6. Belonging as a Local and Interactional Problem

In this first analytical chapter, I want to show how belonging is a communicative problem (Hausendorf, 2000, 99f.), and is thus processed and negotiated in interaction. A second major point in the following analysis is that belonging has to be considered as part of local frames of reference (Anchimbe & Janney, 2011, 1451), taking seriously the sequential unfolding of participants' emic perspectives. Strikingly, this has to be considered a matter of categorial organization. Belonging is made a topic and object of discussion *explicitly* in the following extracts. An official representative of a governmental institution – the 'trainer'[82] – comes to the community to conduct a training on economic and social female empowerment with the community women. The workshop is a specific interactional setting with different roles distributed to the trainer as an authority and expert, and the participants expected to deliver answers and executing tasks. Within this setting, the women face two different tasks: On the one hand, they have to answer the questions to the satisfaction of the trainer. On the other hand, they have to deal with the categories that are proposed by the trainer as an authority in this workshop.

Asking the women to categorize themselves into a system of ethnic categories is something the trainer does in all of her workshops with rural women in agricultural contexts. In the wider social context of Guatemala, this kind of categorization is part of everyday identity practices. In the bigger cities, but also in the smaller towns of Guatemala, the display of belonging to different ethnic groups ranges from the use of specific clothing and garments, to indigenous or mixed religious practices (c.f. Solares 1993, chapter 2, II; Samson 2007) and the use of indigenous languages or varieties. Especially after the civil war and genocide in Guatemala until the Peace Accord in 1996, the 'resurrection' of ethnic groups forms part of a governmental program of recognition. The awareness about – and foregrounding of – ethnicity as a main category in belonging constructions is quite striking in the Guatemalan context (as I have argued in section 1.2).

---

82   The women in the workshop call her *seño* as an abbreviation for *señorita*. The younger teachers in the community (like Bianca and Linda) are addressed with the same abbreviation. I myself, as an unmarried younger woman, was also addressed with this term. I chose the term *trainer*, however, to underline the position of the woman in the workshop as an instructor with a certain official status and power (see section 6.7.).

Hence, questions of ethnic belonging are usually not problematized and form part of the trainer's workshop routine.

In analyzing this example, I will reconstruct how the trainer's questions become an apparent 'problem', how different membership category devices (Sacks, 1995) clash, and how locally relevant categories of belonging can significantly differ from 'official systems'. Membership categorization devices comprise different categories that belong to a "collection" as "a set of categories that 'go together'" (Schegloff, 2007b, 467) and their "rules of application" (Schegloff, 2007b, 471ff.). In the following analysis, I will label the categorization devices *category systems*. This is due to the inner order and relationship of different categories and subcategories the speakers negotiate. Furthermore, it alludes to the less negotiable character of the system's composition, in this case backed up by the trainer's institutional power.

Striking as it is *per se*, this interaction also reminds us that we cannot assume prefigured categories or positions in our social, cultural or linguistic explorations, but that we always have to pay attention to the local practices and relevancies of our participants in making sense of themselves.

In this chapter, I will present and analyze longer descriptions of the interaction between the community women and the trainer in chronological order. The general scene will be introduced in section 6.1. In the first part of the interaction (6.2), the women are confronted with a categorical term they are not familiar with (*étnico* 'ethnic') and they are asked to categorize themselves following the trainer's category system. After that, the questions proceed regarding the languages they speak apart from Spanish (6.3). In section 6.4 and 6.5, I will analyze how the women deal with these tasks amongst themselves. The clash of the two systems is addressed in section 6.6, in which the women explicitly counter the categories proposed by the trainer and introduce their own, namely a strong spatial attachment to the 'here' and a strong social attachment to the 'we'. I will conclude this chapter with a consideration about the categorical power of the 'outsiders' in section 6.7, and with an interim conclusion for this analysis in 6.8.

6.1. The Setting

In the summer of 2011, the community received yet another visitor from the town of Quetzaltenango, roughly two and a half hours by car from the Nueva Alianza. This time, a woman in her mid-twenties came to conduct a workshop with the women of the community. As the trainer explained to me, the workshop is part of a governmental program, aimed at empowering women from rural and agricultural contexts to participate in organizational matters of the community.

This meeting of the community women with the young trainer is a prime example of negotiating belonging through category use. The community women are asked to assign themselves to an ethnically based system of categories outlined by the trainer. As she explains at the beginning of the workshop, the women are expected to discuss and work on questions concerning participation and women's organizations. The workshop took place in a storage room of the eco-hotel, and was quite crowded with eleven women and their children. After introducing herself and the workshop's contents, the trainer divides the women up into two workgroups. The recorded group consists of six women. The trainer dictates a total of seven questions they have to answer collaboratively. One woman per group, in the case of the recorded group Flor, has to write them down.

The first extract we will look at is part of the task dictation and addresses the question of ethnic belonging. As explained above, I will call the workshop leader the "trainer". The other speakers in the recording are labeled with their anonymized names because they will reappear in other extracts. To make the different scenes more comprehensible, I will provide a graphic depiction of the speakers' orientation along the thematic developments in the different extracts.

6.2. Problematizing the Term *Étnico*

We will start with an extract at the very beginning of the training when the two groups receive the questions and tasks for the workshop. For a meaningful analysis of the communicative "problem", a full transcript of the different scenes is required. Furthermore, I will provide an overview of the speaker and topic orientation for each extract, except for extract 4, because the topic and the involvement of speakers do not change in the course of interaction.

Extract 1: Community women's workshop – *Qué grupo étnico?* (01:10:09–01:12:03)[83]

```
 1     Flor:  número cinco
 2  Trainer:  cinco (-) grupo étnico (--)
 3     Flor:  grupo?
 4  Trainer:  grupo (-) [étnico (---)]
 5      Ana:             [é:tnico]
 6      Eva:  É:Tnico?
 7  Trainer:  [es ÉTnico] (--)
 8      Ana:  [É:Tnico] (-) é:tnico
 9  Trainer:  spelling> e (-) t (--) n i (--) c o, (-)> é:tnico (---)
10            grupo (--) étnico↑
```

---

83 The time designation refers to hours : minutes : seconds.

```
11     Flor:  [ÉGnico?]
12      Ana:  [<<p>étnico>]
13  Trainer:  ÉT (--) [nico]
14      Sol:  [é:t/]
15      Ana:  ét(--)n[ico]
16     Flor:  [(inc. 1)] [<<rhythmic laughter>>]
17      Eva:  [<<rhythmic laughter>>]
18      Ana:  <<p>con la e=t> (1)
19  Trainer:  <<browsing through her documents> (---) mh (--) ÉTniCO,
20            (-) mh: étnico, (.)> al que perteNEcen; (---)
21     Flor:  al que pertenecen?
22  Trainer:  aha todas, ustedes;
23     Flor:  <<bending over the paper writing (3)>> bue:no (--) [ét/
24            (1)]
25      Sol:  [ét] (--) ni/ (-) ét/
26     Flor:  ét(-)znico
27  Trainer:  aha (-) sí
28     Flor:  al que pertenecen
29      Eva:  todas mujeres
30  Trainer:  [el grupo étnico] (1)
31     Flor:  <<addressing women around her>[todas mujeres,]>
32  Trainer:  por ejemplo [es (---)]
33     Flor:  [que pertenecen] (--)
34  Trainer:  [sí (--) que pertenECen ustEDES]
35     Flor:  [qué? (-) todas las mujERES?] a::h (-) nosotras
36  Trainer:  [aha ustEdes]
37     Flor:  [(-) así ponemos.] que [pertene:cen:- (1)]
38  Trainer:  [digamos van a/] (-) los grupos [étnicos por] ejemplo
39            son
40      Eva:  [nosotras]
41  Trainer:  e:h (-) grupo étnico maya o:: también el grupo étnico
42            mestizo de=eso ustedes sabran en que grupo étnico están
43            si pertenecen al grupo de los pueblos por ejemplo de los
44            veinticuatro pueblos así (-) indígenas (--) entonces su
45            grupo étnico es maya (--) sí? (---) de:spués e:hm
46            (inc. 1) quién dice maya (-) o mestizo (--) de si
47            ustedes son (--) tienen que preguntarle a cada una (---)
48            cual es su grupo étnico por ejemplo me van a poner (--)
49            mayas (--) allí (--) trEs (--) mestizas (--) somos
50            diez (---) de este grupo (--) igual me dicen
```

Extract 1: English translation, Community women's workshop – 'What ethnic group?' (01:10:09–01:12:03)

```
1      Flor:
2   Trainer:
3      Flor:  group?
4   Trainer:  [ethnic] (-) group (---)
5      Ana:  [ethnic]
6      Eva:  ethnic?
7   Trainer:  [it is ethnic] (--)
8      Ana:  [ethnic] (-) ethnic
9   Trainer:  <<spelling> e (-)t (--)n i (--)c o, (-)> ethnic (---)
10            ethnic (--)group
11     Flor:  [egnico?]
12      Ana:  [<<p> ethnic>
```

```
13   Trainer: eth(--)[nic]
14      Sol: [eth/]
15      Ana: eth(--)n[ic]
16     Flor: [(inc. 1)] [<<rhythmic laughter>>]
17      Eva: [<<rhythmic laughter>>]
18      Ana: <<p>with the e=t> (1)
19   Trainer: <<browsing through her documents> (---) mh- (--) ethnic
20            (-) mh:ethnic (.) you belong to (---)
21     Flor: to which you belong?
22   Trainer: yes allfem of you
23     Flor: << bending over the paper writing (3)>> good (--) [eth/
24            (1)]
25      Sol: [eth](--)ni/ (-) eth/
26     Flor: eth(-)znico
27   Trainer: aha (-) yes
28     Flor: to which youPL/they belong to
29      Eva: all the women
30   Trainer: [the ethnic group] (1)
31     Flor: <<addressing women around her>[all the women]
32   Trainer: [is for] example (---)
33     Flor: [youPL/they belong to]
34   Trainer: [yes (--) you belong to]
35     Flor: [what? (-) all the women?] ah (-) wefem
36   Trainer: [aha you]
37     Flor: [this is how we write it] that [you belong to (1)]
38   Trainer: [let us say you will] (-) the [ethnic] groups are for
39            example
40      Eva: [wefem]
41   Trainer: eh (-) the ethnic group of Maya or also the ethnic group
42            of mestizo from there you will know in which ethnic
43            group you are if you belong to the group of the people
44            for example of the twenty-four people like (-)
45            indigenous (--) then your ethnic group is maya (--) yes?
46            (---) then ehm (inc. 1) who says maya (-) or mestizo
47            (--) if you are (--) you have
48            to ask every single one (---) what her ethnic group is
49            for example you will write me down (--) mayas (--) there
50            (--) three (--) mestizas (--) we are ten (---) from this
51            group (--) you also tell me
```

Figure 3: Speaker and Topic Orientation in Extract 1

Which ethnic group you belong to?
Speaker and Topic Orientation
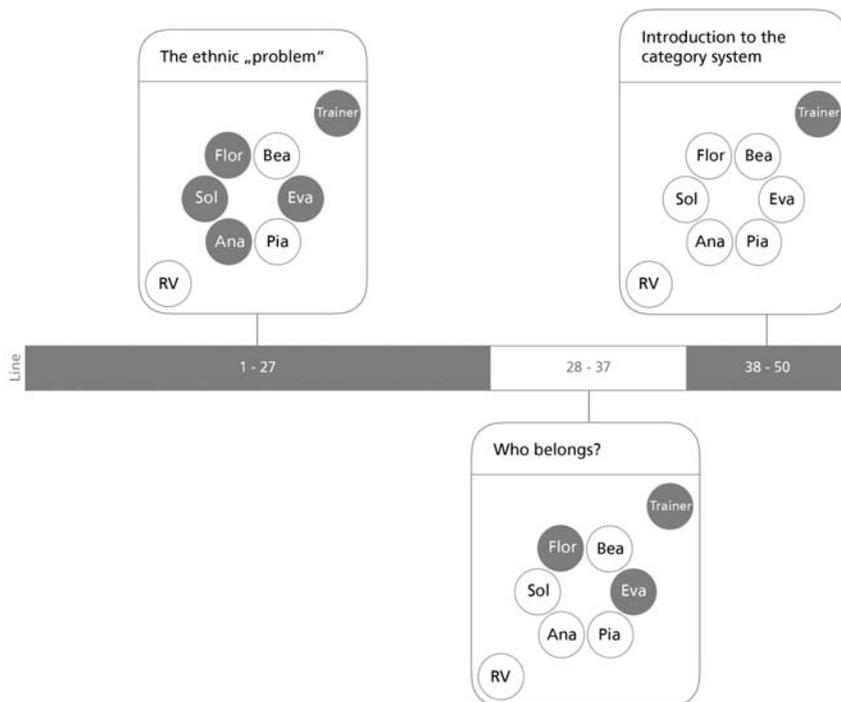
Whilst formulating the fifth question in a row of questions by the trainer, which were about the women's productive activities in the community and their rate of participation in organizational matters, problems of comprehension appear. The women react to the trainer's question about their belonging to a *grupo étnico* 'ethnic group' (line 2) with several inquiries and repetitions concerning the word *étnico,* chorally repeating it in very different forms, which I will now explore in greater detail.

Flor, who is assigned with the task of writing down the questions (and later the answers to them), immediately asks for clarification regarding the attribute to the first word by indicating that she understood this, but not the following one through repeating *grupo* 'group' (line 3) with a rising intonation. The trainer responds to this call for clarification and repeats the syntagma 'ethnic (-) group (—)'. At the same time, another woman, Ana, repeats the key word *é:tnico*

(line 5) with a prolonged first vowel to raise the audibility of the word and facilitate writing it down for Flor. Eva, another member of the women's group, then repeats the word with a rising pitch (line 6), also prolonging the first vowel *é*. The trainer then pursues a second clarification attempt with *es ÉTnico* 'it is ethnic' (line 7), putting emphasis on the first syllable of the word. Again, Ana simultaneously repeats the word twice with a pronunciation prolonging the first vowel and emphasizing on the first syllable: *É:Tnico (-) é:tnico* (line 8). The trainer continues by spelling the word of doubt letter by letter (line 9) and concluding with another repetition of the entire word (line 9), again prolonging the first vowel. She resumes with the initial attempt to phrase the sentence but is interrupted by the writer Flor, still struggling with putting the word down and asking *ÉGnico?* (line 11), while Ana mumbles the word quietly (line 12). The trainer responds to Flor's problem of comprehension by dividing the word into the first and stressed syllable *ÉT,* and after a short pause enunciating the last two syllables *nico* of the word together (line 13). Sol also starts repeating the word, but is cut off by Ana, who follows the trainer's realization and pronounces the word in the same disjunct manner *ét(–)nico* (line 15). Flor and Eva start to laugh rhythmically after this episode (lines 16–17). On the one hand, the situation of numerous repetitions of the word *étnico* and different forms might appear quite amusing. On the other hand, they are the two speakers who apparently struggle with grasping the word (and, in the case of Flor, writing it down). Hence, their laughter might also be a means of distancing themselves from the possibly face-threatening fact that they do not know the word, its correct spelling, let alone the meaning of it. Laughter is a common tool for speakers' distancing themselves from what is said, and at the same time a means for creating commonality amongst the speakers who laugh together (Roth, 2005, 238). Ana concludes the episode of understanding the word correctly by alluding to her knowledge on how to spell it (or, a repetition of the trainer's spelling) by uttering, it is *étnico* with 'with the e=t' (line 18).

The trainer finally resumes finishing the sentence after the repetition sequence. It takes her a short moment of hesitation and a look into her notes, repeating *ÉTniCO* with a middle rising pitch once again, until she ends the sentence with *mh: étnico, (.) al que perteNEcen;* 'mh ethnic (.) you belong to' (lines 19–20). Flor repeats the last sentence, writing it down simultaneously, raising her pitch at the end with the expectation of a follow-up. As there is no further utterance following the sentence, the trainer resolves the implicit question of Flor, putting an emphasis on the shared task of the women *aha todas, ustedes;* 'yes all_{fem} of you' (line 22). In the following long pause of 3 seconds Flor, Eva and Sol bend over the paper Flor is writing on. After Flors's assertion *bue:no* 'good' they

again have a look at the word *étnico.* Sol and Flor both try to pronounce the word anew, with discontinuation either after *étni/* (line 25) or *ét/* (lines 23 and 25), resulting in Flor's final version *ét (-) znico* (line 26), which adds a sibilant after the first syllable. The trainer, however, affirms this and Flor reads the second part of the sentence she just wrote down aloud, with a vocal leap on the last syllable: al que perte↑necen 'to which you_PL/they belong to' (line 28). Instead of meeting Flor's implicit request for proceeding with the dictation, the trainer, taking the sentence as finished, continues with an explanation of the term 'ethnic'.

The grammatical construction *al que pertenecen* can have two referential meanings in Latin American Spanish: 1 (the group) 'you_PL belong to', 2 (the group) *'they'* belong to'. In the second case, the syntactic structure is missing a subject that can be inserted, completing the third person plural indicated in the verb ending. Apparently, Flor is expecting the second version as she repeats the subordinate phrase twice with rising emphasis, indicating a missing piece of information (a subject) which has yet to be provided by the trainer. The first answer to that claim 'yes all_fem of you' (line 22) is by-passed or simply not understood by Flor, who focuses on her writing at that moment. The second time, Flor's request for continuation (line 28) is ignored by the trainer, but is answered by Eva. She tells Flor that the reference is *todas mujeres* 'all women' (line 29), as she apparently heard the short insertion of the lecturer in line 22. Flor first tries to back up this wording within her group (line 31), but does not get any response from the other women. Hence, she interrupts the trainers's explanation about the meaning of *étnico* again by asking for clarification on this interpretation of the sentence's completion *que pertenecen qué? (-) todas las mujERES?* 'you_PL/they belong to what? (-) all the women?' (lines 33 and 35). The trainer answers the claim simultaneously with Flor's inquiry *sí (–) que pertenECen ustEDES* 'yes (–) you_PL belong to' (line 34). Flor indicates her comprehension with the interjection *a::h* and the personal pronoun *nosotras* 'we_FEM' (line 35). This is again confirmed by the trainer with *aha ustEdes* 'yes, you_PL' (line 36). The episode of clarification concerning the ambiguity in the construction *al que pertenecen* is finished with a final confirmation among the women. While the trainer proceeds with her explanation of the term *étnico* (lines 38–39 and 41ff.), Flor rereads what she has written down *(-) así ponemos. que pertene:cen:- (1)* (line 37). As Flor hesitates to finish the sentence for about a second, it is completed by Eva with *nosotras* 'we_FEM' (line 40).

The last part of this extract (lines 41–50) is a longer monologue of the trainer who – after the interruptions – finally introduces her understanding of the term *étnico.* Whether the introduction of the category system is a routinized feature in her workshops, or whether the explanation is due to the apparent problems of

comprehensibility of her audience, and thus an attempt of aligning the different perspectives ("Perspektivenangleichung", Deppermann 2010, 9), remains open. She introduces a system that is binary on its highest level (see figure 4) in which the women are asked to position themselves. As the two decisive categories for the system of ethnic group, she names the 'ethnic group of Maya' (line 41) and the 'ethnic group of mestizo[84]' (lines 41–42). A new category is introduced with relation to the "Maya" category. She draws an inseparable link between belonging to the "indigenous" people and being "Mayan": *si pertenecen al grupo de los pueblos por ejemplo de los veinticuatro pueblos así (-) indígenas (–) entonces su grupo étnico es maya (–) sí?* 'if you belong to the group of the people for example of the twenty-four people like (-) indigenous (–) then your ethnic group is maya (–) yes?'. The category "Maya" is used as a hypernym here, as it contains many different sub-groups which are not elaborated by the trainer. She presents the task to the women as a choice between *maya (-) o mestizo* 'Maya (-) or mestizo' (line 46), and explains how the women should proceed answering the question and how they should write down their answer in numbers (lines 47–50; 47–51 in the English translation [ET]). After this instruction, the trainer turns to the next question for the women, which I will analyze in the following section (6.3).

Figure 4: *Category System of the Trainer for the "Ethnic Group"*
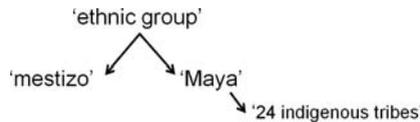
The extensive conversation analytical description of this first extract serves the purpose of showing the amount of communicative effort invested by the trainer and the women in dictating, writing down, and clarifying what is meant by a seemingly simple question. The sincere lack of understanding of the central concept in the trainer's question shows an interactionally acute conversation-analytical "communicative problem" (Hausendorf, 2000, 100). It is a literal communicative problem because the repetition sequence of *étnico* (lines 2–26) indicates a problem

---

84   "Mestizo" is generally defined as a mixture between "indigenous" and "Spanish colonial" heritage (Dow, 1981, 12f.). For a thorough analysis of the term's historical and social embeddedness, see Zermeño-Padilla (2008). As an established concept "mestizo" will not be translated, but rather used in the original.

of *referential meanings* ("referentielle Bedeutungen", Deppermann 2010, 9). Flor, Eva and Sol show no sign of recognizing the word after hearing it precisely spelled out and repeated by the trainer and their fellow group member Ana. They experiment with different versions of pronunciation (*ÉGnico/ét(-)znico*) or show signs of uncertainty when aborting the word after the first or the first two syllables (lines 23 and 25). Whereas Ana seems to be familiar with the word and underlines her familiarity in the repetition sequence, Flor, Eva and Sol seem to be unaware of the concept. As we will see, this interpretation is confirmed in the following sequences of the workshop recordings. It becomes evident that the women in the workgroup struggle with the concept of *ethnicity* – as explained by the lecturer – as a categorization device for belonging. It is not only the ethnic concept that causes a communicative problem here. For the community women, the task of affiliating themselves with a certain ethnic category itself does not appear to be something they are familiar with. Demanding a clarification of the grammatical subject in the syntagma *al que pertenecen* 'to which youPL/they belong to' highlights the negotiation of "who" should be categorized. It is not assumed from the question of the trainer – ethnic group 'youPL belong to' – that it is, of course, the women who are asked to categorize themselves here, but that there is the possibility that the trainer asks about another group's belonging. Only after a series of inquiries and confirmations is the clarification ratified by speaker Flor.

In this extract, the women are not yet asked to work on the task of categorization, but only to write the assignment down. Nonetheless, we already notice problems based on "not being on the same page" with the trainer in terms of being used to affiliating themselves with a certain ethnic group. Hence, without even negotiating belonging explicitly, this sequence alludes to a *problem of belonging* ("Zugehörigkeitsproblem", Hausendorf 2000, 100) in the sense that belonging needs to be worked on and somehow solved within the "conversational organization" (Hausendorf 2000, 100 citing Schegloff and Sacks 1973). Within this extract this work on belonging as a conversational problem is explicit. The women are asked, and within the interaction it becomes apparent, that the meaning of the term 'ethnic' is not accessible to most of the women in the group. Ethnic categories as explained by the trainer do not seem to be *relevant* categories of belonging in the local community context.

In this context of a predominant problematization of the term, it is striking that Ana as the oldest woman in the group, positions herself as knowledgeable on the word in question by constantly answering calls for clarification of her peers, either simultaneously with the trainer or following the trainer's turns and ways of pronunciation. She thereby sets herself apart from the other members

of her group, at least concerning knowledge on the *word* itself. In the following extracts, we will see how she participates when it comes to the meaning of 'ethnic' and the group's actual ethnic categorization.

In the next sequence the trainer proceeds with the dictation of her questions. For the community women, however, the discussion about the 'ethnic' term is not yet over. Furthermore, ethnic belonging is now related with questions of language use by the trainer, opening up a more complex problem of belonging for the participating women.

6.3. Adding Language as a Relevant Category

In this section, we will see how the interaction proceeds after the end of the last extract. The trainer is still dictating her questions and tasks to the women. In this passage, the question is not centered on ethnicity, but on possible other languages the women might speak.

Extract 2: Community women's workshop – *Qué otro idioma hablan?* (01:12:14–01:13:55)

```
1    Trainer:  [qué otro idioma hablan]
2       Flor:  [<<laughing about a former incident>>]
3    Trainer:  (--) aparte del español dice (--) qué otro idioma (-)
4        Pia:  inglés <<short laughter>>
5    Trainer:  hablan;
6        Ana:  [<<smiling> inglés (--) nosotros inglés>]
7        Pia:  [<<laughter>>]
8        Sol:  (--) que habla[mos in´g,lés]
9        Ana:  <<turning to RV, pointing to Flor's paper>> [qué] somos
10             nosotros [aquí]
11      Flor:  <<writing>> [qué] otro idioma,
12       Ana:  mh? (--)
13        RV:  <<to Ana>> hah?
14       Ana:  [qué somos nosotros']
15   Trainer:  [qué otro idioma] ha:blan
16      Flor:  [qué:' (-) tenemos que: (-) poner que otro hablan?]
17        RV:  [sí (--) aquí se tiene que:: (--) hacerlo ustedes]
18      Flor:  [o: (--) poner allí que:]
19        RV:  [tienen que poner aquí que otro]
20       Ana:  [mh]
21      Flor:  [qué otro (--) idioma hablan]
22        RV:  [idioma hablan (inc. 0.4]
23       Ana:  [mh (--) mh]
24   Trainer:  qué otro idioma hablan [ust↑EDes]
25       Ana:  [mh]
26       Sol:  habla[mos es/]
27       Ana:  [esp]añol (--)
28       Eva:  (--) sí español
29       Sol:  español
30       Ana:  español (---) y inglés (--) <<giggling>> sí sabemos
```

```
31              <<laughing louder>> (1.2) Rita me va a enseñar inglés
32              (.) sí?
33     Pia:    <<giggling>>
34   Trainer:  <<interacting with the second workgroup>> (5.8)
35     Flor:   [qué otro idioma hablan ustedes]
36   Trainer:  diez (--) tienen que ponerlo allí (--) las dIEz nosotros
37              hablamos español pero de repente allí las nueve hablan
38              español y una compañera habla el k'iche' o el mam allí
39              (-)
40     Ana:    [ay pues]
41   Trainer:  [de una vez] tienen que ponerlo allí
42     Ana:    <<addressed to own working group>> pero aquí nada,
43     Sol:    aquí nadie la habla
44     Ana:    <<tilting her head towards up the road>> allí hablan
45              [k'iche']
46     Flor:   [ponemos/] no pero dice que después lo vamos a poner
47     Eva:    <<addressing a person in the other group across the
48              room>> doña Alicia (.) que usted ve/usted si puede
49              hablar en otra idioma, (--)
50     Ana:    <<addressed to the person in the other group>> doña
51              Alicia (---) <<addressed to the trainer>> ella sí puede
52              hablar en otro/<<acc>sabe hablar en otro>
53   Trainer:  sí por eso les digo que (--) por ejemplo aquí son mucho
54              mujeres (--) sí? ustedes allí en la lista tienen que
55              poner (--) las ocho hablamos solo español (--) pero por
56              ejemplo (-) por ejemplo que siete
57     Flor:   ah (.) aquí abajo
58   Trainer:  <<f> pon↑gamos atención> (-) por ejemplo que siete (--)
59              hablen español (-) y una (-) habla otro idioma (--) hay
60              que colocarlo siete hablan español y una compañera
61              habla el mam por ejemplo (1) quiero NUmer[os]
62     Eva:    [aquí] nadie (inc. 0.7)
```

Extract 2: English translation, Community women's workshop – 'What other language do you_{PL} speak?' (01:12:14–01:13:55)

```
1    Trainer:  [which other language do youPL speak]
2      Flor:   [<<laughing about a former incident>>]
3    Trainer:  (--) other than Spanish it says (--) which other
4              language (-)
5      Pia:    English <<short laughter>>
6    Trainer:  do youPL speak
7      Ana:    [<<smiling> English (--) weMASC English>]
8      Pia     [<< laughter>>]
9      Sol:    that we spe[ak english]
10     Ana:    <<turning to RV, pointing to Flor's paper>> what are
11              weMASC [here]
12     Flor:   <<writing>> [which] other language
13     Ana:    mh? (--)
14     RV:     <<to Ana>> hah?
15     Ana:    [what are weMASC?]
16   Trainer:  [which other language do youPL speak]
17     Flor:   [what (-) we have to write down which other they speak]
18     RV:     [yes (--) here one has to (--) youPL (have to) do it]
19     Flor:   [or (--) write there that]
20     RV:     [youPL have to write down here what]
```

```
21       Ana:  [mh]
22      Flor:  [which other language (--) they speak]
23        RV:  [other language youPL speak (inc. 0.4)]
24       Ana:  [mh (--) mh]
25   Trainer:  what other language do [youPL] speak
26       Ana:  [mh]
27       Sol:  we spe[ak Sp/]
28       Ana:  [Spa]nish (--)
29       Eva:  (--) yes Spanish
30       Sol:  Spanish
31       Ana:  Spanish (---) and English (--) <<giggling>> yes we know
32             <<laughing louder>> (1.2) Rita is going to teach me
33             English (.) yes
34       Pia:  <<giggling>>
35   Trainer:  <<interacting with the second workgroup>> (5.8)
36      Flor:  [(--) which other language do youPL speak]
37   Trainer:  ten (--) you have to write it down here (--) the ten (of
38             us) weMAS speak Spanish but maybe the nine over there
39             speak Spanish and one comrade speaks K'iche' or Mam
40             there (-)
41       Ana:  [ay well]
42   Trainer:  [once for all] you have to put it there
43       Ana:  <<addressed to own working group>> but here nothing
44       Sol:  here no one speaks it
45       Ana:  <<tilting her head towards up the road>> there they
46             speak [K'iche']
47      Flor:  [we write down] no but she says that afterwards we are
48             going to write it
49       Eva:  <<addressing a person in the other group across the
50             room>> doña Alicia (.) you can speak in another language
51             (--)
52       Ana:  <<addressed to the person in the other group>> doña
53             Alicia (---) <<addressed to the trainer>> she can speak
54             in another/(she) knows <<acc>speaking another>
55   Trainer:  yes this is why I tell you (--) for example here are
56             many women (--) yes you have to put it there in the list
57             (--) eight (of us) we speak only Spanish (--) but for
58             example (-) for example seven
59      Flor:  ah (.) down here
60   Trainer:  <<f>let us pay attention> (-) for example seven (--)
61             speak Spanish (-) and one (-) speaks another language
62             (--) it has to be listed seven speak Spanish and one
63             comrade speaks Mam for example (1) I want numb[ers]
64       Eva:  [here] no one (inc. 0.7)
```

Figure 5: Speaker and Topic Orientation in Extract 2
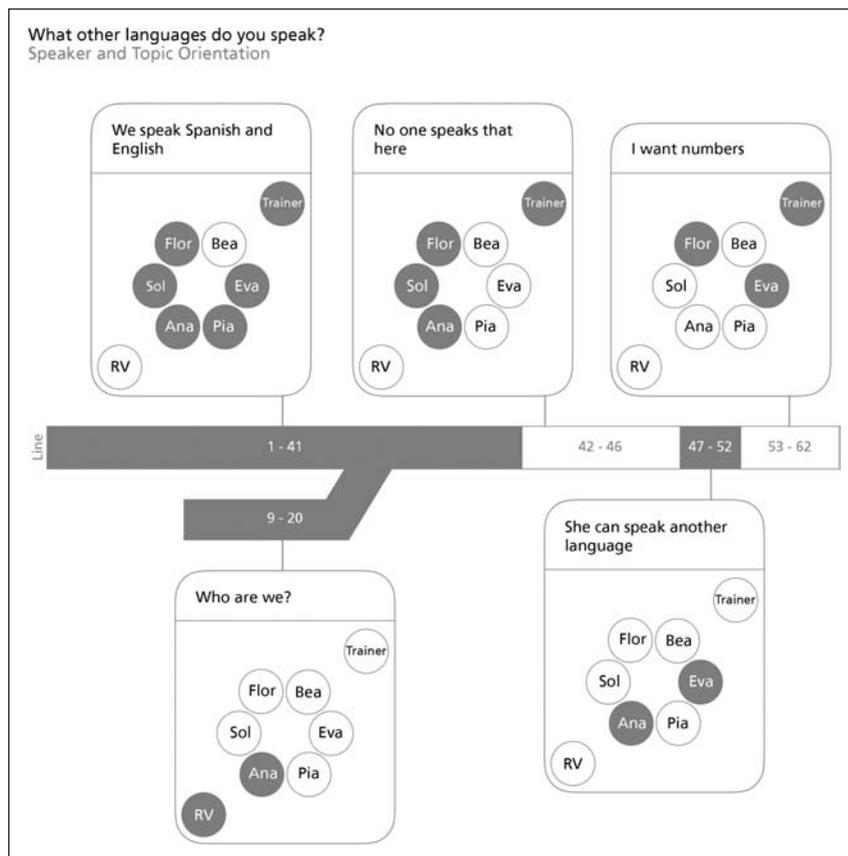
In this extract, two interactions occur in parallel and with a different thematic orientation (see 3). First, the interaction between the trainer and the women, and second an interaction between Ana and me. Furthermore, the women start to deal with the trainer's questions in a humorous way by involving me as a researcher.[85] This part is also again characterized by problems of comprehension.

_____

85 How my presence in the scene affects the negotiations of ethnic belonging of the women was discussed in a talk given at the 21st Sociolinguistic Symposium 2016 in Murcia, Spain: "'Not merely there' – Empirical evidence for the interrelation between an interaction and its observing researcher". Some of the aspects connected to power relations are picked up in section 6.7.

After the trainer dictates the next question 'what other language do you_{PL} speak (–) other than Spanish it says (–) what other language (-)' (lines 1 and 3), there is a blunt reaction from a speaker who had not participated in the interaction thus far. Pia utters *inglés* 'English' (line 4; 5 ET) followed by a brief laughter. Ana picks this up, also answering the trainer's question with *<<smiling>inglés (–) nosotros inglés>* '<<smiling>English (–) we_{MASC} English> (line 6; 7 ET). Sol joins in *que hablamos in ´g,lés* 'that we speak English' with rising intonation on the last syllable. The laughing of Pia, the smiling voice of Ana and the rising pitch of Sol indicate that the women evaluate their own answers as exaggerated and ironic. I am sitting next to the recorded group and the women know about my ability to speak English. During this second research stay, for example, I supported the community by teaching English classes in school. Possibly, the proposition that they speak English is triggered by my presence.[86] By alluding humorously to an existing competence of speaking English, they involve me in the interaction. This turn to me as the observer and deliberately uninvolved researcher could explain why, in the following, Ana takes the issue of ethnic belonging up with me. While the trainer and Flor still negotiate the wording of the question, Ana starts a parallel dialogue with me. Pointing to the paper Flor is writing on, she directly asks *qué somos nosotros aquí* 'what are we_{MASC} here'. With this question she alludes to the previously outlined ethnic category system of the trainer. Instead of asking *quién somos* 'who are we' she uses 'what' to refer to the choice of ethnic categories ('mestizo' and 'Maya'). The 'what' also indicates that Ana is looking for a 'correct' label, and not necessarily for an identification category to determine 'who' they are. Note that Ana is not using the feminine pronoun *nosotras* 'we_{FEM}', but the masculine version that also subsumes the women (as she does in her assertion that 'we_{MASC} (speak) English' in line 6; 7 ET).[87] *Nosotros* points to an understanding of the group in question being larger than just the women participating in the workshop. Ana, hence, probably refers to the whole community when asking for an ethnic category label. As I do not answer immediately she stresses her inquiry with the question particle *mh?*

---

86 Language competence has always been a relevant topic to the women and men in the community. During both of my stays, I was asked on several occasions how many languages I speak, and how their education system fails in teaching their children languages other than Spanish. This is why the community encourages foreign visitors and volunteers to give English classes in school. Furthermore, there is an ongoing presence of the English language in the community as the majority of visitors comes from the United States.

87 In Spanish, the personal pronoun in the first person plural is used in its masculine form to refer to gender mixed groups or as soon as one man is part of the group referred to.

(–) (line 12; 13 ET). Only then do I signal that I note Ana's effort, but that I did not understand it with *hah?* (line 13; 14 ET). Ana repeats 'what are we' still directly addressing me and pointing vigorously to the paper where Flor has written down the question regarding the women's ethnic belonging.[88] I avoid answering that question by allocating the task back to the women: *sí (–) aquí se tiene que:: (–) hacerlo ustedes* 'yes (–) here one has to (–) you (have to) do it' (line 17; 18 ET). The prolonged vowels and pauses mark my reluctance, and the fact that the rejection of Ana's request is potentially uncomfortable and face-threatening[89]. I then repeat the current task introduced by the trainer and direct Ana's attention away from the 'ethnic', and back to the 'language' question: 'you have to write down here what other language you speak (inc. 0.4)' (lines 19 and 22; 20 and 23 ET). In doing so, I align myself with the inquiries of the trainer. Ana displays her comprehension with several hearer utterances (lines 20 and 23; 21 and 24 ET), and the parallel interaction between her and me ends at this point. It is remarkable that Ana turns to me as somebody who is likely to know the answer to the question of ethnicity. This is a first manifestation of an attributed other-categorization as a knowledge-able authority. We will see other instantiations of this attribution in the following sequences of the workshop (see 6.4). In this case, I partly reject the "expert" category as I am not willing to play it out.

Parallel to the interaction of Ana and me, Flor and the trainer are figuring out how to correctly write the question, similar to their negotiations on who is meant with *pertenecen* 'you_PL/they belong to' in the sequence before. She writes down the trainer's question, repeating *qué otro idioma,* 'which other language' (line 11; 12 ET) and raising her voice for an implicit request to complete the sentence. The trainer responds to that request and repeats the sentence (line 15; 16 ET). For Flor the same communicative problem as in the previous section seems to arise. *Hablan* can refer to 'you_PL speak' or 'they speak' and the reference does not seem to be clear to her. Looking at Flor's utterances (without the interruptions from the parallel dialogue), she asks *qué:' (-) tenemos que: (-) poner que otro hablan? o: (–) poner allí que: qué otro (–) idioma hablan* 'what (-) we have to (-) write down

---

88   I recall feeling uncomfortable being drawn into the interaction because initially I wanted to maintain my position as an "uninvolved" observer during this workshop.

89   "Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share" (Goffman, 1967, 5). Following Goffman, interaction is based on the mutual acknowledgment of interlocutors' faces. Constant "face-work" is required in order to maintain this mutuality, mitigate or manage face-threatening acts to others, but also to oneself. Different strategies of face-work can be found in Brown & Levinson (1987).

which other you_{PL}/they speak? or (–) write there that which other (–) language they speak' (lines 16, 18 and 21; 17, 19 and 22 ET). The use of the first person plural verbal form in *tenemos que* 'we have to' points to a reference to 'they speak' in *hablan* which is not based on self-reference. In the second utterance of *hablan* (line 21; 22 ET) by Flor, the reference remains ambiguous. Similar to the previous extract 1, the trainer has to emphasize the personal pronoun referring to the verb to clarify the reference *qué otro idioma hablan ust↑EDes* 'which other language do you_{PL} speak'. The reference is thereby clearly determined.

An immediate response from the women, now directly addressed, follows in lines 26–30, 27–31 in the English translation. Starting with Sol, followed by Ana and Eva, and concluded again by Sol, the women confirm speaking Spanish. At this point, Ana takes up the humorous account of speaking English from the beginning of the scene: *español (—) y inglés (–) <<giggling>> sí sabemos <<laughing louder>> (1.2)* 'Spanish (—) and English <<giggling>> yes we know <<laughing louder>> (1.2)' (lines 30–31; 31–32 ET). This might be an attempt to satisfy the trainer's question about a language 'other than Spanish' (as uttered in line 3), even though marked as a joke through the accompanying laughter. They make fun of the fact that they ostensibly also speak English. Furthermore, this could be another attempt to include me sitting next to the group. This becomes even more evident as the conversation proceeds. As there is no one taking the turn after Ana's utterance, she continues after a longer pause and directly addressing me by requesting a response: *Rita me va a enseñar inglés (.) sí?* 'Rita is going to teach me English (.) yes?' (lines 31–32; 32–33 ET). Pia accompanies the question with a giggle to which none of the interlocutors respond.

The group falls silent for a period of approximately six seconds while the trainer explains the question to the other group in the back of the room. She then turns to everyone and starts to explain the procedure of task management. Flor, poring over her sheet of paper, repeats the question to her group 'which other language do you_{PL} speak' (line 35; 36 ET).

Again, similar to the 'ethnic' question, the trainer outlines different categories which the women can choose from in order to accomplish the task: *diez (–) tienen que ponerlo allí (–) las dIEz nosotros hablamos español pero de repente allí las nueve hablan español y una compañera habla el k'iche' o el mam allí (-) de una vez tienen que ponerlo allí* 'ten (–) you have to write it down here (–) the ten (of us) we_{MASC} speak Spanish but maybe the nine over there speak Spanish and one comrade speaks K'iche' or Mam there (-) once for all you have to put it there' (lines 36–38; 37–40 ET). Ana signalizes her understanding in line 40, 41 in the English translation, and continues to start a discussion directed at her own group. Concerning the languages outlined by the trainer, she responds *pero aquí*

nada, 'but here nothing', rising her voice in the last syllable (line 42; 43 ET). This statement is confirmed by Sol saying *aquí nadie la habla* 'here nobody speaks it' referring by *la* to the languages K'iche' or Mam.

A significant move is then made by Ana with the utterance *allí hablan k'iche'* 'there they speak K'iche'' which is accompanied by a noticeable tilted head movement in the northern direction up the community road which passes by the location of the workshop. The local adverbs *aquí* (used by Sol) and *allí* (used by Ana) are contrasted here and form category predicates for speaking or not speaking a specific language. *Aquí* – inside of the community – they speak Spanish whereas *allí* – on the outside – a language like K'iche' might be spoken.[90] Flor, concerned with her task of writing down the answers, ensures that the answer to the question will only be put on paper later on (line 46; 47–48 ET). Reacting to the fact that no one in her working group speaks a language 'other than Spanish', but acknowledging that this is what the task of the trainer requires, Eva addresses one woman in the second workgroup, shouting across the room *doña Alicia (.) que usted ve/usted si puede hablar en otra idioma, (–)* 'doña Alicia (.) you can speak in another language (–)' (lines 48–49; 50–51 ET). There is no response from the person, however, so Ana calls her again (lines 50–51; 52–53 ET). The addressed woman does not react, hence Ana turns to the trainer and explains the attempts of calling her *ella sí puede hablar en otro/<<acc>sabe hablar en otro>* 'she can speak in another/(she) knows <<acc>speaking another>' (lines 51–52; 53–54 ET) complying with the task of naming speakers of other languages *within* the group of women. The attempt of finding other speakers is not successful in the interaction, though.[91] The trainer takes this as a prompt for another detailed explanation on how to write the different languages down (lines 53–56; 55–58 ET). She does not want specific names but 'numbers' on how many speakers of a language exist in the community. The scene is concluded by

---

90 This interpretation is supported by a conversation with local teacher Bianca. While talking about the scholarly education in indigenous languages for the children, she told me that in villages North of the Alianza people would still speak other indigenous languages.

91 Within the community, it was reported to me that Doña Alicia, who came to the community only a couple of years ago, indeed is the only person left to speak an indigenous language (it could never be specified which one, though). When I asked her about it in an informal conversation, she reported that she would only have a very basic vocabulary and that she did not pass the language on to the younger generations in her family. She was also ambiguous about the actual label for the language other than 'indigenous'. In the evaluation of the answers of the second group, in which Doña Alicia participated, the women did, surprisingly, also not account for a language other than Spanish.

another attempt of Eva to indicate that 'here no one (inc. 0.7)' (line 62; 64 ET) speaks one of the other languages. She once more emphasizes the local adverb[92] *aquí* 'here' as determining the language competences of the speakers located in it.

We have seen in this extract how language is introduced by the lecturer in the row of questions she wants to see answered in 'numbers'. K'iche' and Mam are indigenous languages. A competence in these languages usually coincides with self-identification as and belonging to the ethnic group of Maya (subdivided into twenty-four different tribes, as we have seen in extract 1 of section 6.2). The community women also consider a specific form of language use as a category-bound activity; however, not in ethnic, but in spatial terms. Being *aquí* 'here' implies speaking Spanish and no other language. Only *allí* 'there', an undefined group of 'them', speak another language, namely K'iche'. The local adverb *aquí* is ambiguous: it could refer to the the location of the workgroup (around the table), the room where all the participating women are located, or, as most often in the corpus (see 8.1), the community. An indication for the latter could be the addition to *aquí nadie* 'here no one' used by both Sol (line 43; 44 ET) and Eva (line 62; 64 ET). 'No one' is an indefinite pronoun not referring to a specific gender (in comparison to for example *ninguna* 'no one_FEM') and, thus, could encompass a larger group than the women gathered around the table or the room.

Another analytical aspect in this extract is the marking of affiliation with me, the observing researcher, on several occasions. The allusion to the English language and the humorously framed ability to speak it, indicate a commonality with the researcher and create alignment. As I have argued, this also prepares my consultation on the matter of ethnic belonging by Ana in the parallel interaction. Being a community outsider myself, I might get the same status as the other outsider, the trainer, and hence attributed knowledge about the category systems introduced by the trainer.

Finally, the question of belonging becomes more complex by introducing a language variable. Whereas the trainer related language to ethnicity, the women relate language use to spatial dimensions, and therefore have no use for its relation to ethnic categories. The interwoven relations between belonging and language will become even more apparent in the next section, in which the women work on the questions posed by the trainer on their own, involving me as a consultant.

---

92 Regarding their close connection to demonstrative pronouns, especially in the case of the Ibero-Romance languages, Jungbluth (2005, 24) defines local adverbs as demonstrative adverbs. In the current cases *aquí* has the function of locally qualifying verbs and does not appear in relation to demonstrative pronouns, even in the interview corpus (cf. excursus in section 8.1). This is why I will further label *aquí* in its use as a local adverb.

6.4. Processing the *Étnico* Question

In extract 3, the questions and tasks introduced by the trainer are finalized and the women are supposed to work on them for a specific amount of time while the trainer is not in the room. In the extract, the women just concluded the processing of the first four questions and now turn to the question of the first extract 'which ethnic group youPL belong to'. I will analyze how the women in the recorded group deal with the problematized categories, and how they try to comply with the category systems of the trainer while maintaining their own, spatially grounded category system of belonging.

Extract 3: Community women's workshop – *indígenas del palmar* (01:28:17–01:30:53)

```
1    Flor: ahora el otro (1.6) grupo: (-) a/o (---) grupo ét/ (--)
2    Bea:  a/ét/
3    Ana:  étnico (--)
4    Eva:  es étnico
5    Sol:  étnico
6    Ana:  [étnico]
7    Flor: étnico (-) al que perte'necen (--) perte'necen (-)
8          nosotras (--) al grupo étnico (---) <<turning to her
9          group with a frowning face>>
10   Eva:  mh (1.6) <<pp>mh (-) mh (-) qué (-) qué es> (1.1)
11   Bea:  cómo la seño (inc.0.2) (---)
12   Ana:  <<pointing to RV>> [ahí está 'la otra seño]
13   Flor: [qué qué gru/ (-) qué] grupo ÉTnico dice (--) <<turning
14         to RV pointing to the sheet of paper>> mire
15    RV:  ESO lo tienen que saber us´tedes porque:: (-) se
16         reconocen como gente
17         [maya]
18   Bea:  [mh]
19   Eva:  ah:ya
20   Ana:  [mh]
21   Flor: [cómo?]
22    RV:  sí? (---) o sea son descendentes de la gente maya´ o::
23         (inc.0.8)
24   Flor: ah::
25   Eva:  pero no/aquí no hay:
26   Bea:  somos
27   Eva:  (---)[maya]
28   Ana:  [mh]
29   Flor: nosotros somos qué?
30   Bea:  indígenas
31   Eva:  indígenas pues (1)
32   Bea:  <<to her grandchild>> [VEn]
33   Sol:  [la palabra] indígena
34    RV:  mhm (1.1) y saben de qué grupo de indígenas o sea de que
35         pueblo de indígenas'
36   Eva:  Sí
37   Sol:  aquí nosotros somos nacidos de aquí quetzal[tenango]
38   Bea:  [ah]
```

```
39      RV:  sí?
40     Ana:  [mhm]
41     Bea:  [ehe]
42     Eva:  <<all> [palmar] quetzaltenango> (---) palmar (-)
43           quetzaltenango
44    Flor:  n´´o:, o al [grupo]
45     Ana:  [mh]
46    Flor:  (-) cómo?
47      RV:  indígena
48     Eva:  Indígenas
49     Sol:  e:h indígenas (1.9) vamos así indígena pues (--)
50           <<giggling>> (3)
51     Bea:  igual escribió que (inc.0.3) [nosotras]
52     Pia:  [<<laughter>>]
53     Sol:  <<looking at the sheet of paper in front of Flor>>
54           indígenas (-)
55    Flor:  <<writing while speaking> indí::genas
56     Ana:  mh (1.9)
57    Flor:  que nosotras (.) grupo seis (-)
58     Sol:  [ahí falta todavía]
59    Flor:  [°que otro idioma] (--)
60     Sol:  falta
61    Flor:  por qué?
62     Sol:  porque: <<turning to RV>> (-) cómo dijó´ (-)
63    Flor:  qué'
64      RV:  bueno (--)
65    Flor:  [de/de]
66      RV:  hay como (-) e:h (--) este la seño [dijo]
67    Flor:  [indígenas]
68      RV:  que hay veintiun (sic!) pueblo (sic!) de indígenas de
69           [mayas]
70     Sol:  [aha]
71      RV:  y se reconocen como (---)
72     Sol:  [de dónde son]
73      RV:  [<<hesitating> kachike:l o>] no sé que/hay más o sea
74           yo no: (--)
75    Flor:  y qué´ (-) ponemos de (-) del <<laughing>palmar
76           [quetzaltenango>]
77      RV:  [<<short aspirated laugh>>]
78     Ana:  [<<giggle>>]
79     Pia:  [<<loud laughter>>]
80     Sol:  [quetz/ (--) quetzo/quetzal]tenango nos somos [nacidos]
81      RV:  [<<laughing>indígenas del palmar]
82    Flor:  [pues sí] así (.) verdad?
83      RV:  YO no sé (-) qué es/qué son/[cómo]
84    Flor:  [indígenas]
85      RV:  son [ustedes]
86     Sol:  no se sabe
87      RV:  [<<smiling>eso: deben saber ustedes>]
88    Flor:  [número cinco (inc. 0.3)]
89     Sol:  nosotros no pertenecemos a otro en [donde]
90      RV:  mh
91     Pia:  se denominan (inc. 0.5)
92     Ana:  [bueno] si vamos a
93     Bea:  se podrá?
94     Eva:  sí (.) pero saber si va poner así también'
95     Bea:  [se podrá? (--)]
96     Pia:  [saber si podremos] estaría [bueno preguntar a la seño]
```

```
 97    Bea:  [es que nosotros] pertenecemos al [palmar xela]
 98    Ana:  [si porque] (inc.0.5) pues
 99    Flor: indígenas (.) sí?
100    Sol:  pero es (--)
101     RV:  [pero es como municipio]
102    Ana:  [luego vamos a preguntar]
103    Flor: qué otro [idioma hablan ustedes]
104    Eva:  [municipio (--) que aclara?]
105    Ana:  [porque aquí mencionó munici]pio <<looking at Flor's
106          sheet of paper>>  (--) no mencionó de que municipio (1)
107    Flor: seis (---) el seis (--)
108     RV:  dejamos indígenas y [preguntamos al/a la seño]
109    Flor: [a que idiomas hablamos?]
110    Ana:  español
111    Eva:  español hmh (2.4)
112    Sol:  que todas somos in[dígenas (inc.0.6)]
113    Eva:  <<lifting the document in front of Flor from the table>>
114          cómo ya se escribió que somo:s un: qué? (1.2)
115    Sol:  somos un: (1.3)
116    Eva:  <<reading on Flor's paper>> indígenas
117    Ana:  [mh]
118    Eva:  [mh (--) aha] eso (sic!) son algunas preguntas que me
119          hicieron cuando venían las (-) eh las [compañeras]
120     RV:  [mhm]
121    Eva:  de santa anita lo que recuerdo (inc.1.2)
```

Extract 3: English Translation, Community women's workshop – 'indigenous_PL from palmar' (01:28:17–01:30:53)

```
 1    Flor: now the other one (1.6) group (-) a/o (---) eth/ group
 2          (--)
 3    Bea:  a/eth/
 4    Ana:  ethnic (--)
 5    Eva:  it is ethnic
 6    Sol:  ethnic
 7    Ana:  [ethnic]
 8    Flor: ethnic (-) you_PL belong to (--) you_PL belong (-) we_fem (--)
 9          to the ethnic group (---) <<turning to her group with a
10          frowning face>>
11    Eva:  mh (1.6) <<pp>mh (-) mh (-) what (-) what is it> (1.1)
12    Bea:  how the Miss (inc.0.2) (---)
13    Ana:  <<pointing to RV>> [there is the other Miss]
14    Flor: [what what gro/ (-) what] ethnic group it/she says (--)
15          (--) <<turning to RV pointing to the sheet of paper>>
16          look
17     RV:  you_PL have to know this because (-) do you_PL recognize
18          yourself as [Mayan] people
19    Bea:  [mh]
20    Eva:  ah ok
21    Ana:  [mh]
22    Flor: [what?]
23     RV:  yes? (---) that means you are ancestors of the Mayan
24          people or (inc.0.8)
25    Flor: ah::
26    Eva:  but no/here there are no
27    Bea:  we are
```

```
28    Eva:  (---)[Maya]
29    Ana:  [mh]
30   Flor:  we are what?
31    Bea:  indigenous
32    Eva:  well indigenous (1)
33    Bea:  <<to her grandchild>> [come here]
34    Sol:  [the word] indigenous
35     RV:  mhm (1.1) and do you know of what indigenous group that
36          means what indigenous tribe
37    Eva:  yes
38    Sol:  here we are are born from here (in) Quetzaltenango
39    Bea:  [ah]
40     RV:  yes?
41    Ana:  [mhm]
42    Bea:  [ehe]
43    Eva:  <<all> [Palmar] Quetzaltenango> (---) Palmar (-)
44          Quetzaltenango
45   Flor:  no to the [group]
46    Ana:  [mh]
47   Flor:  (-) what?
48     RV:  indigenous
49    Eva:  indigenousPL
50    Sol:  eh indigenous (1.9) let's go (with) indigenous then (--)
51          <<giggling>> (3)
52    Bea:  maybe she wrote that (inc.0.3) [wefem]
53    Pia:  [<<laughter>>]
54    Sol:  <<looking at the sheet of paper in front of Flor>>
55          indigenous (-)
56   Flor:  <<writing while speaking>> indigenous
57    Ana:  mh (1.9)
58   Flor:  that weFEM (.) group six (-)
59    Sol:  [there is still (something) missing]
60   Flor:  [°what other language] (--)
61    Sol:  it misses
62   Flor:  why?
63    Sol:  because <<turning to RV>> (-) how did you say (-)
64   Flor:  what
65     RV:  well (--)
66   Flor:  [of/of]
67     RV:  there are like (-) eh (--) well the Miss [said]
68   Flor:  [indigenousPL]
69     RV:  that there are twenty-one tribes of indigenousPL of
70          [Mayas]
71    Sol:  [aha]
72     RV:  and they recognize themselves as (---)
73    Sol:  [where they are from]
74     RV:  [<<hesitating> Kachikel or>] I don't know that/there are
75          more that means
76          I don't (--)
77   Flor:  and what (-) we write down from (-) from
78          <<laughing>Palmar [Quetzaltenango>]
79     RV:  [<<short aspirated laugh>>]
80    Ana:  [<<giggle>>]
81    Pia:  [<<loud laughter>>]
82    Sol:  [(in) Quetz/ (--) Quetzo/Quetzal]tenango we are [born]
83     RV:  [<<laughing>indigenousPL from Palmar>]
84   Flor:  [well yes] like this (.) right?
85     RV:  I don't know (-) what is/who are/[how]
```

```
86   Flor:  [indigenousᴘʟ]
87    RV:   [you] are
88   Sol:   one doesn't know
89    RV:   [<<smiling>you should know this>]
90   Flor:
91   Sol:   we do not belong to another [where]
92    RV:   mh
93   Pia:   they name themselves (inc. 0.5)
94   Ana:   [well] yes we will
95   Bea:   will it be possible?
96   Eva:   yes (.) but who knows if it is also going to be written
97          down like this
98   Bea:   [will it be possible? (--)]
99   Pia:   [who knows if we can] it would be good [to ask the Miss]
100  Bea:   [it is that we] belong to the [Palmar Xela]
101  Ana:   [yes because] (inc.0.5) well
102  Flor:  indigenousᴘʟ (.) yes?
103  Sol:   but it is (--)
104   RV:   [but it is like the municipality]
105  Ana:   [we will ask later]
106  Flor:  what other [language do you speak]
107  Eva:   [municipality (--) that makes it clear?]
108  Ana:   [because here she mentioned munici]pality <<looking at
109          Flor's sheet of paper>> (--) she didn't mention of which
110          municipality (1)
111  Flor:  six (---) the six (--)
112   RV:   let's keep indigenous and [we will ask the Miss]
113  Flor:  [what other language we speak?]
114  Ana:   Spanish
115  Eva:   Spanish hmh (2.4)
116  Sol:   that we are all indi[genous (inc.0.6)]
117  Eva:   <<lifting the document in front of Flor from the table>>
118          what was written now that we are a what? (1.2)
119  Sol:   we are a(1.3)
120  Eva:   <<reading on Flor's paper>> indigenousᴘʟ
121  Ana:   [mh
122  Eva:   [mh (--) aha] this (sic!) are some questions that were
123          made to me when the (-) eh the [comradesꜰᴇᴍ]
124   RV:   [mhm]
125  Eva:   from Santa Anita came as I remember (inc.1.2)
```

Flor starts the task of ethnic categorization by re-reading the question to the group. She struggles with the term *étnico* as she already did in the dictation episode with the trainer (extract 1, lines 11 and 26), where she was not sure about how to pronounce or write the word (see 6.2). Here, she corrects herself several times, marked by discontinuations at the beginning of the word: *ahora el otro (1.6) grupo: (-) a/o (—) grupo ét/ (–)* 'now the other one (1.6) group (-) a/o (—) eth/ group (–)' (line 1). Her attempts trigger her fellow group members to step in. While Bea is interrupted after her attempt with *a/ét/* (line 2; 3 ET), Ana utters *étnico* (line 3; 4 ET) without further doubts of pronunciation, followed by Eva with *es étnico* 'it is ethnic' (line 4; 5 ET) and Sol (line 5; 6 ET). Flor then proceeds to utter the whole word, parallel to Ana (line 6; 7 ET), and to read the written

question aloud: *étnico (-) al que perte'n ´ecen (–) perte'n ´ecen (-) nosotras (–) al grupo étnico (—)* 'ethnic (-) you_PL belong to (–) you_PL belong (-) we_fem (–) to the ethnic group (—)' (lines 7–8; 8–9 ET). Flor's utterance has a slightly increasing pitch in the penultimate syllable of the word *pertenecen*. She repeats *pertenecen* twice and identifies the reference subject 'we_FEM'. The event is marked by a series of pauses, leaving lapses for others to take a turn. When she repeats the object of the sentence (*al grupo étnico* 'to the ethnic group'), the question is directed to her group as she moves her head up from the sheet of paper, looks at her peers with a frowning face and ends her turn. Eva responds with a modeless utterance, followed by a long pause and a hesitant question about 'what is it': *mh (1.6) <<pp>mh (-) mh (-) qué (-) qué es> (1.1)* (line 10; 11 ET). A longer pause concludes Eva's turn. In this case, the pauses mark the overall difficulty of the women with the term – their being at a loss about how to approach the question. Eva's question 'what is it' is characterized by ambiguity: either she alludes to missing knowledge concerning the meaning of the concept 'ethnic group' in general, or she points to missing knowledge about which category to choose from the system. The different categories of ethnicity (Maya and its subgroups Mam, K'iche' etc.) which have been introduced by the trainer in the question sequence are not addressed in this extract so far. Hence, this supports the first interpretation of Eva's problem. This analysis is further sustained by Bea's next turn, in which she calls on the trainer as a person capable of clarification concerning the issue (*seño,* line 11; 12 ET). As the trainer is not in the room at that moment, Ana points to me with the words *ahí está la otra seño* 'there is the other Miss' (line 12; 13 ET). As already visible in the former extract, I am identified as being knowledgeable on the issue of ethnic belonging. Ana places me in line with the trainer *seño* by labeling me as *la otra* 'the other' *seño.* Drawing this comparison, I am attributed as being knowledgeable of the non-local category systems. Although I am a different kind of outsider as the trainer (as I have elaborated in section 5.3), neither of us belong to the in-group of the community, and neither of us operate (only) with locally relevant categories. By repeatedly forwarding this specific question to me, we can assume that the women expect that I must be familiar with the concept of ethnic group and the related category system, and somehow could help them out in solving the problematic task.

Figure 6: Speaker and Topic Orientation in Extract 3
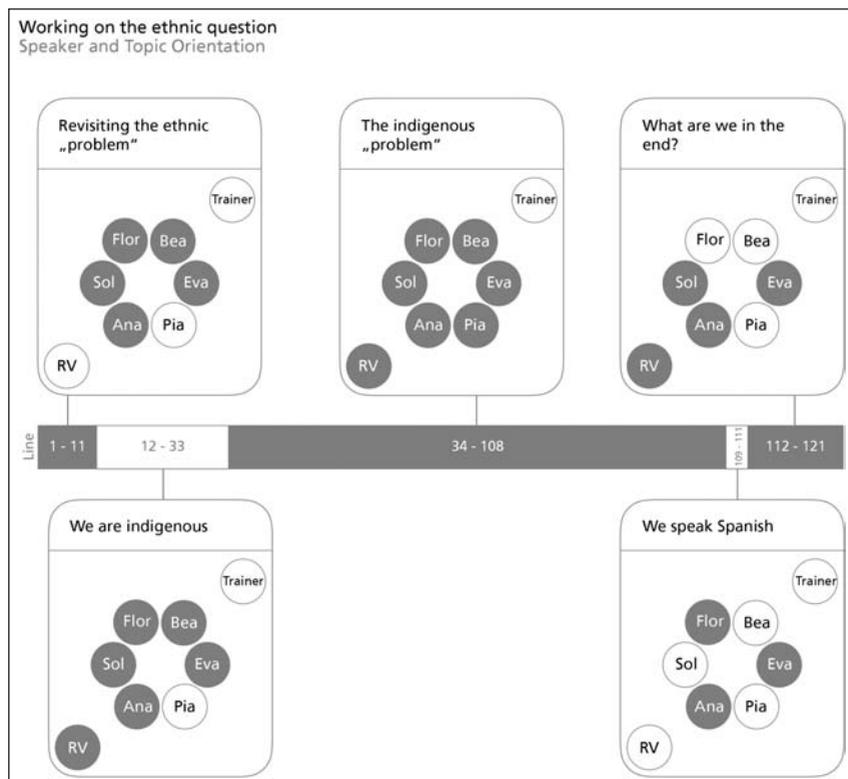
Flor takes up the attempt to invite me into the interaction by turning directly to where I am seated and pointing to the paper rephrasing the task: *qué qué gru/ (-) / qué grupo ÉTnico dice (–) <<turning to RV pointing to the sheet of paper>> mire* 'what what gro/ (-) what ethnic group it/she[93] says (–) <<turning to RV pointing to the sheet of paper>> look' (lines 13–14; 14–16 ET). Much like the first time when Ana tries to consult me (c.f. extract 2, line 9; 10 ET), I try to reject the categorization task the women seek to delegate to me: *ESO lo tienen que saber us ´tedes porque:: (-) se reconocen como gente maya* 'youPL have to know this because (-) do youPL recognize yourself as Mayan people'. The Mayan category has been

---

93　With the unspecific 3rd person singular form of *decir* 'say', *dice*, Flor could either refer to what is written on her sheet of paper ('it says') or to the dictation of the trainer ('she says').

introduced by the trainer. I now pick it up and use it as an example for turning to the proposed category system coming from "outside". My question is acknowledged with hearer responses from Bea (line 18; 19 ET), Eva (line 19; 20 ET) and Ana (line 20; 21 ET), followed by a query from Flor *cómo?* 'what?' (line 21; 22 ET). I scrutinize the acknowledgment from the women by asking *sí? (—)* 'yes? (—)' (line 22; 23 ET). As there is no response during the pause after this utterance, I repeat and at the same time question the statement: *o sea son descendentes de la gente Maya o:: (inc.0,8)* 'that means you are ancestors of the Mayan people or (inc.0.8)' (lines 22–23; 23–24 ET). The prolonged pronunciation of 'or' calls for a takeover of the turn by another speaker, which is successfully done by Flor, who signals her understanding with the interjection in line 24, 25 ET. The reference to the Mayan category now triggers a sequence focused on the trainer's categories. In overlapping turns, the women start to discuss the existence of ethnic groups and their own category membership within that system. Eva reacts by contradicting my assertion with *pero no/aquí no hay: (—) maya* 'but no/here there are no (—) Maya' (lines 25 and 27; 26 and 28 ET). Eva again uses the local adverb *aquí* 'here' to rule out one of the categories of the trainer's binary system. At the same time Eva rejects the category 'Maya' at least within the spatial boundaries of 'here', Bea also deals with the question to which ethnic group they belong. She ponders the question by starting with *somos* 'we are' (line 26; 27 ET), interrupted by Flor's inquiry *nosotros somos qué?* 'we_MASC are what?' (line 29; 30 ET). Bea finally proposes a category, answering my and Flor's question at the same time by stating *indígenas* 'indigenous_PL' (line 30; 31 ET). This category, which the trainer classifies as a subcategory to the Mayan ethnic group ('twenty-four indigenous tribes'), is ratified instantly by Eva and Sol (lines 31 and 33; 32 and 34 ET). However, the category is then put up for reconsideration by me asking about the specifics of this indigenousness, in tune with the trainer's category system: *mhm (1.1) y saben de qué grupo de indígenas o sea de que pueblo de indígenas'* 'mhm (1.1) and do you know of what indigenous group that means what indigenous tribe' (lines 34–35; 35–36 ET). Eva affirms my question (line 36; 37 ET). Sol then makes a crucial move and relates my inquiries about specifications of the 'group' or the 'tribe' to a notion of place and origin: *aquí nosotros‿ somos nacidos de aquí quetzaltenango* 'here we are are born from here (in) Quetzaltenango' (line 37; 38 ET). Quetzaltenango is a first disambiguation of *aquí* and designates the administrative department the community belongs to. Whereas the "indigenous" category in the trainer's system is qualified with other ethnic labels (Mam, K'ich'e etc.), the apparent need to specify the term in compliance with this system is done by the community women in relation to place and where one is born.

Sol's relation of indigenousness to place and provenance is questioned by me (line 39; 40 ET) but affirmed by Ana and Bea (lines 40 and 41; 41 and 42 ET). Eva also supports this approach of Bea by repeating quickly and then in a steady pace <<*all>palmar quetzaltenango*> (—) *palmar (-) quetzaltenango* (lines 42–43; 43–44 ET). She thereby further assigns the municipality 'Palmar' to the department 'Quetzaltenango'. The elaboration of the term *indígena* by Sol and Eva causes some confusion for Flor, who is still in charge of writing. The falling and then rising pitch in the word *no* marks some insecurity followed by the question what group they belong to: *n ´o:, al grupo (-) cómo?* 'no to the group (-) what?' (lines 44 and 46; 45 and 47 ET). In line with the women's proposition, I answer *indígena* (line 47; 48 ET) followed by Eva affirming the term (line 48; 49 ET). Sol, who introduced this category in the first place, also confirms it. After a longer pause, she again confirms that this is what they should write down: *e:h indígenas (1.9) vamos así indígena pues (–) << giggling>> (3)* 'eh indigenousᴾᴸ (1.9) let's go (with) indigenousˢᴳ then (–) <<giggling>> (3)' (lines 49–50; 50–51 ET). Sol accompanies her assertion with a short giggle. The giggle might express a still-pending insecurity about the chosen category "indigenous". It might also again be an index of general amusement about the task itself or the women's category choice. After a longer pause of about three seconds, Bea says something partly inaudible (line 51; 52 ET), but possibly related to that category of belonging, and apparently funny since Pia responds with laughter (line 52; 53 ET). Meanwhile, Sol and Flor are engaged in the writing process. Looking at the sheet of paper, Sol reasserts *indígenas* (line 54; 55 ET). Flor prolongs the vowel *i* in the second syllable of the word, speaking while writing the word down (line 55; 56 ET). This is confirmed with a hearer response from Ana and followed by a pause.

Since there is now an established answer to the 'ethnic' question, the episode is terminated for Flor. She moves on to the sixth question about 'language' (lines 57 and 59; 58 and 60 ET), which followed the 'ethnic' question in the dictation process. However, Sol signals that the question about the ethnic category of belonging is not yet finished, inserting *ahí falta todavía* 'there is still (something) missing' (line 60; 61 ET). Flor notices Sol's insertion only after a few moments, interrupting her reading of the sixth question and asking *por qué?* 'why?' (line 61; 62 ET). Sol starts the attempt of explaining (*porque:* 'because'), but then turns to me and addresses me with a request to take the turn: *cómo dijó? (-)* 'how did you say (-)' (line 62; 63 ET). After another query from Flor (line 63; 64 ET), I rephrase the category system of the trainer with the specification connected to the category 'indigenous': *bueno (–) hay como (-) e:h (–) este la seño dijo que hay veintiun (sic!) pueblo (sic!) de indígenas de mayas* 'well (–) there are like (-) eh (–) well the Miss said that there are twenty-one tribes of indigenousᴾᴸ of Mayas'. My elaboration is accompanied

by insertions from Flor (lines 64, 66 and 68; 65, 67 and 69 ET). This sequence is also acknowledged by Sol (line 70; 71 ET). Whereas I am moving the explanation forward with *y se reconocen como (—) << hesitating>kachike:l o> no sé que/hay más o sea yo no:* 'and they recognize themselves as (—) <<hesitating>> Kachikel or> I don't know that/there are more that means I don't (–)' (lines 71 and 73–74; 72 and 74–75 ET) Sol summarizes my attempts with *de dónde son (–)* 'where they are from (–)' (line 72; 73 ET). There are several markers of hesitation in my utterance. After starting with particles of structuring and delaying a turn (*bueno, hay como, este*), I refer to the trainer's system, and that my explanations are retrieved from her. With her conclusion, Sol takes up the feature of origin and place, which she already brought up in line 37, 38 ET, when I asked about the specific indigenous 'tribe' they attribute themselves to. Based on Sol's insertion Flor in her role of responsible for writing down takes up the issue of origin, asking *y qué (-) ponemos de (-) del <<laughing>palmar quetzaltenango>* 'and what (-) we write down from (-) from <<laughing>Palmar Quetzaltenango>'. While articulating the last two words she starts to laugh, and is shortly joined by me, breathing out laughing, Ana rhythmically giggling and Pia bursting out in a short and loud laughter. The laughing indicates that there seems to be something odd about the combination of the indigenous category with the qualifier 'from Palmar Quetzaltenango'. Even though Flor's suggestion causes general amusement, Sol tries to pursue this thought by reconfirming her utterance from line 37, 38 ET: *quetz/ (–) quetzo/quetzaltenango nos somos nacidos* '(in) Quetz/ (–) Quetzo/Quetzaltenango we are born' (line 80; 82 ET). It takes her two attempts to pronounce the department, but she still emphasizes "birthplace", as the relevant sub-category which can qualify the category "indigenous". Still laughing, I put the two labels together *indígenas del palmar* 'indigenousPL from Palmar' (line 81; 83 ET). Flor asserts this categorization followed by the question *así (.) verdad?* 'like this (.) right?' (line 82; 84 ET) and another mentioning of the term 'indigenous' (line 84; 86 ET). The sequence shows that for the women it makes sense that belonging is categorized along the lines of "place", "origin" and "birthplace" as proposed and repeated by Sol. However, the frequent laughter indicates that they perceive that there is something unusual or amiss in using the ethnic category "indigenous" qualified with a spatial adverb. They thus attempt to converge the trainer's ethnic category system and their own, local conceptualization of belonging as mainly based on relations to a specific place – to the 'here'. They repeatedly turn to me, thereby expressing the assumption that I might have outsider knowledge congruent to the trainer's category system. However, within the interaction, I repeatedly try to renounce this allocated expert role and to withdraw from the interaction: *YO no sé (-) qué es/qué son/cómo son ustedes*

<<*smiling>eso: deben saber ustedes*> 'I don't know (-) what is/who are/how you are <<smiling>you should know this>' (lines 83, 85 and 87; 85, 87 and 89 ET).

The general uncertainty about the validity of combining both categories characterizes the end of this extract. Sol indicates in response to my not knowing 'what', 'who' or 'how they are, that, on a generalized level, they also do not know: *no se sabe* 'it is not known' (line 86; 88 ET). Again, she emphasizes belonging in spatial dimensions *nosotros no pertenecemos a otro en donde* 'we do not belong to another where' (line 89, 91 ET). Doubts arise whether the categorical solution they agreed upon is feasible. Bea asks *se podrá?* 'will it be possible' twice (lines 93 and 95; 95 and 98 ET). Eva reacts to Sol's remark with the question *sí (.) pero saber si va poner así también´* 'yes (.) but who knows if it is also going to be written down like this' (line 94; 96–97 ET). Pia opts for a confirmation of their categorical solution by the trainer herself: *saber si podremos estaría bueno preguntar a la seño* 'who knows if we can it would be good to ask the Miss' (line 96; 99 ET) thereby underlining her authority on the issue. Meanwhile, Bea supports the validity of the women's categorization of belonging in a spatial dimension one last time *es que nosotros pertenecemos al palmar xela* 'it is that we belong to the Palmar Xela' (line 97; 100 ET). She uses the common abbreviation for the town, derived from the K'iche' name of Quetzaltenango *Xelajú*. Even though I denied expertise on the matter, I interfere again and point out that 'Palmar Xela' is a problematic qualifier to the ethnic category as it is a municipality (line 101; 104 ET). Eva questions whether the municipality could not work as a qualifier for the category: *municipio (–) que aclara?* 'municipality (–) that makes it clear?' (line 104; 107 ET). Ana takes up the issue by rephrasing that later on they are going to ask (line 102; 105 ET), and adds *porque aquí mencionó municipio <<looking at Flor's sheet of paper>> (–) no mencionó de que municipio (1)* 'because here she mentioned municipality <<looking at Flor's sheet of paper>> (–) she didn't mention of which municipality (1)' (lines 105–106; 108–109 ET). Ana checks whether Flor would have written down the spatial qualifier of the municipality (Palmar Quetzaltenango) to the category "indigenous". After a look at the document, she notices that Flor has not done it, and still left the term "indigenous" on its own on the paper. I close the sequence by aligning myself with the women: In the first person plural I suggest *dejamos indígenas y preguntamos al/a la seño* 'let's keep indigenous and we will ask the Miss' (line 108; 112 ET). In the previous sequences, I contrasted my own person with the group of women (use of *yo* 'I' vs. *ustedes* 'youPL'). By changing the verbal form I make the women's problem of attributing themselves *our* collective problem. Furthermore, I position myself as someone who would also have to consult the trainer on that matter, and who is therefore *not* an expert on the ethnic category system.

While the discussion about municipality as an ethnic qualifier is going on, Flor tries to close the issue and moves on to the next question concerning the language. She repeats the category and asks for confirmation *indígenas (.) sí?* 'indigenousPL (.) yes?' (line 99; 102 ET) and goes on to ask the question about the other languages the women might speak (line 103; 106 ET). She insists on a response to question six until she receives a response from Ana and Eva, both successively uttering *español* 'Spanish' (lines 110 and 111; 114 and 115 ET). While Ana, Flor and Eva deal with the sixth question, Sol still contemplates the answer to the fifth one (line 112; 116 ET). Having answered the language question, Eva inquires about the final category decision on the paper: *<<lifting the document in front of Flor from the table>> cómo ya se escribió que somo:s un: qué? (1.2)* '<<lifting the document in front of Flor from the table>> what was written now that we are a what? (1.2) (lines 113–114; 117–118 ET). She scans the paper while Sol starts to answer her question (line 115; 119 ET). Eva reads *indígenas* (line 116; 120 ET) aloud. This is affirmed by Ana (line 117; 121 ET), and thus serves as a closing of the interaction dealing with the answer to question number five. Eva finally remarks that this is not the first time that she was asked to do this kind of categorization: *eso (sic!) son algunas preguntas que me hicieron cuando venían las (-) eh las compañeras de Santa Anita lo que recuerdo (inc.1.2)* 'this (sic!) are some questions that were made to me when the (-) eh the comradesFEM from Santa Anita came as I remember (inc.1.2)' (lines 118–119 and 121; 122–123 and 125 ET).

The whole extract elucidates that questions of belonging are apparently not usually a concern within the community, at least not in categories of "ethnicity". Instead, the prompt to categorize oneself according to a system of ethnic terms seems to be something which is demanded or asked for by outsiders, like the trainer of the workshop or women visiting from another community. The women try to deal with the task by adapting their own system of local relevancies ('being born here' or simply 'being from here') to the category system exclusively consisting of ethnic terms which the trainer had provided them with in her short explanation in Extract 1. The meaning of the concept "ethnic", as we have seen in the first extract, is problematic for the women. However, the term indigenous is something they can relate to, as this is the one they pick up from the trainer's explanations and to which they assign themselves as a group. The complication that "indigenous" is a term subsuming different ethnic subgroups or tribes, which I introduce following the trainers outline, is approached by a qualifier emphasizing spatial belonging to the place – either 'here', or in more administrative terms the department or municipality 'Palmar Quetzaltenango'. The women, however, indicate a contradiction in the alignment of the trainer's

category system with their local one, resulting in a category: 'indigenous of Palmar Quetzaltenango'. Repeated laughter and sequences displaying general insecurity about the solution indicate that the workgroup is not completely satisfied with the answer they prepared for the trainer's evaluation. Finally, only the overall category 'indigenous' is written down as an answer for the trainer's question on their ethnic belonging.

In the following comparatively short extract, the women move on to the language question, which is re-directed to a problematization of the ethnic category "indigenous".

6.5. Processing the Language Question

Having finished the discussion on belonging in terms of ethnic categories (or at least postponing the result for the trainer's approval), the women around the table commence engaging in private conversations while Flor browses her document. The trainer is still absent, and the women are still supposed to answer the questions for the workshop. I re-open the interaction focused on the topic of answering the trainer's question – in this case, the question on possible other languages the women speak. As was shown in extract 2, the speakers already have a clearly defined answer to that question – that 'here' 'no one' speaks another language than 'Spanish' (except for Doña Alicia). In this extract, however, the women relate ethnic and language categories in a different way due to their decision on "indigenous" as a belonging category in the previous processing of the ethnic question.

Extract 4: Community women's workshop – *No hablamos* (01:36:46–01:37:15)

```
 1     RV:  y el idioma´ (-) tienen la [pregunta con el idioma?]
 2    Pia:  [pero (--) realmente en el grup/]
 3   Flor:  ah (--)
 4     RV:  con el idioma (—) había una pregunta con idioma
 5    Pia:  sí?
 6   Flor:  si
 7    Sol:  es eso: de la indígena (---)
 8   Flor:  <<looking at her paper>> nosotros hablamos el idio[ma
 9          español]
10    Ana:  [somos hablantes de español]
11    Eva:  aha (-) es igual k/que se [escribió]
12     RV:  [aha] (---)
13   Flor:  <<pp>pero el otro (-) de este de cinco (--) indígenas sí
14          que
15          así vamos a ponerlo>
16    Eva:  no deberíamos escribir que (--) somos maya y no sabemos
17    Sol:  <<p>no sabemos hablar [y no hablamos]>
18    Ana:  [no hablamos] (--) solo en español
```

Extract 4: English Translation, Community women's workshop – 'we don't speak'
(01:36:46–01:37:15)

```
1     RV:  and the language (-) do you have [the question with
2          language?]
3    Pia:  [but (--) really in the group/]
4   Flor:  ah (--)
5     RV:  with the language (--) there was a question with
6          language
7    Pia:  yes?
8   Flor:  yes
9    Sol:  it is that (one) with the indigenous (---)
10  Flor:  <<looking at her paper>> we speak the [Spanish
11         language]
12   Ana:  [we are speakers of Spanish]
13   Eva:  yes (-) it is the same that was [written]
14    RV:  [yes] (---)
15  Flor:
16         indigenous yes like this we are gonna write it down>
17   Eva:  we should not write that (--) we are Maya and we do
18         know
19   Sol:  <<p>we don't know how to speak and [we don't speak]>
20   Ana:  [we don't speak] (--) only in Spanish
```

I direct the women's attention to question number six, which was already partially answered at the end of extract three, but not by all of the participating women. Flor, Ana and Eva approached this topic shortly while I was still engaged with the problem of specifying the category of being "indígena". So I ask *y el idioma' (-) tienen la pregunta con el idioma?* 'and the language (-) do you have the question with the language?' (line 1; 1–2 ET). After Flor signals attention (line 3; 4 ET) I repeat *con el idioma (–) habia una pregunta con idioma* 'with the language (–) there was a question with language' (line 4; 5–6 ET). After a short question and answer sequence regarding the existence of that question between Pia and Flor (lines 5 and 6; 7 and 8 ET), Sol relates the 'language' question to the 'ethnic' question that the women had just discussed: *es eso: de la indígena (—)* 'it is that (one) with the indigenous (—)' (line 7; 9 ET).

Flor starts to reassess how they had answered the question by looking at her paper, and states with a steady voice *nosotros hablamos el idioma español* 'we speak the Spanish language' (line 8–9; 10–11 ET). Ana joins in affirming *somos hablantes de español* 'we are speakers of Spanish' (line 10; 12 ET). Eva strengthens this position by stating that this is what has been written down (line 11; 13 ET). I acknowledge the answers (line 12; 14 ET), and the language question could be finalized at this point. Interestingly, however, the sequence continues. While looking at the sheet of paper and the answers given by the women, Flor revisits the task of ethnic categorization, which ultimately remained unresolved in the former extract: *<<pp>pero el otro (-) de este de cinco (–) indígenas sí que*

así vamos a ponerlo> '<<pp>but the other one (-) this from five (−) indigenousPL
yes like this we are gonna write it down> (lines 13–15; 15–16 ET). She speaks
in a very low voice and hesitates, which is marked by the pauses between her
utterances. The category the women agreed upon (*indígenas*) is still a matter of
debate. Subsequently, Eva makes use of another category, hitherto introduced by
the trainer and later also by me, to elucidate and exemplify the category *indígena:
no deberíamos escribir que (−) somos maya y no sabemos* 'we should not write
that (−) we are Maya and we do not know' (line 16; 17-18 ET). 'Maya' is treated
as equivalent with 'indigenous' by Eva, as it was emphasized several times that
"indigenous" has been written down by Flor as a final answer.[94] The verb *no sabe-
mos* here is not related to not knowing whether they belong to the "Mayan" (=
"indigenous") category, but that they do not speak ('know') a specific language
related to that category. This relation between a certain ethnicity and a certain
language is picked up by Sol and Ana. Sol utters, also quietly <<p>*no sabemos
hablar y no hablamos>* '<<p>we don't know how to speak and we don't speak>'
(line 17; 19 ET). Ana concludes *no hablamos (−) solo en español* 'we don't speak
(−) only in Spanish' (line 18; 20 ET). Self-categorizing as "indigenous" but speak-
ing 'only Spanish' apparently is considered problematic and contradictory. Lan-
guage competence in a specific indigenous language is directly connected with
legitimate (or "correct") belonging to the ethnic group of "indigenous" people,
or specifically Mayans. The Spanish language can, as the women already argued
in extract 2, be related to the spatial category *aquí* 'here'.

To summarize, in processing the trainer's questions, the women encounter
two major problems: First, they try to mediate between the choice of categories
outlined by the trainer and their own local conceptions of belonging in spatial
and social terms. These two systems resulting in "indigenous" + *local* qualifier,
however, contradict the trainer's system of "indigenous" + *ethnic* qualifier. Fur-
thermore, it appears that their choice for "indigenous" itself is a makeshift cat-
egory. It is the only concept in the trainer's category system the women seem to
be familiar with. A second problem the women lay bare in this extract is that
in their conceptualization, indigenousness actually only goes together with the
category-bound activity of speaking a language other than Spanish (which is not
considered to be an indigenous language). However, the women still try to com-
ply with the trainer's system, as she is perceived to be an authority in this specific

---

94 There is a certain inconsistency in the use of categories here. In extract 3 lines 25 and
27, 26 and 28 ET, Eva uttered that 'here there are no Maya' and confirms the alternative
category 'indigenousPL' in line 31, 32 ET. Here, however, "Maya" is treated as the same
category as "indigenous".

interactional setting. The actual contradictions and clash of the two systems will become explicit in the next and final extract.

6.6. Clashing Category Systems

Shortly after the women completed the tasks on their questionnaire, the trainer comes back into the room and collects the sheets of paper from the two work-groups. While the women talk about other community incidents, private topics or interact with their children and grandchildren, she skims the documents. The trainer does not address the first four questions and tasks written down by the women, but immediately reacts to the fifth, the *étnico* question, as we will see in the following.

Extract 5: Community women's workshop – *Todas son indígenas* (01:48:02–01:50:06)

```
 1   Trainer: <<ff>todas> (--) todas son indígenas,
 2      Flor: Sí
 3       Ana: [sí]
 4       Eva: [sí]
 5       Sol: [sí] somos in/ (.) so/ [(inc. 1)]
 6   Trainer: [pero: de qué pueblo digamos]
 7      Flor: <<aspirated short laughter>> <<smiling>del palmar
 8            quetzal/> <<laughter>>
 9       Ana: sí pu:es
10   Trainer: no pero digamos ma:m (-) quichés [(1)]
11       Eva: [no:]
12   Trainer: poqomchis (--)
13       Ana: [espa/ (--) solo por [español]
14       Eva: [nosotros somos nacidos de aquí]
15       Ana: somos de aquí (--)
16   Trainer: sí pero no saben ustedes digamos de qué grupo (--) de
17            qué pueblo'
18      Flor: [no]
19       Eva: [no]
20       Sol: [no]
21   Trainer: [no saben]
22      Flor: [no sabemos]
23       Eva: [no]
24   Trainer: y por que se denominan <<laughing>in↑DÍGenas>
25       Eva: [porque:]
26       Ana: [(inc. 1.7)]
27       Sol: [<<pp>los guatemaltecos/los pueblos que (inc.0.2) hablar
28            su idioma> (--)]
29   Trainer: (1.5) porque digamos indígenas están como les digo los
30            ma:m k'ichés (-) poqomchis (--) kaqchike:les (-) o sea
31            son los veinticuatro pueblos(--) ahora mestizo (--)
32            o=sea un mes[tizos]
33       Eva: [mestizos tambien?]
34       Sol: [mestizo (inc. 0.5)]
35   Trainer: pues yo no sé porque:
```

```
36      Flor:  <<quiet laughter>>
37       Pia:  <<giggles>>
38   Trainer:  <<smiling>ustedes son los que conocen su historia y su
39             origen> [(--)
40             no les puedo poner]
41      Flor:  [°h: por e:so] (--) por eso nosotros por=allí pusimos
42             indígenas (2) porque nosotros no sabemos
43   Trainer:  <<talking to the other workgroup>> (6.5) <<directed to
44             all the women>> es que digamos que: en los grupos
45             étnicos el ladino no existe
46             (--)
47      Flor:  entonces
48   Trainer:  solo el mestizo (--) o sea el mestizo es una mezcla
49             digamos (--) entre:: (---) varios grupos (--) étnicos
50             (-) o sea no no se sabe bien su origen (---) aha (--)
51             o=sea es una mezcla entre: (-) indígen[as y:]
52       Eva:  [es como nosotros] no sabemos de nuestros antepasados
53             (--) [de dónde eran]
54   Trainer:  [por eso es lo que es/] [por eso no saben (--) como
55             <<laughing>]
56       Ana:  [no pues no sabemos pues]
57   Trainer:  denominarse>
58      Flor:  que hemos hemos nacido [aquí y no sabemos]
59       Ana:  [sí pues (---)que somos] [de aquí TOdos]
60       Eva:  [no sa]bemos que somos nacidos TOdos de: (--) [aqu´í]
61   Trainer:  [entonces] la tarea ahorita es (-) para la próxima
62             <<laughing>reunión cuando venga ya tienen que saber> (.)
63             algo de su historia por lo menos cuál es su origen (-)
64      Flor:  [mh:]
65   Trainer:  [aha] porque igual no saben ni dónde ubicarse ustedes
```

Extract 5: English Translation, Community women's workshop – 'all are indigenous' (01:48:02–01:50:06)

```
1    Trainer  <<ff>allFEM> (--) allFEM are indigenous
2      Flor:  yes
3       Ana:  [yes]
4       Eva:  [yes]
5       Sol:  [yes] we are (.) we [(inc. 1)]
6    Trainer: [but of which tribe let's say]
7      Flor:  <<aspirated short laughter>> <<smiling>of Palmar
8             Quetzal/> <<laughter>>
9       Ana:  yes well
10   Trainer: no but let's say Mam (-) K'iche's [(1)]
11       Eva: [no:]
12   Trainer: Poqomchi (--)
13       Ana: [Span/ (--) only in [Spanish]
14       Eva: [we are born here]
15       Ana: we are from here (--)
16   Trainer: yes but don't you know let's say from which group (--)
17             from which tribe
18      Flor: [no]
19       Eva: [no]
20       Sol: [no]
21   Trainer: [you don't know]
22      Flor: [we don't know]
23       Eva: [no]
```

```
24  Trainer:  and why do you call yourself <<laughing>indigenous>
25      Eva:  [because]
26      Ana:  [(inc. 1.7)]
27      Sol:  [<<pp>the guatemalans/the tribes who (inc.0.2) speak
28            their language> (--)]
29  Trainer:  (1.5) because let's say indigenous are like I tell you
30            the Mam K'iche's (-) Poqomchis (--) Kaqchikels (-) that
31            means the twenty-four tribes(--) now a mestizo (--) that
32            means a mes[tizos]
33      Eva:  [mestizos too?]
34      Sol:  [mestizo (inc. 0.5)]
35  Trainer:  well I don't know because
36     Flor:  <<quiet laughter>>
37      Pia:  <<giggles>>
38  Trainer:  <<smiling>you are the ones who know your history and
39            your origin> [(--) I cannot put (it) down for you]
40     Flor:  [°h that's why] (--) that's why we put there indigenous
41            (2) because weMASC don't know
42  Trainer:  <<talking to the other workgroup>> (6.5) <<directed to
43            all the women>> it's that let's say that in the ethnic
44            groups the Ladino does not exist (--)
45     Flor:  so
46  Trainer:  only the mestizo (--) that means the mestizo is a
47            mixture let's say (--) between (---) different ethnic
48            (--) groups (-) that means one doesn't know well about
49            its origin (---) aha (--) that means it is a mixture
50            between (-) indigen[ous and]
51      Eva:  [it is like weMASC] don't know of our ancestors (--)
52            [where they came from]
53  Trainer:  [that's why it's like that] [that's why you don't know
54            (--) <<laughing>]
55      Ana:  [no well we don't know then]
56  Trainer:  how to call yourself
57     Flor:  we were born [here and we don't know]
58      Ana:  [well yes (---) we are] [allMASC from here]
59      Eva:  [we don't] know we are allMASC born (--) [here]
60  Trainer:  [so] the task is now (-) for the next <<laughing>reunion
61            when I'm coming you will have to know> (.) something
62            about your history at least what your origin is (-)
63     Flor:  [mh:]
64  Trainer:  [yes] because you don't even know where to place
65            yourselves
```

Figure 7: Speaker and Topic Orientation in Extract 5
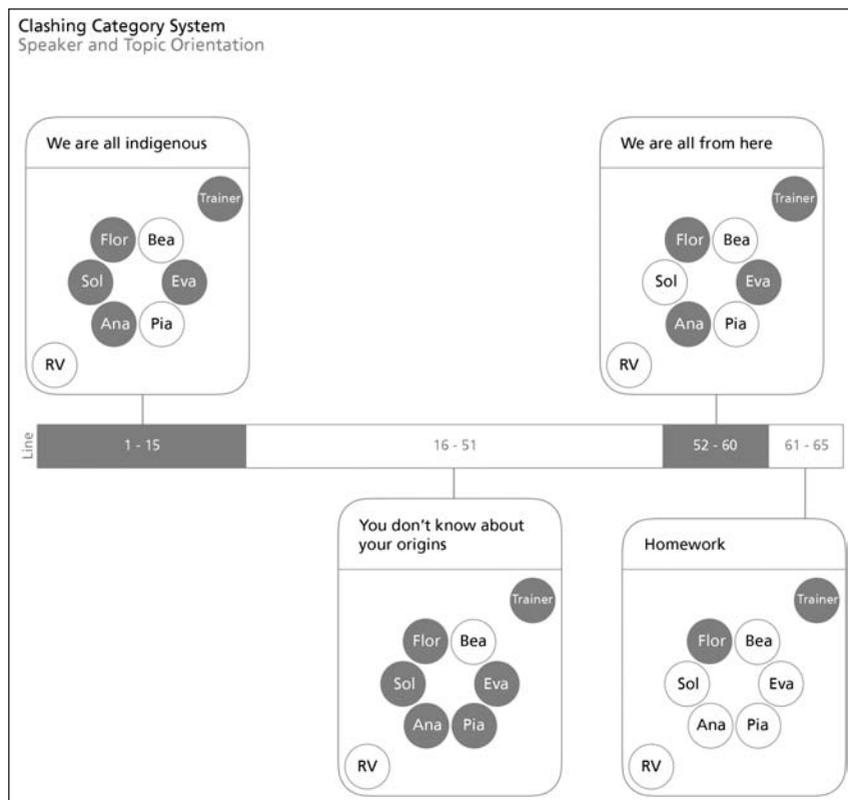
The trainer requests the women's attention by speaking up loudly and confronts them with the result from Flor's paper: *<<ff>todas> (–) todas son indígenas,* '<<ff>all_FEM> (–) all_FEM are indigenous' (line 1). The women affirm this statement with a chorus of consecutive and simultaneous *sí* 'yes' (lines 2–5). Sol begins to add an explanation (line 5) but is interrupted by the trainer, who asks for a qualification of the category "indigenous": *pero: de qué pueblo digamos* 'but from which tribe let's say'. Similar to her reaction to my inquiry about a tribal specification in extract 3 (lines 34–35; 35–36 ET), Flor starts to qualify 'indigenous' in terms of spatial belonging. However, her turn starts with a short aspirated laugh; she utters her turn with a smiling voice, interrupting herself by bursting into rhythmic laughter: *<<aspirated short laughter>> <<smiling>del palmar quetzal/> <<rhythmic laughter>>* (lines 7–8). By laughing Flor distances herself from the

proposition even before she starts articulating it not even finishing the thought in ongoing laughter. As I have discussed in section 6.5, the women are aware of a possible mismatch between their conceptualization and the trainer's system.

Still, her proposition is supported by Ana, mitigating the laughter of Flor by affirming *sí pu:es* 'yes well' (line 9). The trainer, nonetheless, negates Flor's attempt and reframes her question using subcategories of her ethnic category system: *no pero digamos ma:m (-) k'ichés (1) poqomchis (–)* 'no but let's say Mam (-) K'iche's (1) Poqomchi (–)' (lines 10 and 12). Eva negates the trainer's categories after *k'ichés* when she pauses for a moment in her enumeration (line 11). Ana relates the subcategories presented by the trainer back to the language question, negating belonging to one of the categories mentioned and explains that they only speak Spanish: *espa/ (–) solo por español* 'Spa/ (–) only in Spanish' (line 13). Here, the connection between ethnic categories as equivalent to speaking a corresponding indigenous language as a category-bound activity is emphasized again. Eva proposes another explanation as to why the proposed categories do not match belonging in the community by emphasizing local belonging: *nosotros somos nacidos de aquí* 'we are born from here' (line 14). Ana supports her assertion, confirming *somos de aquí* 'we are from here' (line 15). As the women have emphasized numerous times in the previous extracts, to be 'from here' or to be 'born here' is the central category-bound predicate of belonging within the community. On the one hand, being 'from here' determines who belongs to the we-group of the community; on the other hand, it appears to render belonging to an ethnic category impossible. This categorization is not ratified by the trainer, who sticks to the "official" ethnic system. She insists on assigning the "indigenous" category into an ethnic subgroup, a 'tribe': *sí pero no saben ustedes digamos de qué grupo (–) de qué pueblo* 'yes but don't you know let's say from which group (-) from which tribe' (lines 16–17). The women respond to this question in a similar way as they had to the trainer's 'all are indigenous' statement in lines 2–5. They simultaneously answer 'no' chorally (lines 18–20), which the trainer concludes with *no saben* 'you_{PL} don't know' (line 21). Flor also affirms *no sabemos* 'we do not know' (line 22). The trainers's reaction to that conclusion is quite striking; she threatens the faces of the interlocutors by directly questioning their completion of the assigned task, moreover with a laughing and leaping intonation during the last word: *y por que se denominan / << laughing>in↑DÍGenas>* 'and why do you call yourself <<laughing>indigenous>' (line 24). Eva tries to react to the mocking question and starts off with the conjunction *porque:* 'because' (line 25), but interrupts her utterance thereafter. Ana and Sol also try to reply to the trainer's question and overlap each other's utterances. Some children run into

the room at that point and Ana's as well as parts of Sol's very quiet utterances are not audible (lines 25 and 27).

After a pause of approximately 1.5 seconds the trainer proceeds again, explaining the different subcategories without reacting directly to Ana's and Sol's explanation efforts. There is no way of telling whether she did not respond, because she did not hear them due to the children's noise or because she does not consider them relevant. Again, the trainer introduces the ethnic categories 'Mam', 'K'iche', 'Poqomchi', 'Kaqchikeles' as part of the *veinticuatro pueblos* 'twenty-four tribes' (lines 30–31). As a second possibility for ethnic categorization, she brings up the 'mestizo' (line 31) and is interrupted by Eva questioning *mestizos también?* 'mestizos too?' followed by Sol also picking up the new term (line 34). Even though this category has been introduced by the trainer in the outline of the binary ethnic category system in the sequence of question dictation (see section 6.2), it has not been discussed in the following sequences when the women negotiated categories of belonging and language on their own. The trainer appears to interpret Eva's and Sol's reaction to the category as if they were asking whether 'Mestizo' might be a "valid" category of belonging, since their attempt to assign themselves to the category "indigenous" is not accepted in the eyes of the trainer. Hence, she answers by rejecting the ascription of expert knowledge on the women's ethnic affiliation: *pues yo no sé porque: <<smiling>ustedes son los que conocen su historia y su origen> (–) no les puedo poner* 'well I don't know because <<smiling> you are the ones who know your history and your origin> (–) I cannot put (it) down for you' (lines 35 and 38–40; 35 and 38–39 ET). Flor and Pia accompany the trainer's turn with quiet laughter (Flor) and a giggle (Pia), to which the trainer responds with a smiling voice in the middle of her utterance. The laughter of the women once again indicates insecurity, and possibly an alienation (Roth, 2005, 238) from the "inability" to categorize themselves into the system of ethnic classifications. Flor negates the trainer's argument, linking another attempt of explicating the choice of the category *índigena* without an ethnic qualifier: *°h: por e:so (–) por eso nosotros por=allí pusimos indígenas (2) porque nosotros no sabemos* '°h that's why (–) that's why we put there indigenous (2) because we_MASC don't know' (lines 41–42; 40–41 ET). Flor refers to the 'history' and 'origin' the trainer had explained when she says 'we_MASC don't know'. To the women knowing where 'we' come from is a predicate for knowing the qualifier to the ethnic category "indigenous". What they know is that they are from 'here' or 'Palmar Quetzaltenango'. However, as this is not acknowledged as a "valid" qualifier, Flor tries to explain the choice to the trainer in this way. Note how she uses the masculine 'we' *nosotros,* which is not exclusive for the group of women, but also

includes any gender in the community. *Nosotros no sabemos* (about 'history' and 'origin') is hence an attribute ascribed to the whole community.[95] By picking up the trainer's statement about the community members' "ignorance" about their ethnic origins, Flor clarifies the local categorical reasoning. Her turn remains unanswered. Instead, the women of the workgroup start to interact with each other or their children and grandchildren. The point appears to be concluded for them. Meanwhile, the trainer turns to the other group in the room that is still discussing. Although the exact wording is not audible on the recording due to other noises in the room, we can assume that they were still engaging with the answer to question number five; based on the following explanations, the trainer speaks to all of the women in the room: *es que digamos que: en los grupos étnicos el ladino no existe (–)* 'it's that let's say that in the ethnic groups the Ladino[96] does not exist (–)' (lines 44–45; 43–44 ET). Apparently, she picks up a category introduced in her discussion with the second workgroup here, as 'Ladino' was not introduced in the recorded group beforehand. After Flor's call for explanation *entonces* 'so' (line 47; 45 ET), the trainer proceeds to explain that, in her category system, the closest to the category 'Ladino' is the 'Mestizo'. Her definition of *mestizo* entails being an ethnic hybrid and having an unidentified source of origin: *o sea el mestizo es una mezcla digamos (–) entre:: (—) varios grupos (–) étnicos (-) o sea no no se sabe bien su origen (—) aha (–) o=sea es una mezcla entre: (-) indígenas y:* 'that means the mestizo is a mixture let's say (–) between (—) different ethnic (–) groups (-) that means one doesn't know well about its origin (—) aha (–) that means it is a mixture between (-) indigenous and' (lines 48–51; 46–50 ET). In her argument, the 'mixture' of 'ethnic groups' causes the blurring of origins, and hence impedes a label connected to a *specific* ethnic group. Eva interrupts the trainer. She picks up on the definition of 'Mestizo' and focuses on the "unknown" provenance (*no se sabe bien su origen* 'one doesn't know well about its origin'). Supporting the explicative efforts of Flor (in lines 41–42; 40–41 ET), she emphasizes: *es como nosotros no sabemos de nuestros antepasados (–) de dónde eran* 'it is like we_MASC don't know of our ancestors (–) where they came from' (line 52–53; 51–52 ET). When Eva speaks about the 'ancestors', she refers

---

95 The people in the community actually do know about their locally relevant history and origin. They do not, however, frame it in a narrative of *ethnic* belonging, but rather in a narrative of transformation and collective struggle to be able to remain 'here'. In chapter 7, many of these narratives are analyzed.

96 The trainer's conceptualization contradicts academic literature on the term, which considers the "Ladino" to be a hegemonic, but still *ethnic* category in contrast to indigenous categories (c.f. Stavenhagen 1965, Matthew 2006 and del Valle Escalante 2008).

to generations prior to their parents'. In the narratives for example, it is often the grandparents' generation who are portrayed as 'coming down' from the plateau, or, as community leader Javier puts it in his narrative for visitors, the community people have lived in the Alianza for 'five generations' (see for example in 7.3.1.1). In Eva's sentence, we can observe the importance of spatiality again: the people of the community (she also uses an inclusive masculine 'we') do not know 'where' their ancestors 'came from'. To know about the ethnic belonging of their ancestors depends on knowledge about their former location.

In the broader Guatemalan context, this explanation makes sense as ethnic belonging, or specific variations of ethnicity could change from village to village in the Western Highlands and elsewhere in Guatemala. What Eva also tells us implicitly is that, since the ancestors arrived *aquí* 'here' in the *finca* ethnic belonging has lost relevance. *Aquí* cannot be related to ethnic belonging; belonging can only be understood in terms of being 'from here' or 'being born here'. This implicit line of argumentation is made explicit in the following by the other group members. First, however, the trainer signals that she understands their communicative problem: *por eso es lo que es/por eso no saben (–) como << laughing>denominarse>* 'that's why it's like that/that's why you don't know (–) <<laughing>how to call yourself>' (lines 54–55; 53–54 ET). The trainer utters the last word *denominarse* 'call yourself' with a laughing voice, expressing her astonishment over the fact that the women really do not know how to assign themselves to an ethnic category. In line with Flor and Eva, the women open a poly-voiced chorus, supporting each other and repeating the argument. Parallel to the trainer's turn, Ana repeats Eva's contribution *no pues no sabemos pues* 'no well we don't know then' (line 56; 55 ET). Flor states *que hemos hemos nacido aquí y no sabemos* 'we were were born here and we don't know' (line 58; 57 ET). Simultaneously, Ana confirms this with *sí pues (—) que somos de aquí TOdos* 'well yes (—) we are all_MASC from here' (line 59; 58 ET) while Eva joins in with *no sabemos que somos nacidos TOdos de: (–) aquí* 'we don't know we are all_MASC born (–) here' (line 60; 59 ET). *Todos* 'all_MASC' is emphasized in both Ana's and Eva's utterances, and again by using the masculine form referring to all people in the community, and not just the women in the workshop. The emphasis on their shared knowledge, and thereby their collectivity strengthens the speakers position and argumentation. They counter the trainer's apparent amusement about their ignorance by reasoning why they cannot assign themselves, and at the same time emphasize the locally relevant attribute for belonging in the community: 'being from here'. They underscore belonging in spatial terms – in terms of place of birth and of locality. It is their second attempt to defend their perspective on belonging against the trainer.

However, as in the earlier extracts and sequences, the trainer does not ratify place as a legitimate category of belonging. It deviates from the ethnic categories of belonging she considers valid. Instead, the extract ends with another task assigned to the community women: *entonces la tarea ahorita es (-) para la próxima <<laughing>reunión cuando venga ya tienen que saber> (.) algo de su historia por lo menos cuál es su origen (-) aha porque igual no saben ni dónde ubicarse ustedes* 'so the task is now (-) for the next <<laughing>reunion when I'm coming you will have to know> (.) something about your history at least what your origin is (-) yes because you don't even know where to place yourselves' (lines 61–63 and 65; 60–62 and 64–65 ET). As in her previous turns, the trainer articulates part of her utterance with a laughing voice, thus indexing the exceptional status of the women's "inability" to recall their origins and 'placing' themselves in her category system. Neglecting the line of the women's argumentation and the local system of belonging categories, she demands that the women 'have to know' something about their 'history' or 'origin' the next time she comes to visit the community. So instead of acknowledging the local differences, the trainer insists on the application of her system, if not now then in the future. Except for hearer feedback of Flor (line 64; 63 ET), the women do not respond to that demand. After the trainer's conclusion, indistinct chatter starts. The other tasks and questions on the questionnaire are assessed later in the following course of the workshop.

The clash of category systems – an ethnically oriented and a spatially and heritage-oriented one – becomes evident in this extract. This "clash" is not as severe as it appears from the perspective of the trainer.[97] "Ethnicity" is a concept which – in its very (and manifold) definitions – is related to "ancestry" and "origin". It is a

> "sense and the expression of 'collective, intergenerational cultural continuity,' i.e. the sensing and expressing of links to 'one's own kind (one's own people),' to collectivities that not only purportedly have historical depth but, more crucially, share putative ancestral origins" (Fishman, 1985, 4).

Furthermore, space plays a role in ethnic configurations, at least in the Guatemalan context. As I have explained, ethnic belonging and the practices related to it can vary from one community to the other in the highlands.

The problem, thus, apparently does not lie in the spatial configurations of belonging, but in the women's ignorance of the ethnic category system. There

---

97 At a later moment in the workshop that is not presented in this book, she evaluates the women's 'ignorance' as quote 'grave', 'embarrassing' and 'intolerable' given the political times in Guatemala, in which she says it is important to know 'where you come from'.

is no solution or negotiation towards a convergence of both systems or an acknowledgment of the local relevancy of spatial belonging by the trainer, a community outsider. Her ethnically oriented system is institutionally backed up, so the negotiations on 'validity' in the end fall back on interactional authority in this encounter. This is the primary focus of the next section.

6.7. Interactional Positions

The interactions in this workshop are characterized by different interactional positions of the participating parties. As I have outlined in section 4.2, the speakers can index positions on different levels in the interaction. In this section I will address interactional positions as "temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, 592). In the workshop, these interactional positions are indexed by a certain asymmetry in the negotiation and the acceptance of belonging concepts.

The trainer's position as an official representative of a state institution also influences her interactional position in the workshop. She occupies an expert and leading participant role in the interaction's sequential organization. This is intriguing because it mitigates other attributes that usually have weight in the *in-situ* negotiation of the interactional positions of the speakers (age or status in the in-group of the community). The trainer is a young woman of 26 years – younger than most of the participating women. From other observations of interactions in the community (as in the participants' houses or during community meetings), I concluded that age plays a role in turn allocation and amount of contributions in an interaction. In this workshop, the younger woman is the one leading the event and the one allocating turns to the other participants. She is sent by an official governmental institution, which organizes workshops for rural women with the aim of empowering them in their social and economic communal activities. At the beginning of the workshop, the trainer introduces herself by referring to the governmental institution and the women's program she is working for, and provides a schedule for the workshop.

The interaction might be described and analyzed best in terms of a teacher-student relationship[98], which is based on knowledge gaps between both parties and on the assumption that the teacher's knowledge is the "right" knowledge. The women's constant attempts to answer her questions and fulfill tasks in accordance with the trainer's approval, and their reference to her as having the last

---

98   This interpretation is supported by the humorous interaction in extract 6 and 7.

word on their attempt of categorization, point to their acknowledgment of the trainer's leading or teaching position.

During the course of the interaction, the trainer finds that her category system does not resonate with the community's women. It becomes apparent that the trainer as a government representative positions herself as presumably "valid" and dominant regarding belonging categories. The categories of belonging, and explanations proposed by the women, are either passed over, rejected or even ridiculed by the trainer. The asymmetries in the positions of the interlocutors, thus, also create an asymmetry in "participation rights" (Drew & Heritage, 1992, 49) for the negotiation of category membership. This is not only insensitive to local relevancies, but also political as I will show in the following.

Labeling communities in ethnic and other terms, for example by certain authorities, can have different implications for the local people:

> "ethnic (and other) categories may be used to allocate rights, regulate actions, distribute benefits and burdens, construct category-specific institutions, identify particular persons as bearers of categorical attributes, 'cultivate' populations or, at the extreme, 'eradicate' unwanted 'elements'" (Brubaker, 2002, 184).

By asking the women to place themselves within the system of ethnic categories, the trainer applies presupposed global labels on them, which are portrayed as the only ones "available" in that specific socio-geographic context. As a rural woman in the highlands, you can only hold membership to one category: *mestizo* or *Maya*. In the latter case you have to specify your "Mayaness" by referring to one of twenty-four ethnically different *indigenous* subgroups.

Haber (2010) discusses a similar example from Argentina, in which local frames of reference are adopted into an official category system. This has political and economical repercussions on the local community. Members of a native tribe in Argentina assign themselves to the category *criollo*. For the local community, being *criollo* is related to being born and raised in a certain territory.[99] In the official Argentinean context, however, the category is usually used to refer to a "mixed Spanish colonial and indigenous origin" (Schneider, 2006, 11).[100] Haber (2010) points out that anthropologists took the community's local categorical reference of the community seriously, but did not consider its actual

---

99   This is similar to the Alianza community's spatial belonging, to which they do not apply a category other then 'here'.

100   Schneider (2006) observes that there are different attributions to the category *criollo* in the Argentinean context – namely "egalitarian" with a negative meaning of "rural and backward", or "exclusive" as denoting *Porteño* upper class families.

local meaning. As *criollos,* the Argentinean native tribe were not considered to be "purely" indigenous anymore, resulting in severe financial cuts in support from the state and in problems regarding their land rights.

In the case of the Alianza women, the repercussions of the "failed" assignment into the trainer's ethnic system are not as critical as in the above example. However, they are not taken seriously and they are considered by the trainer to be ignorant about their own "origin" and "history".

The women subvert this kind of conclusion at specific points in the interaction. They speak in collective terms (affiliating the whole community to their own position), and we find sequences where they chorally respond to the trainer's inquiries. Furthermore, there are various incidences in the recording in which the women comment on the course of the workshop and the position of the trainer. For example, after the processing of the language question (see extract 4), the trainer is still absent and the women grow impatient waiting for her return. In this setting Flor, Ana and Pia have the following exchange:

Extract 6: *Una deberita* (01:37:16–01:37:23)

```
1    Flor:  y es que no ha terminado (-) es que nos va a venir a
2           poner hacer qué'
3     Ana:  <<laughing>una deberita:>
4    Flor:  <<laughing>>
5     Pia:  <<smiling> pero las ganas>
```

Extract 6: English Translation, 'A little homework' (01:37:16–01:37:23)

```
1    Flor:  and it is that it is not over (-) it is that she is
2           going to make us do what
3     Ana:  <<laughing>a little homework>
4    Flor:  <<laughing>>
5     Pia:  <<smiling> but feeling like it>
```

Ana makes fun of the trainer's authority as she characterizes her as a teacher giving homework because the students (i.e. the women) did not fulfill the task correctly. The diminutive of *deber* into *deberita,* as well as the laughing voice of Ana, make the turn an ironic and playful event. Flor joins in laughing, and thus aligns with Ana on her witty comment about the situation. Pia joins in, saying with a smiling voice that actually they are not 'feeling like it' (line 5).

Another one of these incidences happens a couple of minutes after the trainer's final distribution of the task to learn about "origin" and "history" at the end of extract 5. While the other women chat about other things again, Flor, Ana and Eva comment on the previous sequences:

Extract 7: *Nos va a mandar a la escuela* (01:50:56–01:51:00)

```
1    Flor:  <<laughing>nos va a mandar a la escuela>
2    Ana:   ay: (-) dios:
3    Eva:   <<laughing>>
```

Extract 7: English translation, 'She is going to send us to school (01:50:56–01:51:00)

```
1    Flor:  <<laughing>she is going to send us to school>
2    Ana:   ay (-) goodness
3    Eva:   <<laughing>>
```

Here, Flor uses the same reference to school as Ana with her 'little homework'. She refers to the task just proposed by the trainer and their being positioned by her but also by themselves as 'not knowing', and thus "needing" some education. Ana comments on this proposition with the ironic exclamation 'ay (-) goodness' causing Eva to laugh along.

The trainer's authority in the workshop is commented upon playfully, at least when the group of women is alone in the room. Also, the playful and funny comments on the women's English competence in extract 2 indicate a humorous framing of the interaction by the women. This points to a certain emancipation of the women concerning the position of the trainer within these small incidences.

In the context of differing interactional positions, my own assumed "knowledge" on the ethnic category system also has to be illuminated. Whereas from a researcher's perspective, I was hoping to remain the impossible "blind spot in the scene" (Duranti, 1997, 101) (i.e. somebody merely or ideally not "existent" to the people she observes), the women repeatedly draw me directly into the interaction and position me as a possible expert on their "tasks". In extract 2, I am asked directly to help answer the "ethnic question". In extract 3, I actively take part in the negotiation of ethnic and local categories. In extract 4, I am the one to begin another sequence on the language question. The position the women assign to me is due to my status as an outsider, as the *otra seño* 'the other Miss', sharing not only age and outsider status, but also assumed comparable knowledge on the ethnic category system the women cannot locate themselves in. During the interactions, I align with the trainer's system, repeating to the women what she was saying, while also indicating that I am neither really sure about the ethnic categories, nor about how they should place themselves within them. The local relevance of having been born or belonging 'here' is only elaborated upon after both the trainer and I insist on a qualifying category for "indigenous". For me as a researcher, the question about ethnic belonging and language use were of utmost interest, which is why I move between trying not to be accountable or influential, and at the same time repeating the trainer's system or starting another sequence

centering on language and ethnicity (extract 4). In these attempts, I am neverthe-
less reluctant to be put in the same position as the trainer. This reluctance con-
cerns both terms of knowledge and power over categories, but also that I am as
much an outsider to the community as she is. This is visible from my alignment
with the women using the verbal 'we'-form in extract 3.

From an analytical perspective it is important to consider these interactive re-
lations in the sequential unfolding of the negotiation of categories of belonging.
It shows how the clashing of category systems is intertwined with the different
self and other positionings in the interaction. In the unfolding of the interaction,
we can see how these positions are established and ratified. We can also observe
how the women work together in their positioning as the "students" – the ones
that have to answer questions and fulfill tasks. Their creativity in converging on
their own local understanding of belonging within the "ethnic" system of the
trainer, and in defending their own concept, is a co-constructed and collective
effort. Finally, we can also elucidate how a trainer from outside of the commu-
nity has the institutionally supported authority to explain to the local women
how they are "failing" with their own belonging constructions, and to persist
with an ethnic category system which works in other rural locations in the area,
but is irrelevant to this specific local context.

6.8. Interim Conclusion: Belonging as a Local and Interactional Problem

In the previous sections I have analyzed the sequential development of an inter-
action between some of the community women and a young workshop trainer
who was sent by a governmental institution for a three-hour meeting aimed at
"female empowerment". Several extracts depicted the chronological succession of
thematically critical points in talking about and negotiating belonging: the ques-
tion regarding ethnicity, regarding language, the processing of both the ethnic
and the language question among the women themselves with my participation,
and, finally the confrontation between the trainer's institutionally supported, and
the women's local and collectively held categorical systems of belonging.

Belonging in these extracts is not only a "communicative problem" (Hausen-
dorf, 2000, 99f.) that is negotiated in interaction, in this case explicitly. It is liter-
ally a *problem* for the participating women because the category system offered
to them by the outsider does not correspond to their local conceptualizations
of "where and how we belong". Dealing with both of these problems reveals,
on the one hand, an emic categorical belonging perspective which in contact
with the "other" is more discernible. On the other hand, looking closely at the

developments line by line allows a reconstruction of *how* these categories are dealt with, *how* the women attempt to integrate both systems, and *how* this is rejected by the trainer.

The system brought in by the trainer is based on a dichotomization of ethnic groups into either *mestizo* or *Maya.* The latter is differentiated into ethnic sub-categories: twenty-four indigenous tribes that are widely recognized for Guatemala. The trainer's system is only explicitly articulated after the women clearly voiced their confusion regarding the term 'ethnic'. The problem might be analyzed as one based on asymmetrical knowledge (cf. Rosenberg 2014, Bromme et al. 2004), specifically in the form of knowledge gaps between experts (the trainer) and laymen (the women) (cf. Ciapuscio 2005, Gülich 1999). This is supported by the trainer establishing and using her institutional position to the extent that she even disregards the women's attempt at integrating both category systems (see 6.7). However, analyzing the excerpts in these terms implies the analyst's acknowledgment of the existence of experts and laymen on the issue of the women's (or, for that matter, the community's) belonging, and that consequently, the women would not be "experts" on their own belonging. Their own assertion *no sabemos* 'we do not know' does not reflect that they do not know anything about their belonging. It serves as an argumentative tool for why they cannot place themselves in a system based on "ethnic origin", and why they thus place themselves in a system of "spatial origin". Taking all this into account, a conceptualization of the interaction in expert-laymen terms would perpetuate the asymmetrical power relations at the analytical level. This is why I propose to analyze the extracts as practical manifestations of clashing category systems: The institutionalized "official" system in ethnic terms, and the local system grounded in spatial origin and location related to *aquí* 'here'.

Even though their local concept of belonging is not acknowledged in the conversation with the trainer, the women find several ways to express its *common* local validity. As there are different possibilities to delineate groups with grammatical forms in the Spanish language, the women can mark either *nosotras* 'we_FEM'/*todas* 'all_FEM' referring to themselves as a group of women, or *nosotros* 'we_MASC'/*todos* 'all_MASC', which is the inclusive masculine form in which the women and the men of the community are both included. The claims made about being 'from here' or 'born here' are widened in this way to apply to the whole community. Another form of emphasizing collectivity in the interaction is the women's positioning of themselves as a group speaking in "one voice" to the trainer in sequences of poly-voiced choral speech (as in extract 1: line 2–15, extract 3: lines 1–7, extract 5: lines 2–5, 18–23 and 58–60, 57–59 ET). In these

sequences, the speakers simultaneously or consecutively repeat what the other women say. These are not co-constructions in the sense of a completion of grammatical structures (as in Gülich and Mondada 2008; Günthner 2013; Jungbluth 2016), but co-constructions as sequential "compression" of collective positions in interaction. This strengthens the women's interactional standing and emphasizes their commitment to their shared position.

The cohesion of the women in negotiating and arguing their position with the trainer should not impede an acknowledgment of their individual participant roles in the workshop interactions. For example, in Extract 1, Ana aligns herself with the trainer, emphasizing her knowledge about the *étnico* term her fellow group members struggle with. When the clash of category systems becomes apparent, she aligns with the other women. She is also the one who invites me twice into the interaction over the course of the workshop. Flor writes down the questions and answers, a task that determines most of her turns in the dictation and the processing phases. Pia is rarely involved in negotiating categories of belonging, but is rather an observer of the scene, participating with short insertions or commenting on ongoing talk with laughter and giggles. Eva and Sol are participants who move the discussion along in all extracts, whereas Bea only engages in the processing of the *étnico* question.

The main point of the analysis in this chapter is that, in the Nueva Alianza local concepts do not correspond with concepts that would most certainly be applicable in any other community in the area. Two conclusions need to be drawn from this: The trainer – with her institutionally and experientially approved ethnic category system – is a good example of what researchers (in any discipline involved with human beings) are prone to do. In many research settings, we arrive with preconceived categories about the "groups" we are interested in – about how they supposedly frame their belonging (or *should* frame it), and about how they label themselves and others. This example shows that it is of utmost importance to carefully listen to the participants and to appreciate and take seriously their emic and locally contextualized meaning-making.[101] Furthermore, we need to understand local categories and positionings as they are "materially" displayed, negotiated, acknowledged or dismissed in spoken data:

> "there is no given identity (and belonging, RV) that we as analysts can refer to unless we can demonstrate *that and how* just this social category that we have picked out has

---

101   Anthropology and ethnography, of course, have to be credited for putting local perspectives and meanings at the center of the very foundation of their discipline (e.g. in Malinowski 1922; Mauss 1990[1925] or Geertz 1973).

become interactively relevant *in* the data themselves" (Hausendorf, 2004, 243, emphasis in the original).

Local categories and positions of belonging become most visible when they are contrasted with other conceptualizations, as in this example. Local perspectives on belonging often stay in the realms of common sense within the community. They might not be made relevant in daily interactions between community members. Thus, either the researcher finds a method to elicit relevant belonging conceptualizations (as for instance in biographical narratives or stories about the becoming of a group, see chapter 7) or, as in these extracts, local concepts are made relevant in *contrast* to, and through the lens of other concepts. Differences become more evident at the boundary of category systems (Barth, 1969), but also the actual contents of the "cultural stuff" – in this case the local belonging category (place) and its attributes – become more apparent in contrast to other systems.