl code associated with the mestizo world. These linguistic practices might have an impact on the disuse of Nahuatl, because in ideological terms it places the balance more towards the ideas of modernity and progress.

Within the linguistic market of the assembly, the different voices have different values according to different linguistic capital, which is mobilized in unequal power relationships. The peasant and historical way of life embodied in the communal project and the use of a communality code did not gain favor this time because it was through a code of power that the modernity project won some space in the discussion and was ultimately accepted. The benefits of mobilizing certain linguistic, pragmatic, and discourse practices in the assembly take place at both the individual level, but also collective as in the case of the alliances. Those who win the argumentation at the same time win prestige, providing them with political power and even more prestige. In the case of the professionals, they already have economic power which accompanies social power. In this context which involves several inequalities, the speeches and discourses present throughout this dissertation are the mediums by which people navigate power relationships and make collective decisions.

Part of the burden of colonialism on native groups is reflected in the fact that often the indigenous populations represent one of the primary workforces of industrial and large-scale agricultural centers. They do not have access to jobs and the options for education are limited in their towns, so cities represent an opportunity to have a job or education. To pursue either, they need to migrate to urban centers where they face racism at different levels. After experiencing urban
poverty, the individualistic logic of the mestizo society, the lack of opportunities, and racial exclusion, many end up returning home where they have the family and communal support. That is why the Nahuatl language is central and contributes to reproducing the communal way of life and vice versa. Cargos are communal responsibilities, and because of this every citizen at some point in their civil life, and most of the time when leading and negotiating the communal life, would use Nahuatl. Nahuatl is the language of decision-making, carrying with it the ideological framework of the communal project. That does not mean that if Nahuatl language disappeared those populations would not continue their active political life, but the difference would be those linguistic practices used in these political contexts.

**Is Nahuatl an Endangered Language?**

In many circumstances, indigenous languages are in danger of continuing to be spoken. Indeed, when people use Nahuatl in political arenas they are fighting against the historical forces of colonialism and the racial modern project which imposed Spanish as the language of modernization and progress. As long as the communal project continues reproducing, reinforcing and maintaining those spaces and moments of self-determination, the Nahuatl language should most probably also keep reproducing. There is a risk for cultures when giving up their languages, so I argue that the cost of speaking an indigenous language in the context of the racial monolingual ideology of Spanish must be traumatic when people decide not to transmit linguistic practices as in the case of the assembly described where Spanish was used. As Aguilar (2020) suggests, linguistic diversity
is important, but more important are the subjects who reproduce that linguistic diversity. Here, I advocate for a post-structuralist perspective to understand why languages become endangered, including the active subjects in the process.

In terms of how Nahua people have resisted the forces at play when one language is no longer transmitted and becomes endangered, I argue that all of these negotiations with the racial ideologies and practices of the State in which the communal framework is applied through the use of the Nahuatl language is linguistic resistance. Linguistic resistance is an active and political process exercised by Nahua people. The people of San Isidro have long resisted all of those forces and that is why today use Nahuatl in political arenas.

FINAL RELEXION

My positionality as a mestiza woman makes this research very specific because of my own categories of class, identity, age, and gender. So everything in this research starts from that most of the time privileged positionality. In that sense, I have seen for several years how Nahua people in this community actively participated in the political life in their own language. Although there are many forces acting upon the practice of the racial monolingual ideology of Mexico, young people are still speaking the Nahuatl language. When they return to San Isidro after migrating they use the language, and children are learning from them. That learning is not only about the importance of reproducing the language but also the political framework that sustains that language.
ABBREVIATIONS

1: first person
2: second person
3: third person
AG: agentive
APPL: applicative
CAUS: causative
CNJ: conjunction
COND: conditional
DEM: demonstrative
DIM: diminutive
DIR: directional
DUB: dubitative
EXHRT: exhortative
HON: honorific
IMP: imperative
INDEF: indefinite
INTJ: interjection
IPFV: imperfective
IRR: irrealis
LIG: ligature
LOC: locative
NEG: negation
OBJ: object
PAST: past
PFV: perfective
PL: PLURAL
POSS: possessive
PRON: pronoun
RDP: reduplication
REFLX: reflexive
SG: singular
STAT: stative
SUBJ: subject
APPENDIX. GLOSSARY OF NAHUATL TERMS

altepetl: village
axtle: no
coyomeh: mestizo people
ika: with
tohwantih: we
ilhwitl: feast
imowaya: with you all
inmohwanatih: you all
itstok: it, she, he is
ixtlamatini: the experienced ones
kamanali: thoughts, words, knowledge
kena: yes
kitlalia: it /he/she puts
kommontekitl: communal work
kommontekitinih: the ones who perform the communal work
kwali: good
masewalmeh: nahua people
mikailhwitl: dead celebration
mila: crop field
nanameh: women elders
nikan: here
nohki: also
panoa: ‘it, she, he continues
siwameh: women
tekichiketl: the one who performs (communal) work (for everyone)
tekichiwanih: the ones who perform the (communal) work (for everyone)
tekitl: work
tekiweh: aides
tepatiketl: doctor
tlakwiloketl: scribe
tlalnamikili: thought
tlanawatianih: the ones who command
tlapetpenia: it, she, he picks
tlawili: electricity
tlayakanketl: the one who leads
tominpixketl: treasurer
wewetsitsin: elders
xantolo: day of the dead
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